

EXPLORING POPULAR RESPONSES TO ATTEMPTED CHANGES IN THE  
DOMINANT DISCOURSE: THE CASE OF THE 6TH GRADE HISTORY  
TEXTBOOK REVISION IN GREECE

by

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Exploring Popular Responses to Attempted Changes in the Dominant Discourse: The  
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## **DEDICATION**

To Thomai and George, the joy and beauty in my life.

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **EXPLORING POPULAR RESPONSES TO ATTEMPTED CHANGES IN THE DOMINANT DISCOURSE: THE CASE OF THE 6TH GRADE HISTORY TEXTBOOK REVISION IN GREECE**

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This study explores the factors that inform popular responses to attempted changes in dominant national historical discourses. Using a history curriculum revision initiative in Greece as a case study, an effort is made to identify factors that constitute determinants of acceptance or resistance to initiatives that appear to be introducing more axiologically balanced curricula. Multiple methods of systematic inquiry are employed to carry out this task: a) *content analysis* of the old and the new history textbooks in the case concerned so as to identify differences in their axiological patterns, especially in the relationship between national Self and Other; b) *thematic analysis* of 100 newspaper articles, opinion pieces and internet blogs, so as to identify the discursive patterns in the public dialogue supporting or opposing the given history curriculum revision initiative; and c) *in-depth interviews* with 15 stakeholders in order to elicit their opinion on the initiative and on the factors that shaped popular reaction to it. The intention of this research is to take a further

step towards understanding the cognitive and emotional responses of a society when attempts are made to change the dominant historical narratives. At a practical level, the insights drawn through this research may be utilized in future initiatives to identify popular concerns and, accordingly, develop strategies to address them, thus, increasing the likelihood of success.



## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **UNDERSTANDING THE SUBJECT OF THIS STUDY**

Historical narratives lay among the factors that play catalytic role in providing the cognitive, affective and evaluative paradigms within which groups develop an understanding of their identity, as well as their place in the world. They constitute a central mechanism, through which certain types of social identities, such as national identity, are being reproduced and transmitted from generation to generation. Importantly, they stand as major determinants of the nature of the relational space and interaction patterns between groups. It is, oftentimes, historical narratives that, inter alia, provide the foundations for conflictual relationships between different groups, by promoting axiologically unbalanced forms of identity. In other words, the behavioral consequences of unbalanced collective axiologies, as found in historical narratives, are reflected in hard-to-break cycles of conflictual interaction patterns between different groups.

Over the last decades, this reality, coupled with an increasing realization that educational institutions lay among the major loci of production and reproduction of historical narratives and national identities, have led to a number of peace-building initiatives directed towards the revision of history textbooks in a number of countries; these initiatives are meant to render history education, not a vehicle for perpetuating conflictual relationships, but a means for the students to develop a `critical eye` on

history, devoid of in-group favoritism, exclusivist discourses, monolithic glorification of in-group achievements, and axiological imbalance in the representations of ‘Self’ and ‘Other’. In their turn, these new narratives, meant to be inclusive and axiologically balanced, intend to lead to improved inter-group relations, as they may bring with them different, more positive logicalities of action; through such narratives the relational space between different groups is defined in a way that promotes cooperative relations.

However, these initiatives have been, often, received with, at best, caution and, at worse, strong resistance, especially in cases where the intention is to alter the representation of the ‘significant other’ -the group that has been used to a certain extent as a reference frame against which ‘ingroup’ collective identity is formed. The initiation of such processes is oftentimes perceived as an attempt to ‘falsify’ a group’s history and as a threat to one’s identity; accordingly, such initiatives are met with resistance that led, in some cases, to the withdrawal of the revised books.

*The intention of the present study is to explore the factors that shape people’s response to such peace-building initiatives (revision of history textbooks) that are meant to change dominant historical narratives and break the cycle of unbalanced collective axiologies.* In other words, the goal is to identify clusters of factors that constitute determinants of acceptance or resistance to these initiatives. The importance of such an endeavor lay at multiple levels: a) at theoretical level this research is a further step towards understanding the cognitive and emotional responses of a society when dominant historical narratives –and by reflection given representations of ‘Self’ and ‘Other’ - are contested; the insights acquired through this analysis may be useful in improving our

understanding of the defense mechanisms at play in conflict systems, when attempts are made to introduce axiologically balanced discourses; b) at practical level, the study draws a series of insights to be utilized in future initiatives through exploring and identifying people's objections and concerns, while in the process of moving from an exclusive towards a more inclusive historical narratives. It could be of critical importance for the success of future initiatives to take these concerns into consideration and find ways to address them.

Answers to the research question are provided through the exploration of a textbook revision initiative that took place in Greece at the turn of the new century, meant to alter the dominant historical discourse produced and reproduced through history education. In the years prior to 2006 an effort was made in Greece by a number of academics under the auspice of the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs to revise the sixth grade history curriculum, which among others presented the historical relationship between Greeks and Ottomans (and later the Turks) –Greeks' 'significant others'). The introduction of the revised curriculum in September 2006 met with strong resistance by parts of the Greek society, which resulted in the withdrawal of the new books shortly after the beginning of the school year 2007/2008 –a year after it was introduced.

Throughout this research, the methodological specifics of which are discussed in following sections, the aim is to: a) identify the axiological patterns as reflected in the representations of 'Self' and 'Other' in the old textbook and compare them with the respective patterns of the revised textbook, allowing the researcher to see whether this

revision reflected indeed a step towards a more inclusive historical discourse, which on its turn could potentially lead to more positive intergroup relations; and b) identify the factors that shaped people's response to the initiative concerned. In order to carry out the latter task interviews were conducted with key individuals that represent different groups of stakeholders involved in the process (within and outside the initiative) in order to elicit their views on the factors that shaped people's response to the initiative; these interviews were coupled with thematic analysis of a series of newspaper articles and blog entries that reflect people's reaction to the textbook revision.

In the following chapter, before I delve deeper into the specifics of the case study explored in this work (Chapter 3), the theoretical insights that inform the discussion throughout this research are offered.

## **CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL INSIGHTS FOSTERING NATIONAL IDENTITY THROUGH HISTORY EDUCATION THE WORKINGS OF HISTORY EDUCATION, SOCIAL IDENTITIES AND HISTORICAL NARRATIVES**

As understood by the brief introduction, the case explored in this study touches upon a series of key issues that have been problematized by scholars and practitioners across academic disciplines, questions related to history education and identity formation; social identity and categorization; nationalism and national identity; nature and function of historical narratives and dominant historical discourses; utilization of history curricula for positive transformation of intergroup relations; and psychological defense mechanisms triggered by the introduction of counter-narratives. In order to provide a review of the key concepts and ideas related to the above areas, in the sections to follow the discussion is divided into different thematic units. First, the role of history education in the formation of collective identities and the systematic promotion of given national narratives is explored. Second, theoretical insights on the working of collective and national identities are offered; this discussion is informed by theories of social identity and social categorization, as national identity is widely seen to be a key form of social identity. Central place in this discussion is reserved for the concept of collective axiology (Rothbart and Korostelina 2009), the system of value commitments a collectivity holds, and through which group members come to develop a view of their place in the world and their relationship with outgroups. Third, the nature and functions of historical

narratives, as well as the role of dominant historical discourses in the formation of key paradigmatic frames through which a group's identity, shared past and present are viewed and understood, are presented. Fourth, the chapter proceeds with a review of key developments during the course of 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century toward history curricula revisions meant to transform history education into a vehicle for peacebuilding. Finally, this first theoretical part of the study –before I turn to the case that is the focus of this research- will conclude with an exploration of popular responses to attempted changes in dominant historical discourses through –among others- history curriculum revision initiatives. This last section is informed by the theoretical insights offered throughout the chapter and is meant to explore the factors that seem to play a role in determining popular responses to attempted discursive changes: a) identity dynamics; b) power arrangements reflected in history curricula; and c) epistemological differences between professional historiography and popular consciousness when approaching a group's history. The discussion to follow provides sound theoretical prismata, through which the case study problematized in this work –the revision initiative concerning the sixth grade history curriculum in Greece- is explored, discussed and analyzed. As this is the first time that the concept of collective axiology is used to analyze the narrative constructs in the given case, the following sections are also meant to demonstrated why individuals interested in challenging toxic historical discourses need to be attentive to identity dynamics and the workings of national narratives as reflected in official history education curricula.

## **History Education**

### **Importance of History Education as an Identity-Building Mechanism**

One could rightfully argue that educational institutions are just one of out of many loci where individuals are exposed to and get to internalize the overarching narrative of their national group. Two questions that could arise then in regards to this study are: a) why focus on the role of educational institutions? and b) out of all subjects, why is it important to explore history teaching, and textbooks in particular? While the author recognizes the multiplicity of factors that shape individuals' understanding of Self and Other, the importance of which should not be understated, state education has a catalytic role in fostering among young individuals a certain view of themselves as members of a historical collectivity. History education, in particular, is an important realm in which identity politics and discourses find their way through systematic, mass instruction to wider social strata. Accordingly, its role should be systematically explored and analyzed. It is hoped that this section will provide clear answers to the two questions posed above by discussing the key functions of popular history education.

It was mentioned in the introduction that history education plays a catalytic role in reproducing given social identities as reflected in dominant historical narratives, especially within the frames of the nation-state. Popular education in general –and with it state-attached historiography- emerged and developed hand in hand with the modern nation state, especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; that's why when one talks about modern school what is really meant is 'national school' (Dragonas and Bar-On 2000). Indeed, education has been a powerful tool at the disposal of states as organizers of collectivities

(Anderson, 1991); historically, educational institutions have been major mechanisms of identity-building. In conjunction with other public discursive practices, the school has been employed by the nation state so as to “to create, disseminate, sustain and perpetuate shared national myths, heroes, symbols, ideals, values and historical narratives, upon which notions of state authority and legitimacy as well as national belongingness and identification were rested” (Philippou and Klerides 2010: 220). These processes constituted what Ingrao calls ‘weapons of mass instruction’, that would catalyze the acceptance by popular imagination of an overarching national narrative gradually and systematically crafted by political, economic and cultural elites (Ingrao 2012). School curricula and textbooks have played a central role in defining the reservoirs of collective meaning, by shaping collective memory and by establishing common values within a country’s population. It is textbooks that, *inter alia*, provide the key through which national identities are constructed, reconstructed, and situated within a wider world. Through state education, identity politics have been regulated and adherence to a specific national and civic order has been elicited (Zambetta 2000). In other words, it is primarily at educational institutions that members of a nation get to socialize both as ‘citizens’ and as ‘patriots’ (Vickers 2005).

Although educational institutions are just one of out of many realms where individuals get to internalize the ‘story’ of their national group (what we will later call ‘master narrative’), their systematic, persistent nature makes them the key instrument of regulating collective identities and eliciting loyalty to given power arrangements; this is why their functions have drawn the attention of social scientists. As all young members



of a national group typically go through state education for a significant number of years, schools become the principal institutions for the political socialization of youth, that is, socialization into mental constructs that support given socio-political and cultural structures (Epstein and McGinn, as cited in Collet 2007: 133). And they do so in a period during which children are at formative stages of their socio-political orientations, which vests educational institutions with a special power in shaping and solidifying young individuals' understanding of the world (Collet 2007). These years represent a privileged moment in individuals' life, at which key cognitive, social, and emotional representations of reality are discovered and internalized (Nicolini and Cherubini 2011).

This is also why the teaching of history has been at the focus of social scientific inquiry; because out of all subjects taught in schools, the teaching of history is the one that has a profound role in shaping individual's understanding of themselves as a collectivity distinct from other groups (social dimension), attached to a certain geographic area (spatial dimension), and with a historical evolution over time (temporal dimension). History education, as a realm where national identities are discursively produced, has a special, privileged place in what Bell calls a national collectivity's 'mythscape': "the temporally and spatially extended discursive realm in which the myths of the nation are forged, transmitted, negotiated, and reconstructed constantly" (2003: 63, 66). Although textbooks constitute the focus of this study, the repertoire of 'weapons of mass instruction' is actually wide; national pedagogy may include mental as well as physical practices, mostly of public nature. For Hamilakis these processes include "national school celebrations involving embodied experiences such as theatrical plays

and marches and visits to archaeological sites and museums....public rituals, such as school dramas, parades, en masse attendance of church ceremonies...[which] are all bodily performances instrumental in constructing a bodily mnemonic *habitus*, a sensuous reception of national ‘truths’” (2003: 60-61). It is thus clear, that there is plethora of repeated public processes meant to strengthen one’s commitment to the national group through psychological, discursive and physical practices. It is true, however, that within this repertory of media, history textbooks have a special place. Their power, both as identity-building resources and as knowledge tools, rests with their *authoritative status* as privileged media of meaning making and of conveying an officially-sanctioned version of reality/ account of history. The knowledge they convey is systematic and persistent, yet highly selective, while vested with a symbolic power that stems from the fact that it is approved by state-run institutions (Hamilakis 2003; Lässig 2013; Lässig and Strobel 2013). Textbooks stand as mirrors that reflect “state policies on education, national ideologies, cultural constructions of reality and truth, and public concerns on education, morality, and national destiny” (Hamilakis 2003: 41); and they are the basic means through which these constructs make it to the psyche of the national youth.

This socio-political power of history education has rendered it a key vehicle for legitimizing agendas put forth by political and cultural elites that control state mechanisms (Ahonen 2001; Vickers 2005). The creation of new states was accompanied (or more accurately was preceded) by overarching narratives that were developed through a combination of facts and myths by the founding elites which aimed to “impress their self-justifying version of the country’s creation, efficacy and sublime mission on future

generations” (Ingrao 2013: 120-121). As discussed earlier, the transmission of this ‘national truth’ has taken place primarily through primary and secondary education, the aim of which is to disseminate an officially sanctioned account of the past, and with it hegemonic conceptions of national identity; promote adherence to key moral, social and political orders; define the nation’s socio-spatial borders and present ‘otherness’; and articulate common aspirations for the future. Ideally, history education would allow for the exploration of diverse viewpoints; promotion of critical thinking when looking at the past; drawing insights from past experiences so as to address needs of the present; and understanding of ‘otherness’ in non-axiological terms. However, in practice the latter objectives have very rarely, and only recently, found a place among the goals of official state pedagogy. The cultivation of critical skills and the development of cosmopolitan views on history has been often seen as contradicting the formation of good ‘citizens’ and ‘patriots’.

Instead, what history education typically focuses on is the narration of a collectivity’s past, without necessarily offering connections to processes that took place in the wider world. In the same way that modern school is a ‘national school’, history education centers on the nation’s history, legitimizing the nation-state as a ‘natural unity’ (Broeders 2008). To add more, in the accounts commonly offered through history textbooks there is an emphasis on the uniqueness and, often, the superiority of one’s nation, the roots of which is traced back into the past; the further those roots are traced the more important and worthy the nation seems to be (Broeders 2008). This ethnocentric history revolves around monolithic representations of past events, axiological views of

the relationship between the national ingroup and outgroups, and oftentimes dogmatic interpretations of the past, in a fashion that legitimizes the actions of a state (Koulouri 2002). The narrative of history textbook is most commonly centered on political and diplomatic history, and offers a linear account of conflicts, disasters, important dates and the deeds of key figures in a nation's past. The natural consequence of such an approach to history is that students become "much more familiar with extraordinary, negative and exceptional events, persons and dates from the past than with the ordinary everyday life experience of people living in the past" (Leeuw-Roord 2000: 4). Thus, students develop an understanding of history as an amalgamation of dramatic events, while they come to see the national Others only through the perspectives of the conflict encounters that the nation, either as the victor or as the victim, had with them in the past.

Importantly, the narrative presented in textbooks oftentimes appears as a combination of heroism and victimization (Ingrao 2013). Here, the nation is presented either as the victorious hero or as the innocent victim at the hands of the Other. The voice of the outgroup is silenced, the suffering that ingroup inflicted on the Other is not explored, and any acts of violence committed in the name of the nation is presented as a historical necessity and is thus morally justified (Koulouri 2002; Leeuw-Roord 2000; Papadakis 2008). It is through this prism that students get to develop their understanding of their national group's collective past and its relationship with the Other. The narrative is offered in such a way that time collapses and what happened decades or even centuries ago appears relevant today, especially when it comes to interactions across national boundaries. Using an example here, past incidents of victimization may be used to keep a

nation's youth alerted in regards to current threats that the Other is perceived to pose for the nation: 'if it happened in the past, no one can assure us that it will not happen again'. The use of the Kosovo myth in Serbia since 1980s to mobilize Serbs against an Albanian threat or the importance of the Battle of the Boyne for the collective psyche of both Protestant and Catholic Irish, are prime examples of past incidents used as mobilization resources in the present. It is, therefore, clear that history education is not limited in a descriptive conveyance of knowledge; rather, it offers the new generations the cognitive maps for understanding and engaging with the world. There is, in that sense, an aspirational dimension in history education; it conveys what a society/ nation wishes to convey to the new generation, defining in this process not only the collective past, but also the collective aspirations for the future. Thus, "history textbooks have an amplified significance, for history is not only a definition of the past and present, but also an attempt at continuity in national memory, upon which a collective identity is founded and a future predicated" (Levy; Mayer; as cited in Nuhoglu-Soysal et al 2005: 14).

Turning back to the question posed at the beginning of this section, informed by insights offered so far one could argue that for people interested in exploring the relational space between different groups, history education is a worth-studying subject, because it is through their journey at the educational institutions of their country that the youth get to acquire a sense of national identity (as a form of social identity); they are exposed to the nation's officially sanctioned narrative; and accordingly they understand the place of Self and Other in the world. The discussion in this section rendered clear that history education touches upon a series of key issues that have been problematized by

scholars and practitioners across academic disciplines. If one wishes to develop a deeper, more analytical understanding of the functions of history education, a closer look needs to be taken at the formation and workings of social identities (and naturally national identities as a form of social identity), as well as at the role of historical narratives as key discursive topoi for the production and reproduction of collective identities and conceptions of both ‘Self’ and ‘Other’. In the following sections these themes are presented and elaborated on. While proceeding with the discussion of these themes, connections are regularly made, so as to underline the relevance of these concepts to history education and their importance for the present study.

## **Social Identity, Collective Axiology and National Identity**

### **What Is Social Identity**

As the subject of this study touches upon popular conceptions of collective identity as reflected in dominant historical discourses and state education, it would be both interesting and useful to offer some theoretical insights on social identity and group processes. One could not grasp a deep understanding of the workings of national identities and representations of the national Self and Others without being somehow familiar with the nature and function of social identities in general; the processes of social categorization and identification through which individuals come to understand themselves as social subjects; issues of social comparison and self-esteem; and the concept of Collective Axiology. This will allow for a deeper exploration of the cognitive, affective and evaluative mechanisms through which, groups get to make meaning of the world around them and position themselves –and outgroups- within certain sociocultural

and political ecologies. Importantly, when one is talking about history education as an identity-building mechanism, it is these underlying identity processes that need to be kept in mind, as they shed light on the way young members of a (national) group get to form their collective identity.

Since the last quarter of 20<sup>th</sup> century the study of social identity has drawn increasing interest of scholars across different disciplinary fields, with an emphasis on the role of conceptions of Self and Other in the instigation of intergroup conflict (Ashmore et al 2001; Capozza and Brown 2000; Grosvenor 1999). The study of social identity is critical for our understanding and interpretation of social reality (Somers 1994). In other words, if one wishes to develop a sound understanding of social action, special attention needs to be paid to the existing identity dynamics and group processes within a given society. Especially when it comes to the analysis of the emergence and escalation of conflict between different ethnonational groups, being attentive to the role of exclusivist identities in these processes is a *sine qua non*. For Ashmore et al (2001) social identities may very well lay the foundation for and exacerbate intergroup conflict, which, in its turn may further solidify and rigidify these identities, rendering them more exclusive. Thus, addressing social identity questions might lead to tension reduction and positive transformation of the intergroup relational space.

Social identity is defined by Korostelina as “a feeling of belonging to a social group, a strong connection with a category, and an important part of our mind that affects our social perceptions and behavior” (2007: 15). Similarly, for Tajfel, social identity refers to “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of

his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (as cited in Trepte, 2006: 258-259). Theories of social identity emerged as an effort to provide an explanatory account of how the social environment is inexorably involved in the formation of individuals’ identity and being (Wearing 2011), combining both cognitive and motivational processes (Capozza and Brown 2000). Such theories attempted to reveal that social identity is essentially *contextual*, in that it is embedded within historical sociocultural contexts that reflect given power arrangements, and *relational*, in that it is shaped through social interactions (Wearing 2011). This reflects an understanding of social identity not as a static ‘label’ residing exclusively within the individual, but as a frame provided dynamically within one’s cultural and national community (Ashmore et al 2001); it is “at its core, a process, rather than a property of social actors” (Snow 2001: 3). Thus, social identity theories focus on “the group in the individual” (Hogg and Abrams, as cited in Trepte, 2006: 255), meaning that it is through the workings of social identities that individuals get to internalize group norms and practices, and develop their attitudinal and behavioral patterns. Here, a group is defined as “a set of individuals, who hold a common social identification or view themselves as members of the same social category” (Stets and Burke 2000: 225). Moreover, for Deux (2000) the concept of social identity can be used to explore: a) the relationship of the individual to the broader social structure; b) the self-structure of individuals, as it is defined by a person’s categorical membership (i.e. in this study, conceptions of national identity); and c) the nature of intergroup relations (i.e. positioning of Greeks vis-à-vis Turks as the ‘Other’). Although all three dimensions may



be relevant to this study, the focus of this research is mostly on the last two, as the goal here is to discuss issues of categorical membership and conceptions of national identity, in regards to the nature of intergroup relations.

In addition, the systematic exploration of a group's identity frames allows analysts to reveal people's understanding of their existence and self-definition alongside cognitive (knowledge of group membership), evaluative (positive or negative evaluation of group membership) and emotional or affective (positive or negative emotions attached to group membership) lines (Tajfel, as cited in Trepte 2006: 256). In history education all three dimensions are at play at the same time: not only is knowledge about the collective past conveyed to young members of a national group (cognitive dimension), but also this knowledge transmission is meant to trigger strong emotions towards both one's national Self and one's national Other (emotional dimension), while the typically, benignly or explicitly, unbalanced representation of Self and Other vests history education with an evaluative dimension.

The nature of collective identities has been generally examined through different ontological and epistemological paradigmatic perspectives. Snow (2001) identifies three traditions in approaching the phenomenon of social identities: primordialist, structuralist and constructivist. "From the primordialist point of view, the defining characteristic is typically an ascriptive attribute, such as race, gender, or sexual orientation...From a structuralist perspective, the critical characteristic is typically a kind of master social category implying structural commonality...[Finally, through a constructionist perspective] collective identities are seen as invented, created, reconstituted, or cobbled

together rather than being biologically preordained or structurally or culturally determined” (Snow 2001: 5-6). For Snow, although collective identities are constructed, this construction never takes place *ex nihilo* or in a vacuum; while they are undoubtedly fabricated, collective identities “rarely are constructed *carte blanche*; rather...[they are] typically knit together by drawing on threads of past and cultural materials and traditions, structural arrangements, and even primordial attributes...through the experience of collective action itself” (2001: 7). This is also the approach that the author of the present study adopts; collective identities –especially at a macro level, such as national identities- are built upon a series of key elements already available in a group’s cultural reservoir and are constantly and dialectically shaped and reproduced.

**Social Identification: The Path from Individual to Collective Identity Passes through Common Developmental Experiences at Institutional, Linguist and Symbolic Levels**

No matter what approach one embraces in regards to the nature and formation of collective identities, their key role in shaping people’s worldviews and ethos is undeniable, as it is through identification with a social signifier that individuals become *social subjects* and develop their sense of both individual and collective agency (Dashtipour 2012). Important for the development of an individual’s consciousness of her/his social identity is the process of *social identification*. The latter is developed in three stages: a) definition of ‘self’ as a member of a group, b) development of perceptions and understanding of social reality through the categories formed by the group, and c) adoption of group’s stereotypes and norms (Korostelina 2007). What we see here is a distinction between personal identity (definition of Self on the basis of personal

attributes) and social identity (definition of Self on the basis of social category membership) (Turner, 1999). It would be preferable here to view personal and social identity as representing different levels of self-categorization and not as two different poles of the same continuum (Trepte 2006). Individuals are either born in a social category or choose to become members of a social group. In their turn, groups function because they may be attractive to existing and potential members (affective involvement), they succeed in addressing members' needs and solve problems (goal involvement), and provide status to group members (ego involvement) (Bass; Stogdill; as cited in Druckman 1994: 45). As individuals increasingly socialize within their social groups, their cognitive and emotional attachment to these groups is strengthened. Consequently, over the flow of time individuals are more likely to become "less focused on themselves per se and more focused on themselves as part of larger social setting" (Druckman 1994: 45). This fact illustrates the key role that educational institutions play in fostering certain forms of collective identities among children, as the latter grow older and socialize within given educational structures that systematically promote a dominant identity frame.

Importantly, the shift from personal to social identity signifies a change from interpersonal to intergroup behavior (Dashtipour 2012), which in its turn "not only suggests the possibility of collective action in pursuit of common interests, but even invites such action" (Snow 2001: 3). The shift takes place through the process of *depersonalization*, where the individual comes to see herself not as an independent unit, but as a living embodiment of the in-group 'prototype': "a cognitive representation of the social category containing the meanings and norms that the person associates with that

social category” (Hogg, as cited in Stets and Burke 2000: 231). Throughout their socialization at different loci and discursive topoi where group identity is produced and reproduced, such as schools, the army, media, museums, and more, individuals get exposure to and come to adopt both descriptive and normative aspects of group membership and, accordingly, develop what they see as a prototypical behavior in alignment with these norms (relevant here is the function of ‘national heroes’ as prototypes). This depersonalization and socialization are the foundational processes “underlying group phenomena such as social stereotyping, group cohesiveness, ethnocentrism, cooperation and altruism, emotional contagion, and collective action” (Stets and Burke 2000: 323). To add more, identification with a category allows individuals to connect their own fate with the fate of the group, and develop emotional connections with events, ideas and symbols just by virtue of their group membership, without having experienced idiosyncratically the specific events (Branscombe et al 1999). These are key identification processes in history education, which is commonly geared towards eliciting group loyalty among the national youth, and which, through narrativity and school praxis, provides the prototypical events, heroes, ideas and symbols for students to get cognitively and emotionally attached to.

Moreover, social identity centers on the development of shared images of the world; throughout their socialization process group members share common developmental experiences –many of them of repetitive, ritualistic character- at different social loci, and incorporate those experiences into their personal identities (Ross 2006). Sociocultural discourses, social representations, collective memory and myths are

essential to the formation of group identities, while institutional, linguistic and symbolic relations shape constantly individuals' understanding of Self, identity and agency (Ashmore et al 2001; Breakwell 1993; Korostelina 2006; Somers 1994; Stets and Burke 2000). As will be later discussed in this study in relation to national identities, collectivities are commonly created, reproduced, transformed and, even, deconstructed through discursive means, that is, by the use of "language and other semiotic systems" (De Cillia et al. 1999: 153). Collective identity production is essentially a search for commonly accepted signifiers, which serve as a habitat for the creation and dissemination of shared understandings, emotional attitudes, behavioral predispositions, and normative orders (De Cillia et al. 1999). Key place in this process is reserved for the discursive strategies of *assimilation*, meant to create an understanding of intra-group sameness, and *dissimilation*, which aim at the construction of intergroup differences (De Cillia et al. 1999). It is through exposure to such a discourse that young members of collectivities get to develop a sense of intra-group uniformity and inter-group distinctiveness (e.g. Greeks are perceived as a homogeneous group, as opposed to Turks 'who are very different than us').

### **Social Identity and the Other: Social Categorization, Social Comparison and Self-Esteem, as Catalysts for the Formation of Intergroup Relational Space**

As discussed above, in conjunction with attachment to a group, a twin-function of the social identification process is that it provides the cognitive and emotional substratum for *differentiation* and distancing from other groups/ outgroups (Brewer 2001). Categorization is a key concept here in understanding how individuals come to distinguish between the different collectivities existing within their social surroundings.

Striving to understand their complex physical and social environment, individuals, through social- and self-categorization, attempt to simplify their social landscape, make sense of this complexity and develop their social action patterns accordingly (Dashtipour 2012; Oakes as cited in Cook-Huffman, 2009: 24). For Turner, social categorizations may be conceived “as cognitive tools that segment, classify, and order the social environment, and thus enable the individual to undertake many forms of social action” (as cited in Trepte 2006: 257). Categorization appears, therefore, as a ‘compass’ that structures one’s environment in such a way so as to allow for a consistent ‘navigation’ throughout an otherwise ‘uncharted’ social environment. It is a means for achieving a certain degree of cognitive simplicity that enables individuals to manage the oftentimes overwhelming amount of information they face in regards to their social being. Naturally, categorization enhances individuals’ sense of predictability in social action; people belonging to the same social categories are believed to think and act in the same or similar ways, and this perceived uniformity of attitudes and action allows the individual to have certain expectations, hopes, and fears about people who belong to the same category (Trepte 2006; Stets and Burke 2000).

The above insights indicate that social identities are typically formed not in absolute, but in relational terms (e.g. Greeks vs. Turks). Groups exist in the social landscape *in relation* to other groups. Ingroup members develop, express, communicate, reproduce and sustain their identity in relation to Others. The distinctive ‘we’ of group members is built upon a ‘semiotic bricolage’ that not only communicates ingroup commonalities, but delineates the outgroup differences at the same time, thus

distinguishing insiders from outsiders (Snow 2001). It is important to remember here, as Somers argues, that “if persons are socially constituted over time, space, and through *relationality*, then *others are constitutive rather than external to identity*” (1994: 629, emphasis added). Social identity formation and maintenance is, thus, a ‘dance’ with at least one or more actual or imagined outgroups.<sup>1</sup> This shared understanding of collective identity has important behavioral implications both in regards to ingroup common aspirations and vis-à-vis outgroups; for Snow, “embedded within the shared sense of ‘we’ is a corresponding sense of ‘collective agency’” (2001: 3). This sense of collective agency provides the cognitive and emotional maps for individuals to develop their behavior toward both ingroups and outgroups as social objects. It is of great importance, consequently, to explore the type of cognitive and emotional maps that are systematically promoted in a society, among others, through history education. A natural consequence of this categorization and the need for cognitive simplicity and social structure are what Brewer calls ‘stereotypic representations (prototypes) of social categories’ (2001: 20), which provide social meaning and guidance and help interpret, explain, and even justify the behavior of group members (Tajfel, as cited in Trepte 2006: 257).

The unity, coherence, and security of collective identities are contingent to a great extent on the construction and maintenance of ‘borders’ that mark the difference between ingroup and outgroup (Ellemers et al 1999; Grosvenor 1999). A number of theorists have

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<sup>1</sup> As we will see in a following section of this study, when it comes to national identities, which are the focus of the present research, the constant interplay between Self and Other is catalytic for the construction and reconstruction of national identities, where “the history of the Other is necessarily implicated in the history of the Self...these histories are inscribed within each other; they are not separate” (Grosvenor 1999: 245).

underlined the importance of maintaining group boundaries in different forms, ranging from the need for ‘psychological borders’ (Volkan, 1997), to the ‘narcissism of minor differences’ (Freud, as cited in Montville, 1990), and the invention of enemies (Volkan, 1997). Charles Tilly argues that social identities are based on boundaries that draw the distinction between ‘ingroup’ and ‘outgroup’, where these boundaries are reflected in each group’s discourse and are used to define both ingroup and outgroup relations. For Tilly, “the elements of social boundary include distinctive social relations on either side of an intermediate zone, distinctive relations across this zone, and shared representations of this zone itself” (as cited in Korostelina 2007: 30). Similarly, Rothbart and Cherubin argue that “the symbols of orders and borders bring into ‘existence’ what they convey: they delimit the interior from the exterior, the realm of the sacred from that of the profane, and the homeland from the foreign territory” (2009: 60). In this process – through the principle of meta-contrast- the differences between separate social categories are accentuated, while ingroup differences are underestimated, so as to achieve clear-cut distinctions between members of different groups and enhance cognitive simplicity (Turner, as cited in Rothbart and Korostelina 2011; and Trepte 2006). This accentuation concerns all forms of attitudes, behaviors, social norms, common styles and all other “properties that are believed to be correlated with the relevant inter-group categorization” (Stets and Burke 2000: 225).

Apart from addressing the need for cognitive coherence, social categorization provides the ground on which collectivities may be compared and evaluated (evaluative dimension of social identity). After the distinction between two collectivities has been



established, Self and Other are constantly compared in terms of a number of dimensions that social subjects may find relevant. Here, the Other serves as a reference frame against which a collectivity comes not only to define and understand its own identity and place in the world, but also evaluate its very existence. Inherent in every social group is a need for positive self-esteem (Abrams and Hogg 1988) or positive social identity (Brown 2000; Cook-Huffman 2009; Korostelina 2007). For Trepte (2006), the enhancement of self-esteem passes through the development of a positive social identity, as the outcome of social comparison largely determines a group's self-esteem. Since group members desire a positive outcome in their comparison with outgroups, they selectively apply the accentuation effect "primarily to those dimensions that will result in self-enhancing outcomes for the self" (Stets and Burke 2000: 225). In other words, group members select the dimensions in which their group 'scores well' and they compare outgroups in terms of those dimensions, so as to achieve a self-esteem-enhancing outcome. They also, regularly engage in a process of overestimating their ingroups, at the same time underestimating the qualities of outgroups, in order to achieve a positive self-image. Undoubtedly, this lays the foundations for antagonistic intergroup relationships to emerge. Especially in cases where group members feel insecure or uncertain about their group's 'standing', they are more likely to engage in such comparisons, intentionally 'manipulated' in order to enhance self-regard (Brewer 2001). In cases where groups rely primarily on such comparisons for determining their self-value, their identity is characterized by 'external locus of self-esteem', while when group members' pride lies within their own identity *per se* and is not expressed in comparative terms, the locus of self-esteem is internal

(Korostelina 2007). It is primarily due to this process that in school history curricula we often see in-group achievements and virtues typically compared and contrasted to outgroup achievements and negative qualities, indicating that perceptions on the value of the collective Self are drawn upon an external locus of self-esteem.

### **An Attempt to Understand Unbalanced Representations of Self and Other: The Concept of Collective Axiology**

In regards to the topic of this study, achieving a positive self-image may be one of the primary reasons –among others- that the narratives found in history curricula in many countries appear often to include a disproportionately favorable evaluation of Self, coupled with understatements of the Other’s achievements or even moral standing. This comparative process may be one of the reasons that a dominant theme in national discourses in what Anastasiou (2009) calls the ‘moral absolutization’ of nation. Of course, although the motivational function of self-esteem can hardly be denied, it is important to remember that self-esteem considerations is not the only factor that shapes intergroup relational patterns, as there might be other determinants of intergroup relations, such as distribution of wealth and power, material resources, or religious and political values (Abrams and Hogg 1988). Undoubtedly, however, the fact that group differences are framed in axiological terms and appear in a group’s discourse as if they are grounded in ontological distinctions between right and wrong, good and bad, and virtues and vices, may have a detrimental effect on intergroup relations and may potentially instigate identity-based conflicts (Rothbart and Cherubin 2009). This is because such views of the Other are seldom purely descriptive; rather, there are certain

logicalities of action that stem from these representational frames that have a normative character for the group as a collective agency.

This normative dimension of identity is captured in Rothbart and Korostelina's concept of 'collective axiology' –the value commitments held by a group that “determine the right action at the right time for the sake of what is good” (2009: 88). This is a set of normative orders that offer moral guidance and regulate relations both within a group and across identity boundaries. These value commitments constitute frames through which group members come to understand the social world and action around them, and are regularly used as criteria on the basis of which ingroup and outgroup decisions, actions, and policies are understood and evaluated, validated or vindicated, rationalized and legitimized (Rothbart and Korostelina 2006). Moreover, collective axiology delineates obligations for social subjects to act according to established rights and duties, while it “establishes judgments of character through the attribution of virtues and vices to members of the ingroup and outgroup, respectively” (Rothbart and Korostelina 2011: 125). Such commitments are vested with a notion of 'sacredness' and under given circumstances (e.g. perceived threats to a group's identity), may lead to aggressive responses to external stimuli.

Collective Axiology comprises two dimensions that determine its dynamics: the degree of 'axiological balance' and the degree of 'collective generality'. In other words, if one wishes to understand the physiognomy of a group's Collective Axiology, they need to take a look at these two dimensions as they are reflected in this group's discourse and praxis. 'Axiological balance' refers to the balance between positive and negative

characteristics attributed to ingroups and outgroups. As discussed earlier, it is common in a group's discourse to describe Self in favorable terms, while the Other is depicted as possessing primarily negative attributes. This monolithic representation of ingroup positive qualities in sharp contrast with outgroup negative attributes reveals a discourse characterized by low axiological balance. Groups with high axiological balance, on the contrary, acknowledge equally the negative and positive attributes of both ingroup and outgroup. In Korostelina's words (2012: 94), "balanced axiology leads to the recognition of the decency and morality as well as potential immorality and cruelty of both the out-group and the in-group. A high degree of axiological balance reflects recognition of one's own moral faults and failings, while a low degree of axiological balance is connected with the perception of an in-group as morally pure and superior and an out-group as evil and vicious".

Unbalanced axiologies are the primary reason that group members interpret differently the same actions, depending on whether they were carried out by ingroups or outgroups. To illustrate this point, Brewer offers an interesting example: "the same behaviors that are interpreted as reasonable caution on the part of the ingroup in dealings with outgroup members become interpreted as 'clannishness' and indicators of treachery when exhibited by out-groupers toward the ingroup" (2001: 30). Also relevant here is the concept of the 'fundamental attribution error', according to which people have the tendency to explain outgroup negative behavior in dispositional terms (emphasizing character traits that are perceived to be common to all members of an outgroup), while ingroup negative behavior is explained in situational terms (emphasizing the

circumstantial factors that ‘forced’ ingroups to behave negatively, despite their virtuous character) (Rothbart and Korostelina 2006). A natural consequence of this psychological phenomenon is that in comparison with ingroup members, “out-groupers are...more likely to be seen as provoking aggression, [and] less likely to receive the benefit of the doubt in attributions for negative behaviors” (Brewer 2001: 23). As a result of this process, in the representations of a group’s collective experiences (e.g. history curricula) we often see similar events characterized either as ‘heroic acts’ or as ‘acts of barbarism’ depending on whether the actor belonged to the ingroup or the outgroup.

Turning to the second dimension of Collective Axiology, ‘Collective Generality’ refers to the level of generalization in how outgroups are represented in the ingroup discourse. More often than not, outgroup members are perceived as possessing homogeneous attributes and undifferentiated personal traits. Individual characteristics of outgroup members and personal differentiations are neglected and all members of the same outgroup are believed to have the same thought and action patterns, especially vis-à-vis the ingroup. Thus, a high level of ‘Collective Generality’ is associated with representations of the Other as “homogenous, exhibiting unchanged behaviors, committed to long-term fixed beliefs and values, and projecting a wide-ranging, possibly global, scope of influence or power” (Rothbart and Korostelina 2009: 89). In this way, acts of aggression carried out by an outgroup member are considered to be reflective of a generic quality of the whole group (“They are all aggressive”) and thus, the whole group has the same responsibility for the aggression committed. Through this “simplification and stereotypization, as well as the attribution of the same antagonistic goal to all out-

group members [...]every member of the out-group is perceived as an actual or potential enemy” (Korostelina 2012: 101). On the contrary, lack of a ‘fixed’ representation of outgroup –a rare phenomenon indeed- indicates low levels of collective generality. Here, the ingroup acknowledges the fact that the outgroup comprises individuals with different characteristics and qualities and no collective responsibility is to be attributed to the whole group. As is clear from the above discussion, low Axiological Balance and high Collective Generality constitute a form of Collective Axiology that appears more likely to lay the ground for intergroup conflict.

The concept of Collective Axiology, as it will be also discussed in the methodological chapter, is one of central importance for the present study. It can be very well used to explore history curricula and analyze the axiological patterns that are reflected in the dominant themes promoted by official history education. It is believed that axiologically unbalanced curricula may play a key role in perpetuating negative images of neighboring Others and, thus, lay the foundations for the creation of problematic intergroup relational space. At the same time, history education may be used as a tool to challenge the ‘Positive We’ –‘Negative Other’ duality that is so often found in popular historical discourses, by increasing Axiological Balance and decreasing Collective Generality in the representations of Self and Other (Korostelina 2012). As the focus of the present research is on the representations of *national* Self and Other as reflected in history education and problematized in popular discourse, it would be useful at this point to contextualize further the discussion on identity dynamics, by moving the discussion from social identity in general to national identity and its socio-

psychological dimensions. The following section offers insights on the workings of national identity.

## **The Nation & National Identity**

### **What is a Nation?**

The concept of nation and the phenomenon of nationalism have been the focus of much scholarly work. For people particularly interested in analyzing, understanding and addressing conflict, the nation has been a primary area of focus, as throughout human history –especially in modernity- intense conflicts have been fought across ethnic lines. ‘Homo nationalis’ not only emerged as an answer to common existential questions of collectivities, but also brought with him a powerful conception of what ‘proper’ political entities should look like, also defining these entities’ rights and duties in antagonistic terms with other collectivities. Conflicting aspirations, negative past experiences, competition for material and non-material resources, and, importantly, exclusivist ethnic identities have oftentimes brought collectivities against each other, laying the foundation for intense ethnic conflicts to break out. As one of the areas that this study touches upon is national identity as reproduced and disseminated through history education, it would be useful to explore at this point the concepts of nation and national identity.

National identity is widely seen as a form of social identity. It is the product of a process through which groups of people come to perceive themselves as a distinct community with historical continuity, common culture, and common belief in a set of values and ideals. There is a plethora of definitions of nation and national identity. For Anthony Smith a nation is a “named human population sharing an historic territory,

common myths and historical memories, a mass, a public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members” (Smith 1991: 14). For him, national identity comes as a product of perceived commonality of a set of cultural characteristics among a given population; perceived continuity of the collectivity over time; and a shared belief in a common fate, coupled with systematic promotion of a dominant ideology and conscious identity manipulation through institutional and discursive practices. Similarly, for Herbert Kelman a human population has developed a sense of national identity at the point that its members have come to perceive themselves as “a unique, identifiable entity with a claim to continuity over time, to unity across geographic distance, and to the right to various forms of self-expression” (as cited in Korostelina, 2007: 181).

Benedict Anderson (1991) sees ‘nationality’ and ‘nationalism’ as cultural artifacts, products of a combination of numerous historical forces that came into play towards the end of eighteenth century. It was at that time that nationalist ideological movements acquired momentum mobilizing around the idea of a common identity, unity and autonomy populations that came to perceive themselves as constituting actual or potential nations (Triandafyllidou 1998). For Triandafyllidou (1998: 595) the nationalist doctrine contains three foundational propositions: “first, the world is divided into nations. Each nation has its own culture, history and destiny that make it unique among other nations. Second, each individual belongs to a nation... [and] ...Third, nations must be united, autonomous and free to pursue their goals”. Turning to Anderson again, he conceptualizes nation as an ‘imagined, inherently limited and sovereign political entity’.



This definition lays the fundamental qualities of the nation as understood by Anderson: a) it does not represent any objective historical reality, but rather it is invented (imagined); b) no nation includes (or can include) all people throughout the world; it is therefore limited; c) all nations aspire to their independence, to their expression as sovereign states; and finally d) nation creates a sense of common bonds between people that have not –and usually will not- met each other; it is conceived as “a deep, horizontal comradeship” (p: 7). Commenting on Anderson’s analysis of the emergence and workings of nations and nationalism, Wodak et al. nicely point out that in his work it becomes clear that the miracle of nationalism was that it turned chance into destiny (2009: 21). Indeed, in comparison to socialism and capitalism, nationalism historically has appeared more successful in mobilizing social groups around a goal, as it seemed to provide answers to existential questions of collectivities, vesting its ideology with teleological notions and normative dimensions.

It was mentioned in the beginning of this section that questions of nation and nationalism have problematized thinkers and social scientist across disciplinary boundaries. So far, some key definitions of nations and nationalism have been offered. Since there is a multiplicity of paradigmatic perspectives through which the phenomenon of nations has been explored, it would be useful at this point to offer a taxonomy of different theoretical traditions on nationalism. Llobera (1999) distinguishes between four general families of theories of nationalism:

- *Primordialist and the sociobiological perspectives*: For these theories, group identity is a given that exists in all human societies and centers on primordial attachments based on blood, race, language, religion and other shared cultural

characteristics, while members of an ethnic group share a belief of a common descent. Sociobiological approaches take a further step arguing that ethnicity has a biological character in itself; here, individual attachment to the group resembles that felt for other blood-based groups like family.

- *Instrumentalist Theories*: According to these approaches nations are a historical phenomenon that emerged out of certain socio-economic and political processes; as such, the nation is a flexible and adaptable instrument, with the definition of group borders changing according to circumstances. National identity is formed on the basis of elements already available in a collectivity's cultural reservoir. As ethnic identity is not primordial the constant maintenance of boundaries is crucial for a group's distinctiveness.
- *Modernization Theories*: Modernization theories resemble instrumentalist theories in some senses. They focus on the modern character of the nation as a social, political and economic phenomenon and attribute its emerge to a number of factors and processes associated with modernity. Although different approaches within this tradition may offer different explanations for the advent of nationalism (e.g. economistic theories, such as Marxism, may place on emphasis on the emergence of capitalism as the cradle of nationalism, while social communication theories focus on the role of industrialization, urbanization and mass communications in fostering a sense of common identity among the population of a certain geographic region) they all agree on the modern character of nations. For these approaches, although preexisting ethnic communities may have served as a springboard for modern nations, nationalism came essentially as a product of modernity.
- *Evolutionary Theories*: For these theories, modern nationalism came as a part of a long cycle of ethnic consciousness. According to these theories, "there is no miraculous appearance of the nation at the time of French revolution, but a long process of evolution" (Llobera 1999: 19). Modern national identities are rooted in

the medieval period –or in some cases even earlier-, although the medieval understanding of national identity is rather different from the modern conceptions of nations. For proponents of these theories modern processes, such as industrialization, made their appearance at a time that national identities were already at place; however, they did exercise an evolutionary impact on them, as national identities had to be ‘reinvented’ or recreated in order to fit the new, modern reality (Lloberra 1999).

For the author of this study, modern national identities have been formed on the basis of already existing cultural reservoirs and consolidated through repetitive institutionalized and discursive practices. Of course, nationalism has historically manifested itself in different forms. In regards to the nature of national identities Hobsbawm (1990) distinguishes broadly between two types of nationalism: the mass civic-political nationalism, whose core is not ethnicity but a sense of belongingness and loyalty to a political entity; and ethno-linguistic (ethnic) nationalism, exclusive in nature, in which national identity is structured upon the notion of ethnic ties and common descent. In other words, some national communities are formed on the basis of civic and territorial ties, whereas others are based on a shared understanding of common ethnicity (Triandafyllidou 1998). Building off this distinction Korostelina (2006) offers her taxonomy of three different understandings of national identity: ethnic, civic, and multicultural. Her definitions of ‘ethnic’ and ‘civic’ nationalism are similar to the ones offered above, while the third type of nationalism “reflects the perception of a nation as multicultural, with equal rights for all ethnic groups and elements of autonomy and self-

governance” (Korostelina 2012: 96). As opposed to ethnic nationalism, in which more exclusivist elements are typically present, political entities formed on the basis of civic or multicultural nationalism may appear less likely to become loci of interethnic conflict. It is easily understood, that the form of nationalism that shapes a collectivity’s sense of its identity is reflected, above all, in history curricula taught in the educational institutions controlled by this collectivity. There, students are systematically exposed to the official version of their group’s history and get to internalize their nations’ shared narrative.

### **Nation as a Socio-Psychological Representation and as a Discursive Construct**

The fact that nation, as mentioned earlier, is perceived as an ‘imagined community’ vests it with strong socio-psychological dimensions (Dragonas and Bar-On 2000). A political, economic, and social phenomenon as it may be, it also becomes a socio-psychological phenomenon, as individuals identify with it and develop certain attitudes both toward their own national group and toward outgroups (Druckman 1994). There is a common psychological bond that brings its members together, a bond that constitutes the essence of national identity (Triandafyllidou 1998). Even as the nation fulfills the social, cultural, political and economic needs of a community, it provides at the same time “a sense of security, a feeling of belonging and prestige” to the individuals that identify with it, thus having both instrumental and affective functions (Druckman 1994: 44). This sense of collectivity is fostered and strengthened through the discursive means and praxis of collective imagination and remembering and, importantly, through a national narrative, a story that provides meaning to a national group’s social world, “an account of the group’s origins, its history, and its relationship to the land- that explains

and supports its sense of distinctiveness, its positive self-image, and the justice of its claims and grievances” (Kelman, 2001: 191). This account is framed in the first person plural, where ‘we’ become a collective social subject with a unique spatial-temporal identity (Dragonas and Bar-On 2000) and certain rights and duties that this identity entails. Once established, these accounts acquire a life of their own and are substantiated in the form of an ‘ideological consciousness’, shared among the whole collectivity (Vickers 2005), with history education being a premium tool for the systematic promotion of this consciousness.

Important here is to understand the function of nations as mental representations; even when national identities appear just as mental constructs of collective unity and autonomy, they become very real in the attitudinal and emotional consequences they entail for individuals. For Wodak et al, even if a nation is an imagined community “...this image is real to the extent that one is convinced of it, believes in it and identifies with it emotionally” (2009: 22). Of great interest is to explore the ways, in which such mental constructs make it into the ‘minds and hearts’ of individuals. The interest here is not on identifying the active agents of construction and dissemination of national identities such as political, economic, and cultural elites, intellectuals, academics, journalists, religious hierarchies etc. Rather, the focus in this research is mainly on the discursive processes and practices that constitute the media for the formation and dissemination of national identity narratives through dialectics of identification/differentiation, especially in the realm of official history education. From the insights offered so far in this section it must have become clear that the development of national

identity, as a form of social identity, centers both on a self-definition (national identity) and on a group story (national narrative) (Ashmore et al. 2001). For Wodak et al the question of how national identities as imaginary constructs reach the minds of those convinced of it, is simple to answer: “it is constructed and conveyed in discourse, predominantly in narratives of national culture” (2009: 22).

Thus, national identity in this study is conceived as the product of discourse, an idea that is explored deeper in the next section where the importance of national narratives is discussed. This idea is based on an understanding that national identities are formed through the use of language and communication, institutional practices and other semiotic systems: “the idea of a specific national community becomes reality in the realm of convictions and belief through reifying, figurative discourses continually launched by politicians, intellectuals and media people and disseminated through the systems of education, schooling, mass communication, militarization, as well as through sports meetings” (De Cillia et al, 1999: 153). For Wodak et al (2009), this discursive construction of national identities centers around three temporal dimensions -past, present, and future- incorporating at the same time spatial and territorial dimensions like borders, landscape, and physical artifacts that become symbols constitutive of a collectivity’s identity. One can distinguish between different strategies that may be employed in the discursive production of identities: a) constructive strategies, which attempt to establish a certain national identity; b) strategies of justification, which are employed primarily to justify problematic areas in a collectivity’s past; c) strategies of transformation, which are meant to transform an established national identity or some of

its components; and d) dismantling or destructive strategies, which aim at dismantling an existing identity, without necessarily providing an alternative model (Wodak et al, 2009). Constructive and justification strategies are typically linked to the emergence and consolidation of a certain nationalist movement, while once a (nation-) state is established, the narrative that these strategies have produced is widely used to maintain the dominance of a given national ideology. The fact that national identities are discursively produced points towards the importance of a nation's 'story', the overarching national narrative, in providing the cognitive and emotional material for the formation of national identities –a national group's understanding of their common past, present, and future. History curriculum revision initiatives, like the one explored in this study, are commonly based on strategies of transformation, challenging established views on a collectivity's past and existing identity conceptions. As will be discussed later in this chapter, initiatives based on transformation strategies are very likely to be perceived as identity threats. Questioning the dominant discursive habitat of identity formation, these initiatives trigger defensive reactions on the part of the society they are meant to address, and accordingly face strong popular resistance. This is why challenging established 'national stories' through the introduction of counter-narratives (narratives based on transformation strategies) so as to improve intergroup relations is rarely an easy endeavor. In the next section, the nature and function of historical narratives as mental representations shared among the members of a national group is further explored, so as for the reader to develop an understanding of the way narratives, which are disseminated

among others through history education, shape collective identities and define intergroup relational space.

## **Historical Narratives**

### **Narratives and the Discursive Production of 'National Stories' and Identities**

In an effort to develop an understanding of a group's representation of Self and Other, as well as how the relational space between the two is defined, historical narratives are significant sources to be taken into consideration, especially when one intends to explore systems characterized by problematic relationships between different groups. Historical narratives are mental representations of past events that are discursively produced and reproduced over the flow of time to become a cohesive whole that offers the paradigmatic lenses through which a group's shared history and identity are viewed and understood. They can influence deeply the formation of a particular worldview and can play an important role in manipulating emotions, and defining the boundaries between groups, objectifying the 'insiders' and 'outsiders' (MacGinty 2003). For M.H. Ross historical narratives "can tell us a great deal about how individuals and groups understand the social worlds in which they live...and... can reveal deep fears, perceived threats and past grievances that drive a conflict" (2003, p: 303). Looking at a nation's historical narratives can provide insights on how it conceives itself as a collectivity, through identifying not only the aspects that group members choose to remember about their past, but also what they choose to forget (Iggers 1999: 15). Importantly, when conflict systems are the focus of analysis, a group's views on the conflict, its origins and causes, and the place of the Other in it, are all reflected in the group's language, its



discourse, its 'national story', which in its turn establishes the social and relational structures within which the group positions itself.

It would be of particular interest at this point to explore deeper the role that language and discourse in general play in producing social reality and informing people's understanding and interpretation of this reality. The notion that identities, both at personal and at social level, are to a great extent discursively produced has drawn the increasing interest of social scientists over the last decades, especially among scholars who adopt what Davies and Harré (1990) call 'positioning theory' or the 'psycho-socio-linguistic approach' to social reality. Here, language is not seen as a mere medium for expressing or describing social and cognitive realities, but as an active agent that plays a role in producing and structuring these realities (Karlberg 2012; Slocum-Bradley 2008). For Davies and Harré (1990), discourse should be seen as the institutionalized use of language and other semiotic systems through which meaning is expressed and dynamically produced at the same time. All social actors, be they individuals or collectivities, find themselves 'positioned' within certain discursive structures, and come to understand the identity and actions of both Self and Other through categories available to them in their discursive environment. 'Discursive practices' (Davies and Harré 1990) or 'discourse properties' (Karlberg 2012) are all the processes social subjects consciously or unconsciously engage in so as to produce their social and psychological realities (Davies and Harré 1990). These may include systems of categorization, value systems and normative orders, collective representations and metaphors that both reflect and shape power structures, institutional practices, social arrangements, and generally any

form of “cognition, perception, and action within communities of shared discourse” (Karlberg 2012: 17). It is important to remember that this process is not unidirectional; rather, social practices influence discursive processes too, as discourse and social practice are in a constant dialectic, with one influencing and informing the other (Karlberg 2012).

As induced from the above insights, examining a national group’s discourse (e.g. the ‘national story’) allows one not only to understand the way that group members perceive reality (e.g. how they perceive and define their national identity and its constituents), but also the processes through which this reality is produced (e.g. discursive production of national identity). This is why close attention needs to be paid to a group’s narrative when one wishes to understand conflict systems and explain negative interactions across national boundaries. This understanding has led to a shift in the study of conflict: in conjunction to studying conflict itself, the ‘talking and writing’ within which a conflict is placed has also drawn the attention of analysts, as it is “*in the talk* of a community that people’s explicit beliefs become visible, and much that is implicit can be brought to light. *In the talk around a conflict we can find the norms realized in actions*” (Moghaddam et al. 2008: 4, emphasis added). And there may be no better place to look for the discursive production and dissemination of a nation’s ‘story’, than educational institutions, which are key loci of socialization for young members of a national group. This is why in the present study the focus of analysis is both on history textbooks as ‘artificial mnemonic devices’ conveying preexisting knowledge structures (Davies and Harré 1990), and on the way people themselves talk about their identity and their relationship with the Other.

### **The Function of ‘National Stories’ as Master Narratives**

In this study, ‘national stories’ are approached as ‘Master Narratives’ or ‘Grand Narratives’, a term coined by the French philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard, to refer to discursive structures that specify and control the ways that social action is constructed and carried out with the help of linguistic and semiotic systems (as cited in Stanley 2007). The term ‘Master’ implies that those narratives have become the dominant discursive habitat within a given social/ national group, whose members embrace it and experience reality through it. In other words, master narratives provide the mental topoi within which individuals or collectivities are positioned as social subjects (Bamberg 2004; Davies and Harré 1990). As any form of structure, these narratives both constrain social agency and offer the opportunities for it to be expressed by providing guidance and support, and commonly accepted normative commitments and rights. For Somers (1994), master narratives are an ‘ontological condition of social life’, that is, they are essentially constitutive of reality. In regards to the focus of this study, national identities are embedded in a group’s national story (or National Master Narrative, for that matter), which in its turn positions these identities within specific temporal and spatial relationships (Somers 1994). National identity, therefore, is experienced through narrativity, and especially through its institutionalized forms, such as official school curricula.

National Master Narratives are produced through public processes and collective commemoration practices, such as educational systems, museums, national holidays, public rituals, memorial sites, street names and many more –practices that intend to establish and reinforce a certain authoritative account of the past (Subotic 2013). These

narratives may be seen as an overarching theme in what Hobsbawm calls ‘invented traditions’, that is public practices “of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition” (as cited in Broeders 2008: 61). Here, key elements of a national group’s common past, or perceived common past, are brought together to fabricate a cohesive group story with a beginning (national origins), middle (shared past, common collective experiences) and an end (present status of group and future aspirations). In all national stories there are common representational patterns that could be identified: key historical events, heroes and traitors that become positive and negative prototypes, existential fears and collective aspirations, historic victories and painful defeats, national symbols, physical sites of cultural importance, an emphasis on continuity and timelessness, and, importantly, the idea of a ‘pure’ people. All these elements constitute pieces that fall into place to form a cohesive narrative constructed through a combination of historical fact and myth. Anthony Smith (1999) places particular emphasis on the role of myths as key ingredients in the discursive production of a national group’s identity; indeed, he lists myths of common ancestry and shared historical memories among the basic defining characteristics of national communities (ethnies). Here, historical facts and legendary elaborations come together to form shared representational structures and “create an overriding commitment and bond for the community” (Smith 1999: 57). All these are combined to inform a group’s sense of identity and common fate (Hall, as cited in Wodak et al. 2009: 23-24), and all make their way to the officially sanctioned version of the nation’s story taught in schools.

These narratives as shared representations may serve multiple functions for a national group. For Margaret Smith (2005: xiii) the key functions of historical narratives could be summarized as following:

- a) They provide a 'story' through which a group defines itself; they also strengthen its cohesiveness and members' commitment to it, through enhancing collective memory;
- b) They supply different groups with negative material about each other, thus solidifying the boundaries between them and vesting these boundaries with axiological connotations;
- c) In instances of conflict, collective grievances are articulated on the basis of historical material available in a nation's 'story';

Once a conflict is under way, historical narratives act as inflammatory catalysts that harden group identities, thus further exacerbating and perpetuating conflict.

### **The 'Other' in Historical Narratives**

Narratives as psycho-cultural interpretations (Ross 2006) have a great impact on a national group's collective psyche, and –in regards to the focus of the present study- in determining collective attitudes and behaviors across national boundaries. While offering the definition of Self, the 'group story' or national narrative erects the boundaries that distinguish Self from the Other. Nations, as all social groups, do not define themselves in a vacuum; the assertion of a specific national identity presupposes the existence of other collectivities from which members of a national group distinguish themselves. Thus, the 'story' of a nation places it in a world of other nations and also describes its relationship vis-à-vis the other nations. At the same time that national narratives foster intra-national uniformity, inter-national distinctiveness and differences are emphasized. In-group

differences such as gender, social and economic status, political orientations are understated in an effort to forge the idea of a ‘large national family’ (Wodak et al 2009). For Triantafyllidou, the specific elements that are used in reinforcing a national group’s identity, are used to concretize and cement the distinction between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’: “concrete elements like culture, religion or language are important not only to the degree that they reinforce the nation’s identity, but because they differentiate the ingroup from the outgroup and thus justify and make *real* this divided view of the world” (2000: 597). Again here, the Other, as represented in a national group’s narrative, is not external to a group’s national identity but a constituent element of it.

Moreover, it is often the case that the presence of the ‘Other’ in a group’s national narrative is portrayed as threatening. For Liu and Hilton, popular historical discourses commonly revolve around past conflict experiences, essentially becoming a “*collective memory of conflicts* against other groups” (Liu and Hilton 2005: 550, emphasis added). In these representations the ‘Other’ stands as a potential enemy shared among the ingroup nationals, a suitable target of externalization for ingroup negative projections (Volkan 1997). As with other forms of social identity, national identity is not devoid of normative judgments about ‘Our’ virtues and ‘Their’ vices (Rothbart and Korostelina 2006); rather, in the ‘story’ of the national the Other is commonly denigrated, so as to establish and reinforce the moral superiority of the national ingroup (Rothbart and Korostelina 2006). The nature of national historical narratives is, thus, rarely merely descriptive: they provide moralistic judgments, which constitute the prescriptive substratum that assigns and legitimizes certain roles and actions (Liu and Hilton 2005), a process that Rothbart

and Korostelina (2011) call ‘normative positioning of groups’. In this process, the importance of narratives for inter-group perceptions and behavior lies in the logical chain between *narratives* and *behavior*, since the former have a series of *behavioral* and *communicational* consequences not only at individual, but also at societal/ communal level. In other words, not only do historical narratives reflect a group’s representation of Self and Other, but due to their normative nature, they can also inform behavioral patterns towards the outgroup. There often appears to be an underlying morale in each story; historical narratives stand as a call for action (when needed), rather than as a mere representation of a common past. Very commonly, here, negative past experiences or encounters with the Other are used as a ‘gnomon’ to anticipate future possibilities (Rothbart and Korostelina, 201). In a similar fashion, narratives not only offer accounts of a group’s *past*, but also present each community’s view on the *causes* of the conflict (Smith, 2005), where ingroup aggression is explained in situational terms (aggression as an historical necessity), and outgroup aggression is explained in dispositional terms (aggression attributed to outgroup’s ‘evil’ nature). Such processes render historical narratives one of the major mechanisms through which misperceptions, mistrust, enemy images, sense of vulnerability are being generated.

The above psychological states and negative images of the Other are essentially a natural consequence of the fact that, more often than not, national stories may just be collections of past conflicts, victories and defeats. In the national narratives, these past group experiences are framed in ways that are meant to trigger strong emotional responses among group members (Ross 2006). Threat narratives are a prime example of

such a linkage between historical discourse and the development of strong emotions and negative behavioral predispositions toward Others. Threat narratives are typically built upon events that have acquired the status of ‘chosen traumas’ (Volkan 1997). Chosen traumas are traumatic past experiences that a group suffered in the hands of the Other that have acquired a symbolic status in a group’s national discourse, representing the constant threat posed by the national outgroups. Chosen traumas, which are discursively transmitted from generation to generation, reveal a group’s collective fears and instigate feelings of helplessness and victimization (Ross 2006), while they also “‘prove’ the immoral, uncivilized, or subhuman character of the Other” (Rothbart and Korostelina, 2011: 140). Through their exposure to these stories, young members of a national group internalize positive and negative ‘ideotypes’ and get to identify with the prototype that embodies all ingroup positive qualities and values (e.g. national heroes) that are contrasted to the negative character of the Other. It is through these narratives that “the selected dead ancestors prove able to *impose commitments* to their living descendants” (Liakos, 2007: 209, emphasis added). Being exposed to such ‘toxic’ narratives throughout their socialization in educational institutions, young students naturally develop negative predispositions toward the national Others.

The insights offered in this section indicate clearly the importance of historical narratives/ discourse as the habitat for the production of collective identities. It was shown that, as discourse not only reflects but also produces reality, it is the discursive structure within which a group lives that provides both the frames and the material/content for the formation of this group’s identity. Consequently, changing the



discursive structure and the way a group narratively approaches its past, present, and future may provide the key to the positive transformation of intergroup relational space. The realization that the nature of narratives and identity is dynamic brought with it a belief that the axiologies associated with these narratives are not static either, but they can be potentially transformed and rendered more balanced. And there might be no better place both at symbolic and at pragmatic level, to introduce new discursive paradigms than educational institutions. It was this realization, along with recent developments in the field of professional historiography that constituted the basic drives of history curriculum revision initiatives like the one explored in this research. In the next section, an effort is made to sketch the historical landscape out of which such initiatives emerged.

## **Recent Developments in History Education: Evolution of History Curricula and Peacebuilding**

### **Recent Developments in History Education**

In the course of 20<sup>th</sup> century a series of key sociopolitical developments at multiple levels, coupled with the emergence of new approaches to history within the field of professional historiography, gave birth to new understandings of national histories, challenging existing national narratives that could no longer appear as vested with absolute authority. The two World Wars, decolonization, the emergence of the rights discourse, social movements of 1960s and 1970s, the process of European unification, and the end of the Cold War had a transformative impact on the way people approached history both as a scientific endeavor and as a school subject (Schissler and Nuhoglu-Soysal 2005). These transformations, also informed by new pedagogical approaches to history education, sought their way to school history curricula with varying success.

Thus, orchestrated attempts to revise history curricula came as a result of two parallel developments: a) the emergence among professional historians of new trends in approaching and understanding history; and b) a growing realization, in the light of the great tragedies of the two World Wars, that history education, which hitherto had often played an inflammatory role perpetuating enemy images and conflictual relations among different nations, could actually turn into a vehicle for building peace across national boundaries. Although these two can be seen as distinct processes, in reality they unfolded hand-in-hand, through a path of co-evolution and cross-fertilization.

In regards to the developments in the field of history, reviewing the literature, one could identify the following trends that seemed to inform the new approaches to historiography:

a) In the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there seemed to be an increasing realization that, while history is a highly political endeavor, the responsibility of the historian is not to justify past or present political or moral arrangements but to try and understand the past through the application of analytical schemata (Koulouri 2002). History education, therefore, should not be seen as an instrument of indoctrination; rather it should aim at the cultivation of responsible citizen who can apply analytic, critical skills in order to make sense of the past and the present, and effectively participate in democratic processes being less vulnerable to political manipulation.

b) A new conception of history emerged that saw historiography not as the mere accumulation of facts and dates; rather historians should focus on the critical analysis of past processes and events, while being aware that past experiences may be seen through

multiple perspectives. Accordingly, history education should not aim at the memorization of events and dates but on the development of a historical thinking through critical analytic skills (Iggers 1999; Korostelina 2013; Stober 2013). Similarly, for Vickers (2005), the purpose of history education is not simply to teach students what historians have written about the past, but “*how* they went about discovering it” (2005: 19, emphasis in original). As also mentioned above, the overall aim of history education should then be the training of students as ‘active democratic citizens’ (Vickers 2005); to this end, detailed knowledge of facts and past events is not sufficient to help students develop a healthy understanding of the past and present (Leeuw-Roord 2000).

c) Historians also started being attentive to economic, social and cultural history, and placed less emphasis on the political and military history (Stober 2013). For Iggers, “it was generally felt that the almost exclusive focus on politics and international affairs did not do justice to the changed circumstances of industrializing societies in an age of democratization” (1999: 27). As attention moved from political activity toward social conditions and everyday life, history became exposed to influences by social scientific methods of economics, sociology, and political science (Broaders 2008). In addition, in regards to history education the shift from political and military history to social and cultural history was “meant to teach historical experiences, which are more familiar and interesting to children, and de-emphasize war as an element of historical evolution, especially in terms of the relations with neighboring states” (Koulouri, 2002: 34). Prime examples of this approach are the Annales School in France, or the movement of New or Progressive Historians in the US.

d) There seemed to be a shift toward inclusion of hitherto marginalized voices in national narratives (e.g. gender perspectives). After World War II people increasingly talked about the need to pluralize national historical discourses (Berger et al. 1999). As a result, the historiographic focus shifted away from the nation-state toward more international and supranational frames (Broaders 2008; Schissler and Nuhoglu-Soysal 2005). Post World War II historiography started challenging the notion of the national character of the past and the uniqueness of national experience (Berger et al. 1999). The preoccupation with national history gave its place to an in-depth comparative exploration of processes across national boundaries at regional or international level, focusing on aspects of social, economic, and political structures (Iggers 1999). In Western historiography in particular, the exclusive focus on the West, gave its place to a more cosmopolitan approach that incorporates the exploration of past processes and events in other parts of the world (Hymans 2005). In addition, such shifts allowed for a realization that history can be seen through multiple perspectives, and as containing multiple ‘truths’; accordingly, there is no validity in claiming that a certain narrative conveys the absolute truth, even if this narrative is officially sanctioned by state institutions. For Broaders, this multiperspectivity came also as a result of postmodernist influences in the field of history: “Where historians in the positivist tradition tried to find the objective truth, historians come to believe more and more that they write just one of the possible views on history” (2008: 23). Finally, Berger et al. (1999) identify the birth of the modern multiparty system as one of the factors that contributed to this shift towards multiperspectivity, as it brought with it competing popular discourses.

Naturally, the above developments in the field of historiography exerted an impact on the didactics of history. Maria Repousi (2009) identifies a number of important changes that were largely informed by these paradigmatic shifts, while new pedagogic methods and teaching media were incorporated in the new curricula after World War II, which included:

- Incorporation of previously marginalized voices in the narrative delivered by the new curricula; in addition, this multiperspectivity came as a way to address the multicultural reality of contemporary societies;
- Multimodality of teaching methods, so as to address the different learning styles that students may have; these new methods may include media such as texts, sources, diagrams, pictures, films, and activities. The new methods also signaled a shift from expository to investigative learning processes. In other words, the curriculum here is not meant to give a solid body of answers, but to encourage active involvement and ownership of the learning process by students;
- Replacement of ex cathedra teaching by more collaborative learning processes;
- An effort to eliminate exclusivist elements in a nation's narrative and incorporate positive images of the Other into the narratives;
- A move away from ethnocentric curricula towards world history, so as to add an international perspective into the teaching of history and contextualize the national experience as a part of wider processes;
- Replacement of event-based linear political and military narratives by exploration of social, cultural and everyday dimensions of the past experience; here, comparative methods may be also used so as to allow students to make connections between past social, political, and economic contexts and contemporary experience;

In relation to the last point, in conjunction with the ‘official’ history curriculum, there was an embracement of extracurricular ‘histories’ located in realms such as family experiences, local community, museums, and monuments

### **History Education at the Service of Peace**

As evident, these new trends discussed here resulted in important paradigmatic shifts both in professional historiography and in the field of history didactics. As mentioned in the beginning of this section, however, these developments were only a part of what drove history curriculum revisions in different parts of the world. Changes in history curricula came also as a result of the realization that exclusivist narratives reproducing axiologically unbalanced conceptions of identity laid the foundation for negative intergroup relations, thus increasing the likelihood of conflict emergence. However, history education could also be a catalyst in positively transforming the relational space between nations or groups that have historically had troubled relations.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, this conception of history education as having the potential to become a vehicle for building peace is very vividly captured in the preamble of the constitution of UNESCO, which in 1945 declared that: “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed” (as cited in Stober, 2013: 27). It was within these frames that history textbooks had also the potential to act as confidence building measures in the long run (Koulouri 2002). For Stober (2013), these alternative views on history education have their roots in the peace movement and the international labor movement of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century that saw ethnocentric and

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<sup>2</sup> Of course, as discussed earlier, this development is not unrelated to the wider processes that took place in the field of historiography.

nationalistic history education as a providing the cognitive and emotional substratum for international conflict to emerge and identified curricular transformation as a needed condition for the promotion of cooperative relationship between countries. Systematic efforts were also made prior to and in the aftermath of World War I, when a number of pacifists and international stakeholders, in cooperation with teacher's associations and women's organizations started seeing textbooks as a means to promote mutual understanding and tolerance between previously hostile groups, with reconciliation being the ultimate goal (Lässig 2013; Stober 2013).

After World War II, these efforts were embraced and supported by international and intergovernmental organizations –such as UNESCO and the Council of Europe, a development that led to their further systematization and institutionalization (Broaders 2008; Nuhoglu-Soysal et al. 2005; Stober 2013). After that period, revision initiatives as a form of peacebuilding were persistent, while an increase in their momentum came in 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union, when international or regional conferences, teacher trainings and common history textbook projects were organized by organizations such as the Council of Europe, the United States Institute for Peace and the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research (Korostelina 2013). In addition, since mid-20<sup>th</sup> century a number of reports and recommendations were published on the role of history education in combating prejudice and enhancing mutual understanding and confidence between peoples. Examples include the UNESCO Resolution on the Revision of Textbooks (1946), and the Council of Europe Recommendations 1233 (1996), 15/2001, and 1880 (2009), which explicitly state that history education should not be an

instrument of political or ideological manipulation, but rather its aim should be to promote understanding and cooperation. Along these lines, revision initiatives intend to develop history curricula that will be “based upon the idea of reconciliation”, meant to “enhance mutual understanding and confidence between peoples”, “eliminate prejudice and emphasize positive mutual influence between different countries, religions and ideas”, “give meaning to the future through a better understanding of the past”, “help the young to acquire transfrontier vision while raising their awareness of the diversity of cultural and historical traditions”, and “develop respect for all kinds of differences, based on an understanding of national identity and on principles of tolerance” (Council of Europe, Recommendation 15/2001).

Following these developments, a number of initiatives emerged, intending to achieve a paradigmatic shift in the way national identities are discursively produced, through challenging exclusivist national master narratives and moral orders and replacing them with axiologically balanced conceptions of national Self and Other. These initiatives were based on an understanding that the evolutionary force of recent historiographic developments and the new ideas and approaches in regards to history education may exercise an impact on discursive constructs like narratives, as well, transforming them from exclusive to inclusive. This evolution of narratives can cause an important shift in how in-groups see the ‘Other’, changing their perceptions, building a more positive image of the out-groups and envision alternatives to ongoing confrontation (Ross 2003).



To this end, historical accounts offered in the curricula developed through such initiatives intended to provide ‘demythologized’ conceptions of both Self and Other devoid of virtues/ vices dichotomies, by including examples of constructive past interactions with national outgroups, cooperation across national boundaries and positive mutual influences, so as to instill among students a conception of patriotism that incorporates positive attitudes toward other nations (Korostelina 2013). Similarly, as a part of this demythologization process, negative aspects of Self and acknowledgement of suffering inflicted on outgroups were incorporated in the narrative, not in evaluative terms, which may very well trigger defensive reactions, but rather as a self-reflective process. This indicated a break from past accounts that were characterized by glorification of ingroup and devaluation of outgroup. Moreover, a new focus on social, economic and cultural accounts of past experience was meant to help student understand history not as a liner succession of wars, but as a complex reality shaped by multiple processes at various levels. This also provided students with prototypes alternative to the ‘warrior-hero’, “prototypes that signify the attitudes of tolerance, peaceful coexistence of different ethnic and religious groups, and cultural development of the nation” (Korostelina 2012: 105). Undoubtedly, political and diplomatic history is not to be excluded and incidents of war must be explored and discussed. The desideratum here was not to silence past negative encounters between groups, but to approach them as historical processes, understand them and evaluate their full impact on collective human experience. Teaching about war is not a tantamount to glorifying war, and is not to be approached in such a way. For Christina Koulouri, “it is possible for war to be taught

without being glorified and without tedious details, numbers, and dates. War can be taught as part of a common human experience...through hunger, poverty, uprooting, survival strategies and moral dilemmas” (2005: 12). Finally, the typical emphasis on national experience was to be balanced by incorporating discussions, which focused on past experiences related to other loci of identity, such as local or regional history, or by exploring concepts such as citizenship, liberty and democracy in a way that would not be geographically focused (Carras 2002).

The potential impact of such curricular and discursive shifts on intergroup relations may be positive at multiple levels. More balanced shared representations of Self and Other naturally increase the prospects of cooperation across identity lines. For Nets-Zehngut (2013), the less biased a group’s narrative becomes, the more this group appears psychologically ready to accommodate peace and reconciliation as viable options. To add more, as negative stereotypes and monolithic representations of the Other are reduced, and as trust and empathy toward the Other increase, a group appears more likely to engage in a process of critical self-reflection about its share of responsibility in instigating and perpetuating conflictual relations (Nets-Zehngut 2013). Getting exposure to the ‘story’ of the Other is important too: acknowledging their views and perspectives on negative past experiences may challenge established exclusivist representations of the ingroup-outgroup relationship, gradually leading to the positive transformation of that relational space. In a similar vein, Kelman (2001) argues that acknowledgement of the Other’s ‘story’, that is the narrative within which the identity of the Other is embedded, is a *sine qua non* for such a transformation to take place. What is needed is a paradigmatic

shift in the way group members perceive their own identity, “such that affirmation of one group’s identity is no longer predicated on negation of the other’s identity” (Kelman 2001: 187). It is important to remember here that positive shifts in the way group identities are discursively produced, significant as they may be, are *just one* of the factors that need to be addressed for the resolution of deep-rooted conflicts; what is argued here is that these shifts can very well *contribute* to such resolution and help build positive momentum to this end. This understanding constitutes the foundation of initiatives similar to the one explored in this research. Since history education is one of the major loci of production and reproduction of exclusive historical narratives, changing history curricula appears as a good point to start the process of shifting historical discourse towards more inclusive narratives.

## **Revision Initiatives, ‘History Wars’, and Lessons Learned: Discussion on Factors that Appear to Shape Responses to Discursive and Identity Shifts**

### **Revision Initiatives Meet Varying Success**

Curriculum revision initiatives similar to the one explored in this study have taken place in a number of countries with varying success. In the Japanese case, the revision of history textbooks initiated in late 1980s, intended to include in the curriculum references to the atrocities committed by Japan in the Asia-Pacific War, led to the production of a textbook centered on a more inclusive narrative, which incorporated self-reflection elements. However, this success had been mediated by the strong resistance that this initiative faced by a number of political actors and social groups, whereas the debate over history textbooks is still open (Beal et al. 2001). A similar initiative in Taiwan, meant to promote, through history textbooks, a more pluralist Taiwanese identity, although it

constituted a step forward, faced the opposition of pro-unification (with China) nationalists (Korostelina, 2008). Positive steps in regards to history education have been also taken in Northern Ireland, without, however, decreasing dramatically ingroup favoritism and out-group prejudice in textbooks (Smith 2005). In addition, a case that is regarded among the most successful is the textbook revision in Germany, where national myths and irredentist narratives were withdrawn from the curriculum, giving their place to representations of a more globalized and diversified world and a discussion about the place of a more relativized Germany in it (Nuhoglu-Soysal et al. 2005). In Europe, under the auspices of private publishers or international organizations, a number of transnational history books have been written, so as to allow for an innovative, more inclusive perspective on the common histories of peoples within certain geographic regions (Pingel 2008; Korostelina 2013). This model was also followed in East Asia where at least five history textbooks with bilateral or multilateral contributions have been published in recent years; although these books have not replaced official curricula, they can offer alternatives to established national narratives (Pingel 2008).

Finally, special mention here needs to be made to the Joint History Project, a remarkable initiative that takes place under the auspices of the Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe, which is based in Thessaloniki Greece.<sup>3</sup> This is a project that intends to instigate constructive debates among Balkan countries on their shared past, “celebrate diversity, and recognize shared suffering and achievements

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<sup>3</sup> Although a considerable number of common textbooks production initiatives have taken place in different parts of the world, special mention is made here to the Joint History Project, as it is directly related to Greece (and its Balkan neighbors), which is also the focus of this study.

through a participative approach to history teaching, in order for students and teachers to develop the understanding and skills needed for sustainable peace and a democratic future. In the long term, the JHP aims to revise ethnocentric school history teaching by avoiding stereotypes, by identifying attitudes that encourage conflict, by suggesting alternative teaching methods and by promoting the idea of multiple interpretations of one event” (CDRSEE webpage). The immediate deliverables of the project included the writing and publication of a series of alternative history education materials that could be available to school teachers in the Balkans, as a means of replacing existing ethnocentric accounts with more balanced views on the common past of the people in the region. The project team, comprising a number of academics from all Balkan countries, has produced four workbooks, available in eight languages, in which the common past of the Balkan peoples is explored since the beginning of the Ottoman presence in the region and through the Second World War. Despite the positive evaluations of the end product, however, the workbooks have not been used systematically in any of the Balkan countries, where they have only enjoyed sporadic support.

### **Resistance to Change and ‘History Wars’**

Despite some prominent successes, the new curricula have not always enjoyed sustained support. More often than not, actually, revision initiatives have met strong resistance by societies, the unbalanced discourses of which they are meant to address. Why do people react negatively in the light of such attempted discursive shifts? What is it that makes them resist such initiatives? As mentioned several times throughout the chapter, this study is informed by an understanding that history education cannot be

explored without reference to identity processes and the function of narratives/discourse. In this part of the chapter, insights offered in earlier sections come together to inform the exploration of the question at hand. It is argued here that if one wishes to answer the question of why people resist these initiatives, attention needs to be paid to a) identity dynamics; and b) reflections of power in existing discursive schemata (history curricula as reflections of power arrangements), with the two realms, identity and discourse, being deeply and inexorably intertwined. Further complications arise from c) the fact that professional historiography and popular historical culture typically have different epistemological understandings of a collectivity's past, thus appearing to be speaking different 'languages' any time that public discussion on history takes place. The rest of the chapter revolves around these three themes in an effort to develop a preliminary basis for understanding popular responses to curriculum revision initiatives, while it concludes with a brief presentation of lessons learned through prior experiences.

### **A. Revision Initiatives Introduce Counter-Narratives that May Threaten Group Identity**

Such initiatives could be described as attempts to introduce national counter-narratives, that is, alternative discourses that challenge the existing order of national master narratives: "counter narratives act to deconstruct the master narratives, and they offer alternatives to the dominant discourse...they provide multiple and conflicting models of understanding social and cultural identities" (Stanley, 2007: 14).

Understandably, introducing such alternative discourses may trigger defensive reactions in a society. If, as discussed earlier in this chapter and as Habermas suggests, narratives are seen as 'identity-securing interpretive systems', then challenging the master narrative

of a national group is a tantamount to challenging its identity and the established psychological and sociological patterns that characterize its society, leading to identity insecurity and anxiety (as cited in Smith 2005: 27). Since maintenance of collective identity may be an end in itself (Kelman 2001), the new discourse is naturally expected to face resistance by group members. Drawing from insights offered in previous sections, one could argue that this shift challenges the ‘compass’ people use to make sense of themselves and their social landscape). In the face of attempts to introduce alternative perceptions of the Self and Others, therefore, groups are very likely to feel their identity threatened and exhibit defensive reactions that will not allow for the positive reception of the initiative. Literature suggests that there are various identity threats group members may perceive as facing; Branscombe et al (1999) offer a taxonomy of four types of such identity threats:

1. ‘Categorization threat’ (being categorized against one’s will)
2. ‘Distinctiveness threat’ (group distinctiveness is prevented or undermined)
3. ‘Threats to the value of social identity’ (the group’s value is undermined)
4. ‘Acceptance threat’ (this threat concerns the individual and occurs when one’s position within the group is undermined)

Here, the threats that appear more relevant to the focus of this study and that groups most commonly face when it comes to attempted discursive paradigmatic shifts are related to a group’s *distinctiveness*, *competency* and *morality*. It was discussed previously that perceptions of collective agency and the maintenance of common schemata of normative representations (where morality systems are located), as well as self-esteem considerations are key functions of collectivities. Attempts to alter the

existing collective axiology by introducing new, balanced discourses, where Self and Other are represented in axiologically similar terms, are very likely to be perceived by group members as a threat both to a group's competency and to its moral standing and self-esteem; in this new discourse 'Neither We, as a distinct collective agency, nor our actions, are seen as morally superior any more'. Thus, if revision attempts are not carried out respectfully and carefully, they might violate a number of principles associated with the workings of collective identities. One of them is what Breakwell (1993) calls the 'Self-esteem Principle'; it was discussed earlier that self-esteem is a basic motive for much group behavior. In their discourses and practices groups seek to achieve and maintain a high self-esteem, that's why representations of Self and Other are typically axiologically unbalanced. While attempting to change this narrative, it needs to be made sure that people come to see their self-esteem not as a resource that emerges out of antagonistic comparisons; rather, they may seek for internal sources/ loci of self-esteem, such as ingroup achievements that came as a result of cooperation with outgroups (Korostelina 2012). If such a paradigmatic shift does not take place, then it is unlikely that members of a collectivity will embrace a new, balanced discourse. In addition, special care needs to be taken so as not to violate the 'Distinctiveness Principle' that is embedded in collective identities (Breakwell 1993). Initiatives meant to alter antagonistic understandings between ingroup and outgroup should also make sure that they acknowledge a group's distinctiveness, and that in the new discourse to be introduced, this distinctiveness is appreciated and celebrated, again as long as it is not defined in competitive, antagonistic terms. Finally, reformers need to pay attention so as not to



violate the 'Efficacy principle' (Breakwell, 1993); stable identity structures are characterized by efficacy and control. Attempts to change the narrative an identity is based on, should recognize that this revision process challenges a group's identity structures and may cause group members to lose their sense of efficacy, thus, triggering feelings of futility, alienation and 'helplessness' (Breakwell 1993).

In the face of such threats, there is an array of tactics people employ to defend their positive identity, such as cognitive resistance to screen the new narrative out of their mental maps; projection to outsiders of any negative attributes of Self that the new narrative may include; keep engaging in self-enhancing comparisons with the Other, often along new dimensions; and focus on new areas of boundary maintenance. In addition, Karlberg argues that there is a broad repertoire of tactics that cultural and political elites and lay people alike may employ to 'screen' those counter narratives out of the public discourse: "...by absolutism and the rejection of ambiguity; by impending threats to security and order; by a fear-based morality; by monopolization of the right to speak; by dismissiveness and ridicule of doubters or dissenters; by autoreferential arguments and appeals; by sloganistic, jingoistic, or chauvinistic appeals; and by superficial appeals for unity, harmony, and consensus" (Karlberg 2012: 21). As people engage in such psychological processes, attempts to change the dominant discourse in a society may backfire, leading to further radicalization. To add more, the feelings of insecurity that perceived threats to identity instigate may, in their turn, heighten the salience of ingroup identity (Branscombe et al. 1999; Korostelina 2006; Rothbart and Korostelina 2011). This means that the importance of group membership is increased in

individuals' understanding of self, and group values and norms acquire primacy over personal values and norms (Korostelina 2006). Individuals with a salient identity are more likely to develop a view of the world as comprising fixed binary oppositions of 'Us' and 'Them', adopt overgeneralizations and negative stereotypes towards Others, and develop stronger conflict intentions vis-à-vis outgroups (Korostelina 2006). In other words, initiatives that intend to alter dominant discourses run the risk of being seen as providing threats to a group's identity, which in its turn may increase identity salience, thus unintentionally exacerbating intergroup relations (doing more harm than good). However, historical experience has shown that shifts in dominant discourses are not impossible. For Bamberg (2004) master narratives and counter narratives are not always in directly oppositional stances but may interact in more complex, cross-fertilizing ways; for such a shift to take place, however, systematic and orchestrated planning, engagement with wide social strata, and non-threatening frames need to be employed. As the above insights suggest, discursive reforms need to be staged as gradual processes and always with the involvement of wider social constituencies, especially in the realm of history education, which is by definition a symbolic 'res publica'; this would empower group members and would increase the sense of ownership and efficacy a society has. In relation to 'best practices' when it comes to the introduction of alternative, non-toxic discourses in history education a number of lessons learned are discussed in a following section. Before that, however, I will take a look at the second factor that may hinder wider embracing of attempted discursive shifts through history education: the fact that dominant narratives in school curricula reflect existing power arrangements.

## **B. Introducing Counter-Narratives May Challenge Existing Power Arrangements**

It was mentioned earlier in this study that the new narratives reflected in revised curricula intend to challenge existing discursive systems of identity production through the ‘discursive strategies of transformation’, which are meant to transform an established national identity or some of its components. Naturally, these attempts are very likely to face resistance by groups whose interests are vested in the existing discursive status quo. As historical discourse is a key habitat for national identity production, and as educational institutions, with their massive character, are key mechanisms for the production, dissemination, and popularization of national identities, the question of who is able to determine or influence what is taught at the nation’s youth is linked to the question of who decides after all what a nation’s identity is. As argued in a previous section in regards to the focus of this study, textbooks, as officially sanctioned constructs, have an authoritative status, which vests them with a powerful potential for reproducing cultural orders and relations of power and eliciting the loyalty of young members of a national group. As Ernest Gellner very aptly framed it, in the modern world it is the professor and not the executioner who stands as the gatekeeper of existing social orders: for him “the monopoly of legitimate education is now more important, more central than the monopoly of legitimate violence” (as cited in Broeders 2008: 14). This power that education curricula have in shaping collective consciousness has rendered the realm of education an arena for contestation between social forces that may intend to have a say over what a nation’s youth is taught (Phillips 1998). Keeping that in mind, especially when it comes to history education, what is to be conveyed to the next generations as a

collectivity's past achievements and future aspirations should not necessarily be seen as a given and static whole; rather, it is a body of knowledge that is, oftentimes, the product of continuous contestation and consensus. Indeed, historical knowledge has been subject not only to control mechanisms by states or dominant elites (Schissler and Nuhoglu-Soysal 2005), but also to pressures exercised by other social groups and institutions that attempt to influence the mechanisms through which knowledge is produced and disseminated. Historically, attempts to transform an existing social and political order, either towards a more progressive or towards a more conservative path have been commonly "accompanied by changes in curriculum and educational structure, with the idea that these measures will hasten or confirm change" (Smith 2005: xiv). Thus, a relevant question here is who decides what counts as history and what needs to have a place in historical narratives (individuals –positive and negative role models, events, processes, values, cultural practices etc.).

A Foucauldian answer to this question would stress the importance of power and legitimacy, where power is the ability to perform certain social tasks and legitimacy the attribution of rights and duties to actors in a certain context to perform those tasks (Slocum-Bradley 2008). Foucault understands curricula as power, "with a potential to create unity of thought and action, but, at the same time, with a tendency to exclude individuals and groups, who hold to an alternative knowledge" (as cited in Ahonen 2001: 191). For him, individuals know whatever is *communicated* to them –whatever they have access to. Therefore, any actor who is powerful enough to control the means of communication (not only in regards to *who* has access to information, but what *emphasis*

is placed where) and legitimate enough to have this control accepted by a society, is able to define what reality –and therefore, knowledge- is (the Foucauldian notion of power as producer of truth). For Foucault, truth is not free from power; it is shaped by it and at the same time induces effects to it. Every society is characterized by its own ‘regime of truth’, or the ‘general politics of truth’. This refers to the “general types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true” (Foucault, 1980: 131). Then, in its turn, this truth serves to reproduce and reinforce this power, by rendering it natural in a society’s discourse and praxis. Similarly, history textbooks, as officially sanctioned instruments of a nation’s historical ‘truth’, reflect power arrangements and support given social orders. Behind every master narrative, a careful observer may be able to identify threads of power that seek legitimacy and acceptance. For Repoussi (2009), textbooks and educational curricula very often intend to render cultures of domination “legitimate, official, truthful, and finally then natural” (p: 25). Controversies over the content of history textbooks then are most likely to emerge between groups that attempt to challenge a given regime of truth and those who defend it. And the outcome of such controversies is a function of the power that each group enjoys within a given society. Thus, the success of curriculum revision initiatives appears largely dependent on whether they mobilize enough support from key social constituencies.

As the new curricula try to contest and renegotiate master narratives already established in educational institutions, they trigger the reaction of actors, who are attached to the previous discursive schemata in multiple ways (cognitively, emotionally, status considerations), with the result being the emergence of ‘history wars’. These are ‘wars’ between people who explicitly or implicitly attempt to critically modify established national narratives and those who refuse “to renegotiate fixed identities constructed in the frames of nationalistic frameworks” (Repoussi 2009: 28). For Liakos (2009), the intensity of these controversies over history curricula may be attributed to the fact that the conflict here is not just about collective memory; it is primarily about the *institutionalization of memory*, and the power a narrative acquires once institutionalized. In other words, it is the political power that history textbook is vested with that makes history education an integral part of the social and political discourse (Broeders 2008).

A final note needs to be made here: undoubtedly, the power and legitimacy that states enjoy have allowed them to largely define what historical knowledge is, always in accordance with defined national objectives. Thus, history textbooks are, as discussed above, products and representatives of officially selected, organized and transmitted knowledge (Schissler & Nuhoglu-Soysal, 2005). For Smith, although states do not have absolute control over professional historiography, they most commonly do have control over what is taught in schools. Of course, although the predominance of states can hardly be questioned, in different degrees and variations powerful and legitimate actors in a society may comprise religious institutions, cultural institutions, intellectual elites or other major loci of power. The power and legitimacy of those actors gives them the

capacity to influence the production of historical narratives as found in school curricula. Thus, history curricula should not be seen as mere tools of indoctrination that follow a top-down process. Indeed, there have been state-sponsored initiatives meant to alter dominant master narratives –among which is the one explored in this study- that have not succeeded in this task. History curricula should also be seen as the products of the entire society that produces them (Koulouri 2002); history textbooks “rarely contain stereotypes and values unacceptable to society. Therefore, their content may be a good guide as to a society’s values; history books, in particular, may reflect the image a human society has of its own past and, indirectly, the way it imagines its future” (Koulouri 2002: 31-32). Given this, involving wider social strata may be a catalyst for the success of curricular reforms, especially when the latter are meant to challenge popular conceptions of Self and Other. As the discursive status quo, through which national identities are produced, reflects given power arrangements, it appears to be of outmost importance for actors interested in introducing alternative, peace-oriented discourses to work extensively and systematically towards mobilizing the necessary social and political support for their endeavor.

### **C. Different Epistemological Approaches to Collective Past Complicate Public Dialogue**

A third factor that may further perplex public discussion on history education is that it is in this realm that professional historiography and popular historical culture come together, each bringing with it different conceptions of what history is and how it should be approached, discussed, and -importantly- taught to the young generation (Broeders 2008). To frame it simply, the complication with history education is not that it is

destined to be subject to public debates; rather, history is meant to be and should be publicly discussed, as collective memory is by definition a 'res publica'. The complication arises from the fact that the actors involved in this debate seem to be speaking different languages, and the legitimacy of their views is evaluated against different sets of criteria: knowledge based on research, on the one hand, and knowledge embedded in the collective psyche of a whole society, on the other. The persistence of the latter form of knowledge makes it real enough in the living experience of social subjects, so as for it to be considered valid in the collective consciousness. Once 'imprinted' in a group's discourse, master narratives and conceptions of Self and Other have acquired an ontological dimension based on the living experience of the community and are not easy to change. This is not only a result of group members being cognitively unwilling to alter their perceptions of Self and Other, but also because they are emotionally attached to those perceptions. To add more, typically, such perceptions appear resistant to knowledge produced through social scientific inquiry (Ahonen 2001; Rothbart and Korostelina 2011). In other words, even if empirical data is provided that suggests alternative images of Self and Other or different interpretations of past events, group members are more likely to resist distancing from already familiar representational structures and embrace a new discourse. This is because in historical master narratives historical accuracy appears to be of secondary importance; the 'stories' are often perceptually and cognitively distorted, as for many groups "the desire for certainty often is greater than the capacity for accuracy" (Ross 2001: 161). The central function of the master narrative here is to strengthen one's commitment to the group, by strengthening the 'collective memory'



(Chew 2001), and not necessarily to provide a historically accurate account of past events. Social psychological research has provided evidence supporting this claim; Sedikides has reported evidence that self-enhancement motivation prevails over needs for actual self-knowledge (as cited in Otten and Mummendey 2000: 33). For Bell, the work of professional historiography is “too meticulous, too intricate and too complex to be assimilated easily into national mythology, which is based on generalization and deliberate simplification, and is packaged into easily comprehended and reproducible narratives” (2003: 77). This is indeed a reality in which even historians themselves may feel caught between what Robbins calls ‘divided loyalties’: “they can find themselves torn between their sense of individual and professional integrity on the one hand, and the expectations and demands of the society which pays them on the other, a society which has certain expectations of what a historian should be doing” (1990: 370). As public discussion rarely relies on academic arguments, when it comes to topics of a politically and socially sensitive nature (Repoussi and Tutiaux-Guillon 2010), professional historians –who, in their turn, may also distance themselves from their social reality– spearheading revision initiatives often find it hard to mobilize the necessary social support for those initiatives.

This does not mean, however, that the national narrative of a group does not change over the course of time so as to address current circumstances and challenges. When needed, a group’s past may be discursively reorganized in order to fit the current socio-political needs of the nation (Anagnostopoulou 2002; Liu and Hilton 2005). In addition, stories that have laid dormant for some time may be pushed forward by political

and cultural elites in order to pursue current pragmatic ends (Ashmore et al. 2001; Liu and Hilton 2005) (e.g. hence the increasing prominence of the Kosovo Myth in the collective Serbian psyche after mid-1980s, although for many years that narrative had been rather dormant). Unfortunately, historical experiences have shown that when such discursive reorganization takes place is usually for instigating further distrust across identity boundaries and polarize different groups. However, it is actually this potentially fluid nature of historical narratives that provides some room for optimism among people interested in turning ‘toxic’ discourses into more inclusive, cooperative discourses. It is important, in this case, for the success of such revision initiatives to associate the intended discursive shifts with very real and pragmatic goals that the group is to achieve, explicitly delineating to the societies they address the multiple benefits that such discursive shifts may entail.

### **Lessons Learned and Intended Contribution of this Study**

Keeping the above challenges in mind, and based on prior experiences, both successful and unsuccessful, attempts have been made to identify a series of lessons learned. Key to the success of such initiatives seems to be not only the framing of the process in non-threatening ways, but also the question of who gets to carry it out and participate in it. On the one hand, it is important to spread the understanding among a society that reflection on perceptions of Self and Other, as well as on a collectivity’s past, is not inherently corrosive of national self-confidence (Schwarz, as cited in Vickers 2005: 12). It was mentioned earlier in this study that sources of self-confidence may lay in loci other than axiological comparisons, such as positive experiences, instances of

cooperation and constructive interactions with national outgroups. Of course, cases of conflict and controversial historical events should have their own place in the curriculum. Avoidance of controversial topics and presentation of all past interactions across national boundaries in a positive light, are very likely to challenge the credibility of a textbook, and elicit defensive reactions in a society (Korostelina 2013). The discussion of such negative interactions, however, should not become a basis upon which to articulate collective grievances and make accusations, but it should aim at helping students understand conflict as a social phenomenon with certain roots, dynamics, and impact on the peoples who experience it.

On the other hand, involving wider social constituencies in the revision process may have a positively catalytic impact on the initiative. This should not be seen as a top-down political or diplomatic process; although enjoying the support of ministry officials and governmental institutions is a significant resource, this alone does not seem to be a sufficient condition for success. Instead, broader social cooperation between different stakeholders, dialectic engagement with interested groups, and encouragement of bottom-up initiatives may significantly enhance the sense of ownership a society has over the process (Lässig 2013; Stober 2013). This type of engagement may include dialogue with school teachers, education officials, teachers' associations, parents' groups, civil society organizations and activists (Korostelina 2013). Here, the importance of school teachers cannot be understated, as they are "the most important translators (or obstructers) of reform ideas" (Lässig 2013: 14) and can stand as "agents of change within their communities" (Korostelina 2013). Similarly, for Smith the training of teachers is crucial

to reforming history education: “history classes can raise students’ level of awareness about issues of history in society and about the point of view of the other group, *if* teachers are trained how to do this” (Smith 2005: 199, emphasis in original).

Another dimension to be taken into consideration in regards to reform initiatives is expectations management. As discursive and psychological changes are long-term processes, reformers need to be aware of the incremental nature of paradigmatic shifts and set their expectations accordingly. Changes in history curricula are not a panacea that brings quick solutions (Koulouri 2002). But they can gradually lay the foundations for mutual understanding and the development of more positive intergroup relations (Lässig 2013). In order for this to happen, however, such reforms should not stand alone, but should be part of orchestrated, systematic efforts that take place at different levels within a society. It was discussed earlier in this study that the school is just one of the loci that students get exposure to the national master narrative and established conceptions of Self and Other. Despite their importance as privileged agents of knowledge transmission, textbooks should not be seen as the only factor that accounts for individuals’ understanding of the past and present, Self and Other, but as one of the many loci where young individuals get to develop a view of themselves as members of a historical collectivity. History textbooks are embedded within complex societies, where neither ultimate accounts of truth nor narratives with absolutely hegemonic power are to be found. With students being exposed to stories that may differ in varying degrees from what they are taught at school, it would be erroneous for someone to argue that official history education accounts for the totality of Self and Other perceptions that students may

hold. Rather, textbooks should be approached as materials the reading of which is mediated by pre-existing conceptions the readers may have. For Wills, reading a text is a process of meaning making; this textual meaning does not rest with the text alone, but is located in the interaction between the text and the reader (as cited in Porat 2004: 966). Thus, the transmission of a certain narrative through a textbook, should not be equated with the reception of this narrative by the receiving end, that is the students (Porat 2004). A study involving Israeli high school students conducted by Dan Porat (2004) found that twelve months after reading a certain narrative in their textbooks, students' recollection of the events described in that narrative was strongly affected by the social memory of the group within which they lived, their prior beliefs and attitudes. To add more, research suggests that individuals tend to read texts in a way that reinforces their preconceived ideas, drawing selectively from the given text elements that are in alignment with their existing understanding of a certain historical account (Barton and McCully 2005; Porat 2004).<sup>4</sup> For this reason, in conjunction with curricular reforms, orchestrated steps need to be taken towards addressing toxic narratives at multiple levels too. Projects like town-twinning, youth and academic exchanges, creation of public space for self-reflective dialogue on history, trainings in peace journalism, and generally projects meant to

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<sup>4</sup> In regards to this study, this does not mean that history textbooks should not be subject to systematic inquiry. It means that, while analyzing and discussing history textbooks, social scientists should be explicit in stating that textbooks, an important role as they may play in shaping students understanding of the past and present, are just one out of a series of other factors that also play a role in informing this understanding (e.g. family, religious institutions, political affiliation). While I acknowledge the existence of these factors, in this study I will not look at how and whether the textual account was perceived by students, but I will largely focus on the message itself and the reactions this message triggered among different social constituencies.

increase awareness of the Other's culture, may all contribute to the larger goal of building a positive relational space across national boundaries.

As evident in the above discussion, in recent years there has been scholarly work that explores lessons learned through past initiatives and intends to address potential challenges that these initiatives may face. Reflecting on past experiences, identifying what can potentially go wrong, and incorporating those lessons into future planning may be critical to the success of future endeavors. The present study should be also seen in this light. Through the use of insights provided by identity theories discussed in this chapter, it intends to explore a case, where an attempted history education reform did not finally flourish, explore the reasons behind Greek society's defensive reaction to the given initiative, identify lessons learned for reformers and, based on those insights, develop a series of policy recommendations in regards to history education reforms. The discussion throughout the chapter indicated that factors inhibiting positive reception may be related to: the workings of identity (defense mechanisms that are put at place when revised curricula violate the principles of self-esteem, distinctiveness, efficacy); the fact that existing history curricula are based on a given discursive status quo which reflects the interests of certain groups; and the epistemological differences in approaching a collectivity's past that appears to exist between professional historiography and popular historical consciousness. The present research intends to shed further light on this discussion. Although systematic studies of history education in Greece in general, and the specific case in particular, have been conducted, it is the first time that a study intends to identify the defense mechanisms at place –as described in this chapter- when master

narratives were challenged in the given context. It is also the first time that the concept of collective axiology will be used to analyze parts of the historical discourse in Greece. It is hoped that the findings of this research will enrich the existing literature, while identifying case-specific courses of action that could increase the likelihood of a more positive reception of such a reform in the given context.

The next chapter offers a background of the case explored in this study, so as to contextualize the key questions explored in the present research. Starting with a discussion on Greek national identity and the key themes of Modern Greek national master narrative, the chapter then proceeds with a general review of history education in Greece. After this, the specifics of the reform initiative of the years 2006-2007 are presented; the chapter concludes with a discussion on the reactions the initiative triggered among different social constituencies in the country, reactions that led to the withdrawal of the new textbook, in September 2007.

### **CHAPTER THREE. CASE STUDY**

#### **GREEK NATIONAL IDENTITY, HISTORY EDUCATION AND A CLOSER LOOK AT THE 6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE CURRICULUM REVISION INITIATIVE**

As one of the foci of the present research is the discursive constructs of Greek national identity, this chapter begins with a discussion on the emergence of Greek nationalism and the key discursive themes of Greek national master narrative. This will offer the reader insights on the master narrative that the revision initiative explored in this study attempted to alter in some ways. Using this as a starting point, I then move to a discussion on history education in Greek schools, also presenting a number of revision initiatives that preceded the one discussed in this study. Next, the specifics of the revision initiative that focused on the 6<sup>th</sup> grade history curriculum in the years 2006-2007 are presented, followed by a discussion on popular reactions to this initiative and a short description of the current state of affairs. It is hoped that this chapter offers the reader a sound background of the case study and contextualizes the key questions explored in the present research before I proceed with the methodological specifics of the study.

#### **Greek Nationalism and Modern Greek National Identity**

##### **The Discursive Constructs of Modern Greek Identity**

The definition of Modern Greek national identity has long been a vigorously debated issue. Due to its geographic location at the crossroad of Europe, Asia and Africa, Greece has been a theatre of economic, social and political exchanges, population



movements and interaction between different cultural groups. Being the birthplace of classical Greek and Hellenistic civilizations, which are thought of as indispensable parts of European culture, Greece could be considered essentially European. At the same time, modern Greeks appear to be the heirs of Byzantine civilization, which, up to a large extent, defined itself against western Christianity (Kokosalakis and Psimmenos 2002). Thus, since the establishment of the Modern Greek nation-state, in 1830, Hellenism and Orthodox Christianity, sometimes in a contradictory and often in a cross-fertilizing fashion, have constituted the two main pillars of Modern Greek identity.

The population in the geographic region of Greece that during the 18<sup>th</sup>, and more intensively in the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century, articulated a Greek nationalist movement aiming at the establishment of an independent political entity in the form of a nation-state, had been living under the Ottoman rule since the 15<sup>th</sup> century. For Clogg (1988), in the early centuries of the Ottoman presence in the Balkans, this population appeared to have little consciousness that, as Greeks, they were heirs to the cultural tradition of Greek antiquity, despite the fact that knowledge and consciousness of the classical past seemed to have survived among scholars, mainly ones with a clerical background. It was primarily the Enlightenment that raised consciousness in, and appreciation of the Greek classical past in Europe that led diaspora Greeks and European intellectuals to articulate a narrative that would offer and popularize identity linkages between contemporary populations living in Greece and Greek antiquity. Thus, the first reference frame for the early nationalist discourse seemed to be Ancient Greece. By constructing an appealing narrative that would link contemporary Greeks with a great past civilization, these

intellectuals provided the ‘yeast’ for the emergence and development of the first systematic nationalist movement in the Balkans. In the years prior to the war of Greek independence, which started in 1821, conceptions of Greek identity were not only profoundly influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment and the increased interest in classical Greece that came with it, but also they were discursively mediated through western literature (Clogg 1988). In other words, the rediscovery in Europe of the Greek past glories, by offering important sources for positive self-identification and increased self-esteem, became the catalyst for the discursive construction of Modern Greek national identity among the contemporary population of Greece. In this process, Hellenism was used as a discursive topos, in which a ‘natural’ and continuous relationship of the nation to the geographic region of Greece was maintained (Avdela 2000).

As is the typical case with nationalist movements, the intellectuals spearheading the Greek nationalist movement in late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries constituted a small but very active minority that managed to impress their own ideas and values on the movement, and succeeded in engaging and mobilizing a population, which at that time was in large part illiterate (Clogg 1988). Illustrative of this success was the phenomenon of *progonoplexeia* that was widespread among the Greek-speaking population in the region before the war of independence: an increased interest in the ancient Greek heritage, and valuing anything that was related to it, such as names, ideas, and historical sites (Clogg 1988). In the popular discourse of the early years of Greek nationalism, the nation, like the mythical bird Phoenix, was reborn after two thousand years of occupation by different conquerors (Liakos 2007).

In parallel, a different discursive construct emerged, in which the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) past was also incorporated in the national narrative. This shift allowed for the integration in the nation's narrative of the Christian element, which was absent in Classical Antiquity, but widespread in contemporary Greece. The Christianization of large parts of the population in the region took place over the first centuries of the Common Era, with the establishment by St. Paul and his students of Christian churches in Asia Minor and southern Balkans, which were both under the control of the Roman Empire. According to this narrative, the edict of Milan, in 313 CE, the transfer of the Roman capital to Constantinople, and shortly after, the adoption of Christianity as official state religion, strengthened further the union between Hellenistic culture and Christianity (Kokosalakis and Psimmenos 2002), despite the fact that, in reality, during the Byzantine times the classical and Hellenistic past were typically seen not only as separate from, but also in conflict with the new Christian Byzantine tradition, with the term Hellene (Greek) being used as synonymous to paganist. This narrative suggests that preliminary aspects of a distinctive Greek consciousness comprising Christianity and Greek antiquity can be identified even before the fall of Constantinople and the establishment of Ottoman Empire. Throughout the years of the Ottoman rule it was the Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople that appeared as the cultural and political reference point for the Greek population of the Empire, while the clergy undertook an active role in laying the ground for the rebirth of the Greek nation. Here, Eastern Orthodox Christianity "provides the continuity, as well as the transition from Ancient to Modern Greece, through Byzantium" (Zambeta 2000: 148).

The new integrated narrative rendered Eastern Orthodoxy a defining characteristic of the Greek collective psyche and presented a more synthetic image of the nation's history, combining both the classical and Hellenistic past and the Byzantine tradition, and viewing the Greek nation as a community traveling through time embodying the qualities of a Hellenic-Christian civilization (Soysal and Antoniou 2002). This inseparability of Christianity and Hellenism, that have come to be integrated through a long cultural osmosis since the 3<sup>rd</sup> century of the common era, became a central theme in the national master narrative, where Byzantium is seen as a 'Greek Medieval Empire' (Asemomytis et al, as cited in Zambeta 2000: 150-151). This master narrative both reflected and strengthened even more the sense of continuity of the Greek nation since classical times, throughout the Hellenistic period and later the Eastern Roman Empire. Indeed, the continuity of the nation is an essential component of the Greek identity as found in the Greek master narrative, in which the nation is presented as a "natural, unified, eternal, and unchanging entity" (Avdela 2000: 239), which "can also include at times the ancient Ionian and Dorian populations, the Byzantines, and the Phanariotes, all the way down to the Greek communities of Australia" (ibid, p: 247). The significance of maintaining this sense of continuity lays at two levels: on the one hand, it allows modern Greeks to position themselves as the heirs of the cultural traditions of important civilization/empires that existed in the geographic region of Greece –an important source of pride; on the other hand, as discussed in the previous chapter, the older the roots of a nation are traced, the more value this nation appears to have in the minds of the nationals, and the higher the self-esteem of group members.

The continuity component of the Greek master narrative was challenged as early as 1830 (the same year that Greece gained independence from the Ottoman Empire) by Jacob Falmerayer, who argued that modern Greeks were descendants of Slavic and Albanian populations, not of ancient Greeks. As a response, the Greek historian Constantine Paparrigopoulos presented a storyline, according to which there was an unbroken continuity between ancient and modern Greece, not on a racial basis, but along linguistic and cultural lines (Carras 2004). For him, the story of the Greek nation comprises three periods of heyday and glory, interspersed by two periods of decadence and subjugation to foreign powers (Clogg 1988). Classical and Hellenistic eras were followed by Roman occupation since 145 BCE. The rise of the Eastern Roman Empire signaled the second glorious period for Hellenism, which ended with the Fall of Constantinople in 1453. The period of Ottoman occupation was the second dark era in the history of Hellenism, while from 1821 on the Greek nation was reborn, thus entering the third period in which Hellenes created their own independent political entity that would catalyze the actualization of the nation's collective aspirations (Clogg 1998). To this day, Paparrigopoulos has been the single most influential historian in the discursive construction of the Greek master narrative, having set through his work the basic parameters of the most popular mental representations on the collectivity's past. However, the storyline he presented made its way through popular discourse somehow distorted; although he talked about linguistic and cultural continuity, popular discourse appears to define this continuity on the basis of bloodlines, thus vesting 'Greekness' with

a restrictive, primordial dimension. Similarly, it has traditionally been *jus sanguinis* that has governed citizenship laws in the Modern Greek state (Carras 2004).

It is clear from the above that in the Modern Greek nationalist movement the discussion on the character of the Greek identity developed along two dimensions. On the one hand, a group of intellectuals and historians and, above all, the clergy emphasized the centrality of Christian Orthodox Byzantine culture and wished to see the Modern Greek state as the heir of the Eastern Roman Empire. On the other hand, another group of intellectuals, being more attracted by the virtues of Enlightenment –which was *inter alia* based on the classical Greek and Hellenistic cultures- “visualized the rebirth of Greece and its identity in the modern world not on the basis of the Byzantine religious culture, but in the context of a secular civil society guided by the old Hellenic spirit and rational, humanistic and philosophical values” (Kokosalakis and Psimmenos 2002: 6). Ultimately, the nationalist discourse incorporated both perspectives, with the image of classical antiquity being embodied in the Acropolis of Athens, and the image of the Eastern Roman Empire being embodied in Constantinople and Hagia Sophia, the Byzantine Cathedral built by Emperor Justinian in the sixth century (Liakos 2007). However, although the Greek national master narrative managed to incorporate these temporal-spatial linkages “the ambivalence between East and West remains an important feature of Greek identity and politics even today” (Triantafyllidou & Veikou 2002: 192). The salience of either depended upon not only domestic socio-political and economic ferments, but also external circumstances that exerted an impact on the developments inside Greece. Importantly, these two aspects should be considered in the frames of an

ongoing dialectic between tradition and modernization –a process that characterized the overall development and transformations of Modern Greek national identity. In addition, in the popular discourse in Greece one can identify two dominant approaches to national identity: the first is conservative and exclusive; it underlines the uniqueness of being Greek (brotherlessness).<sup>5</sup> The second is more inclusive and cosmopolitan; it emphasizes pluralism and multiperspectivity. From the latter point of view anyone who shares Greek culture and education should be considered Greek. For almost two centuries the question of whether Greek nationalism should be of ethnic or civic character remains open, with the former, however, being dominant for most of the period since the inception of the modern Greek state, thus vesting modern Greek identity with an exclusivist dimension.

### **Greek National Self and Others: The Turk as the National Significant Other**

Similarly to all social identities, Greek national identity in its current form did not emerge in a vacuum; it was discursively constructed in contrast to the identities of other groups (religious, linguistic, cultural) that were used as reference frames against which Greeks came to develop a sense of collective Self. Since the Self, as a social being, is perceived to have maintained a continuous presence in the region since antiquity -with the integration of classical and Byzantine pasts into the national narrative, as described above- then, it is similarly perceived that there have been a number of groups, which historically have served as the Greeks' Other, more often than not in axiological terms. For Costa Carras (2004), it was after the Persian wars (490, 480-79 BCE) that Greeks started systematically assigning cultural and political inferiority to a neighboring group.

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<sup>5</sup> The idea of 'brotherlessness' of the Greek nation "evokes the kind of nationalism wherein singular cultural traits must be preserved and protected by all means" (Mattheou et al, 2006: 53).

For him “after the Persian wars, a clear sense of general superiority emerges based on constitutional government under the law with the resulting military and cultural achievements; [this was] the first instance in which Hellenic identity is partly defined in opposition to others” (2004: 302). Throughout history, groups whose collective aspirations conflicted the ones of the national group, or groups at the hands of which the national Self has suffered, have been assigned the image of the Other in the national narrative. Persians, Romans, Arabs, Roman Catholics, Slavic populations, the German Nazis and Italian Fascists, and even at times European Great Powers, which are often represented as unreliable partners for Greece, have secured the role of the Other in the Greek popular discourse (Broeders 2008; Soysal and Antoniou 2006). Special place in this discourse is, of course, reserved for the Ottomans and Modern Turks, which constitute part of the focus of the present research.

After independence, the emergence of other Balkan nationalisms resulted in growing tensions between Greece and neighboring populations, which through their own nationalist rhetoric –and accordingly through the reconstruction and projection of their own national pasts- tried to establish title to territories that were also claimed by the Greek Kingdom, while being still under the control of the Ottoman Empire (Clogg 1988). Throughout 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries a large part of the Greek populations in the Balkans and Asia Minor remained subject to the Ottoman Empire. This reality gave rise to an irredentist discourse that centered on the idea of a psychic unity of the Greeks residing in the Greek Kingdom and the Greeks of the Ottoman Empire and focused on the incorporation of these populations and the respective territories into the Greek state



(‘Megali Idea’), with the latter standing as the political and cultural frame of reference for the Greek-speaking Orthodox Christian populations in the region (Liakos 2007; Triantafyllidou and Veikou 2002). During this period Greek national identity was further solidified as a product of border formation processes. Distinguishing between Greeks and the non-Christian populations of the Ottoman Empire, as well as Christian groups of Slavic descent, was a necessity for the newly established state. This establishment of borders and the contrast between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ were typically facilitated by reference to myths of historical past and common ancestry.

It was at that time, when national collective aspirations were substantiated in the concept of Megali Idea and the hope that the Modern Greek state will restore the past glories of the Eastern Roman Empire and Classical Antiquity, that the stereotypical negative images of the Ottomans/ Turks were formed and acquired central place in the Greek collective memory and national discourse: “the Turk as the national ‘other’ became the violent and inhuman conqueror of the Greeks, the oppressor through four hundred years of slavery (1453-1821), trying to Islamize by force the Greek Christian population of the empire, forbidding their education... [and] ...threatening national identity” (Repoussi 2009: 26). The open issue of the Greek state borders intensified national antagonism between Greece and the Ottoman Empire, while a series of conflict episodes between Greece and Turkey in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have further solidified the negative representations of the Turkish Other in the Greek national master narrative.

A fact that further perplexes the Greek-Turkish relational space is that, due to the conflictual past between the two groups, the Ottomans/ Turks appear as key protagonists in the threat and victimization narratives existing in the Greek collective memory. It was presented in the previous chapter that these narratives reflect a group's existential fears, by emphasizing past suffering and at the same alarming group members against threats looming in the future, posed either by past perpetrators or by other groups for which the status of 'enemy' is currently reserved in the collective imagination. In this process, threat narratives provide the linkage between popular discourse and the development of negative behavioral predispositions toward Others. In a similar fashion, in the Greek popular historical discourse, Hellenism often has been victimized at the hands of foreigners, subject to injustice and under constant threat. It is this resistance to external threats that for Ephe Avdela (2000), "forms the basis of the relationships the national 'Self' has with 'Others'" (p: 248). As a result, a key theme in the Greek national identity discourse is that during the centuries-long history of Hellenism, stability, homogeneity, and continuity were maintained through continuous resistance to external threats (Avdela, 2000). The five centuries-long Ottoman presence in the Balkans (referred to as 'Turkocracy' in the popular discourse) represented in the Greek collective imagination the most serious and sustained threat to Hellenism, with a number of victimization themes –such as the fall of Constantinople, the child levy, and the forced 'Islamization' of many Greeks living in the Ottoman lands- being combined to form a national suffering and survival narrative. The numerous, yet not continuous, post-independence conflicts between the two countries resulted in new traumatic episodes, thus adding more themes

to this overarching narrative: the Asia Minor Catastrophe, the population exchange that followed the Lausanne Treaty in 1922, and the Cyprus conflict, among others, became landmarks in the Greek collective imagination. Refugee memories, which centered on a narrative of pain, suffering and mourning of loss became part of the Greek historical discourse (Liakos 2002), found their place in history curricula in the country, and provided the chronotopical frame for the discursive solidification of the Turk as the archetypal enemy-Other of the Greek nation.

Drawing insights from the previous chapter, one could argue here that this image of Turk, as the Other, is not external to the Greek identity; rather, it seems to be constitutive of it as its mirror image.<sup>6</sup> This explains why attempts to alter the negative discursive representations of the Other, may very well be perceived as threats to one's own identity. It also explains why the relationship between Greece and Turkey has been a topic with important socio-psychological implications, and hence, very sensitive when it comes to public debate in both countries. Despite the fact that at a human level relationships may have often been friendly, "political events have been less favorable to a diminution of the perception of the Turks as a defining opposite: this remains a task for the future" (Carras 2004: 323). This is a difficult task, indeed, as introducing alternative discourses is a highly sensitive and complex endeavor. It requires acknowledgement of past traumas, while avoiding the demonization of the Other; embracing feelings of loss and suffering without inspiring revanchism; and acknowledging a national group's own

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<sup>6</sup> Maria Repoussi (2009) makes an interesting and important observation here: modern Greek identity –as is the case with all Balkan nationalisms– was developed not against the image of Ottomans/Turks as they really are, but against the image of Turks as existing in western literature. This also emphasizes a point that was raised earlier in this chapter: the development of Modern Greek identity was to a great extent discursively mediated through western literature.

responsibility for past misconduct without posing threats to the core loci of this group's self-esteem. It is hoped that the present study will contribute to this debate on best practices when it comes to discourse revision initiatives.

In this section the key discursive themes of the Greek national master narrative were touched upon, so as to provide insights on how modern Greeks perceive their history and identity, coupled with a preliminary discussion on how they position themselves vis-à-vis the Ottoman/Turkish Other. Next, issues of history education in Greece are explored and a number of revision initiatives that preceded the one discussed in this study are briefly presented.

### **History Education in Greece**

As typically the case with modern educational systems, the Greek school since the foundation of the Modern Greek state was put at the service of national identity-building. In the context of the emergence and consolidation of the Greek nation state, compulsory education became a medium for the cultivation of national identity. Accordingly, Modern Greek historiography served the national ideology of the newly established state (Bouzakis 2009). Although at different times, and especially after 1970s professional historiography in Greece was informed by alternative, innovative paradigms in approaching history, at the level of official history education curricula are dominated by more traditional approaches to national history. Simply put, since the inception of the Greek state, the governments of the country have traditionally linked history education to the inculcation of national loyalties in young people (Repoussi 2006), mostly through curricula based on event-recording in a plenary, linear fashion (Bouzakis 2009). As

Broeders (2008) suggests, looking at the institutional setting is a first step towards understanding the physiognomy of history education in a given context. This is, therefore, my starting point for this section.

### **Institutional Context of History Education in Greece**

Education, arts and sciences have a special place in the Greek Constitution; according to Article 16 “education is a basic mission of the state aiming at the moral, spiritual, professional and physical education of Greeks, the development of their national and religious consciousness and their cultivation into free and responsible citizens” (Constitution of Greece, 1975, Article 16.2). In addition, law 1566/1985 which regulates the structure and function of primary and secondary education, provides that “the goal of primary and secondary education is to contribute to the comprehensive, harmonious and balanced development of students’ intellectual and psychosomatic abilities, in order for them to be able to grow as fully developed personalities and live creatively, independently of their sex and origin” also adding that education should help students develop “loyalty to the homeland” and embrace “the genuine elements of the Orthodox Christian tradition” (Law 1566/1985, Article 1). In regards to the focus of this study, the basic parameters of history education in primary and secondary education in Greece are set by a document called the Integrated Common Framework of History Curricula (Διαθεματικό Ενιαίο Πλαίσιο Προγραμμάτων Σπουδών Ιστορίας), published by the Pedagogical Institute, an advisory body to the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs responsible for the implementation of the government’s educational policy. The Common Framework provides that “the general aim of history education is

the development of historical thinking and historical consciousness...[which are]...linked to the general aim of education, which centers on preparing responsible citizens”. This framework in conjunction with the ‘Analytical Program’ –a more detailed document meant to convey the desired competencies of history teaching in each grade- lay out analytically the key parameters of history curriculum for each grade of primary and secondary education.

Continuing with the institutional context, compared to other European countries, the educational system in Greece is highly centralized and under the tight control of the state (Avdela 2000; Koulouri and Venturas 1994; Repoussi 2009). The Ministry of Educational and Religious Affairs and its agencies are assigned the task of drawing and implementing the country’s educational policies, maintaining a strong hand in the process of curriculum development and leaving no room for flexibility to individual educators. Thus, for all school subjects there is a centrally planned and detailed curriculum, which is obligatory for all schools in the country (Repoussi 2009), while since 1937 a single state agency, the Organization for the Publication of Textbooks, has been assigned the task of publishing all school textbooks used in the country (Koulouri and Venturas 1994). Similarly, history education in primary and secondary levels is organized around an officially drawn and sanctioned syllabus and its single corresponding book (Avdela 2000). The production and approval of school textbooks is a responsibility of the Pedagogical Institute. There is no standard process for textbook production, which may happen in two ways: either through direct assignment to an author/ team of authors (traditionally the vast majority of cases, especially before 2003), or through an open

competition where interested authors –based on Pedagogical Institute guidelines- are invited to submit a sample part of the textbook (e.g. 20%) to an three-member evaluation committee comprising an academic, specialized in the relative subject matter, a school consultant and a teacher. Chosen candidates proceed to writing the whole textbook under the supervision of the Pedagogical Institution officials. The latter process has become a common practice after 2003, and it was the process followed for the writing of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook discussed in this study.

Overall, the Ministry of Education and the Pedagogical Institute, through drafting the analytical program, through the appointment of teachers and staff, through controlling funding and the textbook production process, and through a number of circulars and guidelines exert heavy control over history teaching in the whole country (Repoussi 2008). It is easily understood that such an institutional arrangement that allows for knowledge management and control in the schools of the whole country, renders history education a powerful medium at the hands of a government –or any other political and social group that has the power to influence the country’s educational agenda- for the promotion of desired ideologies throughout the country (relevant here is Ingrao’s conception of school curricula as ‘weapons of mass instruction’, discussed in the previous chapter). For Ephe Avdela, history curricula in Greece have traditionally reflected “the views held by the educational authorities on what is historically important or unimportant in the nation’s past; as such, it documents the choices, suppressions, omissions, and emphases that constitute ‘official history’” (2000: 240). It is this reality that has oftentimes made history education a prime arena for direct or indirect

confrontation between groups with divergent ideologies that are interested in influencing the discursive construction of Self and Other identities.

History teaching in the country starts at the fourth grade of primary school (age 9) and continues through the whole primary and secondary education. In the fourth grade students are taught the history of Ancient Greece with some limited references to Roman history. In the fifth grade (age 10) the curriculum centers on the history of the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium), which is presented as Medieval Greek history. Finally, in the sixth grade (age 11) students are exposed to modern and contemporary Greek history. This is a cycle that is repeated with minor changes in the three years of junior high school and the three years of senior high school (lyceum), where students can optionally take European history too (Repoussi 2006; 2008). In principle, history education should aim at: a) familiarizing students with the history of the Greek nation, as well as with key events and developments in world history, with an emphasis on those related to Greek history; b) helping students develop historical thinking, familiarity with historical research, and critical analytic skills when looking at the past; c) helping students appreciate the past, draw solid conclusion from the past, love their country and democracy, and evolve into good citizens (Avdela 2000). However, what is taught in the subject of history in Greek schools is practically a genealogy of the Greek nation (Repoussi 2009). The curriculum is based on a Helleno-centric narrative with limited discussion on historical developments in other parts of the world, which aims at the promotion of an idealized image of the Greek nation throughout history (Bouzakis 2009; Repoussi 2006), thus appearing to reflect a rather unbalanced collective axiology. In



terms of didactics, the basic characteristic of history teaching in Greece have traditionally been the linear narration, the plenary recording of information, predominance of ex-cathedra teaching with limited use of collaborative learning processes, and memorization by students of key events and dates. Speculation, the interpretation of socio-cultural and political processes, and international/global considerations seem to be absent (Bouzakis 2009).

### **Key Discursive/ Identity Themes as Reflected in History Curricula in Greece**

The content of history textbooks in Greece typically reflects the national master narrative, the basic themes of which were discussed earlier in this subject. It is through this exposure that young Greeks get to develop an understanding of their identity, the nation's history, its place in the world, and the relationship with outgroups. According to literature, the basic themes of the narrative existing in Greek history textbooks include:

- An idealization of the past and a romantic conception of the Greek nation as a natural unity, coupled with the idea of cultural continuity of Hellenism from antiquity to contemporary Greece (Avdela 2000; Soysal and Antoniou 2002), based on what Liakos calls “two of national historiography’s basic premises: a) the monolinear sequence of time; and b) homogenized space” (2002: 205).
- The inseparability of Hellenism and Eastern Orthodox Christianity (Hamilakis 2003; Zambetta 2000)
- An –at times benign and at other times explicit- axiological dimension in the representation of Self vis-à-vis the Other reflected in the belief in the superiority of the three thousand-year-old Hellenic civilization (Avdela 2000).
- A representation of the national group as a homogeneous entity, as a ‘deep, horizontal comradeship’ (Dragonas and Bar-On 2000), by silencing within-group social, gender, cultural, religious and political differences and conflicts, and including no discussion on minorities (Broeders 2008); the account offered in Greek

history textbooks appears to be one of selective memory, which “conceals and omits all those crucial elements that might disturb the image of continuity and homogeneity” (Avdela 2000: 248).

- Exclusion of the Ottoman legacy (especially with the purpose of affirming the spatio-temporal continuity of the nation), coupled with a representation of the Church as the nation’s main protector against the suppression of the Ottomans/Turks (Broeders 2008; Soysal and Antoniou 2002)
- A number of recurring threat narratives that center on the survival of the Greek nation, despite threats posed by external Others. As an example, a popular narrative is that of the Secret School (Krypho Scholeio). According to this narrative, when the Ottomans suppressed and restricted Greek education, clerics took the risk to teach secretly the Greek youth in underground schools, typically in churches or monasteries. It came as a result of this secret educational activity that Greeks were ultimately not assimilated by the Ottomans, with Secret Schools becoming the birthplace of the nation’s renaissance.
- When it comes to the historical relationship between Greeks and the Ottomans/Turks, the account that is traditionally dominant in history textbooks follows closely the national master narrative as described above. Thus, the Ottoman period is seen as a gap in the evolution of the Greek nation, a dark era of subjugation to a dynastic authority that inhibited the development of the nation at a time that its European partners were able to flourish culturally, politically and economically. The ‘Europeanness’ of the Greek nation is affirmed by representing the Ottoman period as an anomaly which slowed the dialectic engagement between Greece and other European nations “tainting Modern Greeks with ‘Easternness” (Soysal and Antoniou 2002: 65). Ultimately, however, in a prime example of externalization and projection of what are considered to be negative attributes of

one's identity, it is argued that this 'Easternness' and the four century-long presence of the Ottoman Other did not change the Greek national identity. After a period of what could be described as 'passive Greekness' (Broeders 2008), the nation managed to be reborn and join again its European family. Overall, history curricula in Greece served the national master narrative by providing a stereotypical, hostile image of the Ottoman/Turk as a key Other in the modern Greek collective psyche, and by reproducing a number of national myths regarding the period of the Ottoman rule and the Greek-Turkish relations in general, despite historiographical developments in the country that from 1970s onward have offered alternative, less simplistic and exclusivist accounts of the Ottoman period (Repoussi 2009).

In addition to the above, it is often the case that history textbooks include short excerpts from historical sources that accompany the main narrative of the textbook. This complementary material typically centers on description of wars/ battles and heroic deeds, either by individuals who experienced the events directly or people who lived at the time that these events took place. These sources are vested with an emotional dimension, and for Ephe Avdela (2000), are designed to appeal to students' feelings, thus laying the emotional substratum for the students to accept easier a 'documented' narrative. In other words, they lend authority and an aura of objectivity to the textbook's main narrative. Similarly, for Giannis Hamilakis (2003) the 'objectification' of history is a very clear pattern in history education in Greece: "...despite constant reference to objective empiric data and their illustration with archaeological remains and monuments, the narrative incorporates at times mythological elements and even more recent legends,

which are cited side by side with the selective empirical data” (Hamilakis, 2003: 55). In accordance with the theoretical insights offered in the first chapter of this study, historical narratives here bring together historical fact and legendary elaborations to form a cohesive story that sets the frames for the discursive construction of Modern Greek identity. The result of Greek youth’s exposure to such a narrative is the development of a self-image that, in addition to historically grounded elements, bears all the characteristics of a mythological past (Avdela 2000). Very illustrative to this end, are the results of the ‘Youth and History’ survey (in 1994/95), a European project designed to explore the links between pedagogy and identity formation and the development of historical consciousness as a result of the youth exposure to national master narratives at the public educational institutions of their countries. Given the insights offered in this section, it came as no surprise that out of the 27 countries in which the survey was conducted, the Greek youth demonstrated the highest degree of interest in the history of their own country, when they were asked to choose among the histories of their country, their region, Europe, and the world (Kindervater and von Borries, as cited in Dragonas and Bar-On 2000; Prodromou 2000).

### **Divergence between Professional Historiography and History Education – Attempts to Introduce New Curricula**

Based on the above, it appears that history education in Greece does not seem to fulfill a number of its stated aims, beyond the cultivation of ethnic pride and loyalty. It seems to be part of a national pedagogy with clear moral lessons meant to help students internalize the given normative order, especially when it comes to the relationship between Self and Other: although presented as a ‘truth’ discourse, the dominant narrative

operates more like a ‘defense weapon’ alarming young students against national enemies (Hamilakis 2003). The multiperspectivity component is absent from the teaching of history; rather, a single, simplistic view of history seems to be presented to students (a politically and ideologically charged view), who, in addition, are not offered the opportunity to develop their analytic skills when exploring the past and do not become acquainted with the specifics of historical research (Repoussi 2009). Importantly, students are not taught that historical sources do not necessarily offer an objective and authoritative account of the past, but may be subject to alternative interpretations that need to take into account the socio-cultural, political and economic context of the period in which they are placed (Avdela 2000). Efi Avdela summarizes the teaching of history in Greece as following: “while the aims of the official history syllabus make reference to modern research methods and the fact that the study of history offers students an opportunity to develop a more critical attitude...the version that finds its way into textbooks is an exceptionally traditional and linear historical account which focuses on events, is extremely ethnocentric, and does nothing at all to encourage critical thought” (2000: 249).

Importantly, history education in Greece has not managed to incorporate the new trends of contemporary historiography in the country. In 1970s and 1980s, following historiographic developments in other parts of the world, which were discussed in the previous chapter, a number of Greek historians offered alternative approaches to history, having both ideological and scientific motives (Koulouri 2002). These historians –mainly individuals who studied or lived abroad- produced historiographical work that attempted

to go beyond the ethnocentric narrative; placed emphasis on the hermeneutics dimensions of historical research and questioned positivism in historiography; argued that socioeconomic, cultural and political-ideological contexts should be taken into account in historical interpretation; and wished to see historical writing free from ideological and political manipulation (Bouzakis 2009; Broeders 2008; Koulouri 2002).<sup>7</sup> In addition, research on textbooks, especially concerning the images of ‘Self’ and national ‘Others’ started attracting the growing interest of historians and social scientists in the region, especially after the end of the Cold War and the new wave of nationalism in the Balkans (Koulouri and Venturas 1994). Although research done on Greek history textbooks has repeatedly suggested that the narrative promoted is rather nationalistic and one-sided (Broeders 2008), the new ideological, methodological and didactic trends of professional historiography have not been reflected in history textbook production in Greece. As a consequence, history education as in its current state appears to actually hinder the cultivation of historical thought by students in Greece and this is “neither pedagogically sound, nor ‘patriotic’” (Repoussi 2006: 8).

This, however, does not necessarily mean that attempts to change this reality and revise history curricula have not been made. Hamilakis (2003) suggests that although history textbook production seems to be strictly controlled by the state, history textbooks have been often subject to vigorous public debates. With history education being a ‘res publica’, political parties, pressure groups, non-state initiatives, and other groups, which

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<sup>7</sup> Of course, one could argue here that voices calling for a new approach to history education are very rarely devoid of ideological or political elements themselves. It is the author’s belief that it is rather unrealistic to expect that such historiographic discussions and dialogues on history education can be completely devoid of ideo-political coloring.

posses the necessary social and political capital, have managed to generate public debates, sometimes achieving to have their view included in the textbook or an ‘annoying view’ withdrawn from it (either toward a revisionist or toward a traditional end). Most commonly, as evident in the case explored in this study, there seems to be limited space for revisionist approaches in school textbooks. Even in cases where political authorities appeared willing to provide the space for alternative conceptions of history to make it into school curricula, the Greek society seemed to reprimand the state for not providing ‘proper’ national pedagogy (Hamilakis 2003). Before the 2006-2007 initiative which focused on the 6<sup>th</sup> grade textbook, three more attempts had been made to develop a revisionist curriculum at different grades in primary and secondary education, as described by Maria Repoussi (2009):

- The first initiative was carried out by Lefteris Stavrianos, a worldwide renowned historian, who in the beginning of 1980s was asked to write a textbook on world history to be used in the first class of senior high school. Stavrianos’ textbook was published in 1984 and was introduced in schools at the 1984-1985 school year. The book presented a narrative that was not ethnocentric and also included the Darwinian Theory on the evolution of species. After its publication this new textbook was seen as offensive to the Greek Orthodox religion and a number of religious circles, conservative groups, journalists and politicians organized campaigns for its withdrawal. Stavrianos’ textbook survived with some corrections until the end of 1980s, and it was ultimately withdrawn in 1990.
- Starting in April 1983 a parallel attempt was made by Vassilis Kremmydas, a leading figure in the school of ‘New History’, who was appointed to write a history textbook for the third grade of junior high school. In his textbook, entitled ‘Modern and Contemporary History: Greek, European, Global’, Kremmydas offered a revisionist and radical view on history. He placed Greek history within the broader

frame of the European and World history making interconnections and emphasizing interdependency of developments at regional and international levels. In addition, his approaching of the Greek collective past was devoid of national myths and stereotypes (Repoussi 2009). Upon its publication and its introduction to schools in 1984-1985 this new textbook was criticized by groups belonging to the right side of the political spectrum for political one-sidedness, and as “anti-scientific, anti-historic, anti-pedagogic, and Marxist style...[and that]...it did not put enough emphasis on Greek history” (Broeders 2008: 45). After it was submitted to corrections without the consent of the author (Repoussi 2009), the book survived until 1991, when it was withdrawn for its alleged ‘political one-sidedness’.

- The third case took place in 2002 and concerned a new history textbook for the third grade of the senior high school. Written by a team of new historians with the coordination of the professor George Kokkinos, this new textbook was entitled ‘History of Modern and Contemporary World, 1815-2000’, and incorporated a number of new historiographical approaches as described above. Importantly, it contextualized Greek history within a broader European and World frame. The controversy in regards to this textbook arose in regards to the critical presentation of the National Organization of Cypriot Fighters (EOKA), a Greek Cypriot organization the members of which fought against English colonialists for the liberation of Cyprus, as well as against the Turkish Cypriots. This critical approach to the role of EOKA in Cyprus “was viewed as an insult to the struggle of the Greek-Cypriots for liberation and national independence...[and as excusing]...the Turkish occupation of the island. The book was withdrawn even before the school year began” (Repoussi, 2009: 5).

The above attempts, similarly to the one explored in this study, tried to challenge parts of a national master narrative that is deeply embedded in the Greek collective imagination. Although some limited successes occurred, ultimately the defensive reactions of the Greek society did not allow for a sustained change in the way history is



taught as a subject in Greek schools. Accordingly, despite these initial steps to the contrary, the discursive construction of the national Self and Others, as well as the overall monolithic representations of the Greek collectivity's past, have retained their place in history curricula, contributing to the perpetuation of a popular discourse that appears to be characterized by axiologically unbalanced schemata. In the next section, the revision initiative that constitutes the focus of this study is analytically described.

## **An Attempt to Revise the 6th Grade History Curriculum in Greece**

### **Background and Specifics of the Initiative**

The fourth prominent case of history textbook revision was the one explored in this study and received wide social attention and the longest airtime in the media compared to the previous three. It was also the one that revealed in the most vivid way the strong relation between historiography, history education and identity politics (Repoussi 2009). In late 1990s and early 2000s with the financial support of large EU programs the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs introduced an initiative for the modernization of primary and secondary education in Greece. In the frames of this initiative, among other school subjects, the 6<sup>th</sup> grade history curriculum was to be altered. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook revision, although not officially linked to them, also appeared to have come as a product of the low-level agreements signed in 2000 between the Greek foreign minister at that time, George Papandreou, and his Turkish counterpart Ismael Cem, and should be seen in the context of the Greek-Turkish rapprochement, which started in 1999 after the two destructive earthquakes that hit the two countries in the summer of that year. Among other areas of cooperation, the agreements provided that

the two countries will work towards altering negative perceptions of each other within their respective societies, especially through history education. Thus, the book came as a part of a general effort, carried out and supported by top-level actors, to improve the relational space between the two peoples by altering preexisting toxic discourses.

Making a break with past practices of assigning the task of textbook writing – through the Greek Pedagogical Institution- to authors of government's preference, the decision on who will comprise the authoring committee of the new textbook was made through a process, in which candidates were asked to submit sample of their suggestions (covering at least 20% of the material to be included in the book). These samples were evaluated through a blind-process by a team of independent judges. The winners of the process were a team of historians which included Maria Repoussi, Hara Andreadou, Aristides Poutahides, and Armodios Tsivas. Team members were primarily influenced by the French School of historiography and placed an emphasis on short narration, inclusion of multiple historical sources in the textbook, and a form of detective learning for students (Bouzakis 2009). With Repoussi heading the team, the authors started working on the new textbook in 2003 and two years later the textbook was ready for publication (Bilginer 2013). Throughout the process, members of the authoring team cooperated with Ioannis Papagrigoriou, who was the textbook coordinator on the part of the Pedagogical Institute. The new textbook presented a significantly revised curriculum, both in terms of content and in terms of methodology, and offered an alternative national narrative, which deviated from the previous approach that was largely seen by the authors as nationalistic. The goal the new textbook intended to achieve appeared to be two-fold: a) to introduce a

new didactic/ methodological approach to history education; and b) to offer a balanced, less ethnocentric narrative that would be more in line with current professional historiography. The overall aim of the authors was to come up with a textbook that would stand as a tool for historical literacy and not as a medium for reproducing exclusivist discourses on history and collective identity (Repoussi 2006).

The methodological innovations of the new textbook included: encouragement of students' critical and analytic thinking by reducing the main text and including historical sources that students could critically examine, compare and reflect on; these sources included oral accounts, as well as written evidence, and various visual sources (pictures, maps, paintings, graphics, timelines, portraits and thumbnails accounted for more than 30% of the book) (Bilginer 2013; Repoussi 2008); establishing a laboratory-style, active learning environment, which would facilitate students' understanding of history by in-class discussion and activities, not through memorizing key events and dates; and endorsing cross-curricular learning by asking students to recall and apply knowledge and skills that they have acquired in other school subjects (Repoussi 2008). Finally, along with the main textbook, additional bibliographical suggestions were offered to the students if they were interested in further exploring any themes they were particularly interested in (Repoussi 2009).

In terms of content, the new book did not reproduce a significant part of popular historical narratives, which were included in the previous book, on the ground that there is lack of scientific evidence to support what was broadly considered to be a national narrative reflecting historical truth. The authors made an attempt to present a balanced

narrative that presents and discusses historical processes through multiple perspectives and is devoid of stereotypes, enemy images, victimization themes and idealization of Greek culture and history (Broeders 2008; Repoussi 2008). They, also, attempted to offer students a more dynamic perspective on history by: placing Greek history within a broader frame of European and World history; introducing multiperspectivity in exploring key historical events and processes; moving away from an event-based narrative towards a process-based narrative; placing less emphasis on political, diplomatic and military history and including in the textbook narrative social, economic and cultural history (e.g. history of childhood, history of everyday life, or women's history) (Repoussi 2009); devoting less space to renowned heroes and emphasizing the role of anonymous, laypeople heroes.

### **Popular Reactions to the Revised Curriculum**

It is understood from the insights offered above that, apart from the methodological innovations, the new textbook represented a break with key discursive themes of the national master narrative in Greece, especially in its effort to avoid the denigration of the national Others and offer multiple perspectives in approaching key events (either traumatic or glorious) in the collective experience of the Greek nation. In other words, the new book intended to offer a more axiologically balanced narrative than its predecessor. A number of points that were included (or not included) in the textbook narrative, as well as the way certain events and historical figures were presented, were perceived as controversial by wide parts of the Greek society and laid the ground for

popular reactions to emerge. If one wishes to make a preliminary summary of the key points of controversy, these would include:<sup>8</sup>

- Compared to the previous textbook the new book appeared to challenge the existence of the Secret School (Krypho Scholio), a theme of central importance for the Greek collective imagination. According to the national master narrative, during the period of the Ottoman presence, Krypho Scholio became the medium for the cultural and linguistic survival of Hellenism, through courageous clerics who resisted the ban on Greek education that Ottoman authorities had put in place. At a symbolic level, Krypho Scholio represents the struggle for survival during a period that the very existence of Hellenism was under threat; challenging this narrative was perceived as questioning core components of the national collective psyche.
- Objections were also raised in regards to the framing of the Asia Minor Catastrophe in the new textbook narrative. Compared to the previous textbook the authors used less dramatic language to describe what is considered one of the greatest tragedies in the history of Hellenism, a war that resulted in the uprooting of the Greek populations that resided in Asia Minor since antiquity. The issue that drew the most attention was the framing of the last dramatic episode in this war: the destruction of Smyrna and the forced displacement of the Smyrna Greeks. In the textbook it is read that “thousands of Greeks crowd at the port [of the city] and try to leave for Greece”. Popular objections centered on the choice of the verb ‘συνωστίζονται’ (to crowd; to jostle; to throng), which according to critics is too soft to describe the fact that these populations were violently pushed out of the city (with many of Greeks slaughtered before they managed to flee). Further objections were raised due to the absence of any reference in the textbook to the ethnic cleansing of Pontic Greeks before and during the Asia Minor Catastrophe. Authors were accused that they came up with a

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<sup>8</sup> As stated here, this list of points that triggered popular objections is preliminary and far from exhaustive. A more analytical discussion on the arguments –either for or against the textbook- made during the public dialogue at the time will be presented in the analytical part of the study, in chapter 5. There, specific opposition or supportive themes will be identified through systematic analysis of a number of articles and opinion pieces published in Greece during this debate.

- ‘light’ narrative that in the name of the Greek-Turkish rapprochement would sacrifice historical accuracy by downplaying the atrocities that the nation had suffered at the hands of Turks.
- Similarly, authors were also accused that the Ottoman period in general is described in the new textbook in light colors, not as a dark period in the history of Hellenism. For critics, the coexistence between Greek-speaking and Turkish-speaking populations under the Ottoman rule was not as smooth as represented in the textbook’s narrative. Illustrative is the issue of the Child Levy (Devşirme). This was the practice of taking young children away from their families (primarily of Christian background), convert them to Islam and train them with the purpose of creating a group of qualified individuals, free from familial attachments and loyal to the sultan, to employ in the Ottoman military or administration. Although in the popular discourse Devşirme is represented as forced kidnapping, the authors used the term ‘recruitment’, which was perceived by critics as an attempt to ‘soften’ the discursive representation of a practice that was in essence traumatic (and is represented as such in the Greek collective imagination)
  - The role of the church in the reawakening of the nation and the 1821 war of independence does not receive the prominence that, according to critics, it should have received in the textbook. Although according to popular discourse, clerics were among the pioneers of the nation’s struggle for freedom, contrary to the previous textbook, this did not appear to be a theme in the new textbook’s narrative.
  - The more limited coverage of political and military events, and the incorporation of social, cultural and economic history in the textbook’s narrative was seen as an effort to downplay the spirit of heroism and self-sacrifice that is characteristic of the Greek psyche and that was evident in numerous occasions, e.g. during the war of independence. Similarly, authors were accused that they placed disproportionate emphasis on the role of women, while they downplayed the role of famous heroes in the contemporary history of the nation (Repoussi 2006).

- Finally, the authors of the new textbook were accused that they placed more emphasis than needed on events that reveal bad qualities of the nation, such as civil wars, internal differences and conflicts (Repoussi 2006).

Reactions to the new book started even before its publication, within the Pedagogical Institute. Ioannis Papagrigoriou, the coordinator on the part of the Pedagogical Institute, did not appear as sharing the same approach with the authors (in regards to both the methodology and the content), and there seemed to be a far from smooth cooperation between him and the authors' team. His objections revolved mainly around two dimensions: a) in regards to the didactic approach of the textbook, he argued that relevant research suggests that students of the targeted age group have not yet developed the necessary skills to learn history from critically examining historical sources –simply put, eleven-year-olds are just too young for this; and b) in regards to the content of the book and the alternative views it offered on Greek history, Papagrigoriou foresaw that the book would cause social and political tumult (Broeders 2008). After some amendments, very common in such textbook writing processes, the textbook was published without significant deviations from the authors' initial two-fold aim of introducing methodological innovations and a balanced narrative. The textbook was to be introduced in schools in September 2006.

Even before its publication, it was no secret that the upcoming book would represent a methodological and discursive break from the past. That's why the authors expected some limited criticism on the parts of the Greek society who hold more traditional conceptions on the nation's history and identity (Bilginer 2013). Upon its publication the textbook was placed under scrutiny by state officials, politicians,

journalists and parts of the Greek clerical hierarchy, who wanted to find out whether it complied, as its predecessor, with the dominant ethnocentric discourse or deviated from it, as rumor had it (Repoussi 2006). Soon, many actors of diverse backgrounds, ranging from right-wing politicians and church leaders to left-wing groups, teachers and journalists expressed their opposition to the new textbook. One of the pioneers of this reaction was Dimitris Natsios, a teacher and theologian from the city of Kilkis, who in Spring 2006 attended a presentation of the book. Subsequently, he printed out a copy of the new textbook, which was available at the website of the Pedagogical Institute before it was officially published and distributed to the schools of the country. After reading it, he identified a series of objectionable/ controversial points, and he wrote a critique of the book, which he sent to the website 'Antivaro' (Counterweight), a popular blog where issues of national interest are primarily problematized and discussed online. Andreas Stalidis, the administrator of the website, initiated a campaign to have the textbook withdrawn from schools on the basis that not only was it anti-national, but also it was an overall bad book, with people of Greek descent from all over the world signing a petition to this end. Antivaro managed to collect about 11,000 signatures and sent faxes regularly to thousands of schools in the country, in order to keep teachers updated in regards to the latest developments. Some teachers returned the textbook via mail to the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, while many parents asked for the exemption of their 6<sup>th</sup> grade children from history classes.

As 2007 was an election year in Greece, and as history education is an issue of great interest to the public, it did not take long for an intense intellectual and ideological



‘war’ to break out in the country around the new textbook –a debate that engulfed large parts of the Greek society (Athens News, 12 April 2007; Bilginer 2013; Liakos 2009). Opposition to the new textbook was expressed, *inter alia*, through public demonstrations, the internet, TV and radio shows, opinion pieces published online or in newspapers, media campaigns, questions in the Greek parliament, and, as mentioned above, signature collection to petition the withdrawal of the book. The textbook was also condemned in churches during sermons following Sunday service, and the Holy Synod, the higher administrative body of the Greek Church, asked for it to be recalled (Liakos 2009). Archbishop Christodoulos on the national holiday of March 25, when the beginning of the War of Independence is celebrated, stated that the aim of the new textbook was to enslave the Greek youth (Bilginer 2013). The right-wing party LAOS (Popular Orthodox Rally) and the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) alike condemned the book, with LAOS leader, Giorgos Karatzaferis, calling the book a ‘historic monstrosity’ (Bilginer 2013). Personal *ad hominem* attacks were not absent either, with articles about authors’ private lives being published in different media.

Centering primarily on the points listed at the beginning of this section, objection themes to the new textbook included:<sup>9</sup> the book being provocative for the Greek collective memory and trying to undermine the very foundations of Greek national identity; the authors seeking the creation of a public history education geared towards the de-hellenization of the Greek society; the authors promoting historical forgetfulness in the name of good relationships with Turkey (especially through downplaying the

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<sup>9</sup> As mentioned in a previous footnote, a systematic analytical discussion on opposition arguments will take place later in this study.

suffering of the nation at the hands of the Ottomans/ Turks); the authors promoting the loosening of ties between the nation and Greek Orthodox Church (e.g. by making no reference to the Secret School in the textbook narrative or by downplaying the role of clerics in the Nation's struggle for independence); the textbook promoting the imperatives of globalization through weakening patriotic consciousness; the whole initiative representing new imperialism and the imperatives of the free market and the European Union (these type of objections came from the left of the political spectrum). At the extreme, some opponents to the initiative claimed that this group of historians – and the ones supporting the revision initiative- are in the service of foreign centers, like the US, the EU or even Turkey, and they should be seen as agents of the New World Order (Bilginer 2013; Liakos 2009; Repoussi 2006, 2008, 2009). Overall, opponents claimed that extremely important elements for the development of youth's national consciousness were missing from the new textbook (Broeders 2008). A different string of objections were also raised by a number of historians who saw the new textbook not as representing a break from the previous narratives, but rather as continuing a pattern of exclusion of the history of Eastern Hellenism (i.e. Asia Minor and Pontus) from school history textbooks (Agtzidis, 2008). In other words, through this prism, the new textbook was criticized because, similarly to the previous ones, it centered on the history of mainland Hellenism, leaving out –or making very brief references- to the history of Eastern Hellenism. It is important to note here that reactions to the new textbook were also widespread in Cyprus, where Greek Cypriot officials from the Ministry of Education called for corrections to be made in the textbook (Repoussi 2006).

Popular reaction to the book was sustained throughout the 2006-2007 academic year, while it reached a climax around March 25<sup>th</sup> 2007, the national holiday dedicated to the commemoration of the War of Independence. During this period, the Minister of Education and Religious affairs, Marietta Giannakou Koutsikou stood by the authors despite the political cost that such a stance would entail. However, in the light of popular reactions the Ministry asked for the opinion of the Academy of Athens, the highest research institution in the country, on the textbook. The Academy identified 70 points in the textbook that, in the opinion of Academy members, needed further elaboration or corrections. The report of the Academy also concluded that the new textbook did not appear to serve the national interests in the context of Greek national memory (Bilginer 2013). In a press conference in August 2007, Minister Giannakou announced that she would not give in to political pressures and that, as a minister, she respected state institutions and the procedures that produced the textbook. She also announced that during summer 2007 correction were made and a new revised version of the textbook would be distributed to schools in September 2007 for the beginning of the new school year (Repoussi 2009). The release of the new version, however, did not stop opponents from campaigning until the textbook is withdrawn. After the national elections of September 2007, the new Minister of Education, Evripides Stylianides, asked again the opinion of the Academy of Athens, this time on whether the corrections in the new version of the textbook were sufficient. The response of the Academy was negative, and subsequently, Minister Stylianides decided to withdraw the book and replace it temporarily with the book used in the previous years, which was written in 1989. Shortly

after this, a new book was commissioned to a team of historians under the leadership of university professor Ioannis Kolliopoulos. This new textbook was published in 2012 and introduced in schools in the 2012-2013 academic year. This book was viewed as even more conservative than the 1989 textbook and it was criticized, this time mainly by professional historians, for its ethnocentric approach to history. Objections were also raised in regards to the process of authors' selection (direct commission instead of open competition). Overall, it seems that the 2006 revision initiative triggered a defensive reaction which led to the production of yet another new textbook that not only restored the status quo ante, but signaled a shift toward an even more conservative path in history education in the country.

### **Preliminary Understanding of the Popular Responses: 'History Wars', Perceived Identity Threats, and Resistance to Discursive Shifts**

The above discussion vividly illustrates that the introduction of a revised curriculum that appeared to offer a more axiologically balanced account of the Greek collective experience was not embraced by wider parts of the Greek society. On the contrary, the discursive shifts it attempted to introduce based on strategies of transformation were perceived –by many critics- as a challenge to a long-established version of Greek identity, as this had been discursively constructed through dominant narrative frames. Approaching in-group achievements in a more moderate way, avoiding the glorification of wartime heroes and deeds (a great source of pride for any national group), and placing less emphasis on the suffering of the nation at the hands of outsiders, the new curriculum seemed to be attempting to shorten the 'axiological distance' between Self and Other, thus challenging indirectly the moral superiority of the Greek nation

(violation of the self-esteem principle). Pointing out historical instances, during which the nation appeared divided around the interests of different groups, questioned the view of the nation as a horizontal comradeship and as a single, unitary social being. This appeared to challenge the efficacy and competency that is believed to characterize the nation's collective agency. Overall, the alternative narrative offered by the book, being perceived as a threat to the identity structures and normative orders of the Greek society, triggered anxiety among wider social groups and automatically put at place identity-securing defensive responses. These reactions included the whole repertory of tactics that Karlberg (2012) offers: absolutist stances and rejection of the ambiguity the new curriculum attempted to introduce; statements underlining the threats to identity, security and order the new curriculum posed; questioning of the scientific, personal and patriotic integrity of the book authors and the supporters of the initiative; ridicule of doubters and dissenters; and sloganistic and chauvinistic appeals to unity.<sup>10</sup>

Importantly, a central part of the public debate around the 2006 history textbook appeared to involve questions on the relationship between what is presented as academic knowledge and what is perceived as knowledge rooted in a people's collective consciousness, with the latter being reflected in popular discourse.<sup>11</sup> Supporters of the initiative framed the debate as revolving around the key question of what is worth teaching to the nation's youth: is history education the medium for reproducing dominant

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<sup>10</sup> As will be discussed later in this study, similar discursive tactics, especially of derogatory nature, were also employed by a number of supporters of the initiative, in their effort to respond to opposition arguments. This is reflective of the toxic turn the public dialogue took at the peak of its escalation.

<sup>11</sup> Although sometimes this debate is framed as a debate between professional historiography and popular conceptions on a nation's history, the author of this study would shy away from adopting such a language in the given context, as the debate explored in this study also included criticism to the new textbook coming from professional historians.

conceptions on the genealogy of the nation and its heroic past, even if these conceptions include at times mythic elements, or is it a tool for historical literacy, through which students approach critically and reflect on past experiences at a level that surpasses the strict national frame. For Antonis Liakos (2009), characteristic of the public discussion on the 2006 revision initiative was that the participants in the debate seemed to be speaking different ‘languages’. For him, on the one hand there was the language of history, scholarship and truth, and on the other hand there was the language of identity, affect, and pride. According to this argument, what happened in 2006-2007 in regards to the history textbook revision initiative in Greece may be partly attributed to a peculiar epistemological debate in which different types of ‘truths’ clashed: the truth of what is imprinted in the collective psyche and the truth of what is presented as academic historical knowledge. For some academic historians, a big part of the commonly accepted ‘ancestor’s truth’ may be based on mythic foundations, while ‘real truth’ centers on common acceptances of the scholarly work of professional historians (Liakos 2009). As mentioned above, the author of this study would not adopt such a sharp dichotomy in describing the 2006-2007 debate on the 6th grade history textbook. This is because part of the opposition to the textbook –less visible than extreme opposition voices- came from professional historians, who raised critical voices in regards to some aspects of the initiative. To add more, framing the debate along the lines of a bipolar between ‘academic knowledge’ and ‘popular consciousness’ stands as a tactic to: a) present the debate as a binary comprising academic historians on one side, and non-experts on the other, thus grouping all critical voices –which were very diverse- under one large

‘opposition umbrella’; and b) attach higher legitimacy to one side, somehow dismissing arguments raised by non-supporters of the revision initiative. As will be discussed later in this study, this was a tactic that some, less moderate, supporters of the initiative employed during the debate.

Leaving aside the question of who is to represent ‘academic knowledge’ and what kind of truth is vested a higher epistemological status –an oftentimes elusive question indeed-, the point that needs to be made here is that even when national identities appear just as mental constructs of collective unity and autonomy, they become very real in the attitudinal and emotional consequences they entail for individuals. For people who have come to internalize given conceptions of collective identity and history, even if these include some mythic elements, attempted discursive shifts are naturally perceived as endangering not only patriotism but the very core components of national identity itself. Accordingly, when it comes to publically discussing questions related to conceptions of identity and approaches to a Nation’s collective past, these popular understandings of identity need to be taken into consideration, and related sensitivities need to be addressed.

Importantly, affective dimensions in approaching national history are not to be dismissed; if they remain unaddressed, the affective realm would become the monopoly of less moderate voices that would capitalize on popular insecurities to promote their goals. In the case explored in this study, using emotional/ affection-centered rhetoric, part of the opposition to the textbook –particularly the most populist, which overshadowed criticism that might have raised more scientifically grounded concerns in regards to the textbook’s didactic approach and content- found a large, receptive audience and

mobilized the necessary social and political support to push for the withdrawal of the textbook, ultimately achieving this aim. Here, the most popular narrative that targeted the revision initiative appeared as a narrative of resistance: resistance to the dissociation of history as a school subject from ‘our history’; resistance to a discursive shift that was viewed as imposed on the Greek society; resistance to globalization’s centrifugal dynamics that require peoples to forget their national roots and identities; and resistance to the relativization of history and the falsification of the nation’s collective experience. This intense public debate appeared to further radicalize Greek society, solidifying/galvanizing preexisting exclusivist and axiologically unbalanced identity constructs.<sup>12</sup> Very aptly, Maria Repoussi notes that their textbook in the popular consciousness seemed to represent all the existential threats that Greek society was facing: “it no longer mattered what it actually said, but *what it symbolized*” (2009: 6, emphasis added). It comes as no surprise, then, that the book has acquired the status of a negative prototype in the Greek popular imagination, and since the 2006-2007 debate, every time a national topic is discussed, the book is referenced as an example of challenges to Greek identity, against which people of Greece need to be alerted.

Finally, in conjunction with identity threats and divergent conceptions of truth, a third thread that was identified in the first chapter as generating resistance to discursive shifts is the fact that dominant narratives reflect given power arrangements. In many ways the public debate over the 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook of the years 2006-2007 reflected a struggle among different groups in the Greek society over who would get to

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<sup>12</sup> Hence, the textbook that was produced after the initiative, in 2012, and is currently taught at the 6<sup>th</sup> grade has been criticized by academic historians as conservative as and even more ethnocentric than the old one.



determine what is taught to the nation's youth, and subsequently who would influence the national identity production process within educational institutions. On the one hand there were groups whose status was to a certain extent affirmed by the existing narrative (e.g. the Greek Church) and firmly opposed the revision initiative; on the other hand, there were groups who felt that their understanding of Greek identity and history was not popularized enough in primary and secondary education and attempted to revise existing constructs by introducing or supporting a new history curriculum (e.g. team of authors and the supporters of the revision initiative). At the same time, there were voices in the public debate at the time, which argued that neither traditional nor revisionist approaches incorporated their truth in the new curriculum and talked about recurring patterns of exclusion or non-recognition of their narrative (e.g. a number of historians who wished to see more coverage of the history of Eastern Hellenism). Finally, voices coming from traditional left (e.g. the Communist Party) saw the debate as a superficial controversy between 'ultra-patriots' and 'progressive cosmopolitans', who systematically elevate the importance of nation as a historiographical unit of analysis, thus neglecting the importance of class struggle and the revolutionary forces that lay behind historical progress. An analytical discussion on these will be offered in chapter 5; what is important to remember here is that the debate of the years 2006-2007 also manifested itself as a multiparty contestation on who will have the greater influence in the institutionalization of collective memory and in the production of the Greek society's 'regime of truth'. As evident in the discussion in this chapter, instigating discursive shifts toward more axiologically balanced narratives is rarely an easy endeavor. Not only may such

initiatives fail to promote the intended changes, but also they may trigger resistance responses, pushing societies toward a more conservative path in a reactionary way. Yet, such shifts are a key to the improvement of the relational space between groups that have come to see each other as enemies. There is a great need, therefore, for people interested in improving relations across national identity boundaries to understand deeper defensive reactions like the ones described in this chapter, and look for ways to address the challenges associated with these reactions. Accordingly, the intention of this study is to explore deeper and more analytically the reaction of the Greek society to this revision initiative and identify the defense mechanisms that are put at place when a collectivity faces an attempt to alter key master narrative constructs that set the frame for the discursive production of its very identity. In the following chapter the methodological specifics of this research are presented and discussed.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN

The previous two chapters offered the theoretical insights upon which the present study draws, as well as a detailed background of the case study explored in this research. In this fourth chapter the methodological design of the study is presented.

### **Few Words on the Intention of the Study**

The present research is a *descriptive* study, as the goal was to generate further insights on a social phenomenon, adding to the descriptive precision of the existing literature. Parts of the findings could be further utilized in explanatory research in the future. According to D. Sandole (2009: 422), “one conducts critical systematic inquiry in order to advance either (a) a theoretical or (b) a practical agenda”. In regards to the theoretical agenda, the intention of this research was to take a further step towards understanding the cognitive and emotional responses of a society when attempts to change the dominant historical narratives are made; the insights acquired through this research are useful in improving our understanding of the defense mechanisms at play in the face of initiatives meant to alter given forms of collective axiology. In other words, this research intended to add to the existing knowledge on social identity dynamics and collective axiology by analyzing a case about which little systematic inquiry has been conducted using the theoretical insights provided by the theories discussed here. The overall intention was for the findings to add to the descriptive richness of already existing

theories. Moreover, reaching out to a series of parties involved in this case in an attempt to explore issues of historical narratives and collective axiology allowed the analyst to understand the given social reality not only as it is directly observed but as it is idiosyncratically experienced by the parties (Moses & Knutzen, 2007). This helped the researcher capture important dimensions of parties' social world as a fabric of meanings, and as a system that needs to be "understood from within, rather than explained from without" (Hollis 1994: 16). Finally, at practical level, the insights drawn through the proposed research may be utilized in future initiatives in order to identify people's concerns and objections and, accordingly, develop strategies to address them, thus, increasing the chances for success.

### **Research Questions and General approach to Social Scientific Inquiry**

As discussed in previous chapters, this study attempted to provide answers to the following research questions:

- a) Did the narrative of the new 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook represent a break from the axiological patterns of the existing national master narrative as found in the old textbook? In other words, was the new narrative more axiologically balanced than the previous one?
- b) Why did large parts of the Greek society respond negatively to the curriculum revision initiative –a reaction that ultimately led to the withdrawal of the new textbook? The intention here was to explore the factors that shaped people's response to an initiative that was meant to change dominant historical narratives

and break the cycle of given collective axiologies. Based on the findings a number of lessons learned on how to facilitate positive change would be identified.

As the subject of this study is a complex social phenomenon, the research adopted a complexity approach to systematic inquiry. In terms of scientific research, such an approach –the employment of multiple methods of systematic inquiry- yielded multiple benefits; it, above all, allowed the researcher to examine social reality through multiple perspectives, thus, capturing this reality in a more synthetic and comprehensive way (Brewer and Hunter 2006). Accordingly, this research was a multi-stage process, in which efforts were made to: a) identify the axiological patterns promoted by the old textbook and compare them with the respective patterns of the new textbooks; b) explore people's response to the introduction of the new textbook and identify the factors that shaped this response. More specifically, answers to the two research questions were elicited through the employment of the following methodologies:

1. *Content analysis* of the two history textbooks allowed for a systematic comparison of the axiological patterns existing in the narratives of the two textbooks (first research question);
2. *Thematic analysis* of newspaper articles and opinion pieces helped the researcher explore popular reactions to the initiative and identify key themes in regards to the factors that shaped people's responses to this initiative (second research question);
3. *In-depth interviews* with people involved in the initiative and supporters of the initiative in order to grasp their understanding of what went wrong; this was complemented with interviews with key individuals from groups that opposed the

initiative in order to get an understanding of the factors that shaped their negative reception of the initiative (second research question again). The insights offered in these interviews were thematically analyzed.

It is understood here that the analysis conducted in this study concerned both the individual (micro) and societal levels (macro).

### **Textbook Analysis**

As mentioned above, the first step in this research was a comparative analysis of the two history textbooks. The researcher here intended to identify the differences between the two textbooks in terms of collective axiology and see whether the new textbook did, indeed, mark a shift to a more inclusive narrative. In order to carry out this task, archival research was conducted through content analysis of the two textbooks in an effort to explore any divergence in the ways in which the fundamental differences between Self and Other are represented in the two textbooks. Exploring through content analysis the differences between the two textbooks could shed light on how the two books represent the ‘Self-Other’ relationship throughout the Greek nation’s collective experience. It is important to note here that for the purposes of this study a decision was made to focus the exploration of ‘Other’ representations on the group that has historically and consistently stood as the Greek Self’s significant Other: the Ottomans/Turks. This excluded other groups that may be present in the narrative of the two textbooks, such as other neighboring and European countries. Although the researcher understands that including those groups would have rendered the analysis more comprehensive, the choice to focus on the Ottomans/Turks was informed by an understanding that this group has a

special place in the Greek history, traditionally representing ‘Otherness’. This is especially true if one takes into consideration that, in terms of historical periods, the two textbooks were meant to present the Greek nation’s collective experience under the Ottoman rule and post-independence, a period, during which, the Ottoman/Turkish Other was more often than not the key reference Out-group for the Greek self.

In regards to the choice of the specific methodology used here, content analysis is generally considered an appropriate method for studying patterns communicated through semiotic-mnemonic artifacts (Zhang & Wildemuth 2009). As the intended task was to extract deep meaning from the two textbooks, the analysis at this stage of the project was latent; the researcher did not limit himself to what was manifestly present in the text, but extended the analysis to an “interpretive reading of the symbolism underlying the data” as this symbolism unfolded within the broader context of the explored case. As suggested by Pingel (2010), through this integrative view of the text and its specific context, the analysts goes beyond the obvious content to explore the underlying connotations that the text may evoke to students’ minds.

### **Operationalization & Coding**

For the purposes of this study, it was decided that units of analysis would be references to Self and references to Other as existing in the two textbooks.<sup>13</sup> Any time mention of Self or Other is made in the texts this would constitute a separate unit to be analyzed (may that reference be a word, a sentence, a paragraph/ section, or an

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<sup>13</sup> The reader is reminded here that in the frames of this research the ‘Other’ is confined to the Ottoman/Turkish Other.

illustration/picture<sup>14</sup>). It was also decided that parts of the two textbooks that make no reference to either ‘Self’ or ‘Other’ would not be included in the analysis. The next decision to be made, before proceeding with the systematic analysis of the two textbooks, concerned the development of a coding schema relevant to the phenomenon under study (collective axiology in the two textbooks’ narratives). At this stage, the categories included in the coding schema were developed analytically, drawing theoretically from the concept of collective axiology. In order for the reader to grasp an understanding of how key concepts were operationalized and how the codes were developed it is useful at this point to revisit briefly the theoretical insights offered in a previous chapter in regards to the concept of collective axiology. Collective axiology plays a critical role in determining intergroup relations; as a system of value commitments it “offers moral guidance to maintain relations with *those within*, and *outside*, a group” (Korostelina 2007: 87, emphasis added). Moreover, it was presented that collective axiology comprises two dimensions: ‘axiological balance’ and ‘collective generality’. The former refers to the balance between positive and negative characteristics attributed to both ingroup and outgroup –“a parallelism of virtues and vices attributed to groups” (Rothbart and Korostelina, 2006: 46). Collective generality, on the other hand, refers not only to the processes through which the Other is represented in ingroup’s discourse, but also to *the degree of simplification of such representations*. For Rothbart and Korostelina (2009), collective generality comprises four dimensions: a) homogeneity of perceptions and behaviors of outgroup members, b) long term stability of their beliefs, attitudes and

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<sup>14</sup> As will be discussed later in this section, the coding for pictures was different than that for written text.



actions, c) resistance to change, and d) perceived scope or range of category of the other. High levels of collective generality are associated with representations of the Other as homogenous and its identity, beliefs and behavior as unchanging over time (Rothbart and Korostelina, 2009). Low axiological balance, coupled with high levels of collective generality, are very likely to give rise to problematic relationships and tension between groups. Again here, the collective axiology reflected in history textbooks may exert important impact both on students' perceptions of Self and Other and on their behavior towards the outgroup.

Drawing from the above theoretical insights, in an effort to operationalize collective axiology and develop a relevant coding schema that would allow for meaningful and systematic analysis of the two textbooks, the two dimensions of collective axiology as offered by Rothbart and Korostelina (2009) were used: a) axiological balance; and b) collective generality. In regards to the first dimension, references to Self and Other as exist in the two textbooks would be categorized under one of the following codes:<sup>15</sup>

1. Reference to 'Self':

- a) Positive attributes of 'Self' (e.g. heroic, moral, culturally superior);
- b) Neutral; and
- c) Negative attributes of 'Self' (e.g. aggressive, immoral, imperialist)

2. Reference to 'Other':

- a) Positive attributes of 'Other' (similarly to above);

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<sup>15</sup> The coding schemata used in this part of the study may be found in Appendix I.

b) Neutral; and

c) Negative attributes of ‘Other’ (similarly to above)

The difference in the frequency of positive and negative attributes of ‘Self’ and ‘Other’ as reflected in the textbooks would reveal whether the narrative each of them provides is characterized by axiological balance in representations of ‘Self’ and ‘Other’. In addition, it was decided that, as an extra step, it would be revealing to explore what constitutes the basis upon which ‘Self’ and ‘Other’ are evaluated. For this reason, while shorting references to ‘Self’ and ‘Other’ by the above mentioned categories, an effort was made to identify the reasons underlying each positive or negative evaluation of ‘Self’ and ‘Other’ (e.g. military successes? political, cultural, economic achievements? group’s inherent characteristics? reference to a group’s historical past?). It was believed that, among others, this would allow the researcher to identify common sources for Greek ingroup’s self-esteem, as well as sources for negative evaluation of the ‘Other’. As opposed to the initial coding schema, this further categorization came as a result of an inductive process driven by elements emerging from the data. This process allowed for another level of categorization of the findings based on the underlying meanings evident in each unit of analysis. As will be shown in the analytic presentation and discussion of findings, the themes emerging out of this inductive process added an extra level of understanding of the textbooks’ narrative and allowed the researcher to identify clusters of themes as to the sources of positive or negative evaluation of ‘Self’ and ‘Other’.

Turning to the second dimension of ‘collective axiology’, the operationalization and coding of ‘collective generality’ was again informed by the theoretical insights

offered by Rothbart and Korostelina (2009). Here, in order to capture analytically *the degree of simplification in the representations of 'Self' and 'Other'* as found in the two textbooks, a schema was developed along the dimension of ingroup homogeneity (all group members share the same characteristics and exhibit the same behavior) and absence of change over time (group characteristics, beliefs and behavior remain unchanged over time). According to this schema, references to 'Self' and 'Other' would be categorized as following:

1. Reference to 'Self':

- a) 'Self' is represented as a homogeneous group
- b) Within-'Self' differences are acknowledged
- c) 'Self' exhibits unchanged behavior/ beliefs over time
- d) 'Self' is represented as an evolving community

2. Reference to 'Other':

- a) 'Other' is represented as a homogeneous group
- b) Within-'Other' differences are acknowledged
- c) 'Other' exhibits unchanged behavior/ beliefs over time
- d) 'Other' is represented as an evolving community

This analysis allowed the researcher to explore whether the two textbooks offer students a stereotypical, static image of Self and Other, where within-group differences are not acknowledged and evolution over the flow of time is not discussed.

It is important to note here that apart from the text, a sound analysis of history textbooks needs to include analysis of illustrations found in them, as the latter are never

used arbitrarily, but rather they are meant to convey certain messages to their audience (students) –messages that complement and support the narrative provided in the text. A complication that arose here was that illustrations could not be studied using the above-mentioned two schemata that were developed to analyze text in regards to axiological balance and collective generality. It would be hard, for example, for an analyst to determine whether a famous painting included in the textbook offers a representation of ‘Self’ as an evolving community. However, it was the firm belief of the author that illustrations can tell us a great deal about the narrative promoted by each textbook; if the new textbook signaled indeed a paradigmatic shift in how both ‘Self’ and ‘Other’ are represented in the national narrative, the choice of visual material included in it would be revealing to this end. Despite being slightly different from those used to analyze text, the schema used to explore the visual representations of ‘Self’ and ‘Other’ in the two textbooks was also theoretically informed by the concept of collective axiology. More analytically it included the following codes:

1. Visual Reference to ‘Self’:

- a) Material illustrating positive attributes of ‘Self’ (e.g. heroic, moral, culturally superior);
- b) Neutral; and
- c) Material illustrating negative attributes of ‘Self’ (e.g. aggressive, immoral, imperialist)

2. Visual Reference to ‘Other’:

- a) Material illustrating positive attributes of ‘Other’ (similarly to above);

b) Neutral; and

c) Material illustrating negative attributes of 'Other' (similarly to above)

As an extra step here, representations in each category were further explored along three dimensions: a) Direction of Representation (Action vs. Static); b) Who is represented in character portraits (e.g. military, diplomatic, political, cultural leader; man, woman); and c) Intergroup relations (peaceful coexistence/ cooperation vs. conflict). Taking a look at these dimensions would help the analyst identify the ways in which each textbook delineated visually the fundamental virtues and vices of 'Self' and 'Other', and how the two narratives differed.

It would be useful at this point to reiterate a point made earlier in regards to data coding and analysis. It is understood that a purely deductive approach would be unlikely to capture the multiplicity of meanings existing in the two textbooks in regards to the dimensions that constitute the focus of this study. Thus, throughout the process, the initial coding schemata, which were produced deductively, were further enriched inductively through a dialectic engagement of the researcher with the actual data. This integration of deductive and inductive processes in carrying out the task of analyzing the content of the two textbooks was a conscious choice. As a purely deductive development of coding categories might not suffice to capture the range of possible meanings embedded in the text and visual materials, including an inductive dimension in the analysis would allow the researcher to immerse himself in the data and explore the reality of the text in a more comprehensive way. As mentioned earlier, this dialectic process added extra levels of categorization of the findings, clustering together at a deeper level thematic threads that

weave the narratives of the two textbooks, when it came to representations of ‘Self’ and ‘Other’.

In regards to the validity of content analysis and the development of generally acceptable categories, an effort was made to determine: a) how well a formed category captures the whole range of possible meanings of the concept as found in the textbook; and b) what the criterion is for deciding which unit (indicator) corresponds to what category. After the initial coding schemata were formed, the researcher tested them against real data, and asked at the same time the opinion of colleagues, who were familiar with the phenomenon to be studied (a form of triangulation). This ensured that the schemata used in this study were precise and comprehensive. Moreover, prior to conducting the analysis, inter-coder reliability was used in an effort to determine the consistency of the coding. An agreement of 80% between the coders is generally considered one that renders the coding reliable. For the purposes of this study two colleagues served as additional coders. Between the researcher and the first coder there was an overall agreement of 85% in the coding of the textual references, and 90% in the coding of the visual materials. The levels of agreement between the researcher and the second coder were 87.5% and 85% respectively.

As a final note for this section, it is no news that there have been numerous studies that focused on the representation of ‘Other’ in textbooks in Greece, as well as in a multiplicity of other countries and regions. This is useful in and of itself and offers revealing insights in regards to how the Other is seen in the national master narrative. The strength of looking at textbooks through the theoretical lenses of collective axiology is

that it allows for an analytic understanding how the ‘Other’ is represented *in comparison* with the Self. It was discussed in the theoretical chapter of this study that a main source for the development of stereotypes is a group’s need for positive self-esteem. Group members in order to achieve a high self-esteem engage in favorable comparisons between Self and Other. This vests Self and Other representations with a relative dimension: self-esteem is achieved not in absolute but rather in comparative/ relative terms. This is why, if one wishes to understand the evaluative dimensions that underlie a national group’s representations of other collectivities as social subjects, both Self and Other representations need to be studied at the same time.

The first stage of the research, the specifics of which were described in this section, intended to explore the differences in the axiological patterns of the two textbook’s narratives and see whether the new book truly offered a more axiologically balanced representation of Self and Other. The findings are presented and discussed in Chapter 4. In the second stage of the research, an effort was made to answer the second research question of the study: what factors shaped people’s response to an initiative that intended to challenge the dominant axiological patterns of the national master narrative? Why did large parts of the Greek society react negatively to it? In order to carry out this task archival setting was combined with natural setting. First, a number of articles and opinion pieces that discussed the revision of the 6th grade history curriculum were explored through thematic analysis so as to examine the rhetoric around the issue; it was hoped a systematic exploration of the public debate on the issue would help the researcher identify basic themes in popular reactions to the revision initiative. Second, in-

depth interviews were conducted with a series of stakeholders (both supporters and opponents of the initiative) in order to elicit their opinions on what went wrong and what factors seemed to influence popular responses to the initiative.

### **Thematic Analysis of online articles/ opinion pieces**

At the center of an intense public debate, the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade textbook revision initiative was the subject of a plethora of articles and opinion pieces published in the country, especially between summer 2006 and fall 2007, which was the peak of the debate. Taking a look at the arguments used in this debate would open a window for the analyst to understand why the revision initiative attracted so much attention and what the reasons behind the extensive popular reactions were. The goal here is to reveal a number of factors that seemed to inform popular responses to the new textbook.

The sample comprised a total of 100 pieces, published in popular newspapers, online fora, and personal and professional blogs. The sampling technique used to identify the articles was purposive sampling. While conducting an online search to identify relevant pieces, I came across a chronology of articles written on the new textbook, pulled together by the new textbook's authoring team. The list included more than 1000 articles and documents related to the revision initiative written between May 2003 (the initial call for proposals by the Pedagogical Institute) and May 2008. The list was published on Maria Repoussi's personal page at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and seemed to be pretty inclusive.<sup>16</sup> Out of this list I included in my sample 100 pieces written between May 2006 –when the new textbook was first presented to teachers- and

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<sup>16</sup> This list can be found here: [http://users.auth.gr/marrep/PS\\_REPOUSI/EL/xroniko/index.htm](http://users.auth.gr/marrep/PS_REPOUSI/EL/xroniko/index.htm)



October 2007, a few weeks after the new Minister of Education and Religious affairs, Evripidis Stilianidis, decided to officially withdraw the new textbook from Greek schools. The pieces included in the sample were written by individuals/groups who: represented certain political blocks/traditions (e.g. Mailis of the Greek Communist Party; Samaras of the New Democracy party; Haritos of LAOS); are renown historians (e.g. Liakos, Chourmouziadis, Koulouri, Fotiadis); known journalists (e.g. Mpoukalas); represented the Church of Greece or were closely identified with it (e.g. the Holy Synod, Cholevas); were part of the initiative (e.g. Repoussi); served in key institutional positions at the time (e.g. Papagrigoriou); were active in publically advocating for or against the revision initiative (e.g. Natsios); were teachers (e.g. Raptis; Teacher's Associations). Finally, I also included in my sample a number of pieces written by individuals who have been public figures –in different capacities- for many years and seem to have a considerable following/readership (e.g. Theodorakis, Zouraris, Andrianopoulos, Giannaras).

While constructing my sample, I made an effort to ensure that a wide range of perspectives are captured in it and it comprised both typical and more extreme conditions as reflected in the public dialogue on the new textbook at the time (heterogeneous purposeful sampling). My final data set of 100 articles included: 60 signed articles, opinion pieces and interviews; 9 anonymous opinion pieces; 14 articles describing popular reactions; 13 open letters and press releases by a number of actors (professional, educational, and cultural associations; teachers; parties; and Clerical institutions); 1 report on the new textbook published by the Academy of Athens; 1 press release by the

Pedagogical Institute; 1 press release by the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece; and 1 question to the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs posed by an MP in the Greek parliament. A bibliographic list with the articles included in the sample is offered in Appendix II. As mentioned above, authors included individuals and groups across the political spectrum, and with different professional affiliations: politicians, teachers, journalists, army members, the Greek Church, lawyers, historians and other academics of different disciplinary backgrounds.

The method used to analyze these 100 published pieces was thematic analysis, as the goal was to explore and identify expression patterns through an inductive process. Since this part of the study was of an exploratory nature, the use of thematic analysis would allow the researcher to explore ‘the talk around the issue’, delve deeply in the data, and through an inductive process identify emerging patterns of expression and attitude vis-à-vis the revision initiative. This was a reflexive process of identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas and meanings, as these were communicated by the authors in the text (Gavin 2008). The author first read the articles to familiarize himself with his data set. He then took a closer, more analytic look at them. The first step here was to identify whether the articles examined were critical of the textbook revision initiative, supportive of it, or just neutral to it. Then, while reading each article, an attempt was made to identify core arguments either supporting or opposing the initiative, in whole or parts of it. These themes were formed by bringing together components of ideas/arguments expressed by article authors. Throughout the process specific excerpts and quotes were used to explain and support the researcher’s choices in forming the

themes. After listing the arguments, the next step was to group together themes that were linked to each other, thus creating thematic clusters. This allowed the researcher to develop meaningful story lines in regards to the subject of the study. The findings of this analysis, which will be presented in Chapter 6, in conjunction with the findings of in-depth interviews (Chapter 7), provided valuable insights on what appeared to be the factors that informed popular perceptions on and attitudes towards the revision initiative.

### **Interviews with Stakeholders**

A second data set in regards to the second research question and the researcher's effort to understand what factors informed popular reactions to the revision initiative was constructed through a number of interviews with experts and key stakeholders. Interviews here were employed in order to search for “‘deep’ information and understanding” (Johnson, 2002: 106) and to “elicit from the interviewees rich, detailed materials that can be used in qualitative analysis...to discover the informant's experience of the particular topic or situation” (Lofland & Lofland, 1995: 12). Talking with people, who have been involved in the debate, helped the analyst draw insights on how the phenomenon was idiosyncratically experienced by people in the country. Here, a combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques was used. The researcher identified and contacted key individuals who were either close to the initiative, or were actively involved in the debate of the years 2006-2007, or by definition belonged to a core group of stakeholders (e.g. teachers) in order to elicit their understanding of a series of issues related to the new textbook and popular responses to it. These individuals further directed the researcher to other potential interlocutors. An effort was made here to contact people with diverse

political and disciplinary background so as to capture a wide range of views on the initiative: academics, historians, politicians, journalists, teachers, and people close to the Greek Church. The final sample included 15 interviewees: 4 teachers; 2 individuals who were close to the initiative (1 academic and 1 education advisor); 1 more education advisor; 1 individual who at the time of the debate held a key position at the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs; 5 academics (3 historians; 1 political scientist with an expertise on Greek-Turkish relations; and 1 social psychologist); 1 political scientist closely related to the Church of Greece; and 1 popular blogger with active participation in the public debate at the time. Although a number of individuals included in the sample had a clear position either opposing or supporting the 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook revision initiative, other interviewees took a more neutral stance identifying core positive and negative elements in the textbook.

The interviews took place in different cities in Greece between August and September 2014. All interviews were tape recorded; interviewees' consent was obtained at the beginning of each interview, while they were informed about their right to withdraw at any point of the interview, if they decided to do so. Appendices III and IV include the interview protocol and the informed consent form used in this research. The interview protocol was constructed based on the insights acquired through the first two steps of the research. More specifically, after the axiological dimensions of the two textbooks were explored and compared, and after the 100 articles were analyzed, the researcher developed the interview protocol informed by the findings of this analysis. Questions included in the protocol covered the following areas:

- A section with general questions on Greek national identity, the status of history education in the country, and school textbooks; this section included questions on the purpose of history education, representations of Greek national identity, and the need for revising history curricula in the country;
- A section with questions specific to the new 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook; questions included in this section were meant to elicit interviewee's views on the textbook's strengths and weaknesses, their opinion on representations of the Greek national identity in the textbook's narrative, as well as comments on the overall political/ideological and pedagogical orientation of the textbook
- The next section included questions that touched upon the public debate on the textbook. Here, interviewees were asked to offer their understanding of popular reactions to the new textbook; evaluate the public debate on the issue at the time; discuss the question of reconciliation across national borders; evaluate the role of relevant institutions on the issue (e.g. Ministry of Education; the Pedagogical Institute; the governments as a whole); and also discuss questions related to the process of developing history curricula for Greek schools (e.g. issue of broader participation in the process).
- Finally, in the last section, interviewees were invited to identify a number of lessons learned through this experience and offer their suggestions for future initiatives.

The hope was that the data collected through these interviews would offer valuable insights on how people in the country received the textbook revision and why parts of the Greek society responded negatively to it. To add more, identifying a number of lessons learned and eliciting interviewees' views on what is to be done in the future would allow the researcher –in conjunction with insights drawn in the other parts of this research- to develop specific recommendations for future initiatives so as to increase the likelihood of success.

Once the interviews were completed, a large amount of rich material was there to be analyzed. There is a number of ways to analyze data collected through structured interviews in which informants talk about their experiences of a given social phenomenon. Again, here the researcher considered thematic analysis as an appropriate method for analyzing the collected data; the intention was to look for 'deep information' and meaning in regards to interviewees' experiences with the revision initiative explored in this study. In this respect, the use of thematic analysis helped the researcher to delve deeper into the 'talk around the issue' explored, and through an inductive process identify themes and patterns of experience embedded in the interviewees' input in regards to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook revision initiative. Accordingly, the researcher took a first look at the data set so as to familiarize himself with it. Then, taking deeper and more analytic look at the data set, the researcher made an attempt to identify the key arguments made by the interviewees within each of the questions asked, and brought together common threads so as to develop recurring themes in regards to the parameters of interest set by each question (e.g. history education in Greece; need for revision of history curricula;

strengths and weaknesses of the specific initiative; popular responses to it; the terms of the public debate and the role of relevant institutions; lessons learned and recommendations). The result was the creation of meaningful storylines based on the insights offered by the interviewees. These findings, which are presented in Chapter 7, were used –in conjunction with the findings of the analysis of the 100 articles published in Greece at the time of the debate- to discuss popular perceptions on and attitudes towards the revision initiative, identify a series of lessons learned through this experience, and offer specific recommendations for the future.

### **Researcher Bias**

The last note in this chapter concerns the researcher's personal reflections on how he approached the topic of the study. Being an ab initio supporter of history curriculum revisions as a peacebuilding endeavor, the author of the present study entered the research having a clear, normative distinction in his mind, coloring whatever had to do with this initiative as positive, and popular reactions as overall negative. However, it soon became clear that sound arguments could be identified both in supportive and in opposition voices prompting the research to engage in a, at times stressful, but at the same time much needed and rejuvenating, process of reflection so as to make sure that the approach he takes to the subject matter is not biased. As the research unfolded, it became evident that, despite the overall good intentions and the many positive steps taken in this initiative, a number of questions could have been approached differently, more constructively, from people involved in the initiative, as well as its supporters. The initiative was not devoid of limitations at a number of levels, as will be presented later in

this study, both when it comes to the textbook itself and when it comes to the unconstructive involvement of some supportive voices in the public dialogue. This realization, in conjunction with the acknowledgement that defensive popular reactions are to be understood and not dismissed, indicated that the researcher, up to that point might have had taken a biased approach to the subject of this research. For this reason, he spent some time trying to defocus, went back to revisit his notes, and changed the framing in any parts of his draft that seemed to be indicating biases. This included the rephrasing of an interview question, the original framing of which seemed to be implying that the controversy around the new textbook was one between ‘academic knowledge’ and ‘popular discourse’, which simply did not reflect the essence of the controversy. Overall, although it happened during the research and not prior to it, this reflection indicated an effort made by the researcher to approach the issue without bias, to the extent possible. Of course, discussions throughout the study are naturally to be seen as being informed to an extent by the researcher’s personal background.

This fourth chapter offered a detailed presentation of the methodological specifics of this study. In chapters 5 through 7 the findings of this study are analytically presented and discussed.



## **CHAPTER FIVE: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE TWO TEXTBOOKS PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS ON TEXTUAL AND VISUAL REFERENCES TO GREEK SELF AND OTTOMAN/TURKISH OTHER IN THE TWO TEXTBOOKS**

In the previous section the methodological specifics of the present research were analytically presented. This part of the study presents the findings of data analysis, starting, in this chapter 4, with a comparison of the axiological patterns of the two 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbooks. This will allow the researcher to answer the question of whether the new textbook provided a more axiologically balanced narrative, comparing representations of the Greek Self and representations of the Ottoman/Turkish Other in the two textbooks.<sup>17</sup> The presentation of findings in this chapter proceeds as following:

- a) Textual and Visual Representations of Self in the Old Textbook
- b) Textual and Visual Representations of Self in the New Textbook
- c) Textual and Visual Representations of the Ottoman/Turkish Other in the Old Textbook, and
- d) Textual and Visual Representations of Ottoman/Turkish Other in the New Textbook

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<sup>17</sup> The reader will find tables with summative presentation of the findings toward the end of the chapter, pp. 208-210.

While each section includes a brief commentary on the findings, the chapter ends by analytically discussing the implications of given representations of Greek Self and Ottoman/Turkish Other in the two textbooks.

## **Greek Self in the Old Textbook (Textual and Visual)**

### **Exploring the Greek Self in the Old Textbook: Axiological Balance and Collective Generality in Self Representations (textual references)** **Axiological balance**

Analysis revealed that in total there appeared to be 311 references to Greek Self in the old textbook, either to the Greek collectivity in general or to individuals representing the collectivity, such as political, cultural, and military leaders. Out of them, 239 references (76.85%) were of positive content, 37 references (11.9%) were neutral, and 35 references (11.25%) seemed to have negative meaning. It is evident here that the vast majority of references to Greek Self centered around a positive self-evaluation, thus creating a positive self-image, while it is only one-tenth of the total references to self that may have negative connotations. In other words, it was revealed that in the old textbook narrative, the Greek Self is typically positively evaluated, with instances of self-criticism being very limited.

As a next step, the researcher looked at these 311 references and attempted, through an inductive process, to identify thematically common sources of positive, neutral, or negative evaluation of Self. While results are also offered in a numerical form, the researcher here was mostly interested in going beyond numbers and revealing key discursive constructs through inductive theme-building; what is to follow, therefore, should be approached as common thematic threads that weave the narrative of the old

textbook together, when it comes to Self-representation. Exploration of the 239 positive references to Greek Self in the old textbook revealed that common themes in positive evaluation of Self included:<sup>18</sup>

- *Heroic achievements*: a common source for positive evaluation of ingroup centers on actions vested with a heroic aura. Implications on the heroism of Greek ingroup may be found in 111 references to Greek Self. Such actions may include military achievements, acts of self-sacrifice, or actions that are considered morally superior. In the most direct cases, the reader may find expressions like ‘heroic struggles’, ‘glorious achievements’ and ‘golden moments in the battlefield’ being used to describe ingroup actions. In this type of references, the freedom-loving and uncompromised spirit of Greeks, their courage and lack of fear despite adverse circumstances are celebrated. The Greek nation is represented as an entity always working for a better and freer future; when conflict comes into the picture, the Greek nation is always engaged in defensive acts and it stands for its freedom even in cases of power imbalance. It is actually this imbalance that indicates the magnificence of the nation’s heroism, which is sometimes acknowledged even by its enemies. Illustrative of this last point is a narration of an incident that took place after the battle in Maniaki during the Greek War of Independence between the much larger Ottoman-Egyptian army and a small group of Greek fighters led by priest Gregorios Dikaïos (Papaflessas). After the end of a fierce battle, the leader of the winning Ottoman army, Egyptian pasha Ibrahim, acknowledging the heroism of Paspaflessas commanded his men to identify his body, wash it and put it in a standing position

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<sup>18</sup> Throughout the chapter, when themes emerging out of data are presented, the reader will see that number of references included within each theme –both in regards to Self and in regards to Other representations– does not add up exactly to the total number of references, but exceeds it. This is because many references appeared to be touching upon more than one theme at the same time. E.g. institutionalization of women’s rights is a positive development both at political and at social-cultural level; similarly a representation of a group of women choosing to commit suicide than fall at the hands of the enemy and have their honor compromised, relates both to the theme on nation’s heroism and to the theme of nation’s suffering.

against a tree trunk, as if he was alive. Then, the Egyptian leader kissed Papaflessas' dead body, so as to honor his heroic spirit.

- *Sympathy for suffering, survival ability and resilience* (103 references): commonly, the Greek collectivity is vested with a positive light that stems from the suffering the nation was exposed to during the period covered in the old textbook narrative. Evident in those references are elements of a victim identity, suffering of 'national slavery' and a sense of vulnerability and martyrdom, coupled, at the same time, with an extraordinary ability to survive and ultimately progress. Such references are meant to elicit sympathy for the Greek nation and celebrate its survival ability and resilience. Special emphasis here is placed on the role of education, religious tradition and practices in the preservation of the Greek identity, with the church playing a key role to this end, not only during the Ottoman times, but also in contemporary periods, e.g. serving as the connecting link among Greek immigrants in different parts of the world. As an illustrative example here, reference in the old textbook is made to the legend of the secret school. According to it, with Greek education being persecuted during the Ottoman times and the "enslaved nation having been left with no teachers and schools" (suffering theme), priests and monks secretly undertook the task of educating the nation's youth despite the dangers such an action would entail (survival ability theme).
- *Socio-cultural identity and achievements*: another common source for Self's positive evaluation centered on the nation's social and cultural achievements, with 79 Self-references appearing to have implications relevant to this theme. References related to the nation's cultural identity, education, arts, sciences, common cultural and social practices, coupled with citation of poems, popular legends, and folklore songs that celebrate the nation's positive qualities, seem to be meant to establish ingroup positive self-esteem for cultural identity and achievements. As an example here, when referring to the Ottoman period and the Greek nation's cultural progress at that time, the textbook reads, "despite being enslaved Greeks managed to progress at the level of education and arts", a sentence followed by a list of key artistic works produced

- during that time. At different parts of the textbook, reference is also made to “worldwide known Greek civilization”. A key sub-theme here is the representation of the Greek nation as historically and culturally related to Europe, with the Ottoman occupation standing as an obstacle for the nation to follow the same progress path as the rest of Europe.
- *Long historical past and contribution to global civilization:* in a similar theme, in 23 instances throughout the textbook, positive reference is made to the nation’s long historical past and its multifaceted contribution to global civilization. Key theme here is the continuity of the Greek culture and civilization since antiquity and the widely recognized glorious achievements of the nation throughout its history. Here, the Greek nation travels from Mycenaean to classical antiquity, through Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium) to contemporary Greece which is a natural heir to this historic heritage. As examples here, 19<sup>th</sup> century women of Mani, are presented as worthy descendants of Ancient Spartan women; the ideas of classical Greek philosophers as a foundation of European Enlightenment; and modern-day artists as capitalizing on the traditional elements of Hellenism. Reference is also made to the historical roots of Hellenism in Asia Minor, Homer’s homeland, where Greeks prospered since antiquity, and during the Hellenistic years, while it was this land that constituted the birthplace of the Byzantine Empire, an empire influenced by Hellenism.
  - *Political and Economic Achievements:* another common source for positive self-evaluation touches upon the Greek nation’s political and economic achievements, both before and after independence (35 references). The ability of Greeks to find ways to progress politically and economically, oftentimes despite adverse conditions, is commonly celebrated in the textbook. An illustrative example here is reference made in the textbook to Phanariotes, a group of political and clerical leaders residing in the Phanari neighborhood of Istanbul. Phanariotes, taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the Ottoman authorities managed to sit in key diplomatic and administrative positions in the Ottoman authority structures, also helping their ethnic kin. Moreover, Greeks in the old textbook are generally represented as a democracy-

loving people, who in several occasions stood against undemocratic regimes and practices (imposed from either ingroup or outgroup members). A thread in the textbook narrative touches upon political and economic progress, democratization and modernization in the period after independence from Ottoman Empire, –with its ups and downs, but in a progressive fashion, anyway.

- *Spatial Dimension –Physical Homeland*: finally, commonly in the textbook positive references to self are vested with a spatial dimension with the concept of physical homeland being at the core (24 references). Here one reads about the beauty of the homeland and the special attachment that the Greek nation has with it at multiple levels (historical, cultural, political, economic). Part of these references concerns the ‘lost homelands’ of Hellenism in Asia Minor and the southern Black Sea region, thus reinforcing –through a dialectic- the victimization theme discussed above. As an example here, the textbook sites an excerpt from Elias Venezis’ novel, *Aeolian Earth*, which narrates the story of a refugee family elder who, while en route from Asia Minor to the Greek mainland, keeps under his garment a pocket with his homeland’s soil , so as to have it always with him and plant a basil in his new home.

Turning to the neutral references to Self in the old textbook, it was mentioned earlier that they cover about 12% of all references to self (37 out of 311). Neutral references are mostly descriptive in nature; here, the reader finds a description of the ingroup’s everyday life and lifestyle and the ways the cultural, economic, political and social life of the nation was organized at different periods covered in the textbook’s narrative (e.g. description of school curricula and schedule; excerpts from travelers’ memoirs describing the typical structure of a Greek house and the daily routine of Greek households at a certain time; description of agricultural and pastoral routines). Neutral references also concern the steps that Greek governments after independence took to

organize and stabilize the new state (e.g. description of attempts to organize the educational system and agricultural production, as well as description of economic policies in general). The reader here may remember that similar subjects were also included in the themes related to positive ingroup evaluation. What this means is that to the largest extent, cultural, political, economic and social activities of the nation are presented in a positive light, but there are some limited occasions in the textbook that these activities are described in a neutral, value-free way.

Finally, it was also presented earlier in this section that 35 out of the 311 references to Greek self (11.25%) appear to be loaded with a negative meaning for the ingroup. What is remarkable here is that all 35 references seem to touch directly or indirectly upon issues of internal divisions within the group and issues of political nature –e.g. political decisions made by ingroup members or representatives- that ultimately led to the harming of the nation. Three key themes may be identified here:

- *The Nation's well-being as the key criterion of evaluation:* in the narrative of the old textbook the well-being of the Greek seems to stand as the criterion against which an act is evaluated as positive or negative. The reader may find direct or indirect implications for such a theme in 24 Self-references in the old textbook. E.g. the violent conquest of a city, which may also result in death or extreme suffering of civilians, may be described in positive colors and not as an act of barbarism, if that given act served the collective interest of the nation, such as its independence. At the same time, internal divisions and bad political decisions that may result in the harming of the Greek collectivity are described in negative colors (e.g. internal divisions that reached the level of civil war during the war of independence put in jeopardy the overall fate of the nation's struggle). Above any other value system, therefore, it is the well being of the Nation that serves as a *gnomon* for evaluating a

certain act, in a fashion that reminds of Harry Anastasiou's (2009) concept of the 'moral absolutization' of nation.

- *Negative references to Self are vested with a situational dimension*: it was mentioned above that negative evaluation of self in the old textbook commonly centers on issues of political nature; this seems to be evident in all 25 out of the total 35 negative references to Greek Self. Bad or mistaken political decisions and actions are typically contingent upon historically given circumstances and are not attributed to any kind of inherent ingroup negative qualities. This vests negative references to ingroup with a situational character: the message here is that "inherently, we are a virtuous, united nation, but sometimes, some of us may act in a reprehensible way under certain conditions". Illustrative examples here are the description of bad political/ tactical moves by the leaders of the military junta that facilitated the Turkish invasion in Cyprus, or reference to political differences, which led to an intense civil war after the end of World War II.
- *Demonization of internal divisions*: typically in the old textbook narrative, negative references to Self concern internal divisions and differences that turned out to have a negative effect on the fulfillment of the nation's collective goals (again, here the civil war that broke out during the Greek War of Independence may be used as a key example). It is true that divergent political agendas have led to –at times- intense conflict among ingroup members in Modern Greek history. However, the way internal differences in general are discussed in the textbook narrative, using only examples that those differences had catastrophic results for the nation, sort of demonizes all kinds of differences, neglecting the fact that such differences, if handled constructively, may also lead to cross-fertilization of ideas and to progress through dialectic processes. At times, internal divisions are presented in the textbook as the product of the involvement of external powers in the Greek political life, where foreign governments encourage and exacerbate those divisions to serve their own interests in the region.



So far, our analysis of the old 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook has revealed that in terms of axiological balance, the vast majority of references to the Greek Self are loaded with a positive meaning, while there are only a very limited number of instances where actions and qualities of Greek Self are evaluated negatively. Next, we will explore the question of collective generality in Self-representations as found in the old textbook, that is, whether Greek Self is represented as homogeneous or heterogeneous, and as a static or an evolving community.

### **Collective Generality**

#### **Self Represented as Static or as an Evolving Community?**

Firstly, it needs to be noted that not all references to self come with implications about the nature of ingroup as a static or an evolving community. Out of the total 311 references to self it is only 53 that seem to have a relevantly loaded meaning. Out of these 53 references, 39 present the Greek nation as unchanged over time (73.6%), while in 14 cases the nation is represented as a community evolving over time (26.4%). An interesting finding is that the two dimensions do not appear to be mutually exclusive; rather, at times the Greek nation appears to be both unchanged and evolving, that is, progressing through modern times, while staying culturally and historically linked to the great Greek civilizations of the past (e.g. communal self-administration of Greeks during the Ottoman years is described as having its roots in classical antiquity and the Byzantine years; in another example, reference is made to contemporary artists that incorporate in their work traditional cultural elements of Hellenism). To illustrate further this point, occasionally in the old textbook narrative, the Greek nation is represented as achieving

cultural progress by capitalizing on classical Greek culture and incorporating in it elements of modernity through cultural cross-fertilization.

More analytically, references that present the Greek collectivity as unchanged over time mainly center on: its ability to survive and preserve its identity despite adverse circumstance; the continuity of Greek civilization from Mycenaean period and classical antiquity through Eastern Roman Empire and the Ottoman times to Modern Greek state; representation of Modern Greeks as heirs to a cosmopolitan civilization with an important global contribution and outreach (e.g. it is presented in the textbook that throughout their long presence in the historical region of Greece, “Greeks created the worldwide known Greek civilization”); and representation of the Orthodox Christian identity as an indispensable component of ‘Greekness’ (e.g. among others, it is directly stated in the textbook that during the Ottoman years “whoever managed to keep their [Christian] faith, managed to preserve their identity”). On the other hand, it was mentioned earlier that there seem to be 14 references presenting the Greek nation as an evolving entity. In these instances the reader sees the Greek nation progressing over time, politically and economically, achieving its independence and managing to catch up with the advanced European nations despite the 4-5 centuries of Ottoman occupation; through this progress, which is a result of continuous struggle, the Greek nation ultimately finds its place among other European countries. The focus here is mainly on post-independence developments, with key themes including modernization and democratization. Special reference here is also made to the country’s entry to the European Union, through which Greece “played an active role in the progress and entente of European peoples”.

As a conclusion here, when it comes to static or evolving representations of self in the old textbook, what the reader finds is an integration of elements from both dimensions so as to combine two self-esteem maintaining images: the image of a nation that is heir to a great historical-cultural heritage and the image of a progressing community.

### **Is the Greek Nation Represented as Homogenous or Heterogeneous?**

Again here, not all 311 references to Greek Self have implications on the homogeneity dimension of collective axiology. Such implications –direct or indirect– may be found in 133 references to Self. Out of them, 99 represent Greeks as a homogenous group (74.4%), while 34 indicate some within-group heterogeneity (25.6%). These results indicate that in the references to Self that have a meaning relevant to the question of homogeneity, the Greek nation is generally represented as homogeneous. Common themes related to this within-group homogeneity as found in the old textbook include: collective, homogenous Self standing against oppressive Other; exhibition of solidarity within the group, both horizontal and vertical with national leaders (political, economic, cultural) working for the protection of the Greek people; suffering is experienced by the nation as a collectivity; similarly, achievements come out of the common efforts of a united entity; hierarchically, this collectivity stands above individuals, with examples of self-sacrifice being cited so as to inspire this feeling to the reader. Illustrative of this thematic thread existing in the old textbook is an excerpt the

reader finds at the end of it, drawn from General Makrygiannis<sup>19</sup> memoirs: “‘I’ and ‘We’: This homeland belongs to all of us, wise and uneducated, rich and poor, politicians and soldiers, even the smallest of people. Whoever fought, depending on their abilities, we will need to live here. So, we worked all of us together and we should maintain it (the homeland) all together. Neither the strong ones nor the weak ones should say “I”. Do you know when each of us may say “I”? Only when each fights on their own and when each of us makes or breaks something only on their own, then we may say “I”. We stand at “We” not at “I”. So, from now on, we should know that if we want to make it work, we should all live together”. Finally, in regards to the homogeneity dimension, the old textbook is devoid of any reference to minorities living in the country, while very limited reference is made to social, economic and gender differences within the nation.

When it comes to the 34 references to self that indicate some within-group heterogeneity, the differences represented there do not seem to concern what appears to be the nation’s long-term established identity, but mostly political/ ideological divisions and tactical decisions and actions of a situational character (e.g. reference to the different political parties/ groups that participated in the first national assemblies during the War of Independence; or discussion on the different opinions on how to proceed tactically at certain times during the War of Independence). Often, these divisions have been exacerbated by foreign involvement and at times evolved into something as serious as a civil war. Generally, in a theme discussed previously as well, in the old textbook narrative reference is made to those political differences that ended up having

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<sup>19</sup> Ioannis Makrygiannis was a fighter in the Greek War of Independence and a post-independence politician

catastrophic effect to the well-being of the nation, thus ‘demonizing’ the existence of differences within the group. Two times in the textbook, reference is made to different local dresses Greeks wear depending on the place they come from, but this is approached as something superficial compared to the common national group identity.

As a conclusion for this section, in the old textbook narrative the Greek nation is commonly represented as an overall homogenous entity. There seems to be some recognition of political differences between groups that sought to control power, antagonisms which at times proved detrimental to the nation’s well-being (in other words, when there is no homogeneity there seems to be something wrong). The explicit or underlying morale of those references seems to be a call for unity, especially vis-à-vis the Other; this theme is also supported by citation of historical sources that call for such unity, because –according to the sources- the nation is legitimately/naturally one’s most salient identity, vested with higher moral importance (e.g. this is what is largely implied in the excerpt from General Makrygiannis memoirs cited above).

### **Visual references to Greek Self in the Old Textbook**

After having examined the textual references to Self in the old textbook, in this section I turn to the visual representations of the Greek Self. In other words, an attempt is made here to sketch the visual Self-narrative that accompanies the textual fabric. Here all visual references to Greek Self were explored so as to reveal the key themes in Self representations in regards to collective axiology. The reader may remember that, as discussed in the presentation of the coding schemata, visual analysis touched upon two dimensions: a) Axiological Balance in visual representations; and b) Intergroup relations

as visually represented (Greek-Ottoman/Turkish relations). It is important to note here that maps were excluded from analysis of the visual materials found in the textbook. Useful as they may be in exploring other aspects of the textbook's pedagogy and discourse, it was the author's belief that exploration of maps may not necessarily offer relevant insights in regards to collective axiology.

### **Exploring the visual representations of the Greek Self in the Old Textbook:**

#### **Axiological balance**

*Cover page:* in the cover page of the old textbook the reader finds a detail of a painting representing the Missolonghi Exodus. This representation refers to the exodus of Missolonghi inhabitants after a year of siege by the Ottoman forces on April 10, 1826, during the years of the Greek War of Independence. Exhausted by the long siege, Missolonghi defenders decided to fight their way out of the city and break free, no matter how slim the chances of success actually were. The image is meant to demonstrate the heroic, uncompromised spirit of Greeks, their preference to sacrifice themselves than fall captives of the enemy.

Apart from the cover page, in the old textbook one may find 151 representations of Greek Self, either as a collectivity or –for the most part- as individuals representing the group. Out of them, 113 represent Greek Self in a positive light (74.8%); 38 seem to be of neutral content (25.2%); while there seems to be no negative visual reference to Self. In other words, it is indicated here that the Greek collectivity for the most part of the textbook is visually represented positively. Moreover, as a next step, the researcher looked at these visual representations and attempted to identify key themes in regards to

positive and neutral Self-representations (as there were no negative visual references to Self).

More analytically, exploration of the 113 positive visual references to Greek Self in the old textbook revealed that common themes in positive representations of self included:<sup>20</sup>

- *Nation's Heroic Attributes*: In 45 cases, the reader finds visual materials that represent the heroic character of the Greek nation. These may be portraits of famous individuals or a number of ingroup members that exhibited heroism in fighting for the nation, and sacrificed themselves to promote the nation's collective cause, without hesitating in cases of power imbalance. Here, one may also find representation of important/ key episodes in modern Greek history that touch upon the same themes – episodes that have acquired a symbolic status in the collective memory of the Greek nation (such as the Messolonghi Exodus mentioned above).
- *Nation's Suffering and Survival Ability*: Out of the total 113 positive visual references to Greek Self, 22 represent the suffering the group has been at times exposed to during its modern history (e.g. Ottoman retaliations to the Greek struggle for independence; the Asia Minor Catastrophe; the 1974 Cyprus invasion). Such references emphasize the survival ability of the nation and appear to be coupling the textual references that center on the themes of suffering, survival, and victimization of the nation, thus constituting a key thread in the narrative fabric of the old textbook.

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<sup>20</sup> Again here, the reader will see that, when added up, numbers seem higher than 113. This is because a number of visual representations touched upon more than one theme (e.g. images having connotations both on nation's heroism and on nation's suffering, such as a representation of a group of women choosing to commit suicide than fall at the hands of the enemy and have their honor compromised)

- *Nation's Cultural and Social Qualities/ Progress*: A central theme in the visual representations of Greek Self concerns the positive references to the nation's cultural and social characteristics, as well as the social and cultural progress that the nation has made during the period covered in the textbook narrative. Overall, 41 out of the total 113 positive visual references to Self seem to be touching upon this theme. Here the reader finds references to ingroup achievements related to arts and sciences, as well as celebration of the Nation's social and cultural heritage (e.g. portraits of renown writers, poets and music composers; paintings; architectural artifacts). It is, finally, within this theme that one finds 8 images that imply continuity of the Greek civilization since classical antiquity, thus representing Greeks as the heirs to great Greek civilizations of the past (e.g. scenes from Ancient Greek tragedies; details from classical painted ceramics).
- *Portraits of Famous/Important Individuals*: cross-cutting the above themes the reader throughout the old textbook finds portraits of famous ingroup members. Among the 113 positive representations of Self, the reader finds 38 character portraits<sup>21</sup>, with 35 of them representing men and 3 representing women. These portraits include cultural figures (13), military leaders and heroes (12), political and economic leaders (8), as well as religious leaders (5), with the last category meant to represent the role of the church in the rebirth and progress of the nation during its modern history.

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<sup>21</sup> It is important to note here that not all portraits in the old textbook are vested with a positive meaning. Apart from these 38 portraits which are vested a positive light, in the old textbook the reader finds neutral visual representations of key ingroup members, as well.



Turning to the neutral visual representations of Self in the old textbook, it was mentioned earlier that they cover 25.2% of all visual references to Self (38 out of 113). Out of them, 26 touch upon cultural and social themes, 10 touch upon political and economic themes, while 2 represent military events in a neutral way. More analytically, the reader here finds images representing Greeks' social and cultural ethos; themes related to everyday life and activities; local dresses, habits and lifestyles; neutral representations of political and military developments; and neutral portrait representations of key political leaders and statesmen. These 38 images seem to be meant to offer a visual narrative in a neutral way that does not have strong axiological connotations for the Greek ingroup. Finally, as mentioned above, it is noteworthy that, apart from the 113 positive and the 38 neutral visual representations to Greek Self, no negative visual references to Self seem to be present in the old textbook. Overall, therefore, it may be argued that the visual narrative of the old textbook colors Greek ingroup in a predominantly positive light.

### **Old Textbook Implications of Visual Self Representations on Intergroup Relations**

A second dimension that was explored in the analysis of the images found in the old textbook was that of intergroup relations. Here, the researcher made an attempt to identify the implications that visual Self-representations had for the relationship between Greek Self and Turkish Other. It is easily understood that not all representations of the Greek Self came with implications on the Greek-Ottoman/Turkish relations. Rather, out of the total 151 representations of Self, it was only 59 that were vested a relevant meaning. In other words, it was about 39% of all visual references to self that came with a meaning on the relationship between the two groups. Remarkably (or not so much),

none of these 59 Self-representations implied directly a positive relationship between Greeks and Ottomans/Turks during the period covered in the old textbook. Typically, this relationship is implied as being negative (57 images, 96.6%), with only 2 representations of Self implying a neutral relationship between the two groups (3.4%). As a large part of the textbook covers the Greek War of Independence, it may appear as a natural consequence that visuals accompanying the narrative are vested a negative meaning in regards to the Greek-Ottoman/Turkish relationship (e.g. images of battles between the two groups, and portraits of famous heroes, who fought against the Ottomans). An important note needs to be made here about some images that seem to have no direct implication on this relationship: a limited number of visual representations of Self during the Ottoman times center on economic activity, agricultural production, cultural activity and, generally, the everyday life of Greek people at that time. The fact that these pictures do not represent directly a conflictual relationship, but show life as normal, may be perceived as indicating that the Ottoman presence was not always about conflict and oppression, although this may not necessarily be a theme in the textual references of the old textbook and appears as a rare theme in the visuals of the textbook. Overall, analysis of the images found in the old textbook indicated that the relationship between the two groups is visually represented as predominantly negative.

*One concluding/ summative word for the representation of the Greek Self in the old 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook:* Insights offered in the section indicate that in the narrative of the old textbook the Greek self is typically represented in a positive light and as a homogenous collectivity. Positive attributes of self, such as heroism, freedom-loving

spirit, and resilience are represented as collective characteristics, while even the relatively rare negative references to self are vested with a situational/ circumstantial dimension.

Overall, analysis showed that the textual and visual narrative of the old textbook offer: a) a highly unbalanced axiological representation of Self towards the positive end, with visual themes supporting the textual narrative themes; b) a description of the Greek ingroup as predominantly homogeneous; and c) a representation of Self that has predominantly negative connotations for the Greek-Ottoman Turkish relations.

Next, I will turn to the new textbook and explore what the discursive representation of the Greek Self is in the textbook's narrative, making at the same time an attempt to identify differences between the old and the new narrative.

## **Greek Self in the New Textbook (Textual and Visual)**

### **Exploring the Greek Self in the New Textbook –Textual References**

#### **Axiological Balance**

In the new textbook, in total the researcher identified 287 references to Greek Self, either as a collectivity or as individuals representing the national collectivity. Out of them, 121 (42.2%) are positive references; 135 (47%) are neutral references to self; while 31 (10.8%) references to self seem to have negative implications. Numbers here, indicate that the narrative of the new textbook seems to provide a more balanced representation of Self, compared to the old textbook; although there is a significant number of positive references to Self, the most common type of Self-references seem to be that of a neutral content, with the number of negative references being similar as in the old textbook.

In regards to common sources for positive evaluation of ingroup, inductive theme-building revealed similar themes as in the old textbook; however, the discussion that

follows will reveal important differences in the way each narrative approached each of the themes. A general observation is that the degree of enthusiasm about ingroup positive attributes in the new textbook is way less than in the old textbook. Here the reader needs to keep in mind that in addition to the fact that positive references in the new textbook are outnumbered by neutral references, most of the times, ingroup positive attributes are *implied* and not directly celebrated in an outspoken way –the researcher indeed found many references that were ultimately categorized a positive, actually being at the verge between positive and neutral. What follows is a list of themes related to positive self-evaluation and listed according to their centrality in the new textbook’s narrative. Similarly to the previous section on representations of self in the old textbook, while results are also reported in numerical form, the intention is to present common thematic patterns that constitute the narrative fabric of the new textbook in regards to Self-representation.

- *Socio-cultural achievements* (43 references) commonly in the new textbook positive evaluation of Self comes from social and cultural achievements of ingroup. In general, coverage of socio-cultural aspects of Greeks’ everyday life at different times is deeper and broader than in the previous textbook. Here, education, arts, sciences, intellectual and cultural progress seem to be the most common sources for positive self-evaluation (e.g. reference to increased educational activity after mid-18<sup>th</sup> century; reference to Modern Greek Enlightenment and the ideas coming out of this movement; reference to cultural and educational progress of diaspora Greeks during 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries; and reference to women’s rights movement and reference to renown contemporary artists, are just some examples of what is included in this theme).

- *Heroic elements*: positive references to Self seem also to be commonly rooted in elements of heroism exhibited by ingroup members (42 references). However, there are important qualitative and quantitative differences between the new and the old textbook: a) ‘heroism’ in the new textbook appear to have a way less central place in the narrative (both in terms of numbers and in terms of emphasis placed on it); b) it is mostly implied in the narrative and not directly celebrated; and c) heroic attitudes are disengaged from war events, which most of the time are presented in rather neutral colors. Heroism in the new textbook refers mostly to the freedom-loving spirit of Greeks, without this meaning the glorification of war. To the contrary, in the new textbook there seems to be more coverage of the negative aspects of war, more emphasis on its negative effects on the population of all sides involved, and less coverage of the ‘heroic’ aspect of it as found in the old textbook. Thus, war is placed within a realistic, pretty negative frame. Illustrative is the following excerpt describing the changes caused in civilians’ everyday lives as a result of the War of Independence: “During the War, life conditions change dramatically both for Christians and for Muslims. Large population movement takes place in the sought for safer places to live...Long engagement in war activities does not allow people to cultivate the land, plantations are destroyed and harvest is non-existent. Warring groups inhibit the acquisition of the necessary means of subsistence and many people –predominantly civilians- die of food shortage/famine. Losses are exacerbated due to increasing epidemic diseases”.
- *Political and Economic Achievements*: an equally common theme in regards to ingroup’s positive evaluation is related to the nation’s social, political and economic progress (40 references). Here, the locus of positive evaluation seems to get disengaged from strictly defined ‘nationalistic’ goals (defined on the basis of heroism, moral superiority, and victory over others), centering mostly on issues of progress within the group and concerning steps toward democratization, social justice and equality. Democratization and modernization appear to be key themes in this regard (e.g. reference to steps toward improving the place of women in the Greek society;

reference to labor legislation and the institutionalization of worker's rights as a step towards higher social justice). In some instances, positive self-evaluation stems from resistance of wide strata of the Greek people against authoritarianism within the country (as was the case during the years of the military junta, 1967-1974), thus rendering positive self-esteem independent from comparisons with outgroups. Even the struggle for independence from the Ottoman Empire is -at times in the new textbook narrative- framed as an uprising against a despotic regime (an 'ancien regime') in conjunction with being a struggle for national independence.

- *Sympathy for suffering, survival ability and resilience*: Another group of references that may color positively the Greek ingroup is related to its suffering and the sympathy this suffering may inspire too the reader (36 references). Although existent in the new textbook narrative, this theme appears to receive significantly less coverage than in the previous textbook, where one could find 103 such references. Thus, 'national slavery' and victimization, although existent in the new textbook, appears to be a much less common theme than in the old textbook. In addition, apart from the suffering of the national Self at the hands of the national Others, there is recognition of the suffering of civilians in all sides involved, as was the case in the excerpt cited previously where the negative effect of war on all sides was presented. An important break with the old textbook is related to the way the new textbook approaches national survival and the preservation of national identity. Here, survival does not come as a sole result of Greeks' continuous resistance to the Ottoman authorities and the nation's resilience; it was also made possible due to the tolerance demonstrated on the part of the Ottoman authorities' vis-à-vis minorities living in the territory of the Empire. Here, the textbook acknowledges the fact that "according to the Islamic law, Orthodox Christians were an acknowledged religious group" and that Greek populations preserved their identity "because they had the right to keep their religion and language and form communities electing their own leaders", with the Orthodox Patriarch being their religious leader, enjoying "special privileges". In addition, while acknowledged, the role of clergy in the preservation of national

- identity receives way more limited coverage than in the old textbook. Similarly, the achievement of independence, according to the new textbook, was also a function of given conditions existing at the time (such as international and regional dynamics, which led to the involvement of European powers in favor of Greece), rather than a sole result of Greeks' continuous struggle. In regards to this point it is explicitly stated in the new textbook that "at the most critical moment, when the Greek struggle for independence was in serious jeopardy, the Great Powers decided to intervene in favor of the revolted Greek people", a fact that ultimately facilitated Greek independence.
- *Spatial Dimension –Physical Homeland* (11 references): References to the concept of homeland and the historical and cultural attachment of ingroup members to it are also made in the new textbook and seem to color ingroup in a positive light. Similarly to the old textbook, part of these references concerns the forced migration of Greek populations as a result of war episodes through the modern history of Hellenism, and are thus vested a traumatic dimension (e.g. reference to Asia Minor refugees). Again here, however, this theme receives less coverage in the new textbook than in the old one (11 references vs. 24), while the language used is significantly less dramatic and emotional.
  - *Long historical past and contribution to global civilization* (5 references) finally, it is only in a very limited number of references to Greek Self in the new textbook, that ingroup positive evaluation has as its source the achievements of ancestors (e.g. reference to the Ancient Olympic Games and the institution of Olympic truce; reference to the increased interest among Europeans since renaissance in the classical past of Greece). Here, these are rather indirect references, in which the status of Modern Greeks as heir to the heritage of previous Greek civilizations is mostly implied and not directly stated.

Turning to the neutral reference to Self, it was presented earlier in this section that this is the most common type of Self-references in the new textbook (47% of all Self-references). The overall style of the narrative, thus, appears to be descriptive and analytic,

not normative and moralistic; it is –for the most part- meant to track the journey of the Greek collectivity since the years before independence, through 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries to contemporary Greece. Common here is the neutral presentation of socioeconomic and cultural conditions within which the Greek nation lived at different times of its modern history. Cited historical sources shed light on issues of everyday life, such as professional ethos of different professions at the time, economic activity and agriculture, family structures and dynamics, the place of women and children, educational and cultural activities, and religious practices (e.g. reference to common professional expertise depending on given localities; description of school curricula and schedule; excerpts from travelers’ memoirs describing certain socio-cultural and economic activities in Greek towns). The goal seems to be for the reader to get familiar with everyday life of the majority of people at certain times and places, and understand historical phenomena and processes as the products of multiple factors existing and interacting at the same time. In addition, it is remarkable in the new textbook that military activities and war episodes are commonly presented in a way that does not glorify ingroup while devaluating outgroup; through –for the most part- neutral references to both ingroup victories and ingroup defeats, description of war events does not serve as a medium for promoting ‘heroic’ or ‘victimized’ self-conceptions. It is interesting to note that even leading figures of the struggle for independence appear to be presented in neutral colors in the new textbook.

Finally, negative references to self constitute about 11% of all Self-references in the new textbook (31 out of 287), a number comparable to that in the old textbook (35 out of 311, which makes 11.25%). References here center primarily on two general themes:



issues of political nature, such as within group antagonisms and bad decisions made by political leaders; and issues of social justice and equality. In regards to the first theme, the textbook narrative seems to acknowledge the fact that different social and political groups may have conflicting interests and build their political agendas according to those interests, even though –at times- these specific agendas did not seem to serve the collective interest of the country (typical here are cases of antagonism that led to civil wars). Criticism of political leaders and decision makers is not absent from the textbook. In the textbook narrative, at times, those controlling power within the group have exhibited authoritarianism, oppressing wider parts of the ingroup population. On a number of issues, such as the Asia Minor catastrophe and the Cyprus issue, decisions and actions by political leaders are implicitly criticized for their maximalist character that ultimately proved to be detrimental for Greek populations in the region (in other words they are not criticized for not being ‘patriotic’ enough; to the contrary, they seem to be criticized for exhibiting an over-nationalistic spirit).

In addition, as mentioned above, a second key theme in negative representations of self concerns issues of social justice and equality. This is an important break with the narrative of the old textbook, which did not touch upon those issues. In the new textbook narrative one may find a recurring discursive pattern around the issue of laypeople exploitation by economic and social elites, which at times is further narrowed to the suffering of women and children at work place. Similarly, gender inequality in the modern history of the Greek nation is explicitly and vividly presented in the new textbook. Intending to familiarize students with this reality, the textbook commonly cites

sources that touch upon these themes, such as a 1995 study by M. Riginos on child exploitation in industry and small industry in the years 1870-1940: “working conditions of little girls and boys in houses is less than ideal. According to labor inspectors, children work for more than ten hours a day, while oftentimes they fall victims of overexploitation and inhuman behavior”. This acknowledgement in the new narrative that not all ingroup members experienced in the same way the modern history of the Greek nation, but there were important class, political, and gender differences will be also touched upon in the next section when the discussion will evolve around issues of collective generality in self representations in the new textbook.

As a conclusion for this section, in terms of axiological balance the new textbook seems to provide a more balanced representation of self compared to the old textbook, with positive Self-references constituting the minority in self-representations.

### **Collective Generality**

#### **Self Represented as Static or as an Evolving Community?**

Similarly to the old textbook, not all references to Greek self in the new textbook come with implications on the status of the Greek nation as a static or an evolving community. More analytically, out of the total 287 self-references such implications seem to be found in 64 references. 9 of them (14%) seem to imply a continuity pattern; this, however, it is primarily done in benign ways. In other words, not only is the number of references to national continuity limited, but also, this continuity is rather implied than explicitly stated (e.g. reference to popular legends during the Ottoman times that discussed the dream of freedom of the Greek nation, or reference to the preservation of

Greek language and Christian Orthodox religion during that time, imply a continuity pattern in the Greek nation's historical experience). Overall, the narrative of the new textbook does not seem to overtly/ directly promote the theme of continuity of the Greek nation through history from classical antiquity to Hellenistic years, to the Byzantine Empire and through modern times. It does not question this continuity, but it does not promote it either, and even in the limited cases that continuity is implied, it mainly refers to cultural continuity.

It is more often the case in the new textbook that the Greek nation is represented as an evolving community –a living organism (55 out of 64 self-references, 86%). These references touch upon the progress of the Greek nation through its modern history at different levels: politically, economically, culturally, and at the level of social justice, with a dual theme here being democratization and modernization. Here, references to the evolution of the nation concern: economic and political advancements that led to independence; the struggle to build a stable and functional state after independence; improvement of people's living conditions; improvement and 'democratization' of education so as to make it more inclusive in terms of gender and socio-economic status; extensive references to steps toward social justice (an important difference from the old textbook); progressive geographic expansion of the new state to ultimately include all Greek-speaking populations in the region; and progress in arts and sciences (e.g. specific reference to renown Greek artists and intellectuals and their work). This progress at different levels appears as the product of cross-fertilization of Greek tradition and modernity, with Europe standing as one of the key catalysts for the cultural and political

advancement of the nation. It is important to note here that in the narrative of the new textbook, this progress does not necessarily come as a natural, smooth and uninterrupted process; rather, it follows a Heraclitean pattern of thesis and antithesis between modernizing and traditional/ conservative elements in the Greek society. A characteristic example here is the author's discussion on the reception of enlightenment ideas by parts of the Greek society; while some intellectuals acted as pioneers in spreading these ideas among their fellow Greeks, "these ideas also met with resistance. Those resisting were primarily members of higher class groups that possessed high-ranking positions and wanted to preserve their power and privileges".

### **Is the Greek Nation Represented as Homogenous or Heterogeneous?**

Contrary to the old textbook, in the narrative of the new textbook within group heterogeneity seems to be acknowledged more than ingroup homogeneity. In total, out of the 287 references to self, there appear to be 103 references that may have implications on the issue of ingroup homogeneity or heterogeneity. Out of them, in 36 cases (35%) ingroup is presented as homogenous, while in 67 (65%) cases ingroup is presented as heterogeneous. To add more, homogeneity in those 36 references is mostly implied rather than framed openly and explicitly (e.g. reference to the Greek nation as a collective social subject with common experience), while heterogeneity is explicitly and clearly stated (direct reference to differences existing within the group). Overall, the new textbook seems to acknowledge within group social, economic, political, cultural and gender differences, thus somehow parting ways from the traditional image of a unified nation, always working toward certain common goals. Importantly, within group differences are

not approached in a normative fashion (and even more, they are not deemed as something negative or reprehensible); they are described ontologically. References to ingroup heterogeneity in the new textbook mainly concern: acknowledgement that different constituent groups of the Greek society may have their own interests, which -at extreme cases- may pursue through resorting to arms (reference to political differences and group agendas that led Greeks to civil wars); it is, similarly, presented that, even if motives are pure, different groups may define collective/ national interest in different ways, based on divergent political orientations; the dialectical contradiction between modernizing and traditional elements in the Greek society (see reference above in regards to how enlightenment ideas were received by Greek society; another example, here is the authors' specific reference to the 'language question': the 'battle' between people supporting vernacular and those supporting an archaic form of Greek language as the country's official language); acknowledgement that not all Greeks suffered under the Ottoman rule and that there were groups who enjoyed privileged relationships with Ottoman authorities; specific mention to the role of laypeople –and not only to that of prominent figures- in the struggle of independence; references to the exploitation of laypeople by local social, political, and economic elites (e.g. citation of testimonies/statements by servants and peasants on the inhuman conditions under which they had to work for landowners); reference to class- and gender-based discrimination and violation of human rights of certain groups within the Greek society (e.g. citation of a 1912 Labor Inspection Report that presents exploitation of workers –especially women and children- in factories, and lack of any safety measures); and mention to lifestyle

differences depending on geographic region. Through references to such differences existing within the group, the narrative of the new textbook provides an alternative to the monolithic representation of the national collectivity as homogeneous, while acknowledging that within group differences may be a natural, common phenomenon. It is remarkable, however, that similarly, to the old textbook, no mention is made to the religious and ethnic minorities living in the country.

*One concluding/ summative word for the representation of the Greek Self in the new 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook:* the new narrative presents Greek Self in more neutral colors compared to the old textbook, while acknowledges differences among constituent groups of the Greek nation, which is overall presented as a community evolving over time. In the following section I turn to the visual representations of Self that accompany the textual references to the Greek Nation. Similarly to the respective section on visual references to Self in the old textbook, this section presents and problematizes issues of axiological balance and intergroup relations in visual representations of the Greek Self, this time as found in the new textbook.

### **Exploring the visual representations of the Greek Self in the New Textbook: Axiological balance**

*Cover page:* in the cover page of the new 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook the reader finds an artistic synthesis of different manuscripts by artist George Lazongas. No individual is depicted and no visual reference to a specific, important event in the modern history of the Greek nation is made. The cover page of the new textbook likely symbolizes a shift in the overall pedagogical approach to history as a school subject, a move away from a person- and event-centric narrative to an understanding of history as

the product of complex processes, about which one develops an understanding through exploration and interpretation of historical sources.

Except from the cover page, in the new textbook the reader finds 186 visual representations of Greek Self (again, maps excluded), either as a collectivity or as individuals representing the group. 98 out of the total 186 visual references to Self are vested a positive meaning for the Greek nation (52.7%); 76 seem to have neutral meaning (40.9%); and 12 visual references to Self appear to be of negative content (6.4%). While for the most part the Greek Self is represented positively, what is shown here is that, compared to the old textbook, visual self-representations in the new textbook are more axiologically balanced, also touching upon negative qualities of Self. In short, in comparison to the old textbook, the new textbook offers less positive visual coverage of Self (52.7% Vs. 74.8%); more neutral visual coverage (40.9% Vs. 25.2); and a number of negative visual references to Self, which are absent from the old textbook (6.4% Vs. 0%).

Starting with the positive Self visual representations, exploration of the 98 positive images revealed that common themes in positive representations of Self were similar to the old textbook and included:

- *Nation's Heroic Attributes*: similarly to the old textbook, images illustrating ingroup heroism exhibited at different times during the Nation's modern history are a common theme in the new textbook (38 images), although this receives somewhat less coverage than in the old textbook, where the reader finds 45 images in this theme. This does not necessarily represent a big break from the previous visual narrative. If, however, one takes into consideration the textual narrative of the new

textbook that accompanies the visual representations related to this theme, where heroism is not as directly and outspokenly celebrated as in the old textbook and where emphasis is mostly placed on the freedom-loving qualities of the Greek nation (both along a national and along a civic dimension) than in a glorification of war against the outgroup, then overall, it seems that the new textbook approaches the Nation's heroic attributes in a less fervent way. In other words, the textual narrative frame, within which the visual narrative is placed, sets a more neutral perspective for the reader to approach the images, as compared to the old textbook.

- *Nation's Cultural and Social Qualities/ Progress*: another theme that receives wide visual coverage in the new textbook centers on the Greek Nation's cultural and social achievements (31 images). Images that touch upon artistic, technological and social progress constitute the majority of the visual material in this theme (e.g. portraits of renown artists and their work; introduction of technological advancements, such as cinema and television in Greek society). What is mostly celebrated here is the progress of the Greek nation at these levels during its modern history, while, compared to the old textbook, no visual reference seems to be made to the continuity of the Greek nation since antiquity.
- *Nation's Political and Economic Qualities/ Progress*: 18 out of the total 98 positive visual representations of Self touch upon issues of political and economic nature. Central place here is reserved for democratization and modernization processes (e.g. picture of the first national assembly after the fall of the military junta), and the overall positive political and economic steps the Greek state has taken since its



inception and throughout its modern history to the entry to the European Union and the first years of the new millennium.

- *Nation's Suffering and Survival Ability*: finally, a recurring theme in the visual representations of Self in the new textbook is that of the Nation's suffering and survival ability. 18 images seem to be touching upon this theme (compared to 22 in the old textbook); among others, Asia Minor refugees receive relatively wide visual coverage with images centering, not necessarily on the direct violence they experienced, but mostly on their suffering from displacement and the adverse conditions under which they needed to start their lives over (e.g. picture of the huts these refugees had to live in for the first years after their displacement). Moreover, a couple of images within this theme represent the suffering of the nation at the hands of undemocratic/ totalitarian regimes, such as during the World War II and the period of the military junta (1967-1974). Overall, if one takes into consideration the frame set by the textual narrative in approaching such issues, it could be argued that suffering and victimization appears to be a way less common theme in the new textbook, compared to the old one.
- *Portraits of Famous/Important Individuals*: similarly to the old textbook, the new textbook includes portraits of famous ingroup members, cross-cutting the above themes. Among the 98 positive representations of Self in the new textbook, the reader finds 23 character portraits (compared to 38 in the old textbook), vested with positive implications for the Greek Self. These portraits represent military leaders and heroes (10), political and economic leaders (8), cultural leaders (4), and one religious leader

(1). Remarkably, more than a fourth of the characters are women (6) –among whom the reader finds a women’s rights pioneer, a fact that represents a break from the old textbook, where only 3 out of the 38 portraits represented women. It appears that the authors of the new textbook intended to acknowledge the role of women at all levels of the Greek nation’s modern history, while also underlining the fact that there were groups within the broader national group that had to fight their way to rights that other members for many years enjoyed by status.

Turning to neutral visual representations of Self, it was mentioned earlier in this section that the reader may find 76 neutral visual references to the Greek Self, which makes about 41% of all Self-references (compared to 25.2% in the old textbook). These neutral references touch upon social and cultural developments related to the Greek nation (53 images), political and economic issues (26 images), and military events (2 images), without the above categories being mutually exclusive (i.e. images touching upon more than one of these themes). The reader here finds representations of urban and rural landscapes meant to illustrate the physical and social environment within which the group members lived and interacted at certain times of the nation’s history; representations of professional activities at the time and local markets; representation of agricultural activities; pictures of means of transportation; all these meant to familiarize students with group members’ everyday lives and ethos at the periods covered in the new textbook’s narrative. The reader also finds neutral portrait representations of key political leaders. In addition, a number of images are related to social and political developments that touch upon issues of social justice, such as the struggle for women’s rights and the

labor movement –all these visually approached in a neutral way, without strong axiological connotations for the Greek Self.

Finally, it is remarkable that in the new textbook the reader may find 12 visual references to self that appear to color Greek Self in a negative light (6.4% of all Self-references). Negative visual references to Self center mostly around two themes: cultural and social issues, and political and economic issues. In the first theme images touch upon such issues as child labor; illiteracy rates; exploitation of poorer strata of the Greek society by economic and social elites (e.g. the phenomenon of serfdom); and two humoristic illustrations criticizing the phenomena of concentrated urbanization in post WWII Greece and alienation in Greek society after the introduction of television in the average Greek household. In regards to political and economic issues, negative self-representations include images that imply criticism for, at times, bad economic policies by Greek governments; political choices that led to the Asia Minor catastrophe; and visual references to the authoritarian regime of the Greek military dictatorship during the years 1967-1974.

Based on the insights offered in this section, one may come to the conclusion that, at the level of axiological balance, although the Greek nation is visually represented in a rather positive light in the new textbook too, there seem to exist important differences with the old textbook: positive visual coverage is significantly less in the new textbook, while in a number of instances, negative characteristics of Self are also presented in the textbook's visual narrative. Overall, therefore, it could be argued that the new textbook offers an

axiologically more balanced visual narrative *in comparison with* the old textbook (in conjunction with a more balanced textual narrative, as discussed earlier in this chapter).

### **New Textbook Implications of Visual Self Representations on Intergroup Relations**

Turning to the second dimension that was explored in the analysis of images in the new textbook, that of intergroup relations, similarly to the old textbook, not all visual references to self seem to come with implications on the relationship between Greek Self and Ottoman/Turkish Other. Out of the total 186 Self-references, it was only 62 that appeared to have a relevantly loaded meaning. 56 of them seem to imply a negative relationship between the two groups (e.g. visual representations of battles between the two groups during the Greek War of Independence; or images of Asia Minor refugees); 5 Self references seem to indicate a neutral relationship (e.g. two groups appearing to coexist in the same place/ market); while in 1 instance the relationship between the two groups seem to be implied as positive (two groups appearing as participating in a local fest). This is indeed an interesting finding, if one takes into consideration that overall the new textbook offers a textual narrative that avoids to present the Ottoman/Turkish Other as a persistent enemy. Maybe this finding is attributed to the fact that a significant part of the textbook covers the Greek War of Independence and the visual materials accompanying the textual narrative represent key events of this war and important figures involved in this struggle, thus, by definition implying a conflictual relationship between the two groups. In addition, given the fact that the textual narrative, as discussed earlier, seems to be more neutral and balanced, by citing visual materials that imply a negative relationship between Greeks and Ottoman/Turks, the authors meant to familiarize

students with what popular feelings/ mental representations were among Greeks toward the specific outgroup during the period they cover in their narrative. At this point, however, that these are just possible explanations, while the fact remains that in terms of intergroup relations as implied in the visual representations of Self, the new textbook does not appear to offer a significant break from the previous visual narrative. Two further notes need to be made here, however: a) many images of Self covering the period of the Ottoman presence in the region before the Greek War of Independence appeared to have no direct implications on intergroup relations and were categorized as such. Indirectly however, the fact that they seem to present ‘life as normal’ (Greek’s everyday life, economic, social and cultural activity, and everyday lifestyle), may be perceived as indicating that life under the Ottoman empire was not all about conflict between the two groups; rather the later might have been the exception; b) in 3 images in the new textbook the reader finds buildings built by the Ottomans to be used by Greek authorities, somehow implying a cultural cross-fertilization between the two peoples (e.g. image of the first parliament of Greece, with a note that the building used to be a former mosque and a building that was used by the Greek state as a museum, again hosted in a former mosque). Overall, although there seems to be no great difference between the two textbooks when it comes to the implications of visual Self-representations on Greek-Ottoman/Turkish relations, if one sees the textual narrative of the new textbook as setting the paradigmatic frame within which the textbook’s visuals need to be seen, the conclusion drawn is that, as opposed to the old textbook, the Ottoman/ Turkish Other does not seem to be standing as a persistent enemy in the new textbook.

*One concluding/ summative word for the representation of the Greek Self in the two 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbooks:* So far in this fourth chapter, I explored representations of Self in the two 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbooks; presented existing discursive patterns in each of them; and identified a number of differences between them in the way collective Self is presented. Overall, analysis showed that the textual and visual narrative of the new textbook offer: a) a significantly more balanced axiological representation of self compared to the old textbook; b) a description of the Greek ingroup that acknowledges within group heterogeneity; and c) a representation of Self that seems to be coming with less negative connotations for the Greek-Ottoman/Turkish relations than that in the old textbook.

Next, following a similar path, the discussion touches upon issues of representations of the Ottoman/Turkish Other in the two textbooks and offers a comparison between the two narratives.

## **The Other in the Old Textbook (Textual and Visual)**

### **Exploring the Ottoman/Turkish Other in the Old Textbook: Axiological Balance and Collective Generality in Other Representations (textual references)**

#### **Axiological balance**

Analysis revealed that in total there appeared to be 170 references to Ottoman/Turkish Other in the old textbook, either as a collectivity in general or as individuals representing the collectivity. Out of them, 145 references (85.3%) seem to be vested with a direct or indirect negative meaning; 24 (14.1%) seem to be neutral, while there is only one instance in which the Ottoman/Turkish Other is referred to positively in

the narrative of the old textbook (0.6%). These numbers indicate that, overall the old textbook offer an axiologically unbalanced image of the Ottoman/Turkish Other. Before delving deeper into specific themes that seem to emerge out of the old textbook narrative in regards to Other-representations reference needs to be made to two important, cross-cutting discursive constructs: a) Ottomans are typically addressed as ‘Turks’, a fact indicating that for the old textbook the Ottoman Empire was a purely Turkish empire, and that there seems to be no room for distinguishing between two historically and politically different entities (Ottoman Empire and Turkish Republic); and b) there seems to be no perspective when evaluating the Other, meaning that practices and policies existing four or five centuries ago are evaluated against modern standards, without taking into consideration the standards of the period discussed.

More analytically, starting with negative references (indeed the vast majority of Other-references in the old textbook), common thematic threads that seem to be weaving the discursive representation of the Ottoman/Turkish Other in the narrative of the old textbook include<sup>22</sup>:

- *Other as a Despot/Tyrant/ Oppressor* (63 references): the most common theme in regards to the Other is that of a group which kept the Greek nation under ‘slavery’ for 5 centuries. Throughout the old textbook narrative, the Greek nation during the Ottoman rule is described as ‘enslaved’ –a discursive construct that reserves for the Ottoman/Turkish Other the place of Despot/Tyrant. Frequently in the textbook, the reader finds references to oppressive tactics used by the Other (e.g. child levy; forced conversion; excessive taxes; limitation of religious freedom) which serve to reinforce the image of the Ottoman/Turkish Other as oppressor. A typical example of this

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<sup>22</sup> Again, here, these themes are not mutually exclusive, as there are references to Ottoman/Turkish Other that touch upon more than one of these themes

representation of the Ottoman/Turkish Other as an oppressor is the following:

“Generally, the Turks (sic) considered enslaved people as inferior. They made them dress poorly, live in small houses and in poor neighborhoods, subjected them to drudgery, forced them to get out of their way in the streets and bend. Moreover, they [Turks] humiliated and disgraced them, they subjected them to injustice and oftentimes they tortured them”

- *Other as Aggressive-Barbaric*: commonly in the old textbook (36 references) the reader finds episodes in which the Ottoman/Turkish Other exhibited aggressive behavior, such as the violent conquest of cities accompanied with looting, or suppression of revolts that resulted in extreme suffering or death of civilians (description of the Missolonghi siege and fall is a prime example here). These references to conflict episodes typically serve the purpose of promoting an image of the Ottoman/Turkish Other as a perpetrator at the hands of which the Greek nation was victimized, while reference to any kind of peaceful coexistence between Muslim and Christian populations during the years of the Ottoman rule is extremely rare – almost nonexistent.
- *Other's Negative Cultural Attributes* (10 references) another source for negative evaluation of the Ottoman/Turkish Other in the old textbook centers on negative cultural attributes of that group. Here common references include: the Other typically caring for military advancements only, coupled with neglect for arts, sciences, and commerce; inherent tendency to corruption by Ottomans; inherently submissive attitude vis-à-vis the ruler/despot; representation of Ottoman/Turkish culture as a culture of domination over other, with forced conversion being represented as a common practice with catholic presence in the regions ruled by the Ottomans; overall cultural backwardness, which prevented the subjects of the Ottoman empire ('enslaved peoples') to follow the progress path of their European counterparts; generally, here, the Ottoman rule is presented as an obstacle that inhibited the Greek nation's self actualization at all levels. A typical example of this theme may be found in the following sentence: “life under the Turkish yoke isolated Balkan peoples from



- the rest of Europe, which, free as it was, followed a progressive path. Greek schools, in which students from other Balkan countries studied as well, were not enough to make up on their own for this lack of progress”.
- *Other's good deeds as having selfish incentives –attribution of hidden motives: (7)* typically in the narrative of the old textbook, the motive attributed to positive actions by Ottoman/ Turkish Other is selfish and serves certain hidden goals. That was troubling to the researcher in terms of coding, as even positive actions by the Ottoman authorities, such as granting privileges to certain Christian communities, are described in the old textbook in such a way so as to underline: a) that the Ottomans acted in this way, so as to serve interests of their own, like keeping their subjects under control and minimizing the possibility of revolts; and b) that this was an exception to the generally oppressing Ottoman rule in the region. These were coded as negative references to Ottomans because reference to selfish motives and to the ‘exceptional nature’ of such actions typically served to reinforce a negative image of the Ottoman/ Turkish other. A typical example of such reference is the following: “The Turks (sic), in conjunction with religious privileges, granted the enslaved Greeks other privileges as well. The reasons for granting those privileges were many. Generally, Turks were concerned with military activity. So, they left the floor open for Christians to work in trade, small industry and agriculture. They also granted some form of self-administration to pre-existing communities, so as to make sure that taxed would be collected effectively, as they did not have properly organized personnel themselves”. Attribution of such motives likely serves to prevent feelings of cognitive dissonance that would stem from the fact that a group generally presented as an ‘enemy’ actually acted in a positive way.
  - *Ottoman/Turkish Other as less capable/ heroic in the battlefield (18):* in the same way that Greek Self is represented as exhibiting heroism even in conditions of power imbalance, the Ottoman/Turkish Other oftentimes appears unable to defeat Greek Self in the battlefield despite the given imbalance, a discursive pattern that serves for the reader to infer an image of the Other as less capable than Self. At the same time, in

cases that the Ottoman/Turkish army defeated the Greek fighters, this –according to the old textbook- happened primarily due to the extreme power imbalance.

Interestingly, in two instances throughout the old textbook narrative, the ‘enemy’ is presented as acknowledging the heroism of the Greek fighter and honoring his dead body; however, the intention here is more to emphasize the heroism of the Greek fighter than the moral standing and magnanimity of the Other in honoring the opponent.

- *War Events –Persistence of Other as Enemy*: Generally, throughout the textbook narrative, and more evidently in the description of conflict episodes and war events, even if this appears as a neutral description of military developments, the Ottoman/Turkish Other seems to be vested an enemy image that goes beyond attribution of specific negative qualities to that group. In other words, the attribution of an enemy image to the Ottoman/Turkish Other seems to have acquired an existential dimension, which stands as an overarching theme in the representation of this group throughout the textbook narrative. This may be attributed to a large extent to the fact that in the largest part of the textbook’s narrative, what is presented is conflict episodes between the two national groups. In this context it comes as a natural consequence that the Ottoman/Turkish Other stands mostly as a negatively colored group, even in references that may appear neutral. It is indicative, that in a couple of references concerning relatively recent periods, Turkey is still represented as a lurking danger. E.g. Toward the end of the textbook, where reference is made to relatively modern times (from late 1970s on) the reader finds the following sentence: “the country’s defense, especially on the islands, was further enhanced, so as to address the Turkish danger”.

Turning to neutral references to the Ottoman/Turkish Other in the old textbook, it was mentioned earlier that 24 out of the total 170 Other-references seem to be neutral (14.1%). Here the reader finds mostly description of political structures and workings of

the Ottoman Empire, reference to diplomatic activity in which the Empire is involved and few instances where military action involving the Ottoman Empire is described in a neutral way (e.g. “Viziers stood as Sultan’s assistants. They constituted the Imperial Council which was also called the ‘Sublime Port’. The Grand Vizier was the head of the council”). Finally, in three instances the suffering of the Other as a result of war, especially the mourning of civilians for their lost familiars, is presented in a neutral way – that is, not necessarily meant to elicit the sympathy of the reader to the Ottoman/Turkish Other. E.g. The authors cite an excerpt from the Memoirs of Fotios Chrisanthopoulos (Fotakos), where he describes the reaction of the Turkish population in the city of Tripoli after the defeat of the Ottoman army by Greek fighters in nearby Valtetsi: “there was much mourning and crying in the city and there was no house that was left without lament and crying. There, one could see Turkish women scratching their cheeks with their nails and pulling their hair, while children were shouting, asking for their fathers. Such was the situation in Tripoli after the Valtetsi battle”.

Finally, one may find only one positive reference to Ottoman/Turkish Other in the old textbook (0.6% of all Other-references); this refers to friendly relationships across identity lines between Greeks and Ottoman/Turks before the war of independence. As easily understood, one cannot really talk about a thematic pattern that seems to exist in the old textbook, in regards to positive Other-representations, as they are largely absent from the old textbook.

As a conclusion for this section, in terms of axiological balance the old textbook narrative seems to provide an axiologically unbalanced representation of the

Ottoman/Turkish Other, which is, in the vast majority of cases, represented in negative colors. Next, issues of collective generality in regards to Other representations in the old textbook are discussed. Here, similarly to the discussion on Self-representations, the two key questions concern whether the Ottomans/Turks are represented as a static or evolving group, and whether they appear as homogenous or heterogeneous.

### **Collective Generality**

#### **Ottoman-Turkish Other Represented as Static or as an Evolving Community?**

Understandably, here, not all references to the Ottoman/Turkish Other come with implications on the nature of that particular outgroup as a static or as an evolving community. Actually, the vast majority of them are devoid of such implications. In regards to the evolution/no-change dimension of collective generality, out of the 170 references to Ottoman/Turks there are only 9 that appear to have a relevantly loaded meaning. In 8 of them (89%) the Ottoman/Turkish collectivity is represented as unchanged over time, while only 1 reference (11%) implies some kind of evolution (reference to the modernizing movement of Young Turks). Tacitly, throughout the textbook, there is a theme that was also discussed earlier in this chapter that seems to vest the Ottoman/Turkish Other with a persistent/ unchanged identity: that is the identity of an ‘enemy’ group. The persistence of the conflictual relationship between Greeks and Ottomans/Turks as represented in the old textbook, from the conquest of Constantinople, through the years of the Ottoman Empire, the war of Independence, the Asia Minor Catastrophe and the Cyprus problem is a theme that has a central place in the narrative of

the old textbook. Thus, one could argue that the Ottoman/Turkish Other is generally represented as a static group.

### **Is the Ottoman/Turkish Other Represented as Homogenous or Heterogeneous?**

In regards to the homogeneity dimension of collective generality, out of the total 170 references to Ottoman/Turkish Other, 33 seem to have a relevantly loaded meaning, directly or indirectly. Out of these 33 references, 30 represent Ottoman/Turks as a homogenous group (91%), while 3 (9%) imply some within group heterogeneity (reference to internal social and political antagonisms, such as the Janissary revolt against Sultan Mahmud II in 1826). In other words, the vast majority of references to Ottoman/Turkish Other in the old textbook that seem to have meaning relevant to the dimension of collective generality, represent Ottoman/Turks as a homogenous group (e.g. it is the ‘Turks’ as a collectivity that appear to be the Greeks’ enslavers, in the old textbook, as in the following sentence: “during the period that Greece was enslaved by Turks, Europe experienced some very important events, the influence of which was worldwide”). The indirect conclusion of this representation of the Ottoman/Turkish Other as a homogenous group is that the (predominantly negative) attributes of being an Ottoman/Turk as presented earlier in this chapter, appear in the narrative of the old textbook to be collectively shared by members of that group.

As a concluding note in regards to Ottoman/Turkish Other representations in the text of the old textbook, analysis indicated that this group is presented in an axiologically unbalanced way with negative references outnumbering by far positive and neutral references combined. In addition, the high degree of collective generality found in the

textbook narrative in regards to Ottoman/Turkish Other, indicated that no within group differences are acknowledged with certain attributes represented as being shared by the whole group as a collectivity.

After having discussed the image of Ottoman/Turkish Other in the text of the old textbook, in the sections to follow I will turn to visual representations of Ottoman/Turkish Other analyzing the images that accompany the textual narrative.

### **Exploring the visual representations of the Ottoman/Turkish Other in the Old Textbook:**

#### **Axiological balance**

*Cover page:* as discussed earlier, the cover page of the old textbook represents the Missolonghi exodus. Here the Ottoman Turks are represented as the enemy at the hands of which the nation has suffered and as the target of the heroic acts of the Greek ingroup. This image ties to the common theme existing throughout the old textbook that establishes the Ottomans/Turks as a persistent enemy group for the Greek nation.

Except from the cover page, in the old textbook the reader may find a total of 22 images, in which the Ottoman/Turkish Other is represented or directly implied. Out of them, 21 have negative implications for the Ottoman/Turkish Other (95%), 1 appears to be of neutral meaning, while there seems to be no positive visual representation of this group in the old textbook. It is understood here that visual representations of the Ottoman/Turkish Other in the old textbook is predominantly negative, with this group being typically represented in dark colors. Themes emerging out of these negative visual representations of the Ottoman/Turkish Other are similar to those of the textual references and include:

- *Ottoman/Turkish Other as an Oppressor/ Tyrant*: 2 images center on the oppression the Greek ingroup suffered during the Ottoman times: a visual reference to forced conversion and a picture of the Greek Declaration of Independence where the Ottoman presence is described as a ‘monstrous oppressive regime’ and a ‘heavy tyrannical yoke’. Here, the reader sees a central theme of the textual narrative to be accompanied by relevant visual material.
- *Ottoman/Turkish Other as Aggressive Barbaric*: Out of the total 21 negative representations of the Ottomans/Turks, 12 present this group as the perpetrator of violent crimes against members of the Greek nation (e.g. a painting by Eugène Delacroix depicting the slaughter of civilians on the Chios island by Ottoman forces in 1822). In visual representations within this theme, the Ottomans/Turks may turn violent even against civilians, women and children or unarmed religious leaders, overall exhibiting barbaric behavior. Often this behavior comes as retaliation to Greeks’ struggle for freedom, while the visuals serve to further consolidate an image of the Other as a merciless tyrant.
- *Ottoman Presence as a Break to the Continuity of the Greek History*: one image in the old history textbook appears to be promoting the idea that the Ottoman presence in the region that had historically hosted great Greek civilizations was a break to the continuity of Greek history (depiction of the Hagia Sophia cathedral interior decorated with the insignia of Islam after the conquest of Istanbul in 1453). This automatically reinforces the image of the Ottoman/Turkish Other as a reference frame

with negative connotations on the actualization of the collective national goals of the Greek ingroup.

- *Persistence of Ottoman/Turkish Other as Enemy*: 6 visual representations of the Ottoman/Turkish Other in the old textbook represent that group as the enemy in the battlefield. However, one could argue that this is an image (enemy) that goes beyond the battlefield, and is established regularly in the visual narrative of the old textbook; images spanning from the years after the conquest of Istanbul to the Cyprus invasion in 1974 establish the Ottoman Turkish Other as a persistent enemy: an enemy in the battlefield, an group to be wary of, and a group against which the heroic spirit of the nation is typically expressed.

Turning to neutral representations of the Ottoman/Turkish Other in the old textbook, it was mentioned at the beginning of this section that there is only one visual reference to this group that seems to be neutrally colored. This is a representation of a slave bazaar during the Ottoman times, meant to present in neutral terms a common socio-economic phenomenon during Ottoman times. Finally, the old textbook is devoid of any positive visual reference to Ottomans/Turks. Overall, therefore, one could argue that, as it does with the textual references to Ottomans/Turks, the old textbook offers an axiologically unbalanced visual representation of that group, colored predominantly in negative colors.

Next, I turn to the implications of visual Other-representations on the relationship between Greek Self and Ottoman/Turkish Other.



### **Old Textbook Implications of Visual Representations of Ottoman/Turkish Other on Intergroup Relations**

Out of the 22 visual representations of the Ottoman/Turkish Other in the old textbook, 21 come with implications on the relationship between Greeks and Ottomans/Turks. All of them represent this relationship as negative (e.g. visual representations of battles between the two groups; pictures of Greek refugees). This appears as a consequence of the fact that, as discussed earlier in this chapter, a special place is reserved for Ottomans/ Turks as the Greek nation's persistent enemy. As the basic themes of the visual narrative in regards to the Ottoman/ Turkish Other center on representation of that group as perpetrator, oppressor, and an enemy in the battlefield and beyond, naturally, therefore, the relational space between 'Us' and 'Them' is typically defined as being conflictual/negative.

*A summative note in regards to textual and visual representation of the Ottoman/Turkish Other in the old textbook:* Overall, analysis showed that the textual and visual narrative of the old textbook in regards to Ottoman/Turkish Other offer: a) predominantly negative, thus axiologically unbalanced, representation of the Ottoman/Turkish Other; b) a description of this group as overall homogenous; and c) a representation of Ottoman/Turkish Other that has typically negative connotations for the Greek-Ottoman/Turkish relations, vesting that specific outgroup with the status of a 'persistent enemy'.

Next, the sections to follow will discuss representations of the Ottoman/Turkish Other in the new textbook, making, at the same time, an attempt to identify divergences in the two narratives.

## **The Other in the New Textbook (Textual and Visual)**

### **Exploring the Ottoman/Turkish Other in the New Textbook: Axiological Balance and Collective Generality in Other Representations (textual references)**

#### **Axiological Balance**

Analysis revealed that in total there appeared to be 79 references to Ottoman/Turkish Other in the new textbook, either as a collectivity or as individuals representing the collectivity. Out of them, in 56 instances (70.9%) references are axiologically neutral; in 20 cases (25.3%) references to Ottoman/Turkish Other appear to have negative implications; and in 3 instances (3.8%) there is positive reference to the Ottoman/ Turkish Other. These numbers indicate that, overall the new textbook offers an axiologically more balanced image of the Ottoman/Turkish Other compared to the old textbook. Before delving deeper into discussing recurring themes in negatively-colored Other representations in the new textbook, two important notes need to be made: firstly, in the new textbook in the vast majority of cases, negative references to Ottoman/Turkish Others are made indirectly and in relatively ‘light’ ways, not directly and emphatically; as opposed to the old textbook, negative meaning here is mostly implied, not necessarily stated explicitly and outspokenly. E.g. while in the old textbook one would read “during Turkocracy, Greeks carried out numerous struggles to get off of their shoulders the yoke of slavery”, in the new textbook the reader finds: “during the years of the Ottoman Empire resistance to Ottoman conquerors took various forms”, a framing that also has negative connotations on Other-representation, but the language used is less dramatic. Secondly, it is noteworthy that 6 out of the 20 negative references to Turkish Other are found in the sources cited in the textbook (which of course are a choice of the authoring

team), and not in the text the authors themselves wrote. That said, it is very rarely the case for the reader to find a directly negative reference to the Ottoman/Turkish Other coming from the authors of the textbook.

Keeping the above in mind, there seem to be two discursive patterns (again, not mutually exclusive) that emerge in regards to negative evaluation of the Ottoman/Turkish Other in the new textbook:

- *Ottomans/Turks as Acting Agents in the Suffering of Greek-Self* (9 references): in nine instances throughout the new textbook the Ottomans are presented as active agents of suffering for the Greek nation (e.g. reference to the lower status of Christian peoples during the Ottoman times; excessive tax-paying; description of war episodes where the Ottomans/Turks were on the aggressive side, thus inflicting suffering to the Greek ingroup). However, in regards to this theme there seem to exist important quantitative and qualitative differences between the old textbook and the new textbook narratives. First and foremost, as mentioned above, the number of references to Ottoman/Turkish Other as an agent of suffering for Greeks is importantly smaller than in the old textbook. In addition, the language used in the new narrative to describe these phenomena is much less dramatic and emotional. Illustrative, to this end, is the description of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in the two textbooks. In the old textbook, one reads: “Turkey, using the protection of the Turkish Cypriot minority as an excuse, had been always instigating problems. When, in July 1974, the Greek military regime organized a coup in Cyprus, the Turkish army invaded the island [Cyprus] and occupied its northern part (Attila Plan). In their effort to save themselves, Greek Cypriots fled to the free part of Cyprus, thus becoming refugees in their own country. Cyprus, once again, experienced tragic moments. The number of dead and missing people was large”. In the new textbook the same event is described as following: “In July 1974, the Greek junta attempted a coup against the President of the Republic of Cyprus. Turkey invaded Cyprus and its troops occupied the northern

part of the island. They form a Turkish Cypriot state, which is not internationally recognized. A great number of Greek Cypriots was displaced violently and the island was partitioned. Ever since, Cyprus remains partitioned and the Cyprus problem unsolved”. While both excerpts color the Turkish Other in a negative light, in the new textbook part of the initial responsibility for the tragic developments in Cyprus is attributed to the Greek junta. The old textbook also recognizes some responsibility of the part of the Greek military regime, but the main responsibility is Turkey’s, which “had always instigating problems on the island”. Moreover, throughout the new textbook the reader finds references that seem to be somehow balancing the negative aura of references to ingroup suffering by the Ottomans/Turks. Such a ‘balancing’ role may be served by references to the fact that all people across identity lines seemed to face adverse conditions: e.g. as presented earlier in this chapter, in the new textbook narrative all people may suffer the consequences of war, which again is not glorified, but is generally seen as a catastrophic phenomenon; similarly, both Christians and Muslims may be subject to the corruption of the Ottoman officials. Importantly, as will be also discussed in the section related to ‘collective generality’, typically in the new textbook the oppressor does not appear to be the whole Turkish outgroup, but the Ottoman authorities. The fact that there seems to be a tacit or at times explicit distinction between authority representatives and the whole Turkish outgroup is an important break from the previous book (e.g. suffering of Christian families is at times attributed to “the behavior of the Sultan’s officials and pashas”, a framing that implies a distinction between Ottoman officials and Muslim laypeople). In a relevant theme here, during their struggles for independence Christian peoples in the Balkans seem to be revolting against the Ottoman authorities not exclusively along national lines (i.e. national Us against national Them, our persistent enemy), but also because the Ottoman regime represented a dynastic, ‘Ancien Regime’.

- *The Ottoman Empire as a factor inhibiting the Nation’s freedom (oppressor), and delaying its political and cultural progress* (14 references): the second theme in regards to negative Ottoman/Turkish Other evaluation seems to be related to issues of

lack of freedom and inhibition of Greeks' cultural and political progress as a result of the Ottoman rule. This representation of Ottomans as a political and –to a lesser degree- cultural 'burden' concerns not only the level of national self-actualization but also the everyday lives of Greek populations, which during the years of the Ottoman rule was oftentimes unbearable. Reference here is made to the resistance by Greek populations to this rule and their attempts to 'free themselves'. Moreover, although the Ottoman presence in the region is not represented as a sudden break from a glorious Eastern Roman Imperial past, in the new textbook it is mentioned or implied that the Ottoman presence, especially after 18<sup>th</sup> century when its decay slowly started, did not allow people under the Ottoman rule to progress in the same path as European peoples, especially in terms of political, cultural and technological/ scientific activity. Immigration to European countries allowed Greeks to get in touch with contemporary European ideas (especially ones calling for the elimination of tyranny) and work towards national self-actualization and freedom. Illustrative of this theme is the following excerpt: "During the Ottoman rule, there is no lack of freedom-visions. These are mainly found in the legends related to the Fall of Istanbul and its [future] liberation. At the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century, these visions become more specific and get linked to the ideas of liberty and equality of all people. Through the perspective of these ideas, the Ottoman authoritative regime looks unjust to all Balkan peoples". The reader here, however, should not conflate authors' reference to the decay of an empire and the negative implications this may have for its subjects and their progress at different levels, with the representation of that empire as inherently backward.

In regards to neutral references to Ottoman/Turkish Other in the new textbook, it was presented earlier in this section that these constitute the majority, with 56 out of the total 79 references (70.9%) being of neutral colors. Generally in the new textbook narrative it is attempted to sketch in a value-free frame, at times descriptive and at times analytic, the socio economic and political landscape within which Greeks lived during the

time of the Ottoman presence in the region. In regards to Ottoman/Turkish Other references, one may find discussion on the economic, political, cultural, social, military and diplomatic conditions, processes, and phenomena associated with the Ottoman empire at domestic, regional and international level, presented in a value-free, axiologically neutral way. Conflict episodes and political/diplomatic decisions are presented and explained on the basis of given conditions and as having certain causes rooted in given circumstances. Typically in this narrative process, no existential, persistent characteristics seem to be attributed to the Ottoman-Turkish outgroup.

Finally, it was mentioned that out of the total 79 references to Ottoman/Turkish Other in the new textbook, there seem to be 3 (3.8%) with positive meaning, mostly centering on the tolerance exhibited by Ottoman authorities to minorities in the territory of the Empire. Although the number does not seem to be large, these are important references for two reasons: a) on the one hand, in terms of content, these references indicate a key paradigmatic shift in how students may see the place of Ottoman subjects within the empire. It is presented in those three references that people subject to the Ottomans in principle had the right to preserve their own language, religion and culture, and maintain a certain degree of self-organization/ administration. It was typically under infrequent circumstances, and often due to corrupted Ottoman officials or as retaliation for revolts, that expression of those rights was suppressed. This signals an important break from the old textbook narrative, in which continuous oppression and persecution of Greeks under the Ottoman rule appeared to be a key theme.; b) on the other hand, these references are found nearly at the beginning of the textbook. This sets a certain

perspective for the students through which they may see the Greek nation's experience under the Ottoman rule in the rest of the textbook.

As a conclusion for this section, in terms of axiological balance the new textbook narrative seems to provide an axiologically more balanced representation of the Ottoman/Turkish Other, than the old textbook, with neutral references to Other being predominant, and negative references being sporadic and indirect. Next, issues of collective generality in regards to Other-representations in the new textbook are touched upon. Again, the two key questions revolve around issues of evolution over time and homogeneity in the representations of the Ottoman/Turkish Other.

### **Collective Generality Is the Ottoman/Turkish Other Represented as Homogenous or Heterogeneous?**

In regards to the homogeneity/ heterogeneity dimension of collective generality, out of the total 79 references to Ottoman/Turkish Other only 13 appear to be loaded with relevant meaning –the rest do not seem to touch upon this issue. As opposed to the previous textbook, in the majority of references here (10 references out of the total 13, which makes 76.9%) within group differentiation is acknowledged, while in 3 references (23.1%) the Turkish/Ottoman outgroup is implied to be homogenous. It is important to note that Ottomans/Turks are never explicitly presented as homogenous in the new textbook; rather, it is mostly the way the authors address the collectivity in those three references that could be received by readers as implying homogeneity (e.g. the sentence “Greeks resist to Ottomans by preserving their memory, language, and religion”, implies a certain degree of homogeneity of the Ottoman Other). Generally, when the authors

discuss the period of the Ottoman rule, they use the term ‘Ottomans’, as opposed to ‘Turks’ which was a typical term in the old textbook. When using the term ‘Ottomans’ the authors commonly seem to be referring to the Ottoman authorities, thus implicitly distinguishing between (Muslim) laypeople and authorities (e.g. use of the terms ‘Ottoman state’ or ‘Ottoman administration’). The same distinction is implied when the authors describe war episodes: they typically refer to Ottoman army/ troops not the ‘Turks’ collectively. In addition, as mentioned earlier, the suffering of Muslim laypeople is also described several times in the textbook, which indicates a differentiation between authorities/ administrators, army and laypeople. In a similar vein, in few references, oppressive actions by representatives of the Other are framed in such a way so as not to refer to the Ottoman/ Turkish Other-group in toto (e.g. “the *Ottoman state* recognizes the right to life and property to Christian Orthodox populations living under its domination, in exchange of many obligations and taxes. Its subjects had to pay taxes for their lives and for the land they cultivate”). This indicates a higher degree of differentiation among outgroup members, compared to the old textbook, and does not present negative actions as a collective attribute of the Turkish Other. It is also remarkable that in the new textbook the expressed need of the Greek nation to pursue its freedom is sometimes framed in a way that implies a desire to free itself from an authoritarian political regime, thus adding a stronger political dimension –in conjunction with a national- to the Greek efforts for independence. In other words, the target here seems to be not exclusively an oppressive outgroup as a collectivity, but an oppressive regime –a given political arrangement. Overall, the new textbook narrative, does not seem to approach the



Ottoman/Turkish Other as a homogenous group, with all of its members sharing the same characteristics and exhibiting the same behavior; rather within group differentiation seems to be acknowledged.

### **Ottoman-Turkish Other Represented as Static or as an Evolving Community?**

In regards to the second dimension of collective generality, none of the 79 references to the Ottoman-Turkish Other seems to have direct implications on the nature of that group as a static or evolving community. What is observed in the overall narrative of the new textbook, however, is that the Ottoman/Turkish Other does not appear to be vested with existential, universal and eternal characteristics. The use of expressions like “oftentimes”, “sometimes”, “frequently”, when the authors refer to actions, processes, phenomena in which the Ottoman/Turkish Other is involved, seems to imply that what they describe (whether positive, neutral or negative) was not ALWAYS the case, thus recognizing that socio-political, economic, cultural and diplomatic phenomena like the ones discussed in the textbook are complex and largely dependent upon circumstantial factors. The overall message that seems to be present in the new textbook narrative is that no group should be vested with eternal/ unchanged characteristics, with its members exhibiting the same, unchanged behavior, independently of given circumstances.

After having discussed the image of Ottoman/Turkish Other in the text of the new 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook, in the sections to follow I will turn to visual representations of Ottoman/ Turkish Other exploring the images that accompany the textual narrative.

## **Exploring the visual representations of the Ottoman/Turkish Other in the New Textbook: Axiological balance**

*Cover page:* as discussed earlier in this chapter no visual reference seems to be made to Ottomans/Turks in the cover page of the new textbook, which comprises an artistic synthesis of different manuscripts by artist George Lazongas.

Overall, in the new textbook the reader may find a total of 24 images, in which the Ottoman/Turkish Other is represented or directly implied. Out of them, one seems to be positive (4.2%), 8 are neutral (33.3%), while 15 seem to come with negative connotations for that group (62.5%). This means that, while visual references to Ottomans/Turks appear to be commonly negative, the new textbook offers a more balanced representation of this group compared to the old textbook, as it also includes positive and a significantly higher number of neutral visual references to the Ottoman/Turkish Other.

More analytically, out of the total 24 representations of the Ottoman/Turkish Other in the new textbook the reader may find 1 image with positive connotations for that group (4.2%). This is a Turkish miniature painting of an open market during the Ottoman period illustrating a healthy/regular socio-economic activity. Inclusion of this painting in the textbook's visual narrative also implies an acknowledgement of the cultural/ artistic production of this specific group.

Turning to neutral representations of the Ottoman/Turkish Other in the new textbook, here the reader will find 8 pictures (33.3% of the total 24) that seem to color Ottomans/ Turks in a neutral light. These images primarily center on neutral representations of socio-economic and cultural activity, political developments and

visuals referring to demographics of cities and regions of the Ottoman empire. It is noteworthy that three of these images present buildings/ architectural artifacts built by the Ottomans, which after the Greek war of independence were used in the new Greek state for different purposes (to host the first Greek parliament, the archaeological museum, and a cultural center), thus somehow implying a kind of cultural exchange and cross-fertilization between the two peoples, despite the fact that their relationship has been at times conflictual.

Finally, despite the fact that negative representations of the Ottoman/Turkish Other do not monopolize the textbook's narrative, as they do in the old textbook, they are the most common type of visual representations of the Ottoman/Turkish Other in the new textbook too (15 out of 24, that is 62.5%). A key difference between the two textbooks however, is that no place is reserved for the Ottomans/Turks as the Greek nation's persistent enemy in the new textbook; negative visual references to them here is only made when the narrative presents conflict episodes between the two groups and not throughout the whole modern history of the Greek nation (i.e. the first negative image of the Ottomans/Turks comes with the narration of the Greek War of Independence). Overall, in the new visual narrative a theme that represents the Ottoman/Turkish Other as a persistent oppressor and Tyrant seems to be largely absent. More analytically, key themes in negative visual representations of the Ottoman/ Turkish Other in the new textbook seem to include the following:

- *Ottoman/Turkish Other as the Enemy in the Battlefield*: in 8 out of the total 15 negative representations of the Ottomans/Turks, the reader sees that group as the

enemy of the Greek ingroup in the battlefield. Representations of famous battles/ key military events between the two groups constitute the core of this theme. Taking into consideration the textual narrative of the new textbook, the reader may hardly find something existential/ persistent in this representation of the Ottomans/Turks as the enemy. Rather, they seem to be represented as the group, against which due to historical reasons the Greek nation had to fight so as to achieve its political independence and territorial expansion. The fact remains, however, that despite having a situational character, these images come with primarily negative implications for the Ottomans/Turks.

- *Ottoman/Turkish Other as Aggressive-Cause of Ingroup Suffering*: In 5 images the reader sees the Ottomans/Turks represented as exhibiting aggressive behavior toward the Greek ingroup, with an emphasis on the suffering of civilians as a result of aggressive acts by this specific outgroup. When it comes to retaliations to the Greek War of Independence, the Ottoman reaction is represented in three pictures as overly forceful against civilians and disproportional, extending to the level of barbarity (e.g. Delacroix's 'Chios Slaughter' is also cited in the new textbook). The remaining two images make visual references to the displacement of Greek ingroup members from Asia Minor and Cyprus as a result of the conflict between the two countries, thus implicating Ottomans/ Turks as active agents in this ingroup suffering.
- *Retro Popular/Humorous Visual Representations of Ottoman/Turkish Other as a Danger for the Greek Nation*: finally, among the visual representations of the Ottoman/Turkish Other in the new textbook the reader finds two popular images that

show Ottomans/Turks as a lurking danger. One of them is a humorous drawing showing a man (Turkey) wanting to eat a newly born (Greece), with an old lady (Europe) guarding against this danger. The second popular illustration shows one soldier from each Balkan country fighting against a dragon wearing the sultan's head. Here, by citing these popular illustrations the authors likely intend to familiarize the students with the popular feelings of the Greek people at that time.

Overall, based on the insights offered in this section, one could argue that, while in absolute terms the Ottoman/Turkish Other seems to be often represented in rather negative colors, in relative terms the new textbook offers a more balanced visual representation of the Ottoman others, compared to the old textbook, where there was a monolithic and exclusively negative visual representation of that group. In the new visual narrative one may also find a higher number of positive and neutral representations of Ottomans/Turks, while if the new textual narrative is also taken into consideration, the Ottoman/Turkish Other is significantly more neutrally presented in the new textbook.

### **New Textbook Implications of Visual Representations of Ottoman/Turkish Other on Intergroup Relations**

Out of the 24 visual representations of the Ottoman/Turkish Other in the old textbook, 6 seem to have no implication on the relationship between Greeks and the Ottomans/Turks. Out of the remaining 18, 16 represent this relationship as negative, 2 as neutral, while no implications can be found on a positive relationship between the two groups among the visual materials representing the Ottoman/Turkish Other. This finding is remarkable, if one takes into account that the textual narrative of the new textbook offers a more neutral representation of the two groups. It is true that, as discussed earlier,

this negative representation is vested with a situational/ circumstantial dimension. What is visually represented is mostly conflictual encounters between the two groups in the battlefield during the years of the Greek War of Independence and the efforts of the Greek state to expand its territory so as to incorporate all Greek-speaking populations in the region; here, the Ottoman/Turkish Other is represented as participating in a series of negative episodes with the Greek ingroup, and not as having the status of a perennial enemy. In addition, it was also mentioned earlier that, despite not having direct implications, one may find in the new textbook three images that may imply some cultural cross-fertilization between the two people, with Greeks after independence making use of architectural artifacts produced by the Ottomans. Overall, the conclusion that one may draw here in regards to the implications of Ottoman/Turkish Other visual representations on the relationship between Greeks and Ottomans/Turks is that, if taken in isolation from the textual narrative, the visual narrative does not seem to represent an important break with the old textbook. If, however, the textual narrative is seen as a paradigmatic frame through which the visuals should be approached, then the Ottomans/Turks are represented more neutrally in the new textbook, while conflictual relationships between the two groups seem to be of a circumstantial/situational character.

*A summative note in regards to textual and visual representation of the Ottoman/Turkish Other in the new textbook:* Overall, analysis showed that the textual and visual narrative of the new textbook in regards to Ottoman/Turkish Other offer: a) a more neutral representation of the Ottoman/Turkish Other compared to the old textbook; b) a description of the Ottoman/Turkish Other that acknowledges within group heterogeneity,

thus avoiding monolithic representations of that group; and c) a representation of the Ottoman/Turkish Other that, despite sometimes having negative connotations on the relationship between Greeks and Ottomans/Turks, seems to acknowledge the situational character of this historically negative relationship, thus not vesting this specific group with the status of a ‘persistent enemy’.

This concludes the presentation of findings in regards to textual representations of Greek Self and Ottoman/Turkish Other in the two textbooks, which revealed that the new narrative seemed to represent an axiological break from the old narrative. The following tables and charts present a summary of these findings (textual and visual), while in the next section the study proceeds with a theoretically informed discussion on the implications of this discursive break in the given context.

**Table 1 Textual References -Comparison**

**1. Textbook Comparison in regards to Greek Self**

**1. a. Greek Self: Axiological Balance in the two Textbooks**

	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Total Self</b>
<b>Old Textbook</b>	239 (76.85%)	35 (11.25%)	37 (11.9%)	311
<b>New Textbook</b>	121 (42.2%)	31 (10.8%)	135 (47%)	287

**1. b. Greek Self: Collective Generality in the two Textbooks**

	<b>Self Homogenous</b>	<b>Self Heterogeneous</b>	<b>Unchanged</b>	<b>Evolving</b>
<b>Old Textbook</b>	99 out of 133 (74.4%)	34 out of 133 (25.6%)	39 out of 53 (73.6%)	14 out of 53 (26.4%)
<b>New Textbook</b>	36 out of 103 (35%)	67 out of 103 (65%)	9 out of 64 (14%)	55 out of 64 (86%)

**2. Textbook Comparison in regards to Ottoman/Turkish Other**

**2. a. Ottoman/Turkish Other: Axiological Balance in the two Textbooks**

	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Total Other</b>
<b>Old Textbook</b>	1 (0.6%)	145 (85.3%)	24 (14.1%)	170
<b>New Textbook</b>	3 (3.8%)	20 (25.3%)	56 (70.9%)	79

**2. b. Ottoman/ Turkish Other: Collective Generality in the two Textbooks**

	<b>Other Homogenous</b>	<b>Other Heterogeneous</b>	<b>Unchanged</b>	<b>Evolving</b>
<b>Old Textbook</b>	30 out of 33 (91%)	3 out of 33 (9%)	8 out of 9 (89%)	1 out of 9 (11%)
<b>New Textbook</b>	3 out of 13 (23.1%)	10 out of 13 (76.9%)	0	0

**Table 2 Visual Representations -Comparison**

**1. Visual Representations of Greek Self: Axiological Balance**

	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Old Textbook</b>	113 (74.8%)	0 (0%)	38 (25.2%)	151
<b>New Textbook</b>	98 (52.7%)	12 (6.4%)	76 (40.9%)	186

**2. Visual Representations of the Greek Self: Greek-Ottoman/Turkish Relations**

	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Old Textbook</b>	0 (0%)	57 (96.6%)	2 (3.4%)	59
<b>New Textbook</b>	1 (1.6%)	56 (90.3%)	5 (8.1%)	62

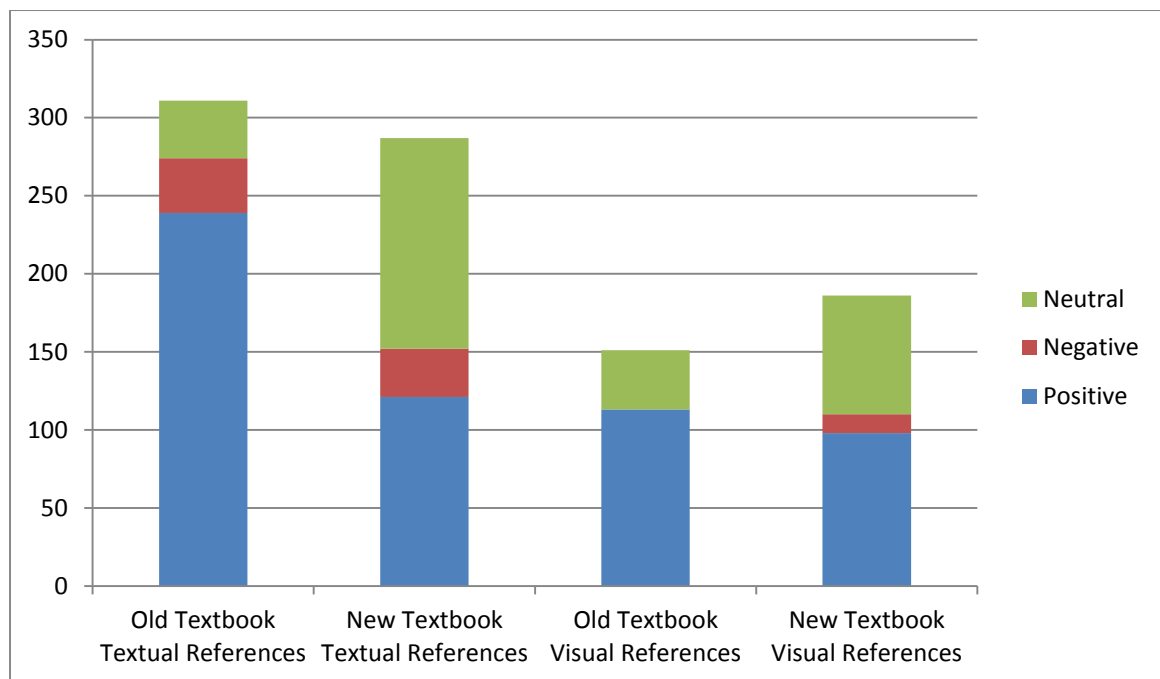


### 3. Visual Representations of Ottoman/Turkish Other: Axiological Balance

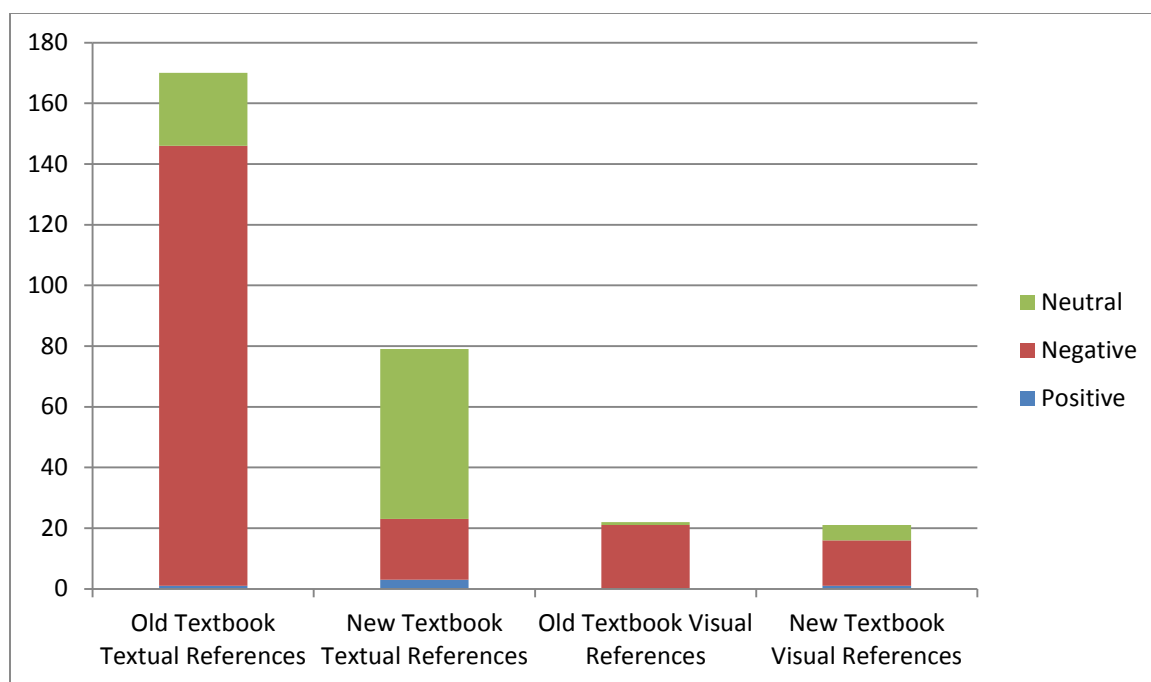
	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
<b>Old Textbook</b>	0 (0%)	21 (95%)	1(5%)	22
<b>New Textbook</b>	1 (4.2%)	15 (62.5%)	8 (33.3%)	24

### 4. Visual Representations of the Ottoman/Turkish Other: Greek-Ottoman/Turkish Relations

	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
<b>Old Textbook</b>	0 (0%)	21 (100%)	0 (0%)	21
<b>New Textbook</b>	0 (0%)	16 (88.9%)	2 (11.1%)	18



**Chart 1 Textual and Visual Representations of Greek Self in the two Textbooks**



**Chart 2 Textual and Visual Representations of the Ottoman/Turkish Other in the two Textbooks**

### **Discussion on Findings: Implication of Given Representations of Greek Self and Ottoman/Turkish Other in the Two 6th Grade History Textbooks**

Analysis of findings of the two textbooks as presented in the previous sections revealed that the new textbook narrative represented indeed an important axiological break with the narrative of the previous textbook. More analytically, it was demonstrated that the old textbook offers an axiologically unbalanced representation of both Greek Self (predominantly colored in a positive light) and the Ottoman/ Turkish Other (mostly colored negatively). At the same time, the old textbook narrative is characterized by a high degree of collective generality, stereotypically representing both Self and Other as homogenous groups, with all members within each group sharing the same characteristics

and exhibiting similar behaviors. In addition, the relationship between the two groups is predominantly represented as negative and conflictual, with Ottomans/Turks standing as a persistent enemy to the Greek ingroup. On the contrary, the new textbook offered a more axiologically balanced representation of the two groups, with the most common type of references to either group being of neutral content. At the same time, the new textbook narrative is characterized by a lower degree of collective generality, as it seems to acknowledge within group differences, and the fact that people's behavior is a function of given social, political and economic conditions, than of inherent group characteristics and attributes. Finally, the relational space between the two national groups is represented as less negative compared to the old textbook, while negative intergroup encounters appear to be more commonly represented as phenomena occurring within given circumstances and having certain historical causes.

As evident in the above, there appear to be key narrative shifts between the two textbooks that could very well challenge the established self-esteem maintaining outcome of social comparison between Self and Significant Other. A key difference to this end is the overall more neutral representation of both Greek Self and Ottoman/Turkish Other in the new textbook, which narrows the axiological distance between 'Us' and the 'Other'. This, however, does not stand alone. Rather, the new narrative seems to challenge the established self-esteem maintaining balance in the Greek society on a number of fronts. More analytically, drawing from the presentation of findings in this chapter, which was accompanied by comparative analysis, one could identify the following changes within specific themes related to collective axiology as found in the two textbooks:

In regards to Greek Self:

- *Socio-cultural Achievements*: while ingroup sociocultural achievements are celebrated in both textbooks, more relative emphasis seems to be placed on this theme in the new textbook than in the old one, in which the key themes for ingroup positive evaluation center on the nation's heroism and its survival ability despite being subject to victimization at different times of its modern history. In the new textbook, the Nation's progressive path passes through social liberalization and social justice, thus disengaging to a certain extent positive ingroup evaluation from purely nationalistic goals.
- *Political and Economic Achievements*: again, the reader will find celebration of such achievements in both textbooks. In the new textbook, however, positive ingroup evaluation in regards to political and economic achievements commonly touches upon developments within the group (democratization; social justice; equality) and seems to be disengaged from comparisons with the outgroup. This indicates that the new textbook seem to take steps from external toward a more internal locus of self-esteem. An important break from the old narrative, in regards to both political-economic and social-cultural issues, is signaled by references in the new textbook that appear to be critical to Self in regards to phenomena of authoritarianism with the group, exploitation of laypeople by elites, social injustice and inequality. This offers a conception of Self as: a) not being homogenous, acting as a unified, collective social subject toward pursuing common interests; and b) as exhibiting behaviors that –at times- are far from being characterized as virtuous, thus challenging again the self-esteem balance
- *Nation's Heroism*: In the new textbook, the reader finds significantly less coverage of the 'heroic' elements of Greek identity; to add more, such elements are commonly linked to democratic and freedom-related ideas in general and are disengaged from the battlefield which is not seen as an opportunity for glorious deeds, but as a phenomenon with negative consequences too. There is also a shift from providing

- ‘heroic’ role models to presenting the life of laypeople majority at different times of the nation’s modern history.
- *Nation’s Suffering and Victimization*: the new textbook places significantly less emphasis on the victimization of the Greek Nation. In addition, suffering does not appear to be the Nation’s monopoly, as the new textbook narrative acknowledges suffering across identity lines. This shift is coupled with a recognition of the fact that, except from the nation’s own powers, there were other, external factors that constituted important determinants of the Nation’s survival and rebirth, such as the tolerance generally exhibited by Ottoman authorities, and the involvement of foreign powers in favor of Greeks.
  - *Long historical past and contribution to global civilization*: Importantly, the new textbook narrative contains very few connections (and only indirect) between modern Greece and what is considered to be a glorious Greek heritage that draws from classical antiquity, through Hellenistic times and the Eastern Roman Empire. By not making historical continuity a central theme in its narrative the new textbook seems to be stripping modern Greeks off a really strong source of positive self-esteem, as the above achievements are not necessarily presented as their own (or at least they are not presented as the direct heir of this glorious heritage).
  - *Physical Homeland*: in regards to this theme, despite the fact that the old textbook offers relatively more coverage on it, no important differences were identified, other than the fact that the language used in the new textbook appears to be less dramatic and emotional when approaching issues in this theme.
  - *Ingroup homogeneity*: as opposed to the old textbook, the new narrative acknowledges within group differences; in the new textbook not all ingroup members appear to have experienced in the same way the modern history of the Greek nation, but there were significant class, political, and gender differences. Importantly, within group differences are commonly approached in the new narrative as something natural and are not demonized. Finally, the new textbook seems to offer an increased

representation of the role of women in the Nation's modern history (e.g. more women portraits than in the old textbook).

- *Evolution over time*: The new textbook does not seem to promote a historical continuity theme (it does not question it either); rather, the Greek nation –in its modern journey- is represented as an evolving community with democratization and modernization constituting two key themes. Reference is made here to the obstacles that these processes faced by more traditional elements in the Greek society, gradually leading to progress through a Heraclitean, 'tidal' process.

In regards to Ottoman/ Turkish Other, which overall, in the new textbook is represented in significantly more neutral colors than in the old one, changes within specific themes include:

- *Other as a Despot/Tyrant/ Oppressor*: The importantly less limited, and only indirect, references to the Ottoman/Turkish Other as an oppressor of the Greek ingroup in the new textbook, coupled with a distinction between that group as a collectivity and the Ottoman authorities and army, narrows significantly the axiological distance between 'Us' and 'Them', a fact that comes with the relevant implications on the self esteem balance. This is further 'sharpened' by reference to the generally tolerant –by that time's standards- attitude of the Ottoman Empire towards its subjects.
- *Other as Aggressive-Barbaric*: representation of the Ottoman/Turks as active agents of aggression against the Greek ingroup is a theme that also receives significantly less coverage in the new textbook than in the old one. Importantly, as mentioned above, the new textbook offers a narrative that distinguish between the Ottoman officials and soldiers, that often appear as perpetrators against Greek ingroup, and Muslim laypeople who may as well find themselves suffering from the corruption of the Ottoman officials and the negative effects of war. Thus, it's not the Ottoman/Turkish Other as a collectivity that appears to inflict harm on the Greek nation.
- *Persistence of Other as 'Enemy'*: While conflict episodes between Greek Self and Ottoman/Turkish Other are also presented in the new textbook, no special place in the new narrative seems to be reserved for that specific outgroup as Self's perennial

enemy. Compared to the old textbook, where the conflictual relational space between the two national groups seems to have acquired more of an existential character, in the new narrative the –at times- conflictual relationship is more implied to be the product of given historical conditions.

- No reference seems to be made in the new textbook to the following three themes that appear to be part of the old textbook's narrative: *Other's Negative Cultural Attributes*; *Other's good deeds as having selfish incentives*; and *Ottoman/Turkish Other as less capable/ heroic in the battlefield*, a fact that further indicates the axiologically more balanced representation of this specific outgroup in the overall narrative of the new textbook.
- *Other's homogeneity*: the new textbook narrative offers a higher degree of differentiation between members of the Ottoman/Turkish outgroup which is not generally presented as a homogenous group. This represents a break from the old textbook, where Ottomans/Turks are presented as sharing the same characteristics and exhibiting the same behavior, while it adds complexity in the 'social map' within which both Self and Other are placed.
- *Other as static or evolving?* While no direct reference seems to be made in the new textbook in regards to this dimension of collective generality, the use of words like 'sometimes', 'often', and 'frequently', when referring to events and processes in which the Ottomans/Turks are involved as a social subject offers an overall message that this group –or any group for that matter- should be attributed eternal/unchanged characteristics, independently of contextual factors.

In conjunction with the above, a general characteristic of the new textbook narrative is that it seems to be coloring historical reality with more shades, acknowledging within-group differences and the existence of multiple factors influencing human behavior. This may signal a shift from the comforting simplicity of certainties toward the anxiety that is entailed in the acknowledgement of the complexity of social and cultural identities. Connecting the findings that were analytically presented in this

chapter to the theoretical insights offered in previous chapters, one could argue that the collective axiology existing in the old textbook narrative appeared to be more likely to inspire among students exclusivist, stereotypical conceptions of the national self and an understanding of the relational space between the two national groups as inherently conflictual, accompanied with respective negative behavioral predispositions toward the given outgroup. The new textbook, however, appeared to be an attempt to alter these axiological patterns, and stand as a first step toward more inclusive mental constructs and less competitive behavioral predispositions. In that sense, it did represent an axiological break from the past; the new narrative was a narrative with ‘transformation’ elements –an attempt to provide a new group story (national narrative) that offers a different form of self-definition (national identity), which in its turn offers a new definition of the relational space between Self and Significant Other

This ‘balancing’ that the new textbook attempted to carry out by bringing closer to neutrality both Greek Self and Ottoman/Turkish Other conceptions may have had significant implications for ingroup’s self-esteem. When the talk is about these changes in the new history textbook (or in any history textbook for that matter), it is important to note that –independently of what the intentions of the authoring team might have been– the image of the two groups did not change independently from each other, but *in relation* to each other, as in the given social landscape it was the Ottoman/Turkish group that typically serves as a reference frame for developing an understanding of the distinctive ‘we’. In other words, at the same time these changes served an axiologically balancing function, they also by definition altered the outcome of social comparison



between the Greek collectivity and an important outgroup, thus challenging the given self-esteem maintaining discursive patterns. With Ottoman/Turks being a constitutive part –as a significant Other- of the Greek identity, the attempt to alter the negative discursive representations of the Other, may very well be perceived as a threat to Greeks' own identity. If, drawing from Habermas, one sees dominant narratives as 'identity-securing interpretive systems', the new representations offered in the new textbook narrative may be seen as challenging the very security of Greeks' collective identity (at least as represented in the old history textbook).

And this was indeed the way the new narrative, and the axiological break it offered, were largely perceived by wider parts of the Greek society –people who for many years had been exposed to the traditional national narrative: as a threat to their identity. Less coverage of ingroup's positive characteristics and achievements; less representation of the Nation as a homogenous entity/ horizontal comradeship, coupled with acknowledgement of within group differences; less coverage of the Other's negative characteristics and achievements; acknowledgement of outgroup's internal differentiations and their positive attributes; less idealization of the past and acknowledgement of –at times- ingroup's negative attributes/ actions; no glorification of ingroup wartime heroes and deeds (a great source of pride for any national group); less emphasis of the Nation's victimization; less emphasis on the survival ability of the Nation and acknowledgement of the importance of external factors facilitating ingroup achievements; less emphasis on the glorious heritage of Greek people and their contribution to global civilization; all these came together and appeared as challenging

the Nation's moral standing, competency, and efficacy as a social subject, thus challenging some key elements of the Nation's collective self-esteem.

Based on the above, it can be argued that the new textbook 'shook' part of what were largely perceived as core foundations upon which the value of the Greek identity was based. It narrowed the axiological distance between the two national groups and altered the prescriptive substratum on the basis of which moral evaluation of Self and Other typically took place in the traditional master narrative. In other words, the new narrative altered what Rothbart and Korostelina (2011) call the 'normative positioning of groups', a shift with important implications on ingroups' self-esteem. It was discussed earlier in this study that self-esteem is a basic motive for much group behavior. In their discourses and practices groups seek to achieve and maintain a high self-esteem, that's why representations of 'Self' and 'Other' are typically axiologically unbalanced. Accordingly, when the established self-esteem maintaining discursive constructs are challenged, collective identities may be perceived as being under threat, leading a group to employ tactics meant to resist such discursive shifts and 'screen' the new narratives out of the public discourse.

It should be noted here that, other than issues of collective axiology and identity threat considerations, other factors may have played a role in the negative reaction of the Greek society to this revision initiative. It was mentioned in the findings of the comparative analysis that a difference between the two textbooks touches upon the role of the church as a key reference frame for Greeks during the years of the Ottoman presence and the centrality of its role as an active agent in the Nation's independence

struggle. The new narrative seems to place less emphasis on both. This reality may have played a role in the generally negative reaction of the Greek Church to the introduction of the new curriculum. As the Greek Church is an institution with a historically prominent place in the Greek collective imagination and a large influence in the Greek society, the discursive shift that the new narrative represented might have been perceived as a challenge to the given power arrangement in the Greek society. Thus, part of the negative reaction may be attributed to the fact that the Greek Church, seeing its historical role understated in the new narrative, opposed openly and energetically the new curriculum. Of course, these issues will be analytically explored in the following chapters that will offer extensive insights on the reaction of the Greek society to the revision initiative. *The basic purpose of this chapter was to provide answers to the first research question, that is, to establish through comparative analysis that the new textbook indeed offered an axiologically more balanced narrative compared to the old textbook.* It is the belief of the author that this chapter provided enough evidence to demonstrate that the new narrative, indeed, represented an axiological break. Having achieved this as a first step, the reasons behind the negative reaction of the Greek society to the new textbook are analytically explored in the following chapters, through analysis of newspaper articles and opinion pieces on the issue, as well as with the help of insights elicited through interviews with a number of stakeholders. While discussion in this chapter centered mostly on issues of collective axiology through comparison of the two textbooks, it is hoped that analysis of the articles on the issue (Chapter 6) and interviews with stakeholders (Chapter 7) will reveal more reasons behind the negative response of the Greek society to the given

initiative, in conjunction to issues of identity threats and self-esteem considerations (such as the possibility that the new narrative challenged existing power arrangements; potential lack of a participatory processes in developing the given curriculum –e.g. consultation with teachers; lack of a constructive public dialogue; or any other reasons that the analysis may reveal).

## **CHAPTER SIX: EXPLORING REACTIONS TO THE HISTORY TEXTBOOK REVISION INITIATIVE: THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF 100 ARTICLES AND OPINION PIECES**

After having discussed the first research question of the present study in the previous chapter, where it was established that the new textbook provided a more axiologically balanced narrative in comparison to the old textbook, in this chapter I move to explore the second research question, which centers on the *reaction of the Greek society to the history textbook revision initiative*. The goal here is to reveal a number of factors that seemed to inform *popular responses to the new textbook*. In this sixth chapter, answers to this second question will be drawn through thematic analysis of articles and opinion pieces published in different media and news platforms between May 2006 – when the new textbook was first presented to teachers- and October 2007, a few weeks after the new Minister of Education and Religious affairs, Evripidis Stilianidis, decided to officially withdraw the new textbook from Greek schools.

As mentioned in the methodological chapter of this study, the sample comprised a total of 100 pieces, published in popular newspapers, online fora, and personal and professional blogs. The sampling technique used to identify the articles was purposive sampling and an attempt was made to include a wide variety of individuals with diverse disciplinary backgrounds and political orientations. The method used to analyze these 100 published pieces was thematic analysis, as the goal was to explore and identify

expression patterns through an inductive, reflexive process. Identification of core arguments, either supporting or opposing the initiative, and development of thematic clusters allowed the researcher to create meaningful story lines in regards to the various responses of the Greek society to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook revision.<sup>23</sup> Throughout this chapter 6, the themes that emerged through the analysis of the 100 articles are presented and discussed.

It is important for the reader to keep in mind here that the themes presented in the following sections do not stand in isolation from each other, but are rather linked and complementary, more often than not vested with an ideological aura. It is also equally important to note that it would be rather simplistic to argue that there were two sides in this debate, one supporting the initiative and one opposing it. Framing the debate in those terms would be misleading, as arguments for or against the textbook revision initiative came from diverse groups that do not necessarily share the same characteristics. That's why it would be invalid to arbitrarily create two large umbrellas –one including the supporters and one including the opponents- and argue that the debate took place across an ideological binary. The discussion that follows is structured on the basis of *arguments* heard during the debate (thus making an attempt to 'map' the public debate at the time), without this meaning that all people who were critical of the textbook –in whole or in parts- shared all opposition arguments, and all people supporting the initiative shared all supportive arguments.

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<sup>23</sup> For more detailed information on the methodological specifics of this part of the study, the reader may revisit Chapter 3.

## **Findings**

Turning to the findings, out of the 100 articles analyzed, 20 seemed to be supportive of the initiative; 64 seemed to be critical of it/ oppose it; while 16 articles were identified as neutral. In the last category I included articles that neutrally described reactions to the initiative, or took a position that identified both positive and negative elements in the arguments of the different sides. In the discussion that follows I make an attempt to identify and discuss core themes in the public dialogue surrounding the new textbook as reflected in these 100 articles. I start with a presentation of key opposition themes, and then move to a discussion of supportive themes. After the presentation of the findings, the chapter concludes with a theoretically informed discussion on popular reactions to the history textbook revision initiative.

## **Key Themes in Opposition Arguments**

Based on the analysis of the articles, key oppositions themes seemed to fall within one of the following categories (as the reader will see, a number of them included a variety of subthemes):

- Objections related to the new textbook's content, and especially how it relates to existing notions of national identity, collective memory and consciousness;
- Objections related to the textbook's pedagogical approach;
- Objections related to the textbook's epistemological approach;
- Objections related to the textbook's overall ideological orientation;
- Objections related to procedural aspects of the initiative;
- Objections to the general process of reconciliation across national boundaries;
- Ad hominem attacks against people involved in, or supporting the initiative

- Finally, special mention is made to criticism coming from traditional left, which seems to cut across many of the above-mentioned themes.

In the following sections, these themes are analytically presented. The reader needs to keep in mind here that opposition themes also include opposition arguments as emerged from neutral articles describing popular responses. Throughout the chapter, excerpts from the articles are used to illustrate the points made by the author. This excerpts have been put as footnotes, instead of inserting them in the text, so as to not disrupt the smooth flow of the commentary.

### **Content-Related Opposition themes**

A big part of criticism against the new textbook targeted its content in a number of ways. First and foremost, critics focused on how Greek identity is represented in the new narrative, arguing that the new textbook negated key positive elements of Greek national identity. This, according to critics could possibly lead to the devaluation of national identity, through elimination of key sources of pride and self-esteem, and the overall erosion of collective memory and consciousness. Other content-related opposition themes included: the textbook deviating from the Greek constitution and the Analytical Program of Study; understatement of the role of Greek Orthodox Church and Orthodox Christian tradition in the nation's history; denial of national traumas; absence or deconstruction of popular national myths from textbook's narrative; an overemphasis on the role of women in Greek history; lack of reference to the damaging –at times- involvement of foreign powers; and the fact that the textbook's narrative was short and did not cover sufficiently key events in the nation's history. Finally, a distinct string of



opposition arguments centered on the idea that the new textbook actually did not represent a break from past narratives, but it was equally discriminative vis-à-vis the history of eastern Hellenism, which was excluded from the new narrative. In the following sections a closer look is taken to each of these sub-themes.

*The textbook as negating key positive elements of Greek identity, thus leading to the overall erosion of national identity, memory, and consciousness (perceptions of identity, pride, and self-esteem under threat)*

As mentioned above, a good part of the opposition to the new textbook centered on its perception as an effort to deconstruct Greek national identity, consciousness and historical memory. Criticism here included concepts such as *de-nationalization, de-Christianization, denial of our (Greek) history, negation of Greek cultural identity and tradition, and erosion of the overall moral system of the nation*.<sup>24</sup> More specifically, major objections were raised in regards to *the lack of emphasis in the textbook on the idea of Greek nation's continuity*, which was practically perceived as a challenge to this very idea of continuity (although the textbook itself does not directly challenge national continuity, the fact that it does not openly promote it either was perceived as a denial of this continuity).<sup>25</sup> The textbook was also criticized for *not promoting a sense of 'we-*

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<sup>24</sup> New Democracy MP, Dimitris Konstantaras (January 3, 2007) quotes Milan Kundera and talks about an initiative that could be characterized as a careless, 'modernizing' attempt to "eliminate a nation by deleting its memory, destroying its books, its education, its history, inventing a new history so as for this nation to start forgetting what it is and what it used to be".

"The new textbook is a tool of de-Hellenization" (Charitos, November 11, 2006).

"It is obvious that the authors of the much-talked-about textbook have a problem with the idea of nation, which is not manifested for the first time in the case of this textbook" (Gotovos, August 3, 2007).

"The real issue is that this is about an ideology that intends to impose itself through education, an ideology that intends to erode the national consciousness of our children in schools" (Ecclesia, May 23, 2007)

Giannaras talks about "humiliating distortions of Greek history" (February 11, 2007)

<sup>25</sup> "According to Repoussi, 'the Greek enlighteners admire Ancient Greeks, whom they think of as their ancestors'. Pay attention to the framing here 'they think of as their ancestors', that is, there is a chance that

ness', thus not allowing for students' identification with a community that constitutes a collective historical subject traveling through time, having common past, common present and common aspirations for the future.<sup>26</sup>

Opponents of the new textbook also argued that it placed *much emphasis on cultural and social events as opposed to war and diplomatic events*; as a result, the textbook narrative offers fewer instances, where the heroic attributes of the Greek nation are presented and celebrated.<sup>27</sup> Even known heroes in the Greek history are often presented in a less heroic spirit, while negative attributes/ actions of theirs, such as their at times selfish or petty motives, are also touched upon. In a related point, critics also seem to object to the extensive reference in the new textbook to civil wars between Greeks, as it presents *an image of the Greek nation as divided and heterogeneous*. (Natsios, 2006). Overall, the new textbook, critics continue, lacks positive prototypes for students; here we see a conception of heroic prototypes as the only/dominant/legitimate form of positive prototypes (Iliopoulos, March 2007).

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Ancient Greeks are not our ancestors, but we may be descendants of Persians, or Phoenicians or someone else. These are the nice ideas 6<sup>th</sup> grade Greek youth learn from Repoussi" (Charitos, November 11, 2006)

<sup>26</sup> "Nowhere in the narration of events there emerges a sense of 'we'. Some 'Greeks' did this or that, but who exactly these 'Greeks' were and what is their relations to me, an international citizen of today?" (Romanos, December 10, 2006).

<sup>27</sup> "...in this textbook there is an overarching idea that the Greek Revolution came as a result of the Modern Greek Enlightenment. It was because of Korais and the intellectuals that we gained our independence...so, more or less it was Korais and the letters he set from Paris that saved us. That is, we were freed by ink and not by the blood of new martyrs, armatoloi (Greek Christian irregular forces), and other uncompromised Greeks" (Natsios, June 2006)

"History textbooks need to aim at students' moral development, not only nationally but also ethically. Thus, they need to mention and praise acts of heroism and self-sacrifice committed by Greeks in the past as an example of great humanism" (Despotopoulos, May 18, 2007).

Another positive attribute of the Greek nation that opponents of the new textbook feel is understated in the new narrative is that of *the Nation's survival ability*, especially its resilience under adverse circumstances.<sup>28</sup> In the opponents' line of argument, such an understatement seems to be deleting key positive elements from the overall representation of the Greek identity. Criticism also emerged from the way the new textbook approaches the issue of territories that were not originally part of the initial Greek state, but were later gradually incorporated in it. Citing demographic data and sources, the textbook represents those territories as multiethnic, while sometimes Greek populations were not even the majority in them. These representations were largely perceived as *a challenge to the historical rights of Hellenism over those territories*, while the authors were accused of citing sources selectively and framing questions in such a way so as to promote a conclusion that questions the Greekness of those regions, such as Macedonia and key parts of Asia Minor.<sup>29</sup>

*Deviation from Greek Constitution and the Analytical program of study:*

This type of opposition arguments centered on the new textbook's deviation from the analytical program of study as set by the Pedagogical Institute and the Ministry of Education. In their turn, the directions of the analytical program of study are based on the Greek Constitution's dictum that public education should aim at developing national and

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<sup>28</sup> "[In the new textbook] no information is given on how the enslaved [Greeks] constantly resist oppression, assimilation, and forced conversion to Islam" (Association of Greek former Members of the Hellenic and European Parliament, March 9, 2007)

<sup>29</sup> "[The textbook]...does not limit itself only to the exoneration of Turkey, but takes an extra step presenting Macedonia as the homeland of many people, among which some Greeks happen to be included" (Ecclesia, May 2007).

religious consciousness. According to this line of criticism the textbook was perceived as being against these aims and was, hence, accused of being unconstitutional.<sup>30</sup> In other words, there is a broader discursive, representational structure at place (as illustrated in the Constitution) that may be seen as constraining the agency of any school subject textbook intending to break new ground. Changing a textbook may as well require to offer new interpretations on what national consciousness is. Here, changing the Constitution per se may not be a solution, as this could trigger defensive reactions; however, changing the interpretation of the Constitution and the understanding of what national consciousness is could be a viable option.

*Understatement of the role of the Greek Orthodox Church and tradition:*

Opponents of the new textbook criticized the new narrative for understating the role of the Greek Orthodox Church in the history of the Greek nation. This was seen as an attempt to take out of the national narrative any positive contribution of the church, and eliminate Christian Orthodox elements from Greek national identity. For textbook opponents, the Church has always served as an agent for the preservation of the Greek identity; by eliminating reference to this catalytic function of the Church, the authors inhibit students' loyalty to an institution that stands as an important agent for Greek identity (representation of the authors as intending to keep youth away from the Church), while they exclude from the new narrative the importance of orthodox tradition in

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<sup>30</sup> "In the private sphere and based on the free expression of ideas...everyone is free to write or delete History, according to their beliefs and will, the commands they receive or their oddities. However, it is explicitly prohibited by the Constitution to introduce [these ideas] in public education in Greece and forcefully teach them to the Greek youth in the name of the Greek state, and especially upon the command of the state" (Society of Macedonian Studies, February 26, 2007)

preserving national consciousness.<sup>31</sup> To add more, since the new textbook was widely perceived as a threat to the Greek identity, it is natural that the Church, a longstanding identity-preserving/defending agent, would take the lead in opposing the new curriculum.

*Denial of national traumas:*

A key cluster of arguments in opposition to the textbook had to do with the perceived understatement or total silencing of national traumas and collective suffering. This may refer to specific traumatic events, such as the Asia Minor catastrophe and the genocide of Pontic Hellenism, or to longer processes such as the suffering of the nation under the Ottoman rule (as will be discussed in relation to other opposition themes a key objection here centers on the idealization of the Ottoman Empire).<sup>32</sup> Over the flow of time, such events have come to become indispensable parts of Greek identity and have acquired a prominent status in the collective consciousness. This lack of emphasis in representing traumatic experiences of the Greek nation was widely perceived by textbook opponents as an insult to the memory of the nations' ancestors (Dimitriadou, March 2007; Fotiadis, March 2007; Papathemelis, November 19, 2006). In opposition discourse, the textbook is widely represented as being offensive to refugee memories and as a denial

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<sup>31</sup> "There is a conspicuous effort to delete any positive reference to Orthodoxy, to the Church and the contribution of the clergy" (Cholevas, September 2006)

<sup>32</sup> "In the section 'Greeks under foreign domination', Turkocracy is 'rationalized' and beautified. Reading over the related chapters one gets the impression that Turks and Greeks co-existed harmoniously. Carnages, crimes, lootings, humiliations, forced conversions to Islam, the child levy, are all silenced. The nation, under the worst slavery that ever existed in the world, according to the 'new history' was almost on...vacations" (Natsios, June 2006)

of their traumas.<sup>33</sup> In regards to this, a number of articles raise the point that there is a general historiographic and textbook writing tradition that gives priority to the history of the Greek state and not the history of Hellenism, thus excluding from the narrative the experience of Greek people residing outside the state's territory –e.g. in Asia Minor and the Black Sea coast (Agtzidis, 2008; Fotiadis, March 2007). Finally, objections also emerged in regards to the way the new textbook narrative approaches the Cyprus problem, with critiques arguing that it does not color the Turkish invasion of the island in 1974 as negatively and explicitly as it should, thus appearing to accept the island's partition as a status quo (Makedonia, N.D.).

#### *Deconstruction of National Myths*

Extensive reactions were triggered by the perceived deconstruction of so-called national myths, such as the existence of the secret school during the Ottoman times. Opponents here presented this deconstruction of myths as a denial of the Nation's history (Association of Greek former Members of the Hellenic and European Parliament, March 9, 2007; Cholevas, September 2006). Less partisan objections centered on the argument that despite some mythic dimensions, such myths include elements of truth in them; importantly, they serve a didactic/ pedagogic function that may benefit students in multiple ways. Moderate critics made an important argument here, when they talked about the authors' approach to the issue of national myths: for those critics, instead of having those myths silenced or denied in the new textbook, the authors could have

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<sup>33</sup> “[The authors]...present the Asia Minor tragedy as a peaceful population exchange, thus committing a national crime and a hubris vis-à-vis the suffering and the uprooting of contemporary Greeks' ancestors” (Evangelides 2007)

approached those myths as such, that is as myths that may contain elements of truths and that serve a pedagogic purpose.<sup>34</sup> E.g. even if the secret school was a myth, it would be pedagogically valuable to discuss them, explore how the myth came to be and how it became part of the nation's history. This would help students develop their critical ability (Papadopoulos, August 9, 2007). To add more here, for some critics, the fact that these myths were silenced in the new narrative rendered them the monopoly of groups that exploited them and capitalized on them for their own purposes (Katsimardos, as cited in To Ethnos, August 21, 2007).

*Disproportional emphasis on the role of women:*

A number of objections to the new textbook, as identified in the analyzed articles, centered on what was perceived to be a disproportional representation in the textbook narrative of the role of women in history (Academy of Athens, March 22, 2007). It is true that the authors' intention was to acknowledge the multifaceted contribution of women at different levels in the modern history of the Greek nation. For critics, however, this effort was blown out of proportion to the extent that important men and their work did not make it into the new narrative in favor of less known women, with not as significant a contribution to the Nation's history (e.g. emphasis on the work of less known and prolific women artists, coupled with no reference to established, and well-known men artists) (Lygeros & Pavlides, N.D.).

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<sup>34</sup> Antonis Samaras, later to become Prime minister of Greece with the New Democracy party, argued for the pedagogical function that myths serve when taught to students of that age and suggested that "the Secret School could be included in the curriculum, even as a popular myth –not a lie, not nationalist propaganda, but exactly as what it was: a popular myth (May 2007)".

*No mention to at times damaging involvement of foreign powers in the history of the Greek nation:*

A less frequent, but existent, critique of the new textbook focuses on what critics perceive as an understatement or insufficient coverage of the damaging involvement of foreign powers in the history of Greek nation (Nearchou, August 4, 2007). Critics, here, refer to instances where foreign involvement instigated hatred among Greeks, leading at times to intense civil wars, as well as to cases that the politics of foreign powers had catastrophic consequences for the Greek nation (e.g. Asia Minor and Cyprus). According to these critics, the textbook should have been clearer and more direct in attributing responsibilities for these catastrophic events to foreign powers.<sup>35</sup> This line of criticism is commonly linked to accusations against the authors that they serve foreign interests (that's why they refrain from attributing responsibilities to foreign powers), and an overall view of them as agents/ pawns of foreign economic and political centers (Nearchou, August 4, 2007) –a type of criticism that will be analytically discussed in a following section.

*Short narrative not covering the needed events:*

Another common objection to the new textbook, as revealed in the analyzed articles, seems to be referring to its short narrative that did not cover (or did so insufficiently) what critics believe to be important events in the Nation's history (Open Letter to the Minister of Education by 174 Teachers, May 10, 2007).<sup>36</sup> Here one may find

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<sup>35</sup> “The policies of foreign powers in Asia Minor and the national division constitute taboos for the authors of the textbook and do not discuss them at all” (Open Letter to the Minister of National Education and Religious Affairs by the Association of Smyrneans, November 8, 2006)

<sup>36</sup> “In the new 6<sup>th</sup> grade textbook of Contemporary and Modern History (funded by the European Union) out of a total of 136 pages, the textual narrative itself is no longer than 1/6 of the textbook, that is less than



several examples that article authors believe should have made it to the textbook narrative, or should have been subjected to more elaboration (Greek heroism in WWII and resistance during the occupation; more emphasis on the events of the War of Independence; mention of the Pontic Genocide; more elaboration on the Greek struggle in Macedonia, and more) (Academy of Athens, March 22, 2007; Bistika, September 26, 2007; Ecclesia –Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, March 29, 2007; Raptis, January 27, 2007; Skalpinakis, September 18, 2006). For those critics, shortening the textual narrative in favor of offering more visual materials left important parts of the modern history of Hellenism outside of the curriculum. To add more, critics argue, the supplementary visual materials that accompany the textual narrative are not sufficiently explained, thus confusing students instead of helping them (Romanos, December 10, 2006). In a point also related to issues of the textbook's pedagogy, a couple of articles raised the point that generally brief coverage of many historical periods and regions, as opposed to focusing on one, has proven to be less efficient pedagogically (Raptis, January 27, 2007).

*Exclusion of and misrepresentation of the history of Eastern Hellenism*

Among a small number of critics, the textbook stood as a typical example of mainstream historiography when it comes to how it approaches the history of eastern Hellenism –the Greeks of Asia Minor and Pontic Greeks. According to this line of criticism, there is an underrepresentation of the history of those populations, as the textbook narrative focuses

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25 pages! Even for the needs of primary education, the length of the textual historical narrative is more than insufficient” (Romanos, December 10, 2006)

almost exclusively on the history of the Greek state, and not the Greek nation.<sup>37</sup> To add more, there seems to be a conscious misrepresentation of the events related to the Asia Minor catastrophe, where –among others- the genocides of the Christian populations are not discussed in their actual extent, which would have shed light to the true violent nature of the Turkish nationalism-Kemalism (Agtzidis 2008). This type of criticism places the textbook revision initiative within a broader discussion on whether the Asia Minor and Pontic refugee experiences have found a conducive environment to be voiced in the Greek state’s official discourse, as well as in mainstream historiography. For these critics, the refugee experience had been for many decades marginalized or misinterpreted in the Greek public discourse, leaving limited room for refugees to voice their criticism against the Turkish nationalism-Kemalism and the mishandlings of the Greek governments that led to the Asia Minor catastrophe. It was only as late as 1980s that the Pontic movement started claiming actively its share in the public sphere and achieved the official recognition by the Greek state of the genocide of Pontic Greeks and Asia Minor Hellenism by Turkish nationalists. However, this line of criticism continues, shortly after this, there emerged an orchestrated effort to reverse these achievements of the Pontic movement and deny the genocide. Accordingly, the new textbook should be seen as part of this orchestrated effort, which Agtzidis (2008) calls ‘anti-refugee revisionism’.

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<sup>37</sup> “One of the friction points between my views and the traditional historiographical school was its obsession with a Greek state-centric dimension” (Fotiadis, March 2007)

“This textbook is a negative symptom and tangible result of a dominant contemporary Greek historiography. A Greek state-centric and reactionary historiography, which bases its interpretation of the historic events of early 20<sup>th</sup> century on distortion/fabrication” (Agtzidis, 2006)

### **Objections related to the new Textbook's pedagogical approach**

Apart from content-related critiques, a number of objections were raised in regards to the new textbook's pedagogical approach, centering mostly on the argument that students of that age group (11-12 years old) are not cognitively mature to be taught history from the sources<sup>38</sup>, as well as that this approach has proven to be less effective pedagogically (Raptis, January 27, 2007). According to critics, students at that age need constants and prototypes even offered in a stereotypical form through a cohesive narrative (Givalos, January 28, 2007). On the contrary, critics argue, the new textbook offers a fragmented narrative, requiring students to draw their own connections between different historical events and processes; for them, the textbook's fluid narrative may cause confusion to students, instability, and ultimately denial.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, for opponents of the textbook, the new narrative is cold, distant and lacks emotional depth, thus neglecting students' emotional pedagogy, not allowing for the inspiration of healthy patriotism (Karapostolis, as cited in 'To Ethnos', August 21, 2007). The critical approach to history that the new textbook offers in an effort to render students 'hybrid historians', detaches them from the collective experience of the nation, again to the expense of identification with a broader national collectivity (Romanos, December 10, 2006).

Additional objections centered on the fact that the questions included in the textbook seem to be asking students to elaborate on issues about which the textbook does

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<sup>38</sup> "The aim of history education is not for students to learn how to learn, but to learn truly, as was the case in the past years" (Open letter by 40 Teachers, January 2007)

<sup>39</sup> "The discipline of psychology explicitly underlines the serious disorders and insecurities that may be created in children's psychology, as well as the negative consequences on the stability of their character, that may emerge as a result of the lack of stereotypes and constants" (Open letter by 40 Teachers, January 2007)

not provide sufficient information, thus leading to further confusion and acquisition of partial only knowledge.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, the textbook was criticized for offering no analysis of historical developments in a cause-and-effect fashion, thus hindering students' understanding of historical processes and progress (Fotiades, March 2007). Moreover, it was deemed as pedagogically invalid that the textbook narrative appears at some points to be in sharp contrast with the narrative that students may have been exposed to in their families and other reference groups.<sup>41</sup> E.g. understating the traumas experienced by Asia Minor, Thrace, and Pontic populations may contradict the narrative that children of refugee families have been exposed to and have been taught through their tradition. For critics, students will experience dissonance and they may accuse their families as unreliable and myth maniacs (Fotiades, March 2007).

A line of opposition arguments that was also discussed earlier is that, according to critics, the new textbook lacks positive prototypes for students, a fact that minimizes its pedagogical value (Romanos, December 10, 2006); what we see here in some critics' arguments is a conception of heroic prototypes as the key/legitimate form of positive prototypes. A number of critics here argued that the actions of significant individuals/heroes should be neither silenced nor absolutely glorified. For them, such figures need to

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<sup>40</sup> "In page 50 students are asked to 'discuss Kolokotronis and Mavrokordatos' contribution to the Greek Revolution'. Based on what information should they really discuss? Based on the two exiguous preceding paragraphs on these two figures, containing three and two sentences respectively? Where is the information that would suffice for building a meaningful discussion?" (Dimitriadou, March 2007)

<sup>41</sup> "Beyond some observations-objections there are a number of other important issues related to the evaluation of the textbook by non-experts; at least from the point of view of 'public history', which is also part of history as a discipline. The textbook is in obvious divergence with a popular understanding of the past, idiosyncratic experiences and representations of history in a modern environment (Katsimardos, as cited in 'To Ethnos', August 21, 2007)

be placed within their historical context and students should discuss in class how these individuals exerted their agency to influence their nation's history. This would facilitate students' understanding of the complex relationship between an individual's personality and actions and particular historical circumstances, thus helping them develop their critical thinking ability.<sup>42</sup>

An additional fact that, according to a couple of critics, made the textbook inappropriate for 11-12 year old children was that it started its narrative with a presentation of historical events outside of the experience of the Greek nation (e.g. developments in Europe at the time). Discussing such developments in places to which students have no personal attachment may result in them looking at history as irrelevant to their experiences.<sup>43</sup> This is why, critics continue, it is pedagogically preferable for history textbooks to start with approaching concepts, events and processes familiar to students, moving toward the unfamiliar at a later stage.

Finally, an overall common critic against the textbook was that in an effort to make the textbook enticing (short narrative, more visual materials, more exploratory/ elicitive/

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<sup>42</sup> "Of course, there exist historical and social terms that create the conditions for a hero, for a historic personality, to emerge...However, these individuals not only do they make good use of those condition but at times manage to go beyond the historical constraints of their time, by using their intuition, ability, and grit to 'look straight to the future'. Neglecting this complex relationship between personality and historical conditions does not contribute either to the cultivation of students' critical thinking or to the acquisition of typical knowledge" (Givalos, January 28, 2007)

<sup>43</sup> "You can't start a narrative meant for 11-12 year old students with a discussion of foreign lands and foreign places, to which students have no personal relationship/attachment. Thus, when it comes to how the student will start understanding the world, the first pedagogical principle is: the student needs to start from what is familiar and move toward the unfamiliar, so as to have a reference frame. Otherwise, the student stays exposed/without support and clarity in what is abstract and distant" (Zouraris, December 17, 2006)

experiential learning), acquisition of knowledge per se was sacrificed (Rizospastis, January 30, 2007).

**Objections related to the textbook's epistemology:**

Among the broader spectrum of criticism against the new textbook, one may find arguments that seem to be targeting the overall epistemological approach of the authors, not necessarily all coming from the same perspective. Here the authors seem to be criticized for adopting an over-relativist, post-modern approach that leads to arbitrary interpretations of the Nation's collective past, while there are objections to their hermeneutical schema in approaching the very concept of nation itself (Papamichail, January 2007). For others, the authors seem to be inventing class-struggle everywhere, thus emphasizing class divisions within the nation.<sup>44</sup>

On this question of epistemological perspectives, and in relation to the authors' overall attitude in the public debate as perceived by a general audience, several voices seem to be raising the point that the authors' approach is only one among many different approaches to history, hence, they should not carry themselves around in public debates as bearers of the absolute truth<sup>45</sup>. It is important to note here that –to the author of the present study- much of this criticism seems to be inspired by authors' known ideas and previous work, than on the textbook itself. In other words, what one may realize

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<sup>44</sup> "...a parochial and internationally failed Marxist analysis, which discovers class struggle everywhere..." (Cholevas, September 2006)

<sup>45</sup> "...in history there is no absolute knowledge and absolute truth...there are more than one scientific theories on each subject. 'Unique scientific knowledge' and 'unique truth' do not exist in any scientific discipline, and more so when it comes to history...so what bothered me was that some boast arrogantly that they alone know the 'absolute' and 'total scientific truth' in history, and anyone expressing a different opinion is either lying or is a naïve hostage to 'unscientific myths'" (Samaras, May 2007)

following the public debate on the textbook is that a big part of criticism, as will be discussed later in this chapter, seems to be coming as objection to the authors' ideological orientation, with the textbook being seen as a manifestation of this orientation and, accordingly, being criticized as such.

Finally, from a traditional leftist perspective, which will also be discussed analytically in a following section, the general epistemological perspective of the new textbook is inherently flawed (similarly to the old textbook, and all previous history textbooks): in this perspective, history is not a matter of exploring the progress of nations; rather history education should explore and analyze oppression patterns of working class by bourgeois-capitalists within national borders, and imperialist powers across national borders (Mailis, March 18, 2007).

**Authors as agents promoting an ideological and geopolitical agenda:**

This appeared to be the most common criticism against the new textbook. Critics, here, presented the given initiative as having its own (hidden) motives and as using the idea of modernization as a pretext only. Common arguments within this theme criticized the authors of using history education instrumentally, that is as an ideological and political tool (Giannaras, February 11, 2007; Gotovos, August 3, 2007; To Ethnos, April 3, 2007). As true as it is that the previous textbook also had strong political and ideological dimensions, critics continue, the new initiative also stood as an attempt to politicize history education. That said, instead of being subject to reform, school history was treated once again as an ideological instrument; it is only the ideological content that changed. A common, related theme in this type of arguments was that the authors and

their supporters represent a small group of intellectuals who have managed to occupy key positions in the state mechanism and use these positions to promote their ideological agendas.<sup>46</sup>

Related voices linked the initiative to the interests/ agendas of foreign, transnational political and economic centers, capitalizing on popular distrust toward globalization dynamics, insufficient understanding of those dynamics and perceptions of identity threats coming out of those dynamics.<sup>47</sup> For them, the textbook served the interests of foreign economic and political centers by promoting the idea of a post-national, multicultural formation in the place of nation-state. Underlining the fact that the revision initiative was funded by 75% by the European Union, critics here argued that it came naturally that the textbook would serve the geopolitical and economic purposes of the EU and the US –which are typically presented as partners having a single, common agenda/ cluster of interests- and that it would be subject to the dictums of Globalization and the New Order.<sup>48</sup> Interestingly, plain mention of these two terms appeared to be enough to trigger defensive reactions, to the extent that article authors did not even feel the need to explain what they refer to by using these two terms. In this line of argument,

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<sup>46</sup> Iliopoulos talks about the “...abusive and unrestricted exploitation of all state ideological mechanisms, which they control tightly and unobstructedly over the past decades, and the ideological terrorism they use to achieve a top-down (despite people’s resistance) imposition of their doctrines and ideologies” (March 2007)

<sup>47</sup> Not surprisingly, in regards to perceptions of Greek identity being under threat, some pieces also reference the large influx of immigrants to the country, as another example of how globalization may have negative consequences on the preservation of identity, consciousness and tradition (Iliopoulos, March 2007; Reserve Officers’ Association of the Municipality of East Attica, May 7, 2007).

<sup>48</sup> “At the end of the back cover is written a key phrase for understanding this disaster: ‘this work was funded by 75% by the European Social Fund and by 25% by national funds’. Thus, it makes sense for the sponsor to claim part of the ‘revenues’” (Skalpinakis, September 18, 2006)



the authors are perceived as pawns/ agents of these foreign power centers (Ecclesia, May 23, 2007; Natsios, February 18, 2007; Papamichail, January 2007); the deconstruction of the Greek national identity and historical memory as found in the new textbook, and the understatement of Greek historical rights (e.g. Macedonian issue, Aegean issue) are parts of an orchestrated plan, according to which we need to maintain friendly relations with neighboring countries even by compromising our legitimate rights, because this is what serves the interests of the authors' 'bosses'.<sup>49</sup> Targeting youth through history education is an effort to facilitate and increase the likelihood of success for their plans, the implementation of which requires submissive youth and future citizens.<sup>50</sup> All these are typically coupled with accusations for manipulation of historical facts and fabrication of certain conclusions in the textbook's narrative in ways that supported the messages the authors intended to pass to students.<sup>51</sup>

Finally, to render the above criticism stronger and present the given initiative as a part of a general, orchestrated effort to deconstruct the national identity the way people know it, have experienced it, and have come to cherish it, a number of articles make

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<sup>49</sup> "In the sensitive region of the Balkans, the general strategy of globalization, which aims at the loosening of national boundaries, national markets, national sovereignties and national identities, is connected to a very immediate geopolitical goal: the geopolitical restructuring of the Balkans, in order to achieve a structural change of the traditional geopolitical balance in this region" (Nearchou, August 4, 2007)

<sup>50</sup> "Some 'planted organic sub-intellectuals' of the New Order decided (pocketing their rewards, of course) to eliminate all those elements of popular historical memory that prevent Greeks –potentially subjects to the 'global civil society'- from being incorporated into the new symbolic order. That is, to delete the memories constituting the contemporary Greek cultural and political identities and the 'inacceptable' patriotic attitudes and behaviors" (Papamichail, January 2007)

<sup>51</sup> "Who granted Repoussi the right...to fabricate and predetermine certain conclusions by citing excerpts that are so chosen....as to lead students to mistaken and inaccurate conclusions and assessments" (Open letter by 40 Teachers, January 2007)

linkages between the new textbook and the Southeast European Joint History Project, carried out by the Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe (an initiative described in a previous chapter of this work), which was also accused of promoting certain foreign geostrategic interests in the region (Ecclesia, Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, March 29, 2007; Koutsourelis, March 4, 2007; Maligoudis, March 7, 2007; Rizospastis, January 30, 2007). Criticism against that initiative seemed to be centering mostly on: a) its -perceived to be- anti-national, post-modern, revisionist approach to the histories of the people in Southeast Europe; and b) its funding by the EU and sponsorship by centers/ organizations that for several reasons are treated with mistrust by wider parts of the Greek society.<sup>52</sup> Again, by making linkages between the two initiatives, textbook opponents managed to present the new textbook as a tool for the implementation of foreign agendas in the country.

### **Objection in regards to procedural aspects of the initiative**

Based on the analysis of the 100 articles and opinion pieces, a number of opposition arguments seemed to be revolving around procedural aspects of the initiative. Three main subthemes emerged here: a) lack of an inclusive dialogue prior to the writing of the textbook;<sup>53</sup> b) criticism on how the government handled the issue; and c) criticism

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<sup>52</sup> “Representatives...of the revisionist historians, in their effort to defend their cause, they have even gone as far as denying the obvious, that this kind of historical revisionism and its products are directly funded by foreign countries. However, what is written in the 4-volume textbook, published in Thessaloniki by the Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in South Eastern Europe, speaks for itself. And naturally bring up a question: what business is it of the American or the German foreign ministries to be involved in the Greek public education? What are their interests and the goals they want to achieve? Why does our Ministry of Education tolerate such interventions from above?” (Koutsourelis, March 4, 2007)

<sup>53</sup> As easily understood, this subtheme goes beyond the strictly procedural details of the given initiative and touches upon the key question of what an inclusive dialogue on an important issue of public concern should look like and who is to participate in a dialogue on what history is taught to students and how.

related to technical details and errors in the textbook. In the following sections, these three subthemes are discussed.

**Lack of an inclusive dialogue during textbook writing –authors exhibiting a form of elitism:**

Despite the fact that in general there are no established channels for broader scientific and social dialogue when it comes to curriculum development for school subjects, one of the objections raised in regards to the specific curriculum revision initiative was this lack of broader dialectic engagement during the writing of the textbook.<sup>54</sup> This made the initiative look, in the eyes of opponents, more suspicious and elitist, while the authors were commonly accused of being agents of certain political and philosophical approaches that have gradually come to dominate state mechanisms –a theme that was also discussed earlier in this chapter. Reactions included accusations that this was an arbitrary, top-down effort to impose certain views on history through a process that lacked transparency (although the authors’ team was selected through a blind, competitive process) and democratic participation.<sup>55</sup> Extreme expressions against the initiative included accusations of ‘ideological terrorism’, ‘fascist practices’, and ‘historiographical Stalinism’ (Diamantis, as cited in To Ethnos, August 21, 2007; Iliopoulos, April 2007; Nearchou, August 4, 2007). In one of the analyzed articles, an official at the Pedagogical Institute (PI) stated that during the review process –before the

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<sup>54</sup> “In a democracy, changes like this are not a matter of experts alone or of the Pedagogical Institute or the Minister of Education; it’s a matter concerning all citizens” (Gotovos, August 3, 2007)

<sup>55</sup> “This tactic pertains to autarchic and totalitarian education systems” (Open letter by 40 Teachers, January 2007)

publication of the textbook- authors were not cooperative and receptive to feedback by PI officials; ultimately, according to him, the authors managed to get around PI's recommendations by exercising pressure to the PI (Papagrigoriou, as cited in Ta Nea, October 9, 2009).

A related critique also touches upon the attitude of the authors and their supporters during the public discussion that followed the publication of the textbook and its introduction to schools. When the textbook became subject to public debate, opponents identified parts of the textbook that seemed to be in sharp contrast with popular sentiments on a series of issues, such as the refugee experiences, and the heroism exhibited by Greeks at certain points of the nation's history (especially the heroism of Greeks in WWII, a period about which modern Greeks had direct, idiosyncratic experiences). Here, in responding to criticism the authors and their supporters, according to critics, seemed to carry their academic weight around in the discussion, presenting themselves as experts, thus paving the way for opponents to accuse them of elitism (Association of Greek former Members of the Hellenic and European Parliament, March 9, 2007).<sup>56</sup> For critics, collective memory is –and should be– an issue of general social concern and not the monopoly of academic historians.<sup>57</sup> Accordingly, critics continue, popular sentiments, memories, and mental representations should not be looked down upon, but rather have rightfully their own place as a part of historical science –in other

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<sup>56</sup> Koutsourelis (April 22, 2007) talks about “arrogant displays of an alleged, ex officio authority” on the part of the initiative supporters.

<sup>57</sup> Kessopoulos argues that collective historical memory is not defined by “academic interventions of a coup-like character” (July 13, 2007)

words, according to this line of arguments the way people remember the past has become part of history itself (Katsimardos, August 21, 2007; Papamichail, January 2007; Samaras, May 2007). An attitude that reinforced popular perceptions of authors' elitism was that the latter, instead of addressing comprehensively the different types of objections raised by diverse actors, seemed to be using selectively extreme opposition voices as an alibi to group all opposition voices under the same umbrella, thus creating an artificial bipolar/dichotomy, representing initiative supporters as modernizers and progressive, and opponents as ultra-nationalists and conservative<sup>58</sup> (in other words, according to these views, the authors have their own share in the polarization of the public discussion surrounding the textbook).

**Process: Criticism that targeted the government:**

Taking a look at the public debate on the new textbook one may find actors in the Greek society that directed their criticism to the Greek government as well. Widespread criticism referred to the lack of a clear position on the part of the Greek government in regards to the new textbook (Makedonia; August 3, 2007; Society of Macedonian Studies; Triga, September 11, 2007). The revision initiative was a task undertaken by the previous government (PASOK); in their turn, the New Democracy government that were in power when the textbook was completed and introduced to Greek schools, embraced and supported the initiative. However, in the face of popular reactions, the government's positions vis-à-vis the textbook were not made clear, while individuals within the

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<sup>58</sup> "An effective way –maybe the most effective way- to avoid substantial critique of a scientific work, that is to evaluate it using quality criteria, is to call it a 'progressive approach' and frame it in opposition to the 'rest' which are all 'obsolete', 'outdated', or even reactionary . In this way, the discussion shifts from the level of argumentation to the level of big words and impressions" (Filiass, March 29, 2007)

governing party appeared divided, publicly expressing divergent views on the issue. Indeed, material analyzed in the frames of this study included official questions in the Greek Parliament by New Democracy MPs directed to the Minister of Education, who also belonged to the New Democracy party (Konstantaras, January 3, 2007). Overall, in the public debate at the time, the government was accused for poor planning, lack of political courage, and pre-election game-playing, as 2007 was an election year in Greece.<sup>59</sup> Further criticism also centered on the lack of an established textbook evaluation mechanism, while other voices accused the government of ordering and approving an unconstitutional textbook (Society for Macedonian Studies, February 26, 2007). Finally, extreme criticism presented the government as being submissive to Turkey (To Paron, July 22, 2007).

**Objections related to technical details, grammatical and syntactical errors, lack of clarity:**

Among the different types of objections to the new textbook one may find criticism that focuses on a series of technical mistakes (e.g. bad visuals), grammar or syntactic errors, what critics perceive as unfortunate framings, parts that may be unclear and confuse students, and historical inaccuracies (e.g. wrong dates, most commonly coming out of poor editing). All this criticism focuses primarily on issues of editing and design and center mostly on a belief that the end product was overall poor/ of low quality standards (Academy of Athens, March 22, 2007; Ligeros & Pavlides, N.D; Voros 2006).

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<sup>59</sup> “...the textbook has not even been printed, as the leadership of the Ministry of Education did not want to find itself facing a new wave of protests in the midst of the pre-election period...” (Triga, September 11, 2007)

**Objections related to Reconciliation across national borders:**

Another cluster of opposition arguments against the new textbook centered on issues related to reconciliation across national borders. According to these arguments, the idealization of the Ottoman Empire and the overall more positive representation of Ottomans/Turks in the new textbook's narrative came as a result of the Papandreou-Cem agreement, as a part of a confidence building process that was agreed upon at the level of foreign ministries in late 1990s –early 2000s. Although this view may include elements of truth (that is the new, less ethnocentric curricula coming out of bilateral agreements), the argument is most commonly taken to the extreme and represents Greek textbooks as if they need the approval of Turkey.<sup>60</sup> Such an argument makes the new textbook a symbol of Greek people submitting their right to decide on history curricula to external powers, especially rival powers.

In addition, part of criticism in regards to reconciliation centers on perceived lack of reciprocity on the part of the other side (Papathemelis, November 19, 2006); reference here is made to national dangers that currently surround Greek people (e.g. Turkey, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), who shouldn't be 'fooled' by reconciliation promises, stand loose and ultimately fall into the trap of submitting national interests to a

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<sup>60</sup> “‘To Paron’ reveals today why the government does not dare to withdraw the book. They don't dare because on June 27th 2001 the Official Government Gazette published the shameful agreement between George Papandreou and Ismail Cem, which grants Turkey the right to approve the writing of our school textbooks and how our history is to be represented” (To Paron, July 22, 2007)

“The school changes its aim, it is not interested in shaping national consciousness by citing the truth, but to instill national forgetfulness through polishing/rounding, hyperbole, and silencing of the ‘needed’ events, through the implementation of political correctness and distortion of historical truth, in order to build better relations with ‘former and current enemies’ on the basis of oblivion” (Skapinakis, October 2006). For Natsios, the new textbook is a “Turkish-written hybrid” (February 18, 2007)

‘so-called reconciliation’<sup>61</sup>. Another point raised by some critics here is that interstate relations are not solely dependent on psychological and socio-psychological processes; according to these views, the new textbook initiative stands as a reductionist effort to ‘neutralize’ history so as to overcome stereotypes across national lines, as if interstate relations are a sole product of psychological processes and what students are taught at schools.<sup>62</sup>

To add more, maybe the most common sub-theme when it comes to reactions that touch upon the issue of reconciliation is that development of critical thought and positive relations across borders does not come as a product of a ‘light version of history’. For these views, silencing is not the solution, and denial of traumas does not exorcise past negative experiences (Association of Greek former Members of the Hellenic and European Parliament, March 9, 2007; Despotopoulos, May 18, 2007).<sup>63</sup> Similar criticism came also out of people who in principle appeared to be in favor of reconciliation, but found that the way this was done in the new textbook was unfortunate. They agree with previous criticism that silencing is not a solution, definitely not a mature one; conflict experiences need to be discussed and analyzed so as to avoid committing the same

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<sup>61</sup> “At the same time that we change/correct our textbooks and distract our students’ minds, our neighbors commit gross violations of our national territory and they express their contempt and animosity toward us in any way they can” (Open letter by 40 Teachers, January 2007)

<sup>62</sup> “It is the same idea, according to which international and interstate relations are determined just by psychological parameters alone and by the image of other peoples promoted by each country’s educational system” (To Ethnos, April 3, 2007)

<sup>63</sup> “Sobriety in assessing historical events, forgetting of old hatreds, and respect to universal values cannot be a tantamount to deleting or silencing or understating the suffering and sacrifices of the Greek people. We emphasize that friendship and cooperation among peoples, but also the cultivation of critical thinking among the Greek youth, cannot be promoted by ‘rounding’ either traumatic or glorious moments in our Nation’s history” (Democratic Independent Educators’ Movement, March 4, 2007)



mistakes in the future (Despotopoulos, May 18, 2007; Papadopoulos, August 9, 2007).

For these voices, there is a way to approach historical facts without inspiring emotions of revanchism.

**Traditional left criticism:**

A distinct string of opposition to the new textbook came from a traditional leftist/ communist perspective. Starting with an attempt to deconstruct the overall discursive habitus within which the public discussion on the new textbook took place, traditional left saw the debate as an epiphenomenal controversy between ultra-patriots and ‘progressive’ cosmopolitans –a debate where neither side got the substance of history right, that is the realization that history centers on class struggle and historical progress comes about in a revolutionary fashion (Mailis, March 18, 2007; Rizospastis, March 9, 2007). The textbook’s overall epistemological approach, left critics continue, is flawed in that it places at its front and center the evolution of nations, while history is really about class conflict and the longstanding oppression of the working class by bourgeois capitalists and imperialist powers across -what have come to be- national borders. Accordingly, the textbook makes no reference to class struggle as the key motive of historical evolution and understates the importance of popular movements in bringing about change.<sup>64</sup> For traditional left critics, even when reference in the textbook is made to revolutionary movements, these are not presented as products of social developments/ ferments with a strong class dimension, but as diplomatic events (Rizospastis, January 30, 2007). To add more, the way the textbook overall approaches the question of revolutions seems to be

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<sup>64</sup> “This is the real substance of the textbook: it casts out/banishes the class contradictions and the class struggle as the real driving force of historical evolution” (Mailis, March 18, 2007)

centering on a demonization of revolutionary action, at the same time promoting dialogue as the only way to solve social problems (this point stems from a long-established belief within traditional left that dialogue is inherently system-conservative, while real change may only come through revolutionary processes). Moving to specific examples, traditional left criticized the book for silencing or insufficiently covering the contribution of Greek communists to the progress of Greek people during their modern history;<sup>65</sup> for idealizing past periods, such as the Renaissance, by not making reference to the oppression suffered by laypeople, who were subject to feudal relationships, slavery and religious oppression (Mailis, March 18, 2007); for not placing enough emphasis on internal divisions and oppression of Greek laypeople by elites during the ottoman years and beyond (Mailis, August 5, 2007; & March 18, 2007); and for not making reference to the negative role played by the organized church at different time in the Greek people's modern history (Mailis, March 18, 2007).

Overall, for traditional left critics, this ideologically monolithic textbook is seen as placed within the frames of a reactionary, conservative school system which is meant to provide prototypes that serve established capitalist interests;<sup>66</sup> it is a tool for ideological manipulation with the intention of rendering education a vehicle for turning

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<sup>65</sup> “[The textbook]...intentionally aims at silencing the struggles of the popular movement in history” (All Worker’s Militant Front, as cited in Rizospastis, March 23, 2007)

<sup>66</sup> “Since this is a discussion on a school textbook, one must examine the question of what kind of school this is a part of, what the goals are, and whose interests are served. This is about a school that emphasizes the development of technical skills, glorifies fragmented knowledge at the expense of holistic/comprehensive knowledge, and cultivates prototypes and behaviors that serve the interests of the established system” (Rizospastis, March 9, 2007)

students into submissive workers.<sup>67</sup> It above all promotes a new form of nationalism, Euro-nationalism, which aims at developing a common European consciousness so as to facilitate the continuing dominance of capitalism across national borders.<sup>68</sup> When it comes to Greek-Turkish relations, the textbook is seen as serving the goals of the imperialist NATOic order which, again, benefits capitalists across borders (Mailis, August 5, 2007). To this end, the textbook silences the negative role of capitalist, imperialist powers throughout history and the catastrophic consequences of their economic and political practices, such as their ‘divide and rule’ tactics (Rizospastis, March 23, 2007).

Finally, traditional left criticism also touches upon the question of who is to participate in a dialogue on history education. Raising similar concerns as voices coming from different political orientations, left critics argue that experts should not be seen as infallible, having the monopoly in discussing history, and especially history education. For them, history textbooks should be evaluated by everyone and, above all, by members of the working class who are interested in what their children are taught in schools.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> “Scientific knowledge, education, and truth have all fallen victims to the efforts of the big capital to shape submissive workers through school, in an early stage of people’s lives” (Rizospastis, September 10, 2006)

<sup>68</sup> “[This is a...] anti-materialist, anti-dialectic approach to social evolution, distortion and aspersion of the national-liberation, national and class struggles and communist ideology, devaluation of and hatred towards the working class, and cultivation of Euro-nationalism” (Rizospastis, September 10, 2006)

<sup>69</sup> “The question of who decides on a history textbook has been posed repeatedly. Of course, the textbook can only be written by experts. This, however, doesn’t mean that experts can or should enjoy immunity/ be above criticism, just by virtue of being experts. The textbook can be evaluated by everyone. First and foremost by the working class, the people, who are interested (or should be interested) in what their children learn at school” (Mailis, August 5, 2007)

**Ad hominem attacks:**

Illustrative of the quality and the overall style of the public debate surrounding the initiative was that part of the opposition to the initiative took the form of ad hominem attacks against the authors. Here, the authors were accused as: people of questionable scientific and academic expertise (Nearchou, August 4, 2007); national nihilists (Iliopoulos, April 2007); new janissaries (Reserve Officers' Association of the Municipality of East Attica, May 7, 2007); stateless intellectuals (Natsios, March 2007); historiographical and internationalist charlatans (Natsios, March 2007); pseudo-progressive and pseudo-modernizers (Nearchou, August 4, 2007), conveniently presenting themselves –and their political mentors and protectors- as continuing the work of prominent modernizers in the contemporary history of the Greek nation (Natsios, June 2006; Skapinakis, September 18, 2006); and over-provocative in an effort to become famous (Aggelidou, as cited in To Paron, July 22, 2007). They were also presented as individuals occupying many seats at universities and public institutions, in the critics' effort to demonstrate that the authors and their supporters: a) have come to dominate state/public mechanisms; and b) they only care for their own advancement and interests (Natsios, March 2007). These ad hominem attacks were extensively used as a means to question the whole initiative by questioning the scientific and personal integrity of the people involved in it and their supporters. Such attacks, questionable as they may be from logical perspective in a dialogue that is supposed to be conducted on the basis of logical arguments, seemed to have exerted a big impact on popular perceptions of the given initiative, especially taking into consideration that were articulated in easily accessible language. Finally, part of the criticism centered on what were perceived as deceitful

tactics used by individuals involved in the initiative so as to construct a new narrative in accordance with their ideological and/or geopolitical agenda: falsification of history through fabrication of historical evidence; selective citation of sources; and biased emphasis on certain events in accordance with authors' ideology, coupled with understatement of events that counter their philosophy and aims (Dimitriadou, March 2007; Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, as cited in Ecclesia, March 29, 2007; Kolovos, August 20, 2006; Ligeros & Pavlides, N.D.; Skapinakis, September 18, 2006; To Ethnos, April 3, 2007; ).

As clear in the above discussion, opposition to the new textbook was diverse and included a broad spectrum of arguments, coming from different political and ideological orientations. It would be important for the reader to remember that, as mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the themes identified above were often related to each other, while in each individual article one typically finds a combination of objections/arguments against the new textbook. However, apart from articles and opinion pieces opposing the given curriculum revision initiative, the public debate surrounding the new textbook included supporting voices as well, that expectedly found themselves in the minority. In the following sections key supportive themes are presented and discussed.

### **Key Themes in Supportive Arguments**

Not surprisingly, supportive voices found some of what opposition defined as negative attributes of the textbook to be its main strengths. Overall, key *supportive themes* emerging from the analyzed articles in regards to the textbook included:

- The debate over the new textbook was a manifestation of a long-running conflict between modernizing and conservative forces in the Greek society;
- The new textbook was more axiologically balanced, less ethnocentric, and promoted a less mythic conception of Greek history and identity;
- Public dialogue needs to be scientifically informed and more democratic;
- There is insufficient institutional structure in the country to protect independent scientific research and freedom;
- Opposition to the textbook was politically motivated by groups interested in maintaining their privileged status quo;
- The textbook was a product of a transparent process;
- The pedagogical approach of the textbook makes it easier for students to learn and develop critical thinking;
- The textbook's short narrative coupled with visual materials provides sufficient coverage of the historical period explored in the textbook; and
- Although the textbook did come with a political-ideological agenda, the goals set in this agenda were positive and needed.

In the following section each of the above themes is analytically presented. Again, here, supportive arguments as described in neutral articles are also included in the presentation of findings.

### **The debate as a manifestation of a long-running conflict between traditional and modernizing forces**

A common argument that supporters of the new textbook seemed to be using was that the controversy was a part of a long-running conflict between traditional/conservative and modernizing elements in the Greek society (Bistis, January 26, 2007; Kremmidas, April 26, 2007; Michalopoulou, January 28, 2007). Accordingly, for them, reactions to the new textbook came from conservative and ultra-nationalist parts of the Greek society that systematically oppose modernization and despise any progressive and scientific approach to describing and exploring social reality.<sup>70</sup> For them, more than its content, the textbook appeared as a symbol of modernization that triggered instinctive conservative reactions. Thus, the whole controversy to them was not a scientific/ historiographical debate but a manifestation of an unfolding social and political conflict that goes beyond the textbook itself; it is a conflict between ultra-nationalism and orthodoxy (having church as a spear head) on the one hand, and modernization and progressive forces, on the other.<sup>71</sup> Undoubtedly, when taken to the extreme, this argument did not seem to be very productive; those supporters of the initiative that framed the debate in those terms, seemed to be grouping all opposition arguments under a large umbrella which they labeled ‘conservative’, sometimes using derogatory language against textbook critics, thus dismissing any well-intended, scientifically grounded

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<sup>70</sup> “The recent debate on school historiography triggered by the new school textbooks indicates that the obscurantist part of the Greek society still claims a say over changes, shifts in perspective, and any expression of thought with modern direction” (Michalopoulou, January 28, 2007)

<sup>71</sup> “Scientific research and clerical dogmatism have never had points of convergence. Today, the conflict is social and political along clear lines: what we see is a general offense of ultra-nationalism, ultra-patriotism, spearheaded by the Church” (Kremmidas, April 26, 2007)

criticism. To add more, this seemed to polarize the public debate at the time even more, thus narrowing the public space that was available for constructive dialogue (Tzikas, March 24, 2007).

**The textbook as an axiologically balanced, less ethnocentric and less mythic conception of history and identity**

For supporters of the textbook revision initiative, there was an urgent need in Greek education to overcome ethnocentric, monolithic and axiologically unbalanced conceptions of the nation's collective history and identity, as well as a need for a more rational and modern version of national history, in which national myths would occupy a less central place (Bistis, January 26, 2007; Iraklides, February 1<sup>st</sup> 2007). Having as a starting point the belief that the purpose of history textbooks is not to fill students with exclusionist national pride, but help them explore humanity's past adventures, proponents of the new textbook called for a modern history education that would convey democratic values, not fanaticism. For them, the path to true patriotism passes through the development of critical thinking and the inspiration of democratic values, and not through the reproduction of myths, the validity of which is, in any case, seriously questioned by the scientific historiographical community.<sup>72</sup> To add more, since one of the stated goals of Greek diplomacy is to promote friendly relationships with neighboring countries, history textbooks should not be monopolized by war events, chosen glories and traumas,

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<sup>72</sup> "The basic rationale is that the new textbook introduces a new educational approach to historical events, helps students cultivate their critical thinking ability, discourages memorization and renders the teacher a true pedagogue...[the new textbook] is exceptionally patriotic because it teaches truths and is not based on myths" (In.gr, March 6, 2007)



and chauvinistic conceptions of identity.<sup>73</sup> The new textbook, thus, came as a means to address these needs; it was an overall more axiologically balanced textbook, less ethnocentric, devoid of emphasis on national myths, and signaled a shift away from binary, black and white, good and bad, oppositions. Importantly, it did not deconstruct national identity and collective memory, but offered an overall new, inclusive form of patriotism (Tzikas, March 24, 2007). As opposed to more traditional books, it offered multiple perspectives, it intended to enhance critical thinking, and it acknowledged within group heterogeneity, validating the diverse historical experiences that members of the Greek nation may have had, and differentiating between the experiences of heroes and the role of laypeople in making history.<sup>74</sup> For supporters of the initiative, it was textbooks like this that could lead to less ethnocentric and mythic conceptions of the Greek national identity, thus preparing Greek youth for operating more efficiently within a modern, internationalized world, and according to the needs existing in this world's reality.

### **Need for a scientifically informed, democratic and constructive dialogue**

In regards to the public debate that emerged around the new textbook, a number of voices touched upon the content and the quality of the public dialogue on history

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<sup>73</sup> “Shifts in political circumstances require new ways of approaching/dealing with the past. The need for peaceful coexistence with neighbors, as well as new pedagogical views (cultivation of self-acting, development of critical thinking) require a revision of the aims and instructional media in history education” (Georgopoulos 2007)

<sup>74</sup> “Including the ‘silent protagonists’ of history in the textbook’s narrative is actually one of its strengths and allows students to identify with individuals, who lived in the past, that may be closer to students’ experience (e.g. the chapter discussing child labor). Demographic information, information on everyday life, society, economy and culture throughout the historical periods covered in the textbook, reflect in an easy-to-understand way the complexity of historical reality, which obviously –and fortunately- did not include only battles, wars, massacres, and hero-warriors” (Koulouri, January 7, 2007)

education, as well as on the question of who is to participate in this dialogue. Part of the voices supporting the revision initiative argued that history education should be a task for the scientific community (Koulouri, January 7, 2007; Michalopoulou, January 28, 2007; Tzikas, March 24, 2007). Some extreme voices among the supporters seemed to be attacking opponents, whom they deemed as irrelevant people that have not understood (or are not able to understand) the textbook's overall orientation and pedagogic aims, yet they have come to dominate public dialogue on an issue that is not their expertise. Derogatory framing was not absent here; among others, one may find references to 'semi-educated', 'stunted' people who have not read a book in their lives, yet they express opinion on a book that they have never read (Andrianopoulos 2007); 'self-proclaimed intellectuals' and experts (Andrianopoulos 2007; Tzikas, March 24, 2007); people whose intention is to build a television career (Repoussi, as cited in Lakasas, April 1, 2007); and withdrawal petitions signed by 'peasants', 'shepherds', and 'housewives' (Koulouri, January 7, 2007; Kremmidas, April 26, 2007). These insights indicate that a number of individuals supporting the revision initiative, on the one hand may have exhibited an elitist attitude, and on the other hand may have had their own share in polarizing the debate, placing it within a political and not a historiographical or educational frame. However, more attention as these rather extreme voices may have attracted by media and people, there also existed more moderate voices that saw history education as a public matter and acknowledged that fact that wider social strata should be included in the public debate and their voices should be heard.<sup>75</sup> The objections raised by these moderate

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<sup>75</sup> [The controversy around the 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook] taught us that the issues discussed are very

voices, however, had to do with the terms of the public debate itself. To them, welcome as wider social participation in the debate may be, the public dialogue on the new textbook was not conducted in a constructive, democratic and respectful way. Critics were not interested in listening to the other side, they often based their criticism on biases and not on real arguments, extreme opposition voices attracted more attention and were placed forth and center in the dialogue, while there were plenty of derogatory comments and personal attacks against the authors. For them, it was unfortunate that broader scientific and historiographical dialogue was replaced by social criticism, bigotry and fanaticism, as this did not allow for their sound arguments to be listened and understood by wider parts of the Greek society (Gazi, September 30, 2007; Tzikas, March 24, 2007).

### **Criticism of the government and the institutional status quo**

Part of the voices supporting the initiative touched upon the issue of governmental support for the initiative and the insufficient institutional structure meant to protect scientific research and liberty. To these voices, a rather unwilling government fell hostage to ultra-right and nationalist voices, as well as to an uninformed and deceived audience.<sup>76</sup> By reflection, the polarized public debate, according to these voices, brought

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important, not just for historians, but for all citizens. History, especially national history, is not harmed by public debate and critiques. On the contrary, this way it is enriched and expands its social functions. However, this is too important an issue and shouldn't be left prey to bigots and fanatics (Gazi, September 30, 2007).

"We cannot argue that it is only the experts that may express an opinion on the textbook. Likely this is true for a math textbook, but in this case the discussion is not just about a school subject, but involves values inextricably linked to the subject (e.g. issues of identity), thus the involvement of the public is inevitable" (Georgopoulos 2007).

<sup>76</sup> "I was deeply insulted by the government's attitude. Minister Gianakou's proud stance was punished by an uninformed and deceived electoral audience. I hope future will give her the credit she deserves. And

to the surface the worst characteristics of etatism: control of thought and expression, and censorship of the scientific community (3<sup>rd</sup> Union of Secondary Education Workers, Thessaloniki, September 25, 2007; Andrianopoulos 2007). According to these views, historians lost the ‘battle’ and the textbook was ultimately withdrawn, not because they did not get the opportunity to talk and be heard, but because the system that was supposed to protect scientific research and its products failed to do so.<sup>77</sup> A sub-theme in regards to this point centers on underlining the limitations of having a single, officially sanctioned textbook for each school subject. This means that approved textbooks stand as substantiations of an authoritative, official form of knowledge. This raises extra complications when it comes to history education, as in this case the textbook symbolizes an officially approved account of knowledge and historical truth, rendering the textbooks vulnerable to social critic and hostages of political games and considerations (Koulouri, January 7, 2007). For proponents of the initiative, it is high time to detach textbook production and approval from central authorities and state mechanisms and leave this task to an independent body that would not be attached to the Ministry of Education (Loukas, as cited in In.gr, March 6, 2007).

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Athenians will realize their mistake. Because with their negative votes against her, they rendered the government hostage to the rationale of the ultra-right” (Andrianopoulos 2007)

<sup>77</sup> “I can certainly say this: historiography, school history, and historians, in this stage of the conflict we lost the battle; not because we did not get a chance to talk or no one wanted to listen to us, but because the very system that is supposed to protect scientific research failed to do so” (Kremmidas, April 26, 2007)

### **Political motives of opposition voices; interest in preserving existing power arrangement**

Maybe the most common theme in proponents' response to opposition criticism, as found in the analyzed articles, was that voices of opposition to the new textbook were politically motivated. On the one hand, these voices argued, criticism against the initiative used the new textbook as a pretext to personally attack the authors due to their known political and ideological orientation (Repoussi, as cited in Lakasas, April 1, 2007; Tzikas, March 24, 2007). Thus, the textbook controversy served for conservative groups as an opportunity to alarm Greek society against potentially 'dangerous' revisionist movements that may ultimately jeopardize national identity and falsify collective memory.<sup>78</sup> On the other hand, the new narrative offered by the new textbook seemed to be challenging the existing discursive power arrangement, in which nationalist and Orthodox Christian elements seemed to be enjoying a privileged status. Here, according to these voices, opposition to the initiative indicated the desire of those elements to preserve their privileged positioning within the existing discursive and institutional structure.<sup>79</sup> These elements, proponents of the initiative continue, managed to mobilize popular support by capitalizing on a series of popular sensitivities (e.g. memories of

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<sup>78</sup> "Those who dare to argue that constitutionally patriotic is what is true and deny that lies and imaginations are ethically national, are called janissaries" (Pesmazoglou, as cited in Ta Nea, March 13, 2007)

<sup>79</sup> "In their Sunday sermons, clerics and no clerics, not only do they criticize the textbook, but also blame historians, who allegedly intentionally distort historical reality and who target the nation-saving Church...there is a conspicuous effort by the whole clerical and extreme-right spectrum to devalue/disdain school history, historians and historiography. They know well, at least their leadership, that historiography is a science and that we, historians, know very well that the Church have never accepted the findings of scientific research, not even in the distant past. In reality, the Church and all deeply conservative forces have fortified their power using historical lies; that's why truth about the past is their enemy" (Kremmidas, April 26, 2006)

trauma that may easily fall prey to populism) for their own purposes, using less than ethical means: fabrication of evidence; selective citation of textbook excerpts that when presented out of context seemed to be delivering a different message than intended by the authors; exploitative use of national myths and emotional arguments; personal attacks to textbook authors and supporters; reference to alleged involvement in the initiative of foreign actors/groups that are treated with mistrust by the Greek society, overall managed to distort the content of the textbook and delegitimize the whole initiative in the eyes of the Greek society (Boukalas, February 11, 2007; Georgopoulos 2007; Kampilis, January 25, 2007; Tzikas, March 24, 2007).<sup>80</sup>

In reality, supporters argue, the textbook simply did not do what it was accused of doing: it did not de-nationalize history, neither did it eliminate patriotism in its narrative; it just offered an overall new, modern, democratic and inclusive conception of patriotism (Koulouri, January 7, 2007). Interestingly, in regards to this point, a number of supporters of the initiative looked at specific excerpts from the new textbook that were fiercely criticized by textbook opponents as anti-national, and compared those excerpts with the coverage of the same events in the old textbook. What they found was that in a number of occasions the framing was similar, and argued that to a great extent it was actually the authors' ideology and known political orientation that drove reactions against the textbook, and less the content of the textbook itself (Karanikas, March 13, 2007). For them, representation of the textbook as an attempt to deconstruct identity and collective

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<sup>80</sup> "I lean toward the conclusion that some people, in order to make their criticism stronger, intentionally and blatantly did injustice to the content of the textbook; they forcefully extracted some isolated sentences out of its pages (out of context) so as to make their accusations look more legitimate and engage publically in demagogic practices" (Boukalas, February 11, 2007)

memory came as a product of propaganda and fabrication in the service of political interests by groups claiming national-religious orthodoxy.<sup>81</sup> In their effort to maintain their power position in the given socio-political and discursive arrangement, these groups influence political power and use history textbooks as tools for socializing Greek youth within a narrative that reserves a special position for them –a position that at the same time is legitimized, sanctioned and reproduced by this very same narrative (Kremmidas, as cited in *To Ethnos*, August 21, 2007; Michalopoulou, January 28, 2007). To add more, for supporters of the revision initiative this narrative has been practically fabricated and includes a lot of myths, drawing its primary strength by the fact that it has enjoyed the official support of the Greek state for a long period of time, to the extent that it has become an objectified, authoritative account of the nation's past collective experience.<sup>82</sup> As the new narrative challenged a number of myths/misrepresentations that laid at the foundation of this narrative, and accordingly challenged the privileged position of the above-mentioned groups, it came as a natural consequence that agents representing the interests of those groups would work toward mobilizing popular reactions to the textbook

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<sup>81</sup> "It is no secret that the issue was brought into the spotlight by known political figures like Papathemelis, Zouraris, Karatzaferis, Sarris, Karabelias, Naxakis and more well-known ultra-patriots who denounce the de-Hellenization of students attempted through the history textbook. Is it a coincidence that the same people (except Karatzaferis) were present in the open reception for the founding of Papathemelis' new political party and that they will likely run as this party's candidates in the upcoming parliamentary elections? They just want to attract voters and to this end they 'sell' patriotism for free" (Tzikas, March 24, 2007)

<sup>82</sup> "What the opponents of the new textbook want to protect is, above all, a specific use of history, this use that for decades has been imposed as a kind of Gospel, as a God-given that cannot be challenged, as if it is a divine revelation. They, ultimately, support a version of history that silences whatever opposes the national myths and emphasizes a whole lot of factoids" (Kampilis, January 25, 2007)

revision initiative to serve their own ends (Kremmidas, as cited in *To Ethnos*, August 21, 2007; Michalopoulou, January 28, 2007).

### **Transparency in textbook production**

A key argument often used by supporters of the revision initiative was that the textbook came as a product of a blind, competitive process. Based on the standards set by the Pedagogical Institute the sample the team of authors submitted was chosen as the best among other competitors and, subsequently the team proceeded to develop the whole textbook in accordance with their sample. This argument was basically used to address objections to the quality and scientific status of the textbook as a didactic tool, as well as to address accusations that the textbook came as a part of a top-down process, in which the authors and certain power centers cooperated in an effort to erode Greek national identity and promote their interests in the country/ region.<sup>83</sup> As this was the first time that a textbook came out of a competitive process, instead of being commissioned to a pre-chosen team of authors, transparency and scientific independence was used as an argument in favor of the new textbook. (Andrianopoulos 2007; Team of authors, as cited in Dimolaidou, September 26, 2007).

### **Textbook's Pedagogical Approach**

One of the key features of the new textbook that its supporters seemed to be cherishing was its modern pedagogical approach. It offers a new, student friendly short

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<sup>83</sup> “The textbook was written after an international competition, where candidates submitted samples of content and methodology and based on those a committee decided on who would undertake the task of writing the textbook. For any sensible person the selection process would be thought of as irreproachable and the end-product excellent; however, for the ultra-patriots this is by definition suspicious, as the call for proposals took place under the Simitis government” (Bistis, January 26, 2007)



narrative that is not based on text only, but on multiple media and visual materials, that altogether provide a sufficient coverage of the key events, phenomena, and processes in the modern history of the Greek nation (Tzikas, March 24, 2007; Zepos, June 21, 2007). In addition, instead of asking students to memorize a long narrative and offering dogmatic certainties and simplifications, the new textbook centers on the exploration of different perspectives, allowing students to approach history through critical lenses.<sup>84</sup> For textbook proponents, history teaching is not about providing a long, boring narration of key events and heroes; it is an exploratory and interpretive process, through which students get to ‘learn how to learn’.<sup>85</sup> This exploratory, elicitive approach to knowledge acquisition is pedagogically more effective for students compared to sheer memorization of a long narrative. In addition, in response to the criticism that a lack of heroic prototypes in the textbook’s narrative may result in overall absence of positive prototypes for students, proponents argue that heroes are not absent from the textbook’s narrative; there is just no identification of heroes as the only historical subjects. Discussing the historical experiences of laypeople actually allows for student’s identification with figures other than famous heroes, that is, figures that are closer to their own

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<sup>84</sup> “...the new textbook introduces a new educational approach to historical events, helps students cultivate their critical thinking ability, discourages memorization and renders the teacher a true pedagogue” (In.gr, March 6, 2007)

“In reality, the positive elements of the textbook are exactly those it has been criticized for: it offers a variety of information from different sources that shed light to all facets of historical experience” (Koulouri, January 7, 2007)

<sup>85</sup> “...the school should not convey knowledge, but teach us how to acquire knowledge, where to find knowledge, how to evaluate it, how we can distinguish between valid and invalid, how to historicize our memories, the experiences of our families, our community, our city, our country and the world within which we live and which changes every day” (Liakos, January 28, 2007)

experiences.<sup>86</sup> For all these reasons, proponents continue, the new textbook was more enticing to students than the previous one in terms of structure, usability and appearance, while it allowed for teachers to be true educators and employ creative teaching methodologies in a laboratory-style environment.

### **Short Narrative as a necessity; importance of visual materials**

In response to accusations that the new textbook offered a very short narrative that insufficiently covered major events and developments in the modern history of the Greek nation, textbook authors and supporters argued that it is not possible for a textbook meant to address an audience of 11-12 year old students to offer an exhaustive narrative that has a place for everything (Koulouri, January 7, 2007). They emphasized the fact that according to the directions of the Pedagogical Institute the authors were asked to present the history of 5 centuries in 140 pages. Using this as a starting point, they argued, it was not the narrative itself that was short; it was the period the textbook was supposed to cover that was too long (Repoussi, as cited in Lakasas, April 1, 2007; Tzikas, March 24, 2007). What critics also need to keep in mind, according to supporters, is that we are talking about 11-12 year old students, who on the one hand would not be able to cope with a very long narrative, and on the other hand are taught history for one hour, twice a week. That said, if the narrative was longer, it would be unlikely that student would be

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<sup>86</sup> “Yes, emotions, thoughts and everyday habits are also subjects that need to be covered by history. No one wants to go back to the period when history textbooks were full of kings’ names, dates, and wars” (Georgopoulos 2007)

“[In the new textbook there is] more emphasis on the real historical subject, which is laypeople, in all the facets of historical action (war, labor, culture etc.), without downgrading the importance of historic personalities. Until now, for the most part we would learn the story of heroes...and not the story of laypeople, those innumerable anonymous individuals, who make the wheel of history spin with their struggles and their blood” (Tzikas, March 24, 2007)

able to go through the whole textbook in one school year. Finally, supporters of the new textbook pointed toward the importance of visual materials supplementing the textbook narrative. For them, if the visual materials are also taken into consideration in conjunction with the textual narrative, they offered sufficient coverage of the key events, phenomena, and processes in the modern history of the Greek nation (Repoussi, as cited in Lakasas, April 1, 2007; Tzikas, March 24, 2007).

**Yes, the new textbook had an ideological agenda, but it was a good one**

In regards to opposition voices criticizing the textbook for having a strong ideological orientation, the authors of the textbook and supporters of the initiative openly stated that this is truly so. The difference is that they viewed this ideological approach as a necessity, if the intention of history education is to help students develop critical thinking, inclusive conceptions of Self and Other, and become true, democratic patriots and responsible citizens devoid of hatred and mistrust vis-à-vis members of other national groups (Bistis, January 26, 2007; Georgopoulos 2007; Iraklides, February 1, 2007). For them, informed by such an approach, the new textbook was connected to current realities at the international level and was oriented toward addressing existing needs through modern education. To add more, they argued that textbooks having an ideological orientation are nothing exceptional; the new textbook did have an ideological orientation, as did all previous textbooks, which, as opposed to the new textbook, reflected ideologies that established and promoted the interests of specific power groups within the Greek

society.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, the authors and supporters of the initiative rejected as invalid all nationalist and populist accusations that the new textbook served globalization interests (a vague meaning as this may have) and the interests of foreign power centers. For them, such opposition criticism stands as a manifestation of popular insecurities stemming from the fact that people do not seem able to understand how the nation fits into the new globalized political geography.<sup>88</sup> This lack of understanding gives birth to insecurities in the Greek society as to “who we are”, with people feeling threatened by everyone –the foreigners, the migrants, the Turks. For textbook supporters there is a need to add more complexity in our thinking and move away from dualistic, binary oppositions.<sup>89</sup>

## **Discussing Popular Reactions**

The findings presented here illustrate the key arguments that authors and the supporters of the initiative made in the frames of the intense public dialogue that emerged around the new history textbook, in their attempt to address voices critical to the new

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<sup>87</sup> “It doesn’t make sense that textbook opponents look surprised and are exasperated because the writing of the textbook was informed by political choices and rationales. Isn’t this what has been happening until now? However, all previous history textbooks –which were informed by opposite ideologies than this textbook- never triggered such popular anger against the underlying political aims they served” (Georgopoulos 2007)

<sup>88</sup> “...the new national-populist movements, in our country and elsewhere, are actually part of the globalization process. This is not only because they comfort insecurities and fears that emerge as a result of modern ferments. It mostly happen because national-populist movements, as well as ‘resistance nationalism’, seem unable to understand how the nation fits into the political geography of globalization and evaluate their own contribution in this process” (Gazi, September 30, 2007).

<sup>89</sup> “Today, due to an unjustifiable deep insecurity (foreigners, migrants, and the ‘ever-existing threatening Other’, the Turk), the question of ‘who we are’ is being posed more and more intensely, especially in opposition with the schematic, simplistic and mythic ideas we were taught. It is high time, both because we operate within the broader Balkan and European context and for the sake of satisfying our own esoteric needs, to restructure our powers/efforts and resources more productively and move away from binary schemata that frivolously reproduce friends and enemies...” (Pesmazoglou, as cited in Ta Nea, March 13, 2007).

textbook. Ultimately, as discussed earlier in this work, in September 2007 the Greek government announced in a press conference their decision to withdraw the new textbook and re-introduce the old one, pending the writing of a yet another new history textbook for the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Table 5.1 offers a list with a number of key arguments supporting or opposing the initiative, as these were articulated during the public debate on the new textbook. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but a brief ‘map’ to help the reader capture key parameters of the debate. Next, the chapter concludes with a discussion on popular reactions to the revision initiative, drawing from the insights offered above, as well as making linkages to the insights offered in the theoretical chapter of the study.

**Table 3 ‘Mapping’ Key Opposition and Supportive Arguments for the New Textbook**

<b>Opposition Arguments</b>	<b>Supportive Arguments</b>
<b>The Textbook’s Content (emphasis on issues of identity, national consciousness and collective memory)</b>	
The textbook negates key positive elements of the Greek nation	The textbook is axiologically balanced; there is neither idealization of Self nor demonization of Other
The nation is portrayed as divided and heterogeneous	The textbook acknowledges the diverse experiences of different historical subjects
Much emphasis on social and cultural dimensions and not enough emphasis on war and diplomatic events; less coverage of instances where the nation exhibited heroic attitudes; lack of positive prototypes	History is much more complex than a narration of military and diplomatic events; everyday life is part of history too; heroes are not absent, but they are not recognized as the only historical subjects
The textbook at times seems to be challenging the historical rights of Hellenism over certain territories	
According to the Greek Constitution public education should aim at developing national and religious consciousness; the	The textbook offers a new, more inclusive and balanced form of patriotism

textbook doesn't do that	
The textbook understates/ does not recognize the contribution of the Greek Orthodox Church to the Nation	The textbook does recognize the Church's contribution, but places it on a realistic basis
The textbook does not sufficiently recognize a number of traumatic moments in the Nation's history; this denial of traumas offends collective consciousness	The textbook does recognize national traumas, without using over-dramatic language. The visual materials in conjunction with the text capture the traumatic dimensions of those events
Deconstruction of so-called 'myths' stands as a denial of our Nation's history; even if some of them are myths, teaching them to students has a pedagogical value	Modern, inclusive national identities cannot be built on the basis of myths
The textbook places disproportional emphasis on the role of women	Men and heroes were not the only historical subjects; the role of women needs to be acknowledged
There is no coverage of the negative involvement of foreign powers in our Nation's history	
The narrative is short and does not cover efficiently the needed events/processes in the Nation's history	Short narrative came as a necessity; there were certain parameters set by the Ministry and the Pedagogical Institute that did not allow for a longer narrative; within these parameters, the text in conjunction with the visual materials offer sufficient coverage of the needed events
The textbook largely excludes from its narrative or misrepresents the history of Eastern Hellenism	
<b>The Textbook's Pedagogy</b>	
11-12 year-old students are not cognitively mature enough to learn history from the sources	Students of that age are mature enough to learn history from the sources; this enhances their critical thinking ability
Fragmented narrative, does not offer connections between different processes and events; creates confusion	Short narrative as opposed to long, boring narration of events; asks students to explore connections; class room as a laboratory-style environment
Students as 'hybrid historians' –this makes them neutral observers and does not allow for identification with the nation	Students as 'hybrid historians'; this enhances their critical thinking ability
Cold narrative, lacks emotional depth; does not inspire healthy patriotism	Healthy patriotism does not necessarily come as a result of emotional narratives

The narrative offered in the textbook contradicts with what students learn at home (e.g. refugee memories). This is pedagogically wrong	Students being exposed to multiple perspectives is pedagogically positive
Lack of positive prototypes, heroes, significant individuals; need to explain how key individuals exerted their agency to influence the Nation's history; discuss complex relationship between individuals and given historical circumstances	Heroes are not absent; they just don't monopolize the narrative; when it comes to heroic/military prototypes, it's not pedagogically positive to promote only these; need for students to know about the anonymous heroes of history; it is easier for them to identify with them as they are closer to their everyday experience
In an effort to make the textbook enticing to the students, knowledge acquisition was sacrificed	Multiple educational media, laboratory-style environment, elicitive learning are pedagogically effective
<b>The Textbook's Epistemology</b>	
The textbook adopts an over-relativist, post-modern approach to Nation	The textbook does not adopt an over-relativist approach to Nation; criticism here is driven by authors' known ideology and not by what the textbook really reflects
The authors discover class-struggle everywhere	The textbook narrative acknowledges that not all social classes had the same historical experience
Using the nation as unit of analysis is misleading; class struggle is the driving force of history	The nation is still a relevant unit of analysis; the textbook acknowledges class struggle as a key dimension of historical experience without monopolizing the narrative;
<b>Ideological and Political Agenda behind the Textbook</b>	
The textbook politicizes history education	The textbook does have a political orientation, as did all previous textbooks; the textbook's political orientation is positive as it signals a shift away from mythic conceptions of identity and intends to prepare responsible citizens able to operate within a dynamic international environment
Textbook supporters and people behind the initiative have hijacked state mechanism in an effort to promote their and their 'bosses'' ideology and interests	Such accusations are dismissed as conspiracy theories

The textbook serves the interests of foreign political and economic centers	Such accusations are dismissed as conspiracy theories; the textbook came out of a competitive, transparent process
Deconstruction of national identity and erosion of collective memory as part of an orchestrated plan to promote certain interests in the region; reconciliation at the expense of our national identity and interests	Such accusations are dismissed as conspiracy theories; the new narrative does not deconstruct national identity, but offers a new, healthier form of patriotism; maintaining friendly relationships with neighboring countries as a necessity in a growingly internationalized environment
Authors manipulated historical facts and fabricated historical evidence so as to promote certain conclusions to students	Textbook opponents used excerpts out of context and capitalized on popular sensitivities, so as to manipulate the public and instigate opposition to the textbook; they have a strong political agenda, which centers on preserving existing discursive structures that give certain groups (e.g. nationalist elements, Greek Orthodox Church) a privileged status; certain political groups take advantage of the controversy aiming at political gains
<b>Procedural Aspects of the Textbook Revision Initiative</b>	
<b><i>Public dialogue</i></b>	
There was lack of an inclusive social dialogue prior to the writing of textbook; this was a top-down undemocratic process	There is no established mechanism for having such a dialectic process; there hasn't been any textbook in the past that was subject to broader dialogue; the textbook came as a product of a competitive, transparent process
History education is a res publica and wider parts of the Greek society should have a say on what is taught to the Nation's youth	History education is an endeavor that should be primarily undertaken by professional historians; not everybody's opinion carries the same weight
Popular sentiments, memories and mental representations are part of history and should be included in the curriculum	Popular sentiments, memories and mental representations are indeed part of history; there are however a number of public misconceptions and mythic representations of the Nation's past and it is historians' task to help society deal with them realistically
Authors and supporters demonstrated an elitist behavior	Everyone felt they had the right to attack professional historians; not everybody is



	qualified to have a say on history education
Textbook supporters and the team of authors grouped all critical voices under the same umbrella as being ‘conservative’ and presented themselves as ‘modernizers’, thus creating a faulty, simplistic binary	It is primarily the conservative voices of the Greek society that orchestrated opposition to the textbook; generally there is an ongoing conflict between traditional and modernizing elements in the country
<b><i>Criticism against the government</i></b>	
The government ordered and approved an unconstitutional book	The book was not unconstitutional
The government appeared divided and did not have a clear position on the textbook	The government appeared divided and did not have a clear position on the textbook; they were expected to be more supportive of the textbook and respect the fact that it came out of an established institutionalized process
The government demonstrated lack of political courage by not withdrawing the textbook; political cost considerations	The government demonstrated lack of political courage by not supporting the textbook more firmly, and by ultimately withdrawing it; political cost considerations
The lack of a clear position led to poor planning (e.g. the book was not sent to schools on time)	The lack of a clear position led to poor planning (e.g. the book was not sent to schools on time)
<b><i>Technical details</i></b>	
The textbook includes a number of technical mistakes, errors and unfortunate/unclear framings	This is common in such endeavors; they can easily be taken care of and the team of authors will act accordingly
<b><i>Reconciliation across National Borders</i></b>	
The textbook came as a product of the Papandreou-Cem agreements; we submitted the right to decide on our history education to foreign, rival powers	Rapprochement with neighboring countries is a necessity in a dynamic international environment; need for more inclusive, less ethnocentric narrative; positively changing the relational space between Greece and its neighbors is a desideratum; no one else except from Greek institutions decide on the content of textbooks
For the sake of Greek-Turkish rapprochement the Ottoman Empire is idealized	The Ottoman Empire is not idealized. Representation of it is placed on a more realistic basis; the narrative acknowledges both positive and negative elements in it. We need to move away from a ‘good vs. evil’ representations and add complexity in

	students' understanding of the past
There is no reciprocity on the part of neighboring countries; this can be detrimental to our national interests	Opponents see national enemies everywhere; exclusivist, ethnocentric narratives contribute to this end; we need to change the way we relate to neighboring countries
Reconciliation cannot come as a product of silencing traumatic events in our history with neighbors; such events need to be discussed and analyzed without inspiring emotions of revanchism; reconciliation comes as a product of acknowledging past mistakes and responsibilities, so as to avoid committing the same mistakes in the future	Traumatic moments were not silenced; there were just not presented in an over-dramatic language; visual materials should be also taken into consideration here. At the same time, periods of peaceful co-existence and exchange need to be included in the narrative
<b>Traditional Left Criticism</b>	
This is an overall reactionary textbook; it does not recognize that historical progress comes about in a revolutionary fashion; on the contrary, it demonized revolutionary action; places the nation at the center of analysis instead of class-struggle, which is the real driving force of history; does not acknowledge the contribution of the communist movement to the progress of the nation; it doesn't make reference to the negative role of capitalist, imperialist powers in history; it doesn't make reference to the negative role the Church played at times in Greek history; generally does not make reference to the oppression laypeople suffered at the hands of elites; finally, the book is a tool at the hands of imperialist powers and global capital so as to create submissive citizens and workers	The team of authors and voices supportive of the initiative did not systematically address traditional left critiques.
<b>Ad Hominem Attacks</b>	
People involved in the initiative are of questionable scientific and personal integrity	'Irrelevant/ignorant people', 'semi-educated', 'stunted', 'housewives, shepherds, and peasants'; people interested in building a 'television career'
'national nihilists'; 'janissaries'; 'stateless intellectuals'; 'historiographical charla-	

tans'; 'pseudo-progressive' and 'pseudo-modernizers'	
Moderate voices (both supporting and critiquing the initiative): ad hominem attacks, bigotry and fanaticism did not allow for a scientifically grounded dialogue, and for the arguments of all sides to be heard and understood	

In this Chapter 6 the discussion will start by an exploration of three overarching themes that were set in the theoretical part of this study as important parameters to be looked at when one intends to understand popular responses to attempted discursive shifts in a society: a) popular perceptions of identity threat accompanying attempts to introduce a new narrative; b) popular discourses as reflecting existing power arrangements; and c) questions related to how a group's collective past is to be publically discussed, especially in relation to development of school history curricula. Within these parameters, a number of points will be discussed based on the findings presented throughout the chapter.

### **The New Textbook as a Threat to Greek National Identity**

The new 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook stood as an attempt to introduce an altered national narrative to Greek schools, a narrative that would offer a different approach to collective identity. At the core of this initiative was an attempt to promote a less exclusivist and axiologically more balanced form of identity, as well as a less ethnocentric way of looking at the world. Naturally, the introduction of a new 'story' posed challenges to the existing 'identity-securing interpretive system' of the Greek society as found in the dominant national master narrative. Since maintenance of collective identity may be an end in itself (Kelman 2001), the new discourse was

understandably met with resistance by a large part of the Greek society. To frame it simply, the textbook was largely perceived as a threat to the existing predominant concept of Greek national identity, and the natural consequence of this perception was for people to resist it.

More specifically, based on the analysis of popular responses, the discourse promoted by the new textbook seemed to challenge established notions of the Greek nation's identity in a number of ways:

- A number of core sources of pride and self-esteem, such as the Nation's survival ability, its continuity over time, and the heroic attitudes exhibited by group members are not affirmed as strongly as in the previous narrative, or are deemed as mythic representations (question of competency and self-esteem)
- The axiological distance between the collective self and others seems to have been narrowed (question of Nation's distinctiveness and moral standing)
- Core elements of Greek identity, such as the Greek Orthodox component, seem to occupy a more peripheral place in the constitution of collective identity, compared to the previous narrative (marginalization of thus far cherished elements of identity content)
- The spatial-temporal historic attachment of Hellenism with certain geographic territories, at best, is not clearly acknowledged and, at worst, is questioned by the new narrative (part of identity is perceived as being taken away)

- National traumas that have come to constitute inextricable components of the Greek identity are significantly understated in the new narrative (denial of trauma as negating parts of identity)

These perceptions of collective identity under threat were further magnified in an era of globalization where long-established, familiar frameworks of understanding the national self and its place in the world have lost part of their descriptive and explanatory power, thus leading to confusion, anxiety, and insecurity. This lack of understanding of how the nation fits into a new, constantly changing, globalized ecology may instinctively lead to stronger attachment to traditional reference frames (thus increasing their salience), coupled with a denial to engage with any alternative approach to a group's collective identity and past. To add more, certain actors within the Greek society capitalized on these popular insecurities so as to instigate further resistance and promote their own political interests. Overall, what one may find in some opposition voices is a common narrative of resistance: resistance to the dissociation of history as a school subject from 'our history'; resistance to a discursive shift that was viewed as imposed on the Greek society; resistance to globalization's centrifugal dynamics that require peoples to forget their national roots and identities; and resistance to the relativization of history and the falsification of the nation's collective experience.

As evident in the analysis throughout this chapter, at its extreme, popular resistance to the introduction of the new textbook was manifested through a broad repertory of tactics aiming at ostracizing its narrative from the public discourse and preserving the dominant discursive representations of Greek identity: public appeals –

often sloganistic in style- for national unity and adherence to established forms of identity; calls for resistance to what was perceived as a foreign-sponsored, top-down, undemocratic, and imposed revision process; attribution of hidden, dark motives to people involved in the initiative; reference to enemies surrounding the nation so as to promote a sense of insecurity and urgency; ad hominem attacks against, and ridicule of people involved in the initiative. Employment of such tactics had primarily a polarizing effect on the public dialogue at the time. The fact that some supporting voices adapted equally adversarial tactics in their public expressions –sometimes using derogatory language- further polarized an already fragile public dialogue, created further mistrust within the Greek society and, ultimately, left limited room for moderate, logically grounded arguments from all sides to be heard through a constructive, respectful discussion.

Such a discussion would actually help address popular perceptions of identity threat. Undoubtedly, any discursive shift –especially shifts concerning national master narratives- may be initially perceived as an identity-threatening process. There is a need, therefore, since the very inception of a revision initiative, to convince the public about the need for the attempted discursive shift, by employing non-threatening frames so as to address popular perceptions of identity being under threat. And this is what moderate voices among the supporters of the initiative tried to do, by explaining that a more inclusive, axiologically balanced perception of self and others is not identity-corrosive, but a healthy –and even more responsible- form of patriotism; by promoting the idea that sources of self-confidence may lay in loci other than axiological comparisons, such as

positive experiences, instances of cooperation and constructive interactions across national identity groups; by arguing that positive relational spaces and cooperative behavioral and attitudinal patterns across national borders in the region can be more beneficial to the national interests and not to the interests of some foreign power centers that allegedly promoted this discursive shift; and by clarifying that controversial topics, traumatic experiences, and conflictual past interactions with national outgroups should indeed be part of history curricula but need to be approached analytically, as phenomena with certain roots, dynamics, and impact, so as to avoid committing the same mistakes in the future. For all the above to happen, however, broader dialectic engagements need to take place in an environment that allows for cross-fertilization of ideas, that is, an environment where logical arguments are exchanged in an effort to convince others, not to attack others. Unfortunately, these were not the terms of the public debate in Greece at the time, where the dialogue was hijacked by extreme voices that, intentionally or not, exacerbated the defensive reactions exhibited by the Greek society. The result of it was for the 6<sup>th</sup> grade revision initiative to acquire a symbolic status in the collective consciousness of a large part of the Greek society; from that point on, any time public discussion revolves around issues of national interest, the 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook is brought into the discussion society as a prototypical example of an effort to erode national identity and memory. The terms of the public debate will be also discussed in a following section, where questions of different approaches to collective past and who is to participate in defining history curricula are explored.

### **Popular Discourses as Reflecting Existing Power Arrangements**

As mentioned in the theoretical chapter of this study, the discourse on a collectivity's history may constitute a key habitat for identity production and reproduction, especially within educational institutions and their massive, officially sanctioned character. Typically, dominant discursive structures in school history textbooks reflect existing power arrangements within a society; that is, an officially sanctioned, authoritative account of a collectivity's past and identity, in which special place is reserved for certain groups, ideas, and practices. This power that education curricula have as key mechanisms for dissemination and popularization of collective identities has often rendered the realm of education an arena for contestation between different social actors/forces aspiring to have a say on what is taught to a nation's youth, what narratives are promoted through education, and what types of loyalty are elicited among the young members of a national group. Accordingly, the key question here, especially when it comes to the development of history curricula, is who decides what is included in a nation's history and what needs to have a special place in historical narratives (individuals –positive and negative role models, events, processes, values, cultural practices and more).

To answer this question one needs to look at notions of power and legitimacy within the society concerned; that is, those forces/groups that are powerful enough and enjoy the highest degree of legitimacy within a society are better positioned to determine what the dominant account of a group's past and the representations of collective identity are. New narratives reflected in revised history curricula oftentimes challenge existing discursive systems of identity production and reproduction through the employment of



‘transformation strategies’ aiming at altering, either in whole or in part, dominant understandings of collective identity. Naturally, these attempts are very likely to face resistance by groups whose interests are vested in the existing discursive status quo, or generally by actors, who are attached to the previous discursive schemata in multiple ways (cognitively, emotionally, status considerations). The result of the debate that typically follows the introduction of a new narrative is determined –at times through contestation, at times through consensus building, and at times through a combination of both- by the power and the degree of legitimacy of the actors involved in the debate and their ability to capitalize on these resources so as to mobilize enough popular support from key social constituencies.

In the case explored in this study, the new 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook came as an attempt to transform, but not to completely change, pre-existing notions of the Greek national identity and approaches to the Greek nation’s collective past. The stated intention was to offer a more balanced approach of looking at the collective self and the history of the Greek nation. However, as presented throughout the chapter, the narrative the new textbook introduced was in reality perceived as challenging core elements of both the Greek identity and the representation of the nation’s history. Among the voices opposing the initiative one may find groups/actors whose status seemed to be more peripheral in the new narrative compared to the previous one, as well as groups that saw a number of key ideas they were particularly attached to being altered or challenged (e.g. the Greek Orthodox Church; nationalist circles; conservative political groups). As the status and the ‘truth’ of those groups were acknowledged and protected in the dominant

narrative, they publically took a stance against the revision initiative and mobilized resources toward achieving the withdrawal of the new textbook from the Greek schools, so as to have traditional narrative reaffirmed.<sup>90</sup>

These groups enjoyed a high degree of legitimacy in the collective consciousness of the Greek society, within which they have traditionally maintained a special status. Capitalizing on these resources, they managed to mobilize support against the revision initiative, also employing –in some extreme occasions- a variety of tactics to erode the legitimacy of the revision initiative itself: it was presented as an undemocratic, top-down process; as being related to foreign centers, whose interests it intends to promote; whereas the scientific integrity of people involved in the initiative was questioned. On the other hand, similar tactics –to a more limited extend- were also adopted by some supporting voices so as to delegitimize criticism against the initiative: groups articulating opposition to the new textbook were presented as conservative fundamentalists, who oppose any attempt at modernization, and in some cases as uneducated people, who should not have a say in history education, which is a task for the community of professional historians (here we see an attempt to affirm legitimacy by reference to a status of expertise).

An interesting dimension in the case explored in this study in regards to the question of power and legitimacy was that the textbook was fiercely criticized despite the fact that it was officially sanctioned by the Greek government. It enjoyed official

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<sup>90</sup> Here, we saw that in the public debate present were also voices, which argued that their truth was not sufficiently or accurately presented in either narrative (e.g. the historical experience of Eastern Hellenism) and which also argued that this truth should have a place in the public discourse of the country.

approval but did not manage to ultimately elicit perceptions of legitimacy among broader parts of the Greek society. In other words, the new narrative became official, even for a limited period of time, but never got to be legitimized in the eyes of large parts of the Greek society, thus never getting the opportunity to become the ‘natural’ narrative in the country. Critical here was the role of the Greek government, which did not show its unconditional and sustained support for the initiative (something that would have vested it with more legitimacy), but rather took an ambivalent stance on the issue leaving the new textbook more vulnerable to criticism. At the same time, the fact that the new narrative was introduced through a textbook that was officially sanctioned –and thus stood as if it was an authoritative account of the Greek identity and history- might be a factor that intensified oppositions voices and popular reactions, as it is more likely for an alternative narrative to be accepted as such (as ‘alternative’ and peripheral) rather than when it is presented as a shift in the officially sanctioned representation of a group’s identity and history.

In any case, as suggested by the outcome of the debate and the official withdrawal of the textbook, the power and perceived legitimacy of the different groups opposing the revision initiative proved higher than the power and perceived legitimacy the supporters of the initiative enjoyed in the Greek society, despite the fact that the latter were often presented as a group that has come to dominate the state mechanism in the country. Thus, as discussed previously in this study, not only did the discursive shift attempted by this revision process not come about, but also the revision became a symbolic prototype used from that point on to trigger defensive reactions within the Greek society. Unfortunately,

the terms of the public dialogue during the 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook controversy were such that there was no consensus-building or any kind of cross-fertilization of the arguments heard at the time, with the result looking more like a winner-take-all. The physiognomy of the public dialogue is also discussed, among others, in the following section.

### **Public discussion on how a group's collective past is to be approached and the development of history curricula**

As became evident in the presentation of findings a key theme in the public debate on the 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook centered on questions of how the Greek nation's collective past is to be approached publically, and who is to participate in such a discussion, particularly when it comes to the development of school history curricula. In this study it is argued that history education, touching key issues of collective identity and memory, is by definition a 'res publica'. Accordingly, it cannot be a task esoteric to the historiographical community, but needs to include dialectic engagement with wider social constituencies so as to make sure that popular sensitivities and representations are also taken into consideration.

In the case explored in this study, different voices participating in the public dialogue seemed to have divergent understandings on this issue. Some voices critical of the new textbook seemed to resent the fact that the discursive shift it represented was not a product of wider social participation, but looked more like a top-down process. In this line of argument, it's not up to a few politicians and a small group of historians to decide and implement such a shift. Rather, all interested stakeholders, including teachers and parents, needed to have been consulted prior to writing the textbook. Voices supporting

the initiative argued that this is something that had never happened before in regards to any of the school textbooks, so it would be unfair to criticize the specific initiative for not being more inclusive in eliciting feedback from interested stakeholders. To add more, they argued that it was the first time that a textbook was written through an open competition; something that overall rendered the process more transparent. The truth is, however, that many voices among the supporters of the textbook seemed to acknowledge the fact that history education is a public matter and agreed that more inclusive processes are needed in discussing and developing history curricula. At the same time, however, other supporters took a stronger stance in regards to this issue arguing that this is a task for the academic historiographical community and that textbooks should come out of informed discussions between experts. The problem with this view was that at times it was taken to an extreme, presenting the historians supporting the initiative as experts representing the scientific community in toto, thus making a simplistic binary describing the public debate as a debate between the experts and the non-experts. One may raise two objections here in regards to such a representation of the debate: a) this is not necessarily an accurate representation, as there were voices critical of the initiative that came from professional historians; and b) it gives the impression that it is only the experts who should have a say in the discussion of the nation's collective past and issues related to history education, a view that triggered popular accusations of elitism exhibited on the part of some supporters of the new textbook, and of using this arbitrary representation of

the debate as a tactic to attach higher validity to their arguments by making reference to their expertise.<sup>91</sup>

A related critique against the new textbook, as discussed earlier in this chapter, was that although historians may and should have an advisory role in the development of history curricula, they should not include in the textbooks interpretations and approaches that stand in conflict with the constitution. Supporters of the initiative here dismissed such critiques as invalid; according to this line of argument the approach the new textbook offered in regards to the Greek nation's history and collective identity was that of a healthy patriotism devoid of ethnocentric and exclusivist elements. Unfortunately, the terms of the public debate, which was quickly polarized, did not allow for this view to be heard and understood from wider parts of the Greek society. As mentioned earlier in this study, part of the problem here is that there seems to be a broader discursive structure at place, which stems from a rather narrow interpretation of how national consciousness is defined by the Greek Constitution and which, over the flow of time, has acquired ontological dimensions, that somehow constrains the agency of any history textbook to break new ground and offer alternative interpretations of what Greek national identity is. Although changing the Constitution per se may not be a solution here, as it would trigger defensive reactions, offering alternative interpretations of the Constitution and the understanding of what national consciousness and identity are, prior to any curricular changes and through broader discussions, could be an option to explore.

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<sup>91</sup> It is important to acknowledge and emphasize here that not all supporters of the new textbook shared this understanding. As stated earlier, there were many voices that acknowledged the fact that issues of history education need to be discussed by everyone as they are a public matter, and recognized the fact that popular representations also need to be taken into consideration even if at times they include some elements the historic validity of which may be subjected to debate.

Overall, one could argue that there seems to be a broader consensus among the moderate voices participating in the public debate on the 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook that issues of collective memory, identity and history education need to be discussed through inclusive processes –processes that would allow for a respectful cross-fertilization of ideas. Among others, this would also empower broader social constituencies and increase a sense of ownership and efficacy within a society. The limitation here is that, great as this idea may sound at a certain level of abstraction, it is hard to imagine exactly what it would look like in practice. How can societies develop institutionalized processes of feedback and how would different constituencies be represented in these processes? How can this be done respectfully and what would be the role of media, taking into consideration that in the case explored here, their role was pretty unconstructive and polarizing as they framed the debate in simplistic, black-and-white terms, offering more airtime to rather extreme voices? What would teachers' engagement in the process look like? Interestingly, although their function is catalytic for the success of any educational endeavor, there was limited reference to their role in the public debate in Greece. These questions of how will be explored in the next chapter of this study, as it was posed to the interviewees, who offered their views on a series of questions related to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade history curriculum initiative. The hope is, based on the insights drawn, to offer a number of recommendations to this end. Before turning to the interviews, however, two last points need to be raised here.

A fact that needs to be acknowledged is that, no matter what process it came out of, a history textbook cannot be inclusive of all different views and approaches to a

collectivity's identity and past. E.g. there can be no textbook that offers a nationalist, leftist, and constructivist narrative at the same time. In other words, there will always be controversial points in a textbook's narrative. The ultimate goal is to help students understand and familiarize themselves with the complexity of ideas, practices and experiences in the past of collectivity as a historical subject. In other words, the goal is to increase students' historical literacy, and this is something that, no matter whether one accepts its success or not, was among the stated goals of the authors of the new 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook.

As final comment, it has been evident to the reader that the discussion in this last part of Chapter 6 was not exhaustive of all the themes presented in the findings. It centered mostly within a number of parameters set throughout this study related to issues of collective identity, memory and discourse. That said, the goal here was not to evaluate the different arguments made during the debate on the 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook and determine their validity; e.g. it's not among the tasks of this study to determine whether the new textbook was indeed pedagogically appropriate for 11-12 year-old students or whether the secret school was indeed a popular legend or a historical reality. This is a task that goes beyond the scope of this study. The goal in this chapter was to identify, present and analyze popular responses to the revision initiative as reflected in a number of published pieces on the issue, in an effort to understand them and draw a number of lessons learned for the future. A similar task is performed in the next chapter, this time drawing insight from interviews with a number of stakeholders.



## **CHAPTER SEVEN: EXPLORING REACTIONS TO THE HISTORY TEXTBOOK REVISION INITIATIVE: INTERVIEWS WITH 15 STAKEHOLDERS**

So far in this study it was shown, through content analysis of the two history textbooks, that the 2006 textbook offered a more axiologically balanced narrative compared to the previous one (research question 1). In addition, a number of factors that seemed to have informed popular responses to the initiative were identified and discussed (research question 2) through thematic analysis of articles and opinion pieces published in the country at the time of the controversy. The latter allowed the researcher to approach analytically a number of key arguments surrounding the initiative, either supporting or opposing it, through the development of thematic clusters that formed meaningful story-lines vis-à-vis the diverse responses of the Greek society toward the 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook revision initiative. In this final analytical chapter of the study an effort is made to problematize similar issues, meant to address the second research question, through eliciting the views of a number of individuals, who, in different capacities, were involved in the initiative, participated actively in the public dialogue at the time, or had by position or by interest an informed opinion on the issue. Eliciting insights from people who had idiosyncratic experience of the case explored in this study could add rich material to this research and enhance its analytic value.

As presented in the methodology chapter, interviewees were identified through a combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The first step was to contact individuals, who played an active role in the public debate at the time through public interventions in different media and fora; next, some of them directed the researcher to other stakeholders, who could offer insights on the issue. In this process, an effort was made to include in the sample people with diverse backgrounds, so as to capture the complexity of approaches to the phenomenon concerned. The final sample comprised: 4 teachers; 2 individuals, who were close to the initiative (1 academic and 1 education advisor); 1 more education advisor; 1 individual who at the time of the debate held a key position at the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs; 5 academics (3 historians; 1 political scientist with an expertise on Greek-Turkish relations; and 1 social psychologist, who also held a key position at the Ministry of Education in the past); 1 political scientist closely associated with the Church of Greece; and 1 popular blogger with active participation in the public debate at the time. Two of the interviewees were women, and the rest were men. Interviews took place between August and September 2014 in Thessaloniki, Athens, Litochoro, and Kastoria, and lasted between 37 and 75 minutes. Interviews were tape-recorded upon participants' consent, while the latter were also informed about their right to withdraw at any point, if they decided so. The interview protocol was informed both by the issues the present study intended to explore *ab initio* and by the insights acquired through the first two steps of the research (comparison of the two textbooks, and thematic analysis of 100 articles). The interview protocol and the

informed consent form can be found as Appendices III and IV at the end of this dissertation.

Once the interviews were completed, the rich material collected was thematically analyzed. The intention here was to look for ‘deep information’ and meaning in regards to interviewees’ experiences with the history textbook revision initiative explored in this study. This allowed the researcher to explore the ‘talk around the issue’ and identify meaning patterns embedded in the responses of the interviewees. The first step was to look at the participants’ input within each question and get familiar with the insights they offered. Next, by taking an analytic look at these responses, the researcher identified the core arguments each interviewee offered within each question. Finally, an effort was made to bring together common threads, as they emerged from the data, and develop recurring themes in regards to the parameters of interests as set by each question. The result was the creation of meaningful storylines based on the insights offered by the interviewees.

As also discussed in previous chapters, it is important for the reader to keep in mind that the themes presented in the following pages are not isolated from each other, but are oftentimes linked and complementary. It is equally important to note that one cannot really frame the public discussion on the issue at the time as a debate between two sides: the supporters and the opponents. This would be both simplistic and erroneous. Rather, the discussion here will revolve around *arguments* supporting or criticizing aspects of the given initiative. Overall, while many interviewees had clear positions either opposing or supporting the initiative explored in this study, some maintained a more

neutral position identifying both positive and negative elements in it. In their responses, interviewees very lively elaborated on a series of issues, not necessarily according to the order of questions, oftentimes maneuvering between relevant themes. For this reason, the findings are presented here divided in sections that do not follow strictly the structure of the questionnaire, but rather, in a way that helps the author of the present work build a cohesive and clear narrative. Accordingly, the discussion in the findings section will be structured as following:

- A general section on history education and national identity in Greece
- A section specific to the initiative discussing its strengths, weaknesses, and popular responses to it as understood by the interviewees
- A section on the terms of the public dialogue and the role of relevant institutions at the time; and
- A final section with lessons learned and interviewee's suggestions for the future

The reader will notice that the majority of the themes that emerged through the interviews are common with the ones already discussed in this study. This is especially true for the sections, in which interviewees were asked to identify strengths and weaknesses of the textbook revision initiative. Although this is a useful form of triangulation –that is drawing the same findings using different datasets- it may entail the peril of making the discussion repetitive/redundant. For this reason, it will happen so that, at times, the discussion will be brief so as to avoid such repetition. The chapter will end

with a series of thoughts on the insights offered by the interviewees, also building connections with discussions from previous chapters.

## **Findings**

### **History Education and National Identity in Greece**

The first set of questions intended to elicit interviewee's understanding of history education in Greece, the place of collective identity in it, and their views on whether there is a need for revising history curricula in the country. This would allow the researcher to see, among others, what the interviewees perceived as the purpose of history education, and their stance toward revision of school curricula, before delving deeper into questions that directly focused on the given revision initiative explored in this study. This will set some background parameters, against which the discussion on the specific initiative will take place in subsequent sections.

#### *Purpose of history education in general*

According to interviewee responses (10)<sup>92</sup> a core goal of history education is, naturally, for students to *learn about the past* –to absorb information on past events, phenomena, social, political, cultural, and economic processes, as well as the role of key individuals in them. For a limited number of interviewees (2) this can be done by offering students –especially students of a young age- a cohesive narrative, presenting events in chronological order and introducing them to key protagonists that have a prominent place in this narrative. For others (11), however, a key goal of history education is to help

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<sup>92</sup> Numbers in parenthesis indicate the number of interviewees touching upon a certain theme

students *understand the historical past*, that is, familiarize them with the process of making sense of history in an exploratory way. For these interviewees, it is important for students not only to learn about the past, but also to learn how to learn about the past, thus *developing competency in historical methodology*.<sup>93</sup> These skills can be applied by students when problematizing questions of how we came to be who we are today (thus increasing knowledge about oneself); how past events emerged as products of given historical forces; and how past social and political processes have shaped the reality we experience today. To this end, for some interviewees (4), it is important for students to learn about local history too, as they can relate to it more easily, through their own experiences and the experiences of their reference groups. Here, bringing the two together (content and methodology), one interviewee uses a metaphor: “history education should offer students both the roots (knowledge about our history and ourselves) and the wings (knowledge of the method)”.

A common, and related, theme in interviewees’ responses in regards to the purpose of history education centered on the development of *students’ ability for critical thinking* when approaching the past (9). For these interviewees, it is important for students to learn how to stand critically before any new piece of information they come across and how to process it critically.<sup>94</sup> Some (10) noted that it is important in this process to help students understand that there are *multiple perspectives* through which we can approach history –this will allow them to appreciate the diversity of views and

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<sup>93</sup> As framed by one interviewee: “Beyond the cognitive –narrative framework, students should also learn how to approach and analyze historical sources, develop their own critical thoughts and draw conclusions”.

<sup>94</sup> For one interviewee, students should learn how to “stand critically vis-à-vis the information conveyed to them; they should not receive information passively”.

interpretations that different people may have on the same social phenomenon explored and discussed at any given time. Using multiple historical sources, even coming from groups different than the ingroup can have a positively catalytic impact to this end. Embracing this multi-perspectivity can also increase students' *ability to empathize* with others and fosters *respect for others* (6).<sup>95</sup> In brief, what interviewees pointed to, without necessarily framing it as such, was that history education should foster students' declarative (content), procedural (method), and conceptual (ideas) knowledge about one's collective self, a collectivity's past, and its historical place in the broader world.

Among the goals of history education many respondents (7) also listed the development among students of *a sense of belongingness* to the same national group. History education, here, is seen as a medium to foster national consciousness and healthy patriotism, devoid of chauvinism or national hyperboles. Similarly, it was also noted that history education –in combination with other school subjects- should aim at helping students *develop a sense of citizenship* and, accordingly, learn how to act as responsible, active citizens (6). As put by one of the interviewees, history education should “help students develop a sense of citizenship: citizen of the country; citizen of Europe; citizen of the world”. For one interviewee, history education should also serve as a medium for familiarizing students with the moral code of their nation, help them internalize it and exhibit it in their lives as they leave their ‘imprints’ in this world.

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<sup>95</sup> “Getting familiar with what is different opens up bridges and catalyzes respect for others”, one interviewee stated.

Finally, a common thread in interviewees' responses (5) was that history education is by definition a public matter, and accordingly a political issue.<sup>96</sup> These participants seem to be in agreement with insights offered at the theoretical chapter that the public school is commonly used to promote a historiographic version that a collectivity has traditionally adopted –a version that more often than not fits the purposes of existing elites/ centers with influence in a given society. That's why some respondents noted that, in their opinion history should be taught at public schools in an 'objective' way, devoid of political influences, acknowledging though at the same time that the term 'objective' may be problematic as its definition is elusive. As presented earlier, several interviewees noted that a way to address the monopoly of a historiographic version in history curricula is to offer multiple perspectives when discussing the past.

Overall, what should be briefly noted in this section is that a key point of divergence among interviewees is whether the emphasis in history education should be placed on helping students learn the past by offering a narration of events and discussing the deeds of prominent figures in a collectivity's past or on introducing students to the method or critically exploring the past and offer exposure to multiple perspectives; the latter is an approach that most interviewees seemed to adhere to. This is a theme that will be further discussed in following sections in regards to the initiative explored in this study.

### *Discussion on Greek Identity*

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<sup>96</sup> As one interviewee argued, "We should first start by admitting that whatever has to do with education is, above all, a political issue."



When the discussion touched upon the issue of national identity and how Greek identity is approached in the schools of the country, all interviewees stated that –for different reasons and to varying degrees- they are not satisfied with the way Greek identity is discussed. Two interviewees noted that currently there is *no instilling of healthy patriotism* in the schools of the country in a way that would allow the new generation to preserve the core elements of Greek identity,<sup>97</sup> which they identified as Orthodox Christianity, Greek language, Greek historical consciousness, and tradition and cultural ethos. To one interviewee, this break from the roots does not shape democratic citizens –on the contrary, it creates anxious, stressed, desperate people with no values and ideals. On a similar note, another interviewee stated that what is missing in primary and secondary education in Greece is connections with *how students are experiencing these elements of their national identity in their everyday lives*, informed by traditional local ethos and cultural context (e.g. there is no or very limited reference to religious holidays). This, dissociates what is covered in the school with the everyday experience of students. A number of interviewees (2) argued that there seems to be an effort over the past years to *minimize reference to national identity*, or even eliminate it, and this is problematic in two accounts: a) on the one hand, it may lead to erosion of national identity among members of the new generation; and b) on the other hand, if national identity needs are not effectively addressed in the school in a healthy way, there is a peril that they will get expressed outside the school in unhealthy ways, through extreme nationalist expressions.

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<sup>97</sup> One interviewee argued here that this is an issue that concerns not only history textbooks; “textbooks in the primary school in general have an issue. We don’t have healthy patriotism in them.”

However, other respondents placed the discussion on identity on a different basis. They are similarly dissatisfied with the way identity is approached in Greek schools, but they come to this conclusion from a different perspective. To them, school education reflects –and shapes at the same time- *a widespread understanding of Greek identity on the basis of ethnic origin, being fixed and unchanged* over time, an understanding they see as erroneous (8).<sup>98</sup> At the same time, they identify as problematic that national identity in Greece –as in many other countries- has come to be one’s central identity and the key prism through which people view the world. For these interviewees, who distance themselves from the above approach to national identity, it is important for history education to help students problematize *national identity as a historical product* and understand that the emergence of specific forms of identity came not necessarily in natural terms, but as a result of given historical forces and developments. To add more, four respondents noted that *national identity is a tool/frame* of thinking and acting, with elites of any given society forging a specific form of identity that fits their interests.<sup>99</sup>

Following the same line of thought, a number of interviewees (8) argued that the discussion on national identity in the schools of the country seem to be *lacking complexity*. For them, one cannot talk about a single Greek identity but about identities, as there are multiple identity levels for individuals.<sup>100</sup> Accordingly, education should

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<sup>98</sup> In regards to this point, one interviewee stated: “Most Greeks understand identity on the basis of ethnic origin. They are proud to be Greeks, because they were born Greeks...and because they are related to Ancient Greece. So, this sense of historical continuity, 4,000 years of history and culture is the dominant frame in the Greek society.”

<sup>99</sup> “National identity is a social construct. It is given to people as a tool/frame for thinking and living. It’s a tool for those who rule this people”, stated one interviewee.

<sup>100</sup> One interviewee framed national groups as “evolving communities with no unitary identity –you have multiple identities”.

account for this complexity, also helping students explore the intersectionality of different identities. In addition, what they don't see reflected in history curricula is the notion that national identity is *evolving*. In the words of one interviewee: "You just don't put it on a shelf and it stays there as is". Within this discussion, a number of interviewees (6) would also like to see some more emphasis on a *cultural dimension* to understanding identity as it evolved over time, meaning that history education should help students place given understandings of identity within the broader cultural context of that period.

Furthermore, another common theme in regards to how the Greek national identity is approached in the schools of the country centers on the *lack of axiological balance*. For five interviewees, there seems to be an emphasis on the positive attributes of Self coupled with a silencing of the negative attributes, and this creates an illusory understanding of Self. "We have placed our self-image so high, that it ends up being problematic" one respondent noted. Reference was also made here to the *mythic elements* that, according to some interviewees, the current understanding of Greek identity includes. On a related note, some interviewees underlined the need for public education to promote the development of *an identity that is not exclusivist*; an identity that students, as everyone else, can negotiate; and an understanding of identity that can accommodate one's individual identity, as well as any different interpretation of this identity by other individuals belonging to the same identity group.

Finally, dissatisfaction with the current understanding of identity as reflected in school curricula was also expressed by two interviewees who noted that the *existing conception of identity is state-centric/Athens-centric*. It has been formed through a

unifying narrative since the foundation of the Greek state. This, they argued, is a partial representation of the Greek identity, that excludes or places in the periphery of the dominant narrative the experience of Eastern Hellenism.

As shown in this section, there seems to be a diversity of views as to the current understanding of Greek national identity as reflected in school curricula in Greece. To a great extent, these views on national identity –of course, in conjunction with a series of other factors- informed interviewees’ reactions to the revision initiative concerned. E.g. if one identifies the absence of complexity in identity representations in history curricula as negative, then that person would be more likely to embrace the history textbook that came out in 2006, which, as shown earlier in this study, added such a complexity in identity representations. As the analysis unfolds in the following sections, these themes are touched upon again, cross-fertilizing the discussion on themes that emerged concerning the specific initiative. In the following section, the discussion will revolve around interviewees’ views on the need for revising history curricula in the country.

### *Need for Revising History Curricula*

Directly drawing on the previous section, interviewees were asked to share their views on the need for revising history curricula in Greece. Participants stated whether they feel that history curricula in Greece are in need of revision and identified areas for improvement, that touch upon issues beyond the curriculum itself to include current institutional and social practices. Here, they offered general insights that will also inform

the more focused discussion on suggestions for future revision initiatives, which will come up toward the end of this chapter.

A key theme that emerged in this discussion centers on issues of didactics and pedagogy. For some interviewees (9), educational paradigms in Greece are often characterized by *parochial ideas and practices* and do not incorporate new findings coming from the field of didactics.<sup>101</sup> To them, curricula should be revised regularly so as to serve as a bridge between recent developments in the field of didactics in each subject (in this case history didactics) and the classroom reality. More specifically, one of the problems they identified concerned the use of one history textbook alone for each school grade, a didactic practice which they find obsolete.<sup>102</sup> One interviewee noted that the Greek classroom is neither teacher-centric, nor student-centric, but textbook-centric; “The textbook is treated as a Gospel”, while teaching typically centers on a narrative that students should memorize. Instead, these interviewees argued, curricula need to be revised to be structured around working sheets with specific learning objectives, as opposed to the use a single textbook. This would allow for mutli-perspectivity and will introduce students to the methodology of making sense of the past through the use of diverse educational materials and historical sources.

In direct relation to what was discussed in the previous section, a number of interviewees (10) underlined the idea that history education in Greece should include *more complexity* in the exploration of the collectivity’s historical experience, going

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<sup>101</sup> For one interviewee, who was close to the initiative, “textbooks should incorporate the new findings of didactics, what works best; an issue here in Greece is that people have difficulty accepting this”.

<sup>102</sup> One interviewee noted: “We should not talk about one textbook, but multiple sources. The idea of one textbook is parochial”.

beyond the political and military history to incorporate discussions on the multiple facets of human life at any given historical period.<sup>103</sup> To this end, it was also stated (5) that it would be useful to allow room for exploring *local histories* that are closer to students' living experiences.<sup>104</sup> Similarly, it was defined as a necessity to include more discussions on *global history*, so as to place the history of the Greek collectivity within its broader context. Some respondents (10) also underlined the need for history education to focus more on the procedural dimension of knowledge, that is work more systematically toward increasing students' *understanding of the historical method* and enhancing their *critical thinking* ability, as well as increasing their skills to this end through practical application. One interviewee noted that this is a broader issue concerning the whole primary and secondary education systems in Greece. To her, the whole education system is not critical, modern, interesting, and challenging, and it does not allow students to integrate their knowledge by drawing connections between different subjects. "So, since the whole educational system is problematic, history education is no exception, especially in a country where history is treated as a 'sacred cow'".

However, other respondents (3) expressed a different opinion on this matter. Although they seemed to acknowledge the importance of procedural knowledge, they argued that priority, especially in early grades, should be given to offering students *a cohesive, clear narrative*: "You should first take care of the tree trunk, and then of the branches", as one interviewee framed it. In this view, in the early grades, history

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<sup>103</sup> One interviewee state here: "You need to add complexity, add a cultural dimension into it...culture as it evolved over time. It is important for children to understand culture, environment, space/place, people's way of thinking and their behavior".

<sup>104</sup> "Local history (not only national) plays an important role too, e.g. their family's history can help students comprehend their positioning in space and time", argued one interviewee.

education should familiarize students with key events and protagonists of history in the form of a narrative, and introduce the historical method in higher grades. Moreover, two interviewees stated that over the past years, and as a result of a number of textbook revisions in Greek schools, the state of history education in the country has deteriorated. The first one made reference to the fact that since 1996 over 100 textbooks for different subjects, including history, have changed in primary school and junior high school, the majority of which are “carelessly written and ideologically colored”. To him, these new textbooks directly *undermine the purposes of history teaching* and the aims of education in general. Among others, this is done by under-covering examples of heroism in Greek history, by stripping the curriculum from references to the traditional cultural and religious ethos and context, and by using plain, unsophisticated language that does not help develop children’s imagination. The second interviewee noted that prior to 2003, when the then minister of education initiated the revision process, he did not have any issues with the existing history textbooks. These textbooks did not instigate fanaticism, as others argued at that time, but included the facts –established facts that the youth of the country needed to be taught. That said, to him the problem emerged when an effort started to change what he would view as appropriate history textbooks. This indicates *an aspiration to return to an earlier state in regards to history education*, when the curriculum seemed to serve better what this interviewee would define as the aims of history education.

Another theme in this discussion, this time on process-related dimensions, concerned the *lack of inclusive dialogue to achieve a higher degree of social consensus*

on key issues surrounding history education in the country –something that current practices do not allow for (8).<sup>105</sup> This lack of dialogue seems to be both horizontal and vertical. Horizontally, academic historians and educators who may belong to different schools of thought appear unwilling to engage dialectically with each other. They form their own ‘cliques’, thus not allowing for a constructive exchange of ideas. Vertically, there is no effort to open up the discussion to broader parts of the Greek society, including different cultural associations, and other civil society groups, both to inform them about current developments in the fields of history and history didactics and to elicit their input vis-à-vis history education in public schools. The result of this lack of dialectic processes at different levels is that people who are close –politically or personally- to the government that carries out any given revision initiative are the ones whose views are reflected in the curriculum. What exacerbates this phenomenon, is that more often than not the *appointment of authors for history textbooks* (or any school subject for that matter) *is not made through transparent processes*. This way, interviewees argued, institutional and para-institutional centers find opportunities to exert influence on the formation of analytical programs of study, which basically set the frame of what the curriculum will be, always in alignment with the government’s agenda.<sup>106</sup> Some interviewees (5) even stated that the Pedagogical Institute, supposedly an independent body, has ended up a spoil at the hands of the government. As will be discussed later in

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<sup>105</sup> As stated by one of the interviewees, “history education should come as a product of social consensus; current practices do not allow for it”.

<sup>106</sup> “The analytical program is developed by appointed people, who have been appointed by political criteria, and who write the analytical program based on the government’s agenda”, argued one of the interviewees.



this chapter, introducing open, competitive processes could be a way to address this problem.

Finally, when thinking about the need for curricular revisions, many interviewees (7) noted the importance of *engaging teachers/educators when developing educational materials*.<sup>107</sup> On the one hand, the experience they have in regards to the classroom reality can be invaluable in making sure that the curriculum that will be developed will be relevant to this reality. On the other hand, since they are the ones who will ultimately apply the curriculum, it is important that they feel included in the process and develop a sense of ownership. On a related note, some interviewees (3) pointed to the *necessity of running pilots* to test the new curricula prior to their introduction to the schools, as this would allow people involved in the initiative, as well as teachers themselves, to see what works in practice and where there is room for improvement.

The previous three sections gave the reader a number of insights as to how participants in this study view history education in Greece, the place of collective identity in it, and whether there is a need to revise history curricula in the country. These brief discussions took place at a certain level of abstraction with no direct reference to the revision initiative that constitutes the focus of this study. However, they did set some background parameters against which the discussion on this specific initiative will take

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<sup>107</sup> “Teachers have to undertake an active role in this”, an interviewee argued, while another one noted the importance of involving “practicing teachers, not only academics, but teacher who have classroom experience and have worked with students”.

place in the following sections. This will also allow us to see how interviewees' general stances toward the parameters discussed here, informed their response to the initiative.

In the next section the discussion will revolve around the 2006 history textbook controversy, drawing upon interviewees' responses on the initiative's strengths and weaknesses, and exploring interviewees' understanding of popular reactions to it. The reader should remember here that this discussion will take place at the level of *arguments* and will not revolve around an artificial bipolar of supporters vs. opponents.

## **Interviewee views on the 2006 History Textbook Revision**

### **Arguments Surrounding the 2006 History Textbook**

As the reader will note, the themes presented in this section overlap to a great extent with the themes identified through the analysis of the articles and opinion pieces in the previous chapter. In order to avoid repetition, the discussion here will be brief, and will only elaborate any time new insights are added to one theme or in cases where there are new themes that emerged through the interviews. As in Chapter 6, the discussion here will be divided between key themes in opposition arguments and key themes in supporting arguments.

### **Opposition Arguments**

Core arguments criticizing the initiative, in toto or in parts, as they emerged through the researcher's discussion with the interviewees, could be clustered around the following themes:

- Objections related to the new textbook's content, and especially how it relates to existing notions of national identity, collective memory and consciousness;
- Objections related to the textbook's pedagogical and didactic approach;
- Objections related to the textbook's overall ideological orientation;
- Process-related opposition themes: top-down process with no broader dialogue
- Objections related to technical details, grammatical and syntactical errors
- Objections to the general process of reconciliation across national boundaries;
- Ad hominem attacks against people involved in, or supporting the initiative
- Objection related to the non-involvement of teachers
- Even more complexity is needed

### **Content-Related Themes**

A big part of the interaction with the interviewees touched upon a multiplicity of issues related to the content of the new textbook. What follows is a presentation of the most common sub-themes that fall under this category.

*The textbook as negating key positive elements of Greek identity, thus leading to the overall erosion of national identity, memory, and consciousness*

For a number of interviewees (6), the new textbook offered a narrative that seemed to be placing less emphasis, or overall negating, core positive elements of the Greek collective identity as they understood it. This could gradually lead to the erosion of this identity among Greek youth, as well as decrease their national consciousness. To add more, these interviewees felt that the new textbook, by doing so, appeared as a challenge to the collective memory of Greek society, which, had the textbook stayed longer in the

schools of the country, could have been similarly eroded by the new narrative.<sup>108</sup> Key opposition arguments here revolved around a perceived lack of emphasis on the idea of the Nation's historical continuity; lack of promoting a sense of 'we-ness'; less emphasis on instances where the heroism of the Nation was expressed,<sup>109</sup> which strips off the narrative from heroic, positive prototypes that could serve as examples for the Nation's youth;<sup>110</sup> de-Christianization of the Greek national identity by not emphasizing its religious elements; dissociation of the narrative from key elements of the Greek cultural identity and traditions; lack of reference to the Nation's survival ability and resilience through the hard times it experienced in certain historical periods; and a challenge to the historical rights of Hellenism over some territories that the Greek state has incorporated since its creation.

*Understatement of the role of the Greek Orthodox Church and tradition:*

Another content-related theme touches upon a perceived understatement of the role of Greek Orthodox church in the Nation's history. For 4 interviewees, the Church stands as an institution which has contributed in multiple ways to the Nation's collective experience. Apart from the fact that Orthodox Christianity is a core element of Greek identity, and hence needs to be acknowledged as such, the Church played a catalytic role in the preservation of Greek identity and consciousness throughout the centuries; during

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<sup>108</sup> As framed by one interviewee: "It definitely challenged the collective memory; that's why you had so many people reacting from different political orientations, Pontics, people of an Asia Minor background, the Academy of Athens, the clergy, the diaspora"

<sup>109</sup> One interviewee noted that, while the textbook does not devoid much space in discussing key events illustrating the Nation's heroism, it offers an export's chart of a Turkish delights factory in one of the Greek islands, concluding: "Well, how did we get our freedom, then? Through Turkish delights?"

<sup>110</sup> For one interviewee the new narrative would create "dehydrated, submissive youth"

the Ottoman period, it was this attachment to the Orthodoxy that enabled the Greek nation to maintain its identity.<sup>111</sup> In the same line of arguments, the clergy at times played a pioneering role in educating the Nation's youth prior to the establishment of the Greek state. These interviewees felt that the new textbook did not sufficiently acknowledge the above. For some voices, this understatement of the Church's role was intentional and part of a broader plan to De-Christianize the nation's collective identity.

### *Denial of national traumas*

Objections were also expressed by a number of interviewees (8) to the way the new textbook approached events of traumatic nature for parts of the Greek population, such as the Asia Minor catastrophe, or the genocide of the Greek population in Pontus.<sup>112</sup> Similarly, in this cluster of criticism, the overall collective experience under the Ottoman empire is presented in lighter colors, with the new textbook at times idealizing the period. Over the flow of time, these events have come to acquire a key place in the Nation's collective memory; understating the traumatic nature of these events, interviewees continued, stood as an insult to the families of people who suffered and who still have living memories. While some interviewees saw this a part of a broader effort for smoothening the nation's hard experiences to promote reconciliation in the region –or to erode the nation's consciousness- others felt that this was just an unfortunate approach

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<sup>111</sup> One interviewee argued: "In the new textbook there were some visuals, but no explanation. It does not seem to accept the role the Church played in the survival of the Nation".

<sup>112</sup> "The whole way the narrative approaches the question of Asia Minor and Pontus is unacceptable", one interviewee noted.

the new textbook adopted, without necessarily attributing specific incentives to the team of authors.

### *Deconstruction of national myths*

Three interviewees expressed objections to the way the new textbook approached a number of historical events/phenomena the true nature of which appears to have been debated both among historians and within the Greek society as a whole (e.g. the Secret School). To them, events that appear to be framed as myths in the new textbook's narrative actually did happen and, in our discussion, they cited sources to substantiate their claims. As these events/myths typically illustrate key positive attributes of the Greek nation, such as heroism, self-sacrifice, and resilience, denying them –apart from negating the nation's history- could also damage the positive collective self-image. On a related note, some interviewees argued that even if there is a mythic element in them, myths in history curriculum may serve an important pedagogical function, instilling among the Nation's youth a number of core values.<sup>113</sup>

### *Disproportional emphasis on the role of women*

Another opposition theme as expressed by 3 interviewees touched upon what was perceived as an effort by the team of authors to acknowledge the role of some prominent women in the nation's historical experience. According to this criticism, the new textbook placed disproportional emphasis on the role of some women, at the expense of

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<sup>113</sup> “Myths serve a pedagogical function too...” one interviewee argued, “they have a foundational function for the development of national consciousness”

male figures who played a more important role at the time, but did not make it into the textbook's narrative. These interviewees made reference to the fact that due to given historical circumstances women had a less prominent presence in the key events of certain periods. Not acknowledging these circumstances and artificially emphasizing these women's role, felt manipulative and overall erroneous, reflecting the team's effort to be politically correct.<sup>114</sup> Of course, shedding light in the role of women may have come as a result of the new textbook's approach to spent more time talking about people's everyday life and cultural context, as opposed to political and military history, which is typically monopolized by male figures.

*Short narrative not covering the needed events:*

A number of interviewees (9) stated that one of the textbook's weaknesses was that its narrative was short and did not cover effectively, what they considered important events in the Nation's history. The fact that the narrative was short—a conscious decision by the authors who wanted to increase the number of visuals and sources- also made it thick and inaccessible to the students, who could have found it hard to follow.<sup>115</sup> Here, some interviewees noted that the size of the textbook and the periods that it needed to cover had been set by the Pedagogical Institute, thus acknowledging the fact that this might have restrained the team of authors. Some of them also felt that the connections

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<sup>114</sup> "History is not a matter of quotas", one interviewee stated.

<sup>115</sup> Here, one interviewee argued: "The language was a bit brief and dry; an adult can infer the meaning, but I'm not sure children would be able to. The authors made an effort to come up with a short narrative, but they made it difficult for students to understand".

between visuals and text were not effectively drawn, thus leading to lack of coherence between the two.

### *Exclusion of and misrepresentation of the history of Eastern Hellenism*

The last content-related opposition theme revolves around objections expressed by 3 interviewees to the misrepresentation or exclusion of the historical experience of Eastern Hellenism from the textbook's narrative. According to these critics, the new textbook did not represent a break from the past, but a continuation of the previous dominant narrative that placed Eastern Hellenism in the periphery of the nation's experience and did not sufficiently acknowledge its multiple contribution to the Nation, as well as the tragedy it went through at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For these critics, when it comes to the Asia Minor catastrophe and the genocide of Pontic Greeks, the textbook acknowledges neither the crimes of the Turkish nationalism/Kemalism nor the historical responsibilities of the governments of the Greek state at that time, thus "following the traditional silences" as framed by one of the interviewees.<sup>116</sup>

### **Objections related to the new Textbook's pedagogical and didactic approach**

Besides the content, in my discussions with the participants in this research, a number of objections were expressed by 7 of them to the pedagogical approach of the new textbook. Although these interviewees acknowledged the value of familiarizing

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<sup>116</sup> "It was not an effort to deconstruct the previous narrative –it was in perfect alignment with it! That's why this whole model followed the typical silencing of the traditional approach in regards to Asia Minor and Pontus, in regards to Turkish nationalism, in regards to the labor movement, in regards to the left, in regards to foreign involvement/domination. There was not difference, the same silences!"



students with the historical method, they found it inappropriate for students of that age-group (11,12 years old).<sup>117</sup> At this age, they continued, one should first build the ‘tree trunk’ and at a later age (junior and senior high school) focus on the branches. For others, although the intention might have been positive, the end-product lacked cohesion and offered a fractured, insufficient narrative that lacked connections with the visuals, thus offering students partial only information and making them feel lost. This did not allow them to fully comprehend neither the method, nor the content of what they were taught. On a related note, one interviewee noted that the size and structure of units was such that would not allow teachers to effectively use this material and facilitate students’ journey through the method in the 45 minutes they had at their disposal.<sup>118</sup>

Another criticism here concerned the fact that the textbook started with a general presentation of historical developments of the covered period at the European level. To them, it should have started with the Greek experience of the time; as this context was more familiar to students, this would allow them to better relate to the specific, before they start exploring the broader context. Finally, and importantly, a common theme when it comes to the pedagogical and didactic dimensions of the initiative –a theme discussed both by critics and by supporters of the initiative-, concerned the very important role of teachers in making a learning experience successful or not. Effective pedagogy and didactics are not a matter of any given textbook alone, but to a great extent depend on the

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<sup>117</sup> “The approach was inappropriate for 11-year old students” said one of the interviewees, “encouraging research and independent exploration of sources should come at a much older age”.

<sup>118</sup> “One of the negative things about this textbook was that it was hard for the teachers to cover a unit in the 45-minute time they had at their disposal”, noted one of the interviewees, who as a teacher himself.

use of educational materials by teachers, as well as their overall individual pedagogical approaches. This is a theme that will be further discussed later in this chapter.

### **Promotion of an ideological and geopolitical agenda**

In alignment with the analyzed articles in the previous chapter, a common theme in opposition arguments expressed by 6 interviewees against the initiative touched upon its perceived ideological and geopolitical agenda. To them, the whole revision initiative was ideologically and politically colored aiming at a ‘relativization’ of the Nation’s history. Several motives were attributed to people who carried out the initiative, from promoting reconciliation with other peoples in the region at the expense of historical truth,<sup>119</sup> to creating a new generation of internationalist citizens that would be more easily integrated in the regional and global market.<sup>120</sup> To achieve this end, the team of authors, among others, manipulated historical evidence and cited it selectively to build a narrative supporting their ideology. For one interviewee, although authors stated that the learning process is exploratory, they used historical sources in such a way so as to condition the students toward reaching certain conclusions. Overall, for one interviewee the textbook did not represent a break from the existing dominant ideology in the country, but an extension to it: a form of neoliberal cosmopolitanism, an effort to cultivate a European identity through the elimination of local, national identities in a top-down, ‘violent’ way. Finally, some interviewees –including interviewees who were close to the initiative–

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<sup>119</sup> “The textbook was written following diplomatic and political orders”, stated one of the interviewees

<sup>120</sup> One interviewee argued that the initiative was “in alignment with the political orientation of the dominant political and economic class; an internationalist orientation to go beyond the nation and create a larger market”

although they acknowledged that there was a political orientation in the textbook (without agreeing that the orientation was what is described above), they saw this as something natural, not reprehensible. To them, it is only natural that when historians contemplate how to approach history, as well as how to teach it, their political ideas, and their multiple identities and experiences factor in the final product.<sup>121</sup>

### **Process-related opposition themes: top-down process with no broader dialogue**

Three interviewees also expressed objections to the process out of which the textbook was produced. Criticism here focused mostly on two issues: although, as described earlier in this study, this was the first time that a textbook came out of a competitive selection process, interviewees seemed suspicious toward the team of authors whom they identified as members of a larger ‘clique’ carrying out an effort to dominate academia in the country and occupy key positions in the political power centers. In this line of argument, the authors were close to the certain political poles of the country and - although not directly appointed- their selection was not as random as it is presented.<sup>122</sup> The second criticism here concerned the lack of a broader dialogue process during conceptualization and writing of the new textbook, although there had previously never been any such open dialogue on the writing of textbooks for any school subject. This did not allow for multiple perspectives to be included in the textbook. This second criticism is a recurring theme that will be also discussed in other sections of this chapter.

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<sup>121</sup> Touching upon this point, one interviewee noted: “This is an issue that historiographic circles have solved long time ago: authors wear their social, ideological, class, racial ‘clothes’”.

<sup>122</sup> One interviewee stated: “The competitive process was set up. There was funding by the EU, there were people in positions of privilege –they had access to decision makers- and they had the advantage. So, they were the ones who prepared accordingly and got the job.”

### **Objections related to technical details, grammatical and syntactical errors**

Criticism toward the technical details of the textbook and its production were not commonly made by the interviewees. Reference, however, was made by two interviewees to the problematic language that characterized the textbook. They found the language “inaccessible, dry, and with poor syntax, not conducive to developing students’ imagination”, as framed by one interviewee.

### **Objections related to Reconciliation across national borders**

The reader may remember that this issue was very frequently touched upon by the articles and opinion pieces analyzed in the previous chapter. This was a theme that was also widely discussed with the interviewees (7). No interviewee objected in principle to reconciliation across identity lines in the region. Concerns, however, were expressed about the way that reconciliation was attempted through this initiative, as this was perceived by the interviewees. To them, the textbook attempted to ‘smoothen’ negative intergroup experiences by presenting them in a lighter way,<sup>123</sup> which they saw as problematic at multiple levels. First, negating or misrepresenting the traumatic nature of such encounters indicate a superficial approach that does not really address the traumas experienced by the nation in its collective past. The desideratum here is not to misrepresent those encounters, but explore them in their full dimensions, analyze them, understand why they happened, help students comprehend the negative consequences they had for the relationship of the parties involved, and assist them in drawing the

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<sup>123</sup> One interviewee stated here: “There was a light representation of traumatic events, which also had an ideological coloring”.

conclusion that these should never happen again. To them, this would be a respectful and mature way to deal with events of a traumatic nature. Secondly, 2 interviewees noted, such an effort toward reconciliation requires broader discussions so as to achieve a minimum basis of consensus among social actors in the Greek society. The perceived top-down process of this endeavor made it feel like an imposition.<sup>124</sup> Finally, another two interviewees noted the lack of reciprocity on the part of Turkey, which they viewed as not making sincere efforts to work equally toward reconciliation.<sup>125</sup>

### **Ad Hominem**

Ad hominem attacks, other than framing the initiative as a broader plan by certain power centers in and outside the country (3), were not present in the researcher's discussion with the interviewees. In just one instance one interviewee framed people involved in the initiative as "pseudo-progressivists". This may be a result of response bias, as people tend to be less offensive in the presence of the researcher.

So far the discussion touched upon themes that also emerged in the analysis of the articles as presented in the previous chapter. In addition to these, in terms of criticism to the revision initiative, another two themes came out of the interviews with stake holders:

a) the need to systematically involve teachers; and b) a desire to see add even more

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<sup>124</sup> One of them noted: "This was a textbook with a diplomatic agenda. It was not a pedagogical tool, it was a textbook with a diplomatic purpose".

<sup>125</sup> One of the interviewees, who saw the textbook as a product of the Papandreou-Cem agreement, signed in 2000, argued: "It all started with an education protocol between Greek and Turkey in 2000, the implementation of which was only partial. First, it was a mistake to sign the protocol. It is not possible to sign a protocol with a country that still has casus belli, occupies illegally part of Greek soil, where they slaughter parts of the population (Cyprus), threatens Thrace, questions everything related to the international law of the sea, and in general has not apologized for the genocides of Pontic Greeks, the Greeks of Asia Minor, and Armenians"

complexity in the textbook narrative and include more diversity of perspectives in the textbook's narrative.

### **Involving teachers**

Both critical and supportive voices of the initiative among the interviewees acknowledged the importance of the more systematic involvement of teachers in the textbook revision (5). This would not only allow for their experience-based voice and perspective to be included in the endeavor, but also for them to develop a better understanding of the overall effort, the narrative it represented, as well as the methodological and pedagogical approaches it drew upon.<sup>126</sup> To these voices, delivering trainings to teachers informing them about the specifics of the textbook and discuss its didactic and pedagogical underpinnings would have been invaluable. Ultimately, this would facilitate the embracing of the initiative by a larger number of teachers, as well as the effective delivery of the curriculum on their end.

### **Add even more complexity and diversity of perspectives**

Finally, 3 interviewees noted that, although the effort was heading toward the right direction, they would have liked to see even more complexity in the textbook's narrative.<sup>127</sup> This would familiarize students with the diverse historical experiences of different actors, it would allow them to develop a less rigid understanding of identities, and overall approach making sense of history as an exploratory endeavor. Relatedly,

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<sup>126</sup> One interviewee noted: "It is important when you develop educational material to work with teachers and have pilots, so they can tell you this works, this doesn't".

<sup>127</sup> "I would have liked to see even more diversity in the discussion of historical experience", said one of the interviewees.

these interviewees would also like to see students being more exposed to a diversity of interpretations of certain historical experiences, so as to soften the idea that there is one historical truth that one can approach objectively.

The discussion throughout the previous sections illustrated the diversity of criticisms the 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook revision initiative faced upon the launching of the textbook. These ranged from the textbook's content and its pedagogical and didactic approach, to the perceived ideological orientation that characterized the textbook, the absence of broader dialogue, and the erroneous –as perceived- approach to reconciliation. The researcher's discussion with interviewees confirmed the findings of the analysis of articles and opinion pieces, as presented in the previous chapter. There was a great overlapping of opposition-related themes between the two datasets, with two new themes being added to the list as they emerged through the interviews. In the next section an effort is made to bring together themes of arguments supporting the initiative.

### **Key Themes in Supportive Arguments**

Supportive voices also touched upon most of the points discussed above, offering, however, a different perspective. Overall, key *supportive themes* as emerged from the discussion with the interviewees were similar to the ones identified in the analyzed articles and included the following:

- The debate over the new textbook was a manifestation of a long-running conflict between modernizing and conservative forces in the Greek society;
- The new textbook was more axiologically balanced, less ethnocentric, and promoted a less mythic conception of Greek history and identity;

- Opposition to the textbook was politically motivated, including groups interested in maintaining their privileged status quo;
- The textbook was a product of a transparent process;
- The pedagogical approach of the textbook makes it easier for students to learn and develop critical thinking;
- The textbook's short narrative coupled with visual materials provides sufficient coverage of the historical period explored in the textbook; and
- Although the textbook did come with a political-ideological agenda, the goals set in this agenda were positive and needed.

The following sections discuss briefly each of the above themes.

### **Modernization vs. conservative elements**

Although not as common as in the analyzed articles, this theme was also present in the researcher's discussion with the interviewees. Three of them placed the controversy over the new textbook within a broader 'tug of war' between modernizing and more traditional elements in the Greek society. To them, part of the reaction was not about what the textbook was, but about what it represented and came mostly from parts of the Greek society that systematically oppose any effort toward modernization.

### **The new textbook was more axiologically balanced, less ethnocentric, and promoted a less mythic conception of Greek history and identity**

For seven interviewees one of the very positive attributes of the new textbook was that it offered a more balanced image of the collective Self, which was much needed in



the Greek society.<sup>128</sup> This was not unpatriotic, they argued, as true patriotism does not pass through the idealization of Self and demonization of the Other. To add more, the aim of history education nowadays is not to create soldiers, as it was several decades ago, but to educate active and responsible citizens, who can approach maturely the historic experience of their national group as it evolved over the flow of time.<sup>129</sup> This means that modern curricula should be balanced, less ethnocentric and devoid of mythic conceptions of Self. One interviewee, who was close to the initiative, also noted here that the textbook's narrative was not in opposition to the Constitution, as it was accused of; it was, in reality, in alignment with the Analytic Program as developed by the Ministry of Education, which stated that the aim of history education should be the development of historical consciousness among students. Accordingly, historical consciousness cannot be based on biased representations of Self and Other. Such healthy historical consciousness may also serve as a substratum for the development of a positive relational space across identity lines.

### **The new textbook added complexity and multiple perspectives**

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<sup>128</sup> "In Greece we have a narcissistic disorder vis-à-vis our Self", one interviewee noted.

<sup>129</sup> For one interviewee, "the traditional approach to history textbooks up to 20-30 years ago served –and in my opinion rightfully so– the function of developing soldiers. At that time the likelihood of having a war was higher, so the understanding was that boys should be able to defend their homeland. Now the likelihood of having war is almost nonexistent, so now the desideratum is to develop citizens, not soldiers. That's why I think that despite its disadvantages, the textbook was heading the right direction: to develop an identity of citizens who will approach the past critically".

A number of interviewees (6) seemed to acknowledge that the narrative of the textbook offered more complexity in the representation of the Nation's past.<sup>130</sup> To them, the textbook's narrative made distinctions between the diverse experiences of different historical subjects (e.g. women and children; wealthy and poor) and went beyond diplomatic and military history to also discuss social and cultural everyday life. In addition, it was seen as positive by these interviewees that the nation is presented as an evolving community subject to transformations and changes that come as products of given historical processes and forces. Importantly, for these supporting voices, on a note related also to the textbook's methodological approach, the new textbook allowed the space for students –under the guidance of the teacher- to acknowledge multiple perspectives and appreciate the fact that history may be subject to different interpretations. This, might have contributed to the reactions against the new textbook. As framed by one interviewee, who was close to the initiative: “What was seen as a problem was that it allowed children in parallel to the central narrative –the short central narrative- to form their own view through the exploratory process. This critical approach to history was seen by some centers as a peril that children may develop a different view than the dominant narrative”.

**Opposition to the textbook was politically motivated by groups interested in maintaining their privileged status quo**

Another common theme among the voices supporting the initiative was that opposition to the new textbook was politically motivated (3). For two interviewees, some

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<sup>130</sup> “To me, it is positive that the textbook added complexity; society is not a unitary thing”, noted one of the interviewees.

opponents of the initiative took advantage of the issue to draw sympathies toward their political party. Through populist, jingoistic language they capitalized on instinctive, defensive mechanisms of parts of the Greek society and blew the debate out of proportion. To these interviewees, such reactions were politically instigated, by people who manipulated an uninformed audience to pursue their own political aims.<sup>131</sup> In addition, opposition to the textbook also came from groups/ actors whose status appeared as being challenged by the new narrative (e.g. nationalist elements or the Greek Church). Finally, two interviewees noted that there was part of the opposition that was ideologically motivated; although critical voices falling under this category might not have had own, micro-political interests to pursue, the primary reason for their reaction was their different ideological orientation from the one of the team of authors. These people found this opportunity to ‘settle’ old accounts with the authors and supporters of the initiative.<sup>132</sup> As also noted in the analysis of the articles, in an effort to delegitimize the initiative, opposition voices sometimes used less than ethical means, such as selective citation of textbook excerpts taken out of context to direct the audience toward certain conclusions, ad hominem attacks, and arbitrary associations between the authors and certain less-than-reputable power-centers/ individuals.

### **The textbook was a product of a transparent process**

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<sup>131</sup> As noted by one interviewee: “The whole universe talked about it without having read it! ...This controversy was totally artificial”

<sup>132</sup> “The controversy was also an opportunity for old accounts be settled”, one interviewee argued.

Five interviewees saw as positive the fact that the new textbook did not come out of a direct appointment, as had been the case up to that point, but out of an open competition. To them, this rendered the process transparent, and could overall increase the quality of produced textbooks due to the competitive nature of the process. This argument was also commonly used by supporting voices to address objections that the textbook was the product of a directed, top-down process,<sup>133</sup> as well as to affirm its quality, since it was the one that was selected by the Pedagogical Institute Committee.

### **The pedagogical approach of the textbook makes it easier for students to learn and develop critical thinking**

A number of interviewees (7) characterized the pedagogical-didactic approach introduced by the new textbook as positive, for reasons similar to the ones identified in the analyzed articles: it was meant to replace ex-cathedra teaching and encourage students' active participation; it attempted to familiarize students with the historical method; enhance their critical thinking ability; and expose them to the idea that history may be subject to different interpretations. This was an overall effort to incorporate in history education the latest developments in the field of didactics. For one of the interviewees who was close to the initiative: "the new textbook was an attempt to go beyond declarative knowledge and offer students procedural and conceptual knowledge as well: what it means to teach history; what historical knowledge is; what the historical method is; how to use effectively historical material and sources". The teachers among the interviewees saw the overall intention positively, although some of them stated that

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<sup>133</sup> "It was the first time that a textbook was produced through a competitive process, as opposed to the previous practice of appointments", one interviewee noted.

the implementation in the classroom was not always smooth. For example, one teacher, who overall saw the methodological shift as positive, stated that while in terms of procedural knowledge his students were able to engage effectively with the method, they found it hard to engage with the concepts. Also, a small concern touched upon the issue of the sources the textbook included: although the fact that sources were provided to the teachers, at the same time this was somehow restraining; to him, he and his colleagues used to incorporate sources anyway –even when they used the previous textbook. The fact that the sources were now given to them, could prevent them from looking further and make them limit themselves to what was easily available to them. Furthermore, again in regards to the new pedagogical approach, an interviewee close to the initiative, trying to address the line of criticism that centered on the claim that 11-year old children are not cognitively mature to learn history from the sources, argued that modern pedagogy has longed solved this issue: the historical thought of children can be very well cultivated at a young age, as long as the teaching method is consistent. He added that his doctoral dissertation touched upon this question. This sheds light to two important issues related to the pedagogy and didactics of history education (or education in general for that matter), which in many ways are common sense: a) in order to produce sustained change that will ultimately lead to a paradigm shift, changing the pedagogical-didactic approach in one school subject in one of the grades would not suffice. There needs to be a more orchestrated, broader effort that will be introduced in a way that facilitates its embracing by both the educational community and the society it is meant to address; for this reason, one interviewee supporting the initiative argued that this time the steps taken should have

been smaller in scope and gradual in nature;<sup>134</sup> b) as noted by a number of interviewees, either supporting or opposing the given initiative, the role of the teacher in the classroom is important. The teacher is the one, who will implement the curriculum within the classroom's microcosm; thus bringing teachers on board since the inception of any given initiative –through eliciting their input, as well as through training them in the new methodologies, may catalyze the success of such revision initiatives.

**The textbook's short narrative coupled with visual materials provides sufficient coverage of the historical period explored in the textbook**

On a related theme, voices supporting the revision initiative, in an effort to address criticism about the textbook's short narrative, argued that the text should be seen in conjunction with the visual materials, one supplementing the other toward offering students a comprehensive narrative. Here, one cannot evaluate the narrative using the same standards as previous books, because this fails to take into account the methodological shift the new textbook introduced: "the content of the book changed to fit the new methodological approach" stated one of the interviewees, who was close to the initiative. Again, here, it would be the teacher that would catalyze the effective connections between the text and the visuals guiding students through an exploration of the periods covered in the textbook. In regards to this point, an interviewee, who was close to the initiative, noted that the materials developed by the team of authors included a teacher's guidebook, that, among several functions it served, it also explained the methodological approach of the new textbook. The guidebook communicated to its

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<sup>134</sup> This interviewee noted: "The new steps [introduced by the initiative] could have been smaller. Not that many changes in a single initiative".

intended audience that instead of the sources supplementing the text, it was the sources that would occupy a central place so as to fit the new methodological approach.

**Although the textbook did come with a political-ideological agenda, the goals set in this agenda were positive and needed.**

In regards to this theme, also common in the analyzed articles, most interviewees acknowledged that the textbook had a political orientation, with many of them adding that naturally so, as it is hard for authors to dissociate themselves from their beliefs, values, and ideas. “This is an issue that historiographic circles have solved long time ago: authors wear their social, ideological, class, racial ‘clothes’”, one interviewee noted. However, supporting voices denied the existence of a hidden agenda behind the initiative; “it was an honest process to come up with a better textbook”, stated one of the interviewees. As also discussed in the analysis of the articles, the key goals were to offer students a balanced representation of Self and Others; help them approach the past critically and draw lessons; expose them to complexity and multi-perspectivity; and assist them in becoming responsible, democratic citizens devoid of hatred and mistrust vis-à-vis other nationalities in the region –what in one sentence, voices supporting the initiative would call modern education, meant to address the current needs of students in an internationalized world.

**Addressing criticism that the team of authors was dissociated from the classroom experience**

Finally, voices supporting the initiative, in their discussion with the researcher made an effort to address the criticism that the team of authors, being dissociated with the

classroom environment, produced a textbook that did not take into consideration the reality of the Greek classroom. They disregarded this criticism as by definition invalid, as the team of authors included teachers, historians, as well as experts on history didactics. They also mentioned that the team did not produce historiography themselves –this is not the purpose of a history textbook- but were based on already existing historiographical material. What they acknowledged, however, as discussed earlier in this chapter, was that there should have been more systematic effort to train teachers on the new methodology and the didactic approach introduced in the new textbook –which is something that went beyond the control of the team itself.

The discussion in the previous sections was meant to shed light on the interviewees' personal opinion on a series of key parameters vis-à-vis the new textbook, as well as the revision initiative in general. The diversity of views mirrored the diverse findings of the articles analyzed in the previous chapter, also adding more insights in some of the themes, which were largely similar between the two data sets. What is evident in this discussion so far is that, no matter what one's orientation was toward the new textbook, at different levels, such as the representation of Self and Other in it, its pedagogical-methodological approach, the process through which it was produced and the narrative it offered, the overall discussion around it took place within a toxic environment that did not leave much space for a respectful exchange of opinions, cross-fertilization of ideas, and an honest discussion on history education in the country in general. The public dialogue on the initiative is something that was also problematized in



the researcher's discussion with the interviewees, and the insights they offered are presented in a following section. Before going there, however, interviewees were asked to go beyond their personal opinion, take a general look at the public debate of the time, and share with the researcher their thoughts as to why the new textbook faced such a sustained and fierce reaction.

### **Public Debate: Reasons behind Popular Responses**

Naturally, interviewees' responses here varied a lot, as popular reactions came from diverse groups over a long period of time. The reader should keep in mind here that, in responding to this question, interviewees to a certain extent distanced themselves from their own attitude toward the new textbook and tried to 'read' the reaction of the Greek society. Yet, several themes are similar to the ones discussed in the previous sections. In brief, these are the reasons –oftentimes supplementary- for popular reactions as identified by the participants:

#### *Instinctive reactions to perceived identity threats*

For four interviewees, the controversy over the new textbook came as a manifestation of instinctive, subconscious reactions to what people in Greece might have perceived as an identity threat.<sup>135</sup> To add more, these reactions need to be seen in the light of broader processes at the global level: there are parts of the Greek society, who feel that one of the effects of globalization is the erosion of national identity. Accordingly,

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<sup>135</sup> "People reacted –to a great extent instinctively and subconsciously- without knowing, without having read the textbook", said one of the interviewees.

viewing this textbook as an expression of the workings of globalization, they felt the need to defend what they understood as Greek-ness using whatever means they had at their disposal. Among those reacting, two interviewees argued, there were people who felt that by using the new textbook, the educational system of the country would end up eroding the youth's national consciousness.

*Lack of sufficient acknowledgement of collective traumas –The Textbook as conflicting living memory*

As in other parts of this study, one theme that emerged in the discussion with the interviewees, when they were asked to identify reasons behind popular reactions, centered on the acknowledgement of certain traumatic events in the history of the Greek nation. To 5 interviewees, members of the Greek society felt that these traumas are not sufficiently acknowledged in the new textbook, or were not presented in their full tragic dimensions. To them, people of an Asia Minor, Eastern Thrace, and Pontic background had still memories of the tragedies they went through, having been exposed for many years to the stories their parents and grandparents told them. Naturally, they felt that the narrative of the new textbook, not only conflicted with their living memories, but also came as an insult to it.<sup>136</sup> On a related note, for one interviewee the textbook was perceived as a reversal to the institutionalized acknowledgement of the tragedies of Eastern Hellenism which only took place in 1990s. For him, being excluded from the mainstream narrative for many decades, these parts of the Greek society were very

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<sup>136</sup> “It definitely challenged the collective memory, that’s why you had people reacting from different ideological orientations”, stated one interviewee.

sensitive toward the recognition of the genocide they went through. To them, the new textbook seemed to exclude their experience again from the main narrative and this was the primary reason they reacted. Overall, this is a theme that also goes beyond the question of certain traumas; 4 interviewees argued that popular reactions came as a result of the textbook being perceived as conflicting the stories people had been exposed to in their reference groups, such as their families.

*Pseudo self-esteem considerations coupled with ignorance*

Three interviewees stated that, although the new narrative the textbook offered appeared as challenging sources of self-esteem among members of the Greek society, this was actually an epiphenomenon, not a phenomenon. What the textbook did was not to assert manifestations of ‘pseudo-self-esteem’ that cannot be substantiated by an informed, balanced approach to history. Here, one interviewee noted that among those reacting there were people who do not necessarily exhibit patriotism in their everyday lives, using the example of tax evasion, which is a commonplace phenomenon in Greek society –an unpatriotic practice by definition. Related to this, two interviewees brought up the question of ignorance: “People reacted –to a great extent instinctively and subconsciously- without knowing, without having read the textbook, rallying around specific short excerpts, which they saw as insulting”, one interviewee noted.

*Power-games over controlling the dominant discourse*

Again in a familiar theme, participants in this research saw the controversy as a ‘power game’ between forces interested in exerting their control over the dominant discourse and the interests reflected in it. For 6 interviewees, a big part of reactions came from actors whose interests lie in the preservation of the dominant discourse, which safeguards their status –rightfully or not- in the Greek society. Here, one interviewee talked about power games with some “centers viewing history as their monopoly”. Special mention within this theme was made to the Greek Church, with responses being diverse. Although some participants seemed to have adopted a critical approach to the Church’s reaction, to other interviewees, the Greek Church reacted rightfully so, as the role of Orthodox Christianity was catalytic in the formation of the modern Greek Nation. For them, the Greek nation-state emerged through the transformation of the Greek-speaking Orthodox population in the region into the modern Greek nation, hence the role of Christianity in this process should be acknowledged: “when it comes to understanding history, one should not understate the historical terms in which an entity was formed”, one interviewee added. Another interviewee, also touched upon the issue of power balance but added a different perspective. To him, over the past two decades there has been an orchestrated effort by a certain group of intellectuals –with whom he identified the team of authors and people supporting the revision initiative- who have tried to establish an academic monocacy in the country. These intellectuals have come to develop strong relationships with parts of the media and key power centers in the political structures of the country. Over the years, they have come to view themselves as having a

privileged status in the Greek society, and popular reaction to the initiative they introduced came as a surprise, which challenged this privileged status.

*An artificial controversy serving micro-political purposes*

Three interviewees identified micro-political considerations as a key reason behind the widespread reaction of the Greek society. To them, populist actors masterfully exploited popular sensitivities and appealed to the defensive instincts of the Greek society to instigate reactions and extent their own political following.<sup>137</sup> A single textbook by itself, these interviewees added, could not alter the dominant paradigm; however, it acquired a symbolic status in the continuous struggle between modernization forces and traditional forces. Accordingly, it was subject to disproportional reactions vis-à-vis any real threat it could potentially represent for the dominant narrative. This threat was exacerbated to polarize public discussion and direct parts of the Greek society toward certain, typically conservative, political groups.<sup>138</sup>

*Divergence between academia and popular understandings*

Four interviewees argued that part of the popular reactions to the history textbook revision initiative may be attributed to divergences between approaching history as an academic endeavor, and the way history education is understood by broader social groups. The latter due to their exposure through their school experience, as well as

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<sup>137</sup> One interviewee talked about “micro-political games of crafty politicians”.

<sup>138</sup> “Remember, the coming year was an election year in the country”, reminded the researcher one of the interviewees, who was close to the initiative.

through their reference groups, to more traditional approaches to history in general, as well as history education, might have developed an understanding of history as something solid, fixed, and unchanged, the exploration of which does not depend on the perspective one takes.<sup>139</sup> Facing an attempt to introduce multiperspectivity in a history textbook, people might have perceived it as an attempt to compromise the Nation's history, thus adopting a critical stance toward the new textbook. One interviewee also noted that since –beyond the level of experts- there is lack of familiarity among members of the Greek society with the most recent developments in the field of didactics, the new didactic approach that the textbook introduced went not only unappreciated, but was largely deemed as irrelevant and inappropriate. To him, this also explains part of the reactions that came from teachers, who were more familiar, and in some ways more comfortable, with the didactic approach of the previous textbook.

*Superficial, top-down effort toward reconciliation*

On a related theme, five interviewees identified as a reason for popular reactions against the textbook, the widespread perception that the revision initiative came as a result of a top-down effort to promote reconciliation across national lines in the region. Apart from the perception of imposition of a new narrative upon the Greek society, which in itself triggered defensive reactions, the textbook was also seen as 'smoothening' the Nation's traumatic experiences at the hands of Others, who were largely idealized in the

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<sup>139</sup> One interviewee noted: "Many groups felt history is something solid, steady, unchanged and does not depend on the perspective one takes. Since this is what we were taught 30 years ago, this is how it is!"

new narrative.<sup>140</sup> In short, once again interviewees made reference to the familiar theme that centered on popular feelings that the nation's historical consciousness is compromised in favor of reconciliation. Critics here, used specific excerpts from the textbook, in which the framing was unfortunate (the team of authors themselves admitted this concerning a couple of sentences/ words used in the book), to make their point that there is an intentional falsification of history to promote political ends. To two interviewees this was unfortunate, as the book, had the team avoided such mistakes, could –as it should- have had a better reception by the Greek society.

#### *Reactions coming from the Traditional Left*

One interviewee noted that reactions coming from the traditional left was based on a belief that the history of the Greek collectivity in the new textbook's narrative is devoid of the conflictual elements in its evolution. Modern Greece is the product of repeated catastrophes, something that is not reflected on the textbooks narrative. Some of these catastrophes concern the continuous suppression or violence against the labor movement and the Left with the clearest example being the defeat of the Democratic Army of Greece, the military branch of the Communist Party, in the civil war of 1946-1949, with the involvement of foreign powers, namely Britain and the US, supporting the Greek government army. Thus, the civil war in the country, which followed the end of World War II, did not end in an honest compromise between the warring factions, but with the defeat of the left. During subsequent decades, in the frames of the Cold war and

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<sup>140</sup> For one interview, one could find in the new textbook “an unacceptable submissiveness toward the Turks!”.

with the encouragement and direct involvement of the above-mentioned foreign powers, the left was repeatedly suppressed and this is something, that according to the leftist critics of the textbook was not acknowledged in its narrative.

#### *Extreme right and popular right reactions*

An interesting perspective on the reactions coming from conservative and extreme right groups, in conjunction with other reasons discussed throughout the study, was offered by one of the interviewees. For him, these groups appeared as the direct heirs of the legacy of the popular right, which had great historical responsibilities for the suffering of the Eastern Hellenism, both due to their strategic mistakes of the popular right leadership during the First World War, and due to the hostility they exhibited to the refugees that arrived in the Greek mainland after the Asia Minor Catastrophe. To them, “this controversy was a perfect opportunity to silence their historical guilt and achieve some form of catharsis” at the level of popular discourse, by supporting the cause of the Eastern Hellenism in this controversy.

#### *Reactions inspired by Conspiracy-esque scenaria*

Another reason for popular reactions, according to four interviewees, was a number of conspiracy-like theories that associated the team of authors and people supporting the revision initiative with foreign power centers that aim to erode the Greek



national consciousness,<sup>141</sup> as a way to promote their own ends, may that be economic or political-ideological. This theme has been discussed more analytically in previous parts of this study. Such theories found fertile ground in popular defensive instincts, upon which they capitalized to delegitimize the initiative *in toto*. Ad hominem attacks against the team of authors and supporters of the initiative, were often grounded in such conspiracy theories.

#### *The amplifying-toxic effect of the Media*

Finally, two interviewees listed the way the Media in the country approached the issue as one of the reasons behind the popular reactions against the new textbook.

Although the Media were not the first and primary reason that instigated the reaction, they definitely played an unconstructive role, and had an amplifying effect on the toxicity of the public dialogue at the time, by giving more airtime to extreme voices and placing more emphasis on the controversial issues surrounding the new textbook. This polarized even further an already divided audience and left no room for constructive dialogue.<sup>142</sup>

The quality of the public dialogue surrounding the issue was also problematized in the researcher's discussion with the interviewees. The findings are presented in the next section.

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<sup>141</sup> One interviewee, who was closed to the initiative stated: "The team of authors were framed as agents of Soros, as agents of...I don't know what..."

<sup>142</sup> "The media seemed to reproduce the more extremist voices, thus creating a multiplying effect", one interviewee argued.

Again in the above sections, the insights offered by the interviewees enriched a number of themes that had already emerged in previous analysis throughout the chapter, as to the reasons behind popular reactions to the new textbook. As we approach the end of this study, these insights, integrated with other findings presented throughout this work, will inform recommendations on what factors to take into consideration in future planning of similar initiatives, so as to increase the likelihood that such initiatives will be better received by the society they mean to address. Before that, however, a few words on the public dialogue around the new textbook.

### **Interviewee's views on the public dialogue surrounding the new textbook**

Responding to this question, interviewees seemed to be in a remarkable agreement that the public dialogue on the new textbook at the time was of suboptimal quality, to say the least. These are the most common themes that emerged through the discussion with interviewees, as they attempted to evaluate the quality of the public dialogue on the textbook:

#### *No constructive exchange of opinions*

Eleven interviewees stated that they were utterly disappointed by the quality of the public dialogue on the issue, as it did not allow for a fertile exchange of opinions among the different actors who publically expressed their view on the initiative. “Pathetic!”, exclaimed one of the interviewees, while another one added: “Tragic...it was a dialogue of the deaf”. For interviewees, the public exchange on the issue at the time resembled more a series of parallel monologues rather than a dialogue, which points

toward the general way Greeks do politics. As framed by one interviewee: “Since this is a political issue, by talking in public we do politics. Since this is a political act my goal is to convince others. So, I need to find space to engage meaningfully –the terms of the debate did not allow for this”. Similarly, four participants identified the controversy around the new textbook as a part of a broader problem in Greece, that is, a lack of a culture of dialogue.

### *Polarization*

Another common theme in interviewee responses was the polarized character of the public dialogue. This polarization had multiple detrimental effects for the public exchange around the new textbook. Firstly, it gave prevalence to extreme voices that approached the issue through a black-and-white lens. “Moderate voices were lost in the chaos”, stated one of the interviewees. In addition, it largely deprived the dialogue from diversity and nuances, as all opposition voices and supporting voices were artificially grouped together in the public discourse to form an arbitrary bipolar of textbook ‘supporters’ and ‘opponents’. Here, according to 3 interviewees, textbook supporters artificially grouped all opposition voices together, placing an emphasis on the most extreme among those voices, so as to make all criticism against the textbook look as if it came from extremists. Similarly, textbook critics grouped together its supporters, as if they were all part of a broader plan orchestrated by some shady political and economic centers to falsify the Nation’s history and erode national consciousness. At the same time, for two interviewees, this polarization left no room for compromise and framed the

controversy as a winner-take-all situation, until the ultimate withdrawal of the textbook. For one interviewee, who was close to the initiative “although there were some moderate voices, and although the ministry itself adopted a moderate stance, and the team of authors admitted that they were going to make changes, the updated textbook never made it to school”. Overall, the deeply normative nature of the issues discussed in the public dialogue at the time made people with different opinion approach each other not as someone with whom they just disagree but in a strongly normative/ judgmental way. As one interviewee noted, “this was a public trial”.

#### *A misplaced discussion*

Another characteristic of the public dialogue around the new textbook, according to four interviewees, is that the discussion was largely misplaced and revolved around issues that went beyond the textbook itself. “The whole initiative by the team of authors was at a didactic, scientific, educational level” stated one of the interviewees and added that “instead of having a discussion on these issues –even an intense, critical, substantial discussion- what happened was a chaotic public dialogue in the media, new media and online blogs”. To a large extent, it is true that the because of what the textbook was perceived as symbolizing (discussed in previous parts of this study), the discussion problematized issues of that broader frame than the textbook itself. At the same time, some critical voices argued here that criticism also addressed the didactic and scientific approaches of the textbook, but people involved in the revision initiative and its supporters chose to focus on the more extreme or irrelevant voices opposing the textbook.

The truth is, however, that the largest part of the discussion seemed to go beyond the immediate issues of the textbook's pedagogy and scientific standing.

### *Elitism*

On a related theme, 5 interviewees argued that the team of authors and people supporting the revision initiative exhibited at times an elitist behavior in the public dialogue; they were even accused of using antidemocratic communication practices. For these interviewees, people involved in the initiative positioned themselves in the public discourse as representing the scientific community that is under attack by actors who are conservative, irrelevant, or pursue their own political ends. For voices critical to the initiative, this was a discursive tactic on the part of the textbook supporters to navigate around criticism on substantial issues and frame all opposition as irrelevant or conservative. One interviewee, who was one of the pioneers in opposition voices, when addressing this question, stated: "reference to scientific standing serves as a pretext; it serves the purpose of protecting the author from criticism". To another interviewee, "it was actually scientists that spearheaded the opposition effort". Overall, several interviewees seemed to be in agreement that, although when it comes to history education, primacy should be given to the views of historians and experts on history didactics, these are not the only ones who have the right to express a public opinion on the issue. Finally, one interviewee noted that adopting an elitist approach in such public dialogue is also a strategic mistake, as it alienates the audience one intends to address.

### *Ad hominem attacks and derogatory language*

Finally, interviewees seemed to be in agreement that a disappointing aspect of the public dialogue at the time was the number and extent of ad hominem attacks coming both from opposition and supporting voices. This is in alignment with findings presented in previous parts of this study, indicating that ad hominem attacks were indeed a common practice in the public dialogue surrounding the new textbook.

### *The controversy, nevertheless, illustrated the importance of the public sphere*

Interestingly, and importantly, for one interviewee the controversy around the new textbook, despite its many negative facets, had one positive effect: it illustrated the importance of the public sphere as a common space to problematize issues of collective interest. Although the process at the time was not ideal, one thing that the controversy affirmed was that this space is co-owned, and hence, no actor should be afraid to bring in for discussion issues of collective concern. As for the process itself, which, as noted earlier, was less than ideal, it can serve as a negative example in the future on how not to conduct a public discussion on important issues of collective interest.

The discussion in this section so far indicated that, the question of how to approach such important topic publically, and how to engage with broader audiences, should be definitely taken into consideration when planning and implementing revision initiatives. If not handled proactively and effectively, failure to engage in constructive ways can very well have a detrimental effect on the success of the initiative. This is a question that will be also touched upon in the recommendations for future action that will

be offered at the end of this study. This section ends with a brief discussion on the role of relevant institutions as viewed by the interviewees

### *The role of relevant institutions*

In a theme that was also discussed previously in this study, six interviewees expressed their criticism against the Greek government at that time due to the ambivalent stance it took during the controversy. To them, the government should have been more adamant in supporting the team of authors, as the whole initiative took place under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. By not taking a clear position on the issue, as its institutional role would suggest, the government allowed the controversy to escalate and take a deleterious character in the public discourse. A remarkable exception was the then Minister, Marietta Giannakou-Koutsikou, who expressed her support for the textbook and stood by the team of authors, despite the fact that the revision was initiated by the previous government. One interviewee characterized the Minister's stance as brave, while another one added that "the leadership of the ministry showed that it acknowledged the need for continuity in vision and planning". However, there were three interviewees – largely critical against the textbook- who evaluated the Minister's uncompromised stance negatively, and saw it as an expression of inertia; to them, the Minister should have listened to the popular reactions against the textbook and withdrawn it much earlier.

Five interviewees were also critical of the role of the Pedagogical Institute in this controversy. To them although the PI ultimately approved the textbook, which was then introduced to Greek schools, during the public dialogue at the time it never expressed its

full support to the textbook, thus leaving the team of authors, as well as the Minister herself, uncovered. This gave critical voices even more room to attack both the textbook and the team of authors. Another interviewee, placing the controversy within a broader frame, noted that in his opinion the PI, similarly to other state institutions, has ended up a prey to certain political parties, especially the party that controls the government at any given time. This ties it to certain government agendas, and does not allow it to fulfill its role as an independent educational institution.

On a similar note, interviewees also discussed the process out of which the textbook was produced. To two interviewees the production process was exceptional; its blind, competitive nature signaled a break from past appointment practices and added transparency to the writing of textbooks, also increasing the quality of the deliverable. However, other interviewees had a different opinion on the issue: one of them characterized the process a ‘joke’, arguing that although it gave the impression of a competitive process, the selection of the team of authors was a bit blurry. In this view, there was a set of parameters and political directions that informed the selection of samples, which somehow ‘photographed’ specific people to undertake the writing of the textbook. Another interviewee added that based on his information, during the writing process, there were disagreements between the team of authors and the supervisor of the textbook production at the PI, with the authors exerting pressure to the PI through publications in friendly media to approve the publishing of the textbook without delays. One interviewee, who was close to the initiative, offered a different view here: to her, a point of friction was that the PI kept a tighter control of the process than its role would



dictate. It was mentioned earlier in this study that the writing of new textbook was partly funded by the European Union, with one of the requirements being that textbook drafts would be evaluated not by the Pedagogical Institute but by external evaluators. However, for this interviewee, the PI kept intervening in the process asking for more corrections than the external evaluators themselves, thus limiting the independence of the team of authors.

Reference, in the researcher's discussion with the interviewees, was also made to the Academy of Athens, which at the time of the controversy was asked by the government to evaluate the textbook and share its conclusions. As noted earlier in this study, the Academy identified 85 points in the textbook that were problematic and needed to be corrected. Those interviewees, who were critical of the textbook, in their discussion with the researcher tended to see its intervention as positive and needed, whereas interviewees supporting the initiative pointed to the fact that the Academy, which they also viewed as a largely conservative institution, has no institutional role in evaluating textbooks, hence its involvement was inappropriate and unconstructive.

Finally, when the discussion touched upon the withdrawal of the book, while five interviewees saw it as necessary and welcome, another 8 were critical of it and mentioned that it was a purely political decision of populist nature; "there was not even a slight trace of pedagogical consideration in the decision to withdraw the textbook", stated one of the interviewees. Overall, 5 interviewees characterized the decision as 'rushed' and argued that it should have been given a chance, especially after the amendments made at the end of its first year in the schools of the country.

What is evident here is that the relevant institutions involved in the issue did not necessarily play a constructive role in the controversy. Rather, with the exception of the Minister of Education, they seemed to approach this issue in the terms of a public trial, not as an opportunity to have a constructive public dialogue on issues very important to the Greek society, as any discussion on education should be. Importantly, they seemed to be lacking a common approach to the issue, thus exacerbating already existing tensions, instead of building a minimum basis of consensus for the Greek society.

In the next, and final, section of this chapter, informed by insights presented previously, interviewees offer their recommendations for future initiatives.

### **Recommendations for future initiatives**

In the last part of their discussion with the researcher, interviewees were asked to offer their recommendations for future initiatives, drawing upon what they thought were key lessons learned from the 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook revision initiative and the controversy around it. Naturally, these responses were also informed by the insights and views they offered up to that point in the interviews. These are the most common themes that emerged out of interviewee responses:

#### *A competitive open process*

Eight interviewees noted that future curriculum revision initiatives should come out of an open, competitive and blind process, to increase transparency, as well as the quality of the deliverable. This could also increase the perceived legitimacy of the

initiative. As discussed earlier in this study, although there were some limited voices expressing doubts about the transparency of the selection process in the initiative explored in this study, the fact that, for the first time, a textbook came out of an open, competitive process was overall evaluated as positive.

### *Broader social and political dialogue*

Seven interviewees noted that, as the revision of history curricula is a matter of great public interest, they should come as products of a broader social process through an open dialogue. At a first, proto-level, this discussion should touch upon the question of history education in general, so as to set the basic parameters of ‘what history education we want as a society’. At a second level, the discussion may revolve around specific initiatives at a given time. Such dialogues will allow for a diversity of voices to be expressed and help build momentum toward achieving a minimum basis of consensus. Four interviewees noted here that organized political actors, such as parties, should engage in dialogue with one another to develop, to the extent possible, a common plan that would reflect multiple views on a series of key issues surrounding history education, including the new curriculum’s epistemological and methodological/didactic approaches. Similarly, different actors/centers in the Greek society, whose mandate includes the study of history and which produce research on historical matters, should be part of the dialogue too. Of course, it was acknowledged that it is nearly impossible to equally accommodate all views in this process, but what interviewees referred to here was not necessarily what the end-product will look like, but a desire to see an inclusive, eclectic

approach to the issue, which will increase a sense of representation, as well as a sense of ownership by broader social strata. One of the interviewees also noted that this can go beyond the borders of the country and may include discussions with authorities and teams of historians and pedagogues at a regional level. Another two interviewees argued that since the Church plays a prominent role in the Greek society, having a dialogue with representatives of the religious hierarchy would also be a desideratum. Importantly, setting the general framework for the dialectic engagement at a broader level, one interviewee argued that in this process, different views are not to be silenced or avoided; rather they should be elicited so as to improve the quality of the deliverable: “if I were in the shoes of the team of authors, before finalizing the textbook, I would have given it to people with whom I know I disagree, to get their feedback...And maybe make some changes based on this feedback”.

It should be noted here that six interviewees, although they agreed that broader, open dialogue is desirable, stated that priority should be given to the voices of experts: historians, experts on didactics, and educators/teachers. For one interviewee: “this does not mean that you should deny society the right to express an opinion, but society should not guide decisions on educational policies”. These interviewees noted that, although history education is a matter of public interest, emphasis should be placed on the voices of people who possess expertise in the key areas involved in history education, as they can offer informed insights, also incorporating the latest developments in their respective fields of expertise. However, it was also noted that people involved in the revision initiative should not exhibit elitism in the way they approach public discussion

surrounding the initiative, as this may alienate the audience and limit the space for constructive public engagements.

*Scientific, interdisciplinary, and diverse teams, enjoying independence from political authorities*

As for who is to participate directly in the process, six interviewees seemed to favor the idea of creating diverse teams of experts coming from different schools of thought and historiographic traditions.<sup>143</sup> At a first stage, they envisioned systematic dialogue among experts through regular meetings and conferences with historians, where through de profundis introspection, analysis, and discussion some key parameters of ‘what history education we want’ would be set. At a second level, a small, but diverse group of experts will get together to develop analytical program parameters and learning objectives for history education, under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. Finally, after an open call, and through a competitive process, a team of experts would be selected to develop educational material reflecting the general parameters and learning objectives as set at an earlier stage. In addition, for one interviewee, when it comes to didactics, the effort can bring in pedagogical faculties at university level, which are specialized in teaching, and best pedagogical practices, so as to help draft the key pedagogical parameters informed by the most recent findings of the field.

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<sup>143</sup> For one interviewee, “the question is whether a revision is coming as a result of a society that is mature and has not issues to silence things, and what tools will be used in that initiative...if a society reaches that level of maturity, then the process will be through regular meetings/conferences of historians, without exclusions...meetings with all different schools, all different traditions”.

However, five interviewees noted here that it is not necessarily possible to accommodate all historiographic traditions in a school curriculum. For them, it is one thing to have a systematic dialogue among experts belonging to different traditions and another to have them work together in small teams toward developing a specific, common deliverable. What is important, for them, however, is that no matter what tradition is more vividly reflected in the curriculum, the message that needs to be communicated to students, with the teachers playing a catalytic role here, is that there are different traditions in approaching history and that each tradition is drawing upon different epistemological and methodological assumptions. Finally, it seemed to be commonplace in the researcher's discussion with the interviewees, that the process as described above should be independent from the agendas of existing political authorities.<sup>144</sup>

*Revisions should not center on single textbooks*

On a related theme, but mostly focusing on the deliverable of the process, four interviewees noted that the idea of one single textbook is parochial.<sup>145</sup> To them, this is something that modern didactics have deemed obsolete, so the discussion should happen instead on the basis of activity sheets aiming at achieving set learning objectives. Accordingly, for these interviewees, curricular revisions should head toward that direction and go beyond the discussion on a single textbook. Finally, for one interviewee

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<sup>144</sup> "The process should be free from political affiliations", noted one of the interviewees.

<sup>145</sup> "We should not be talking about one textbook, but multiple sources. The idea of one textbook is parochial...we should have learning objectives", one interviewee stated.

emphasis should be also placed on outdoor activities and field trips to historical sites, museums, and centers that systematically carry out scientific research; it important here that teachers are given sufficient directions and guidance on how to approach these activities so as to make them successful learning experiences for students.

*Not sporadic, but broader efforts, if needed of a gradual nature*

Five interviewees noted the importance of continuity both in public discussion surrounding history education and in the development of related educational policies. As seen earlier in this chapter, especially vis-à-vis the didactic/methodological approach, no sustainable change can come out of small, sporadic efforts that focus on one school grade level. Revisions should target the whole education system and would require consistency and commitment at all levels, coupled with a recognition that sustained changes take time to come about. Also, one interviewee argued that curricular revisions is something that should be happening regularly, and the process should be of a gradual nature: “You don’t change everything all of a sudden!”. This will facilitate the positive reception of the revision from all parties involved, as it will give them time to gradually adopt to the new educational reality.

*Including teachers/educators*

Another common suggestion for future initiatives, as put forth by 10 interviewees, is the active involvement of teachers in the process. As discussed earlier in this study, for these interviewees, teachers who have idiosyncratic experience of the classroom reality

may offer, in an advisory role, invaluable insights as to what can be achieved in the learning environment of a classroom and how. In addition, once the educational material is developed, it is critical for the success of the initiative to deliver trainings to teachers so as to familiarize them with the material itself, as well as the broader objectives of the initiative. It is hardly imaginable that a revision initiative will achieve sustainable change without teachers fully embracing it, feeling comfortable with the educational material that is offered to them, and clearly understanding how to use it and what learning objectives they are called to achieve. In regards to the specific initiative explored in this study, as noted by one of the interviewees, who was close to the initiative, there were some limited seminars involving teachers, but more seminars and more time were needed to make sure that they develop a deeper familiarity and competency in regards to both the content and the method of the new textbook. Although there was an initial commitment on behalf of the Ministry of Education to this end, there was no consistent planning and follow up on this.

#### *Pilots and trainings*

On a directly relevant theme, in conjunction with teacher trainings, 11 interviewees underlined the importance of running pilots prior to introducing history education materials in schools. This will help people involved in the revision initiative to get the feedback from teachers and students, see what works and what doesn't work and adapt the material accordingly. As stated by one interviewee, "you should run an



assessment, take the results, make the necessary amendments, and deliver the updated product to the educational community”.

### *Sensitivity toward issues of national identity and memory*

Another theme that emerged in the discussion with the interviewees –and has a central place in this study- was related to the way a history curriculum revision initiative approaches issues of national identity and collective memory. For five interviewees care needs to be taken so that, when more axiologically balanced representations are introduced, this is not done in a way that may be perceived as threatening to a nation’s identity and insulting to collective memory. For one interviewee, while it is desirable to make a shift from external to internal locus of self-esteem, this needs to be clearly and effectively explained to a broader audience, so that the society concerned does not feel that the new narrative aims at stripping them of self-esteem sources overall. As framed by one interviewee: “when you take away the positive feeling that comes with the idea that you are better, you need to give people something else”. This will help address feelings of anxiety and ameliorate any defensive reactions that may occur, especially reactions of extreme nature. “We need to be careful”, one respondent noted, “when healthy patriotism is suppressed, it may emerge in unhealthy ways”. Finally, within this theme, it was noted by three interviewees that sensitivity needs to be exhibited on the part of people introducing the initiative when approaching the question of reconciliation across national borders, along the parameters discussed analytically in previous sections throughout this chapter.

*Honest, authentic engagement without micro-political considerations*

Finally, eight interviewees touched upon the question of the politicization of the issue and the intense political nature of the public discussion surrounding the new textbook at the time. Although they seemed to acknowledge the fact that the issue has by definition political dimensions, these interviewees argued that in order for a constructive dialogue to take place, the process should be free from micro-political considerations. As framed by one interviewee, “It is not possible for the dialogue on the issue to be non-political. I don’t think that it was the politicization of the debate that took the discussion to the extremes. This is by definition a political issue. What took the discussion to the extremes was vested interests, the media, ignorance etc....what we discussed earlier”. Micro-political considerations had a deleterious effect on the public dialogue, with many political actors having as their primary concern any political cost their public interventions could have on their careers. “All these politicians...no one said, “well this indicated a problem, we need to do something”; they were like “Oh, history, don’t touch it!””, stated one of the interviewees. Two interviewees also made reference to the role of the Pedagogical Institute arguing that it should be more independent from political authorities. A possible step to that end could be to have its members elected. It should also comprise academics from different disciplines and traditions, as well as representatives of teachers who will not be appointed on the basis of political criteria. Despite the specifics of the suggestions put forth by interviewees here, their comments point to an important issue: one of the primary concerns when thinking through and

planning a revision initiative would be, while acknowledging the political nature of the issue, to create the necessary institutional structures that would allow the revision process to take place independently of political power arrangements at any given time.

In this section, interviewees offered their recommendations for future history curriculum revision initiatives. These were informed by interviewees' expertise, views, or personal experiences and built upon previous insights they offered throughout the interviews. These recommendations, as presented in this section, combined with the findings offered in previous parts of this research, as well as with theoretical insights presented earlier, will inform a set of practical recommendations for future action that will be presented in the conclusion of this study. One observation that was remarkable at the end of the interviews is that five interviewees ended their comments on a pessimist note; they were deeply disappointed by the way the controversy unfolded and felt that nothing positive came out of it. As one interviewee stated, "there was nothing that came out of it that planted a seed for the future, to give birth to something better; it also made it very hard for future initiatives to flourish", with another one adding "It was a failure of our society". The author of the present study, however, believes that despite the unfortunate end of the controversy over the new history textbook in 2007, a number of useful lessons were drawn both at a theoretical and at a practical level –lessons that can prove valuable when the question of history education and potentially the issue of curricular revisions will be brought up again in public discussions. In the epilogue of this study an effort is made to identify these lessons.

## *Discussion*

Before getting there, however, it would be useful to offer a brief comment trying to draw connections with discussions in previous parts of the study. In doing so, the discussion will revolve around the three overarching themes set in previous parts of this study, as important dimensions to look at when one tries to explore popular reactions to attempted shifts in dominant narratives: a) perceived identity threats accompanying attempts to introduce a new narrative; b) popular discourses as reflections of existing power arrangements within a society; and c) questions related to how a collectivity's past is publicly discussed. In conjunction with these three parameters, a number of other points, which emerged throughout the interviews will be also touched upon.

### *The new textbook as a threat to Greek National Identity*

The interviews conducted in the frames of this study confirmed that identity threat considerations informed to a great extent popular reactions to the new textbook. The new narrative the textbook introduced was perceived by parts of the Greek society as challenging their 'identity-securing interpretive system' as set in the previous narrative. In short, as was discussed earlier in this study, the new textbook seemed to place less emphasis on a number of sources of pride and self-esteem (e.g. the Nation's continuity, or expressions of heroism on the part of the Nation); was perceived as placing core elements of Greek identity (Orthodoxy) in a peripheral place compared to the previous narrative; it narrowed the axiological distance between Self and Others, without necessarily offering –or communicating effectively- alternative sources of increased self-

esteem; and was perceived as offensive to living collective memory due to the way it approached and presented certain national traumas. Accordingly, it triggered defensive reactions and was ultimately met with sustained resistance. Defensive instincts were also capitalized upon by actors using populist rhetoric to build a narrative of resistance among an audience, which was already identity-insecure due to globalization's effect in rendering outdated pre-existing, familiar frameworks of understanding the national Self. This resistance narrative was also supplemented by a widespread feeling that a 'clique' of intellectuals with internationalist ideological orientation have hijacked key positions in the academia, as well as the state mechanism, and attempt to use this embedded power to alter the familiar understanding of collective identity to serve their own interests or the interests of power centers they were associated with. Sustained resistance against what was perceived as an orchestrated plan to erode national identity and consciousness seemed as a natural reaction to many parts of the Greek society at the time. Although some interviewees seemed to acknowledge that the existing understanding of national identity in the country appears to be problematic (axiological imbalance, lack of complexity, conception of collective identity as fixed), this is not necessarily a view shared among wide parts of the Greek society. To add more, the tactics some supportive voices employed during the public debate on the issue, unconstructive to some extent, did not allow for communicating to a broader audience that the new textbook did not aim at eroding national identity but at offering a different, more complex understanding of it. Based on the insights interviewees offered, it appeared that the initiative, informed by a different understanding of the purposes of history education, aimed at placing more

emphasis on developing among the nation's youth a modern understanding of citizenship. That is, through an exploration of history, to help students develop a form of collective identity that would allow them to relate to both ingroup and outgroup in a balanced way, in a contemporary world that is largely internationalized. Of course, this relationship between patriots and citizens is not one of mutual exclusion, but rather, a matter of emphasis. Allowing the space for such a discussion to take place would help address popular perceptions of identity threat.

*Popular discourses as reflecting existing power arrangements*

As discussed throughout this study a key function of popular, dominant discourses is that they serve as habitat for producing and reproducing certain understandings of a collectivity's identity. Thus, any actor who is powerful enough and enjoys a high level of legitimacy within a society can exert an impact on popular discursive representations, and accordingly, shape representations of identity within that society. Beyond the immediate question of identity, of course, these actors also influence decisions on what individuals, groups, values, ideas, and practices have a special place in dominant discourses, and what value is attached to each of them. In their turn, these discourses not only reflect these power arrangements, but also serve as preserving mechanisms for these arrangements. Seen under this light, the controversy around the new 6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook, also reflected a 'power' game between different groups in the Greek society, which attempted to influence the narrative young students are exposed to, even within the limited space and time a textbook may occupy toward the formation of the broader discourse. The new

textbook signaled an effort to transform, but not radically change, the pre-existing narrative; defensive reactions by groups that were at different levels attached to that narrative (cognitively, emotionally, status considerations), came as a natural response. For voices supporting the initiative, the controversy can be placed within a general, long-running struggle between modernization forces and more traditional, conservative groups belonging to what could be broadly defined as a patriotic front. In this view, reactions were more based on the expressed and known ideology of authors and textbook supporters, than on the actual changes that the new textbook introduced. In other words, as discussed earlier in this study, the initiative faced reaction not because of what it actually was, but because of what it represented. To voices critical of the initiative, the controversy came as a response to an attempt by a group of intellectuals (often referred to as a ‘clique’) to alter the way the nation’s history is approached and understood; their internationalist orientation could have an eroding effect on national memory, consciousness, and ultimately identity. These intellectuals, despite their small number and limited legitimacy they enjoy among the Greek society, through political networking and on the basis of personal relations, have managed to occupy key positions at a high level, thus exerting a disproportional influence on decision making processes in the country. This is a popular view within the Greek society, which also increased perceptions of the initiative as being a top-down endeavor, forced upon the society.

As discussed earlier in this study, the outcome of the 2006-2007 controversy, indicated that the embedded power and legitimacy that voices critical to the initiative had in the country at the time was higher than those of actors participating in it or supporting

it. Thus, if the controversy is to be seen as part of a broader ‘tug-of-war’ over who exerts an impact on the dominant discourse as reflected in school curricula, this specific episode ended in an affirmation of the status of the key groups that opposed the initiative, through the preservation of the previous narrative.<sup>146</sup> To add more, groups interested in preserving the dominant narrative, from that point on have had a negative prototype to point to, any time public discussion touches upon the subject of history education in the country (or in a broader sense, issues of national identity and collective memory). In regards to this point, in the theoretical chapter of this study it was argued that master narratives and counter narratives are not always in directly oppositional stances, but may interact in more complex, cross-fertilizing ways (Bamberg 2004). The terms of the public debate, however, did not allow for any consensus-building or cross-fertilization, as the whole controversy was simplistically framed as a winner-take-all situation.

#### *Public discussion on how collective past is to be approached*

As in previous parts of this study, it became evident throughout the interviews that in regards to the question of who is to participate in the public discussion on history education, it was commonly acknowledged that, since this is a matter of public interest, such discussions cannot be a task exclusively esoteric to the historiographic community.

Broader dialectic engagements and regular communication among different groups

within a society need to take place, so as to allow for a diversity of views to be heard,

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<sup>146</sup> It should be noted here that, as seen throughout the study, not all actors expressing voices critical to the initiative belonged to groups the ‘story’ of which is part of the dominant discourse. That said, there have been groups, which were similarly placed in the periphery of the narratives offered by both the old and the new textbook. The comment offered in this section concerns largely the ‘power game’ between actors framed as serving a modernizing function and more traditional, conservative actors.



acknowledged and, desirably, cross fertilized. Interviewees here talked about a both horizontal and vertical dialogue: horizontally among historians belonging to different historiographic traditions, as well as experts on didactics; and vertically between historians, educators, and broader parts of a society. It is true that in some instances, popular understandings of history may appear to be in divergence with the latest findings of contemporary historiography. That is why, while interviewees argued for an overall inclusive dialogue, many of them stated that in this process, primacy should be given to the voices of experts involved in history education: historians and experts on didactics. In addition to this, it was seen as a desideratum for the end product of any history curriculum development effort to allow space for diversity and multi-perspectivity, making clear to the intended audience that the core approach that informs the produced curriculum is one of many. Furthermore, emphasis in the researcher's discussion with the interviewees was also placed on the importance of relevant institutions and the constructive role they can play facilitating both the public dialogue, and the curriculum development process. For all the above to happen the honest, authentic engagement of all actors involved is a prerequisite. Unfortunately, as discussed throughout the study, in the case explored here one could hardly observe any of the above. The lack of a dialogue culture; the absence of institutionalized mechanisms for broader public dialogue on important, even if controversial, issues; the insufficient, or even unconstructive, involvement of relevant institutions; the extreme, at times offensive and often ungrounded, criticism against the textbook; the continuous ad hominem attacks; the elitism exhibited by some voices supporting the new textbook; and the overall simplistic,

Manichean terms in which the debate was framed, did not allow for making this controversy an opportunity for having a *de profundis* public discussion on the very important issues of national identity, collective memory, and history education.<sup>147</sup>

However, this experience offered a multiplicity of lessons to be taken into consideration in the conceptualization, planning, and implementation of similar efforts in the future.

Based on the insights presented so far throughout the previous chapters, in the conclusion of this study, among others, an effort is made to offer a number of recommendations for future initiatives. More analytically, the conclusion will include a discussion on theory implications, a presentation of practical implications, a brief discussion on the limitations of this study, and a set of directions for future research.

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<sup>147</sup> The researcher acknowledges that there have been a number of points raised by interviewees that were not thoroughly discussed in this study. This is because there are dimensions of the controversy that went beyond the scope of this research. E.g. when the discussion revolved around the pedagogical approach of the textbook, the researcher noted the different arguments on this issue, without deeply elaborating on these, and without evaluating their validity, as this was something this research did not focus on. Overall, as stated at the beginning of this effort, the purpose of this study is not to evaluate all different arguments made about the textbook, but to discuss issues of collective identity, memory, and discourse.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION**

The present study explored a history textbook revision initiative in Greece and the controversy surrounding it during 2006-2007, which resulted in the withdrawal of the textbook that was produced through the initiative. The aim was to explore popular reactions to attempts at transforming a dominant narrative on the Greek nation's historical experience, and the representations of Self and Other as reflected in this narrative. An analytic, comparative look was taken at the new textbook, as well as the textbook it replaced, so as to identify the ways in which the two textbooks differed in their approaches to representations of Self and Other and the relational space between the two. At a second level, popular responses to the new textbook were explored through analysis of news articles and opinion pieces that were published in the country at the time of the controversy. This analysis was supplemented with insights offered by 15 interviewees-stakeholders along a set of key parameters related to the focus of this study. The two datasets combined allowed the researcher to identify a number of factors that seemed to inform popular responses to the revision initiative.

Central place throughout the analysis was reserved for the concept of Collective Axiology, the set of normative orders and value commitments that inform a collectivity's understanding of Self and Other, the descriptive as well as normative positioning of Self and Other within the social landscape, which in its turn has important attitudinal and

behavioral implications for group members. As the emphasis in this research was on identity representations in narratives, and their role in the constitution of the relational space between different groups, the concept of Collective Axiology offered an apt analytical tool for approaching the subject of this study. It, importantly, allowed the researcher to look at the axiological positioning of the Greek Self vis-à-vis the Ottoman/Turkish Other in the two textbooks, and explore the impact that perceived or real shifts in this positioning, as offered in the new textbook, may have had on popular reactions to the revision initiative.

As stated at the beginning of this dissertation, the importance of this study lies at primarily two levels: a) at theoretical level this study aimed to offer insights on defensive responses of a society when facing attempts to introduce narratives alternative to the long-established, dominant one, especially in cases where the new, transformed narrative offers axiologically more balanced discursive constructions of Self and Other; and b) at a practical level, through an in-depth exploration of such popular responses, to offer a number of recommendations on what parameters need to be taken into consideration and addressed in future initiatives so as to increase the likelihood that the new narrative will enjoy a more positive reception by the society it intends to address. The following sections will revolve around these two levels, first by discussing the study's theoretical implications, and second by compiling a number of recommendations as informed by the findings of this research. This brief epilogue will conclude with a brief discussion on the limitations of the study, and a section on directions for future research.

## **Theoretical implications**

It was shown throughout this study that the introduction by the new textbook of a narrative with transformative elements instigated intense and sustained reactions from wide parts of the Greek society. Among a number of reasons for these reactions that went beyond the realm of identity considerations, such as the new textbook's pedagogical approach, it became evident that central place was indeed held by issues pertaining to the workings of collective identity, shared mental representations of National Self and Other, shared views on the collectivity's common historical experience, and the institutionalization of collective memory through history curricula.

The case explored in this study indicated that in terms of identity representations, attempts to narrow the axiological distance between Self and Other, coupled with efforts to add complexity in the images of both Self and Other in a way that reduces their respective relative homogeneity, are very likely to challenge the existing identity-securing and self-esteem maintaining mechanisms within a society: the normative positioning of Self and Other and the associated axiological comparison between them does not yield as positive results in terms of self-esteem as in the previous narrative. With the introduction of a new narrative, familiar constructs, which reinforce a sense of predictability, security, and even moral superiority of the ingroup, lose ground to new constructs, to which a society is not affectively and cognitively attached. Moreover, the explanatory power of these constructs may be seen by parts of this society as limited, at least at an initial stage after their introduction, with the result being an increased feeling of anxiety. These new constructs may be perceived as being identity-corrosive and, accordingly, they acquire in the collective consciousness the status of 'threats' to existing

identity. As such, they appear to challenge not only the value of the ingroup's identity in static terms, but also the efficacy and competency that is believed to characterize the collective agency of the ingroup. In this process, if alternative sources of self-esteem maintenance, meant to replace unbalanced axiological comparisons between Self and Other, are not communicated clearly to a broader audience –as happened in the case concerned- then it is unlikely that related popular concerns will be effectively addressed.

As a function of the processes discussed above, defensive responses come into action, aiming at ostracizing from the public realm the new narrative using a variety of tactics: public expressions of overt and emphatic rejection of the newly introduced Self and Other positioning; rejection of the ambiguity and complexity in group representations; expression of wariness of losing one's identity and public appeals against what is framed as an existential threat to the group; questioning of the integrity and real motives of people involved in revision initiatives; ridicule of doubters and dissidents; and sloganistic appeals to unity. This repertory of tactics indicates that even as collective identities, such as national identities, appear as mental constructs centering on perceptions of collective unity and autonomy, they become deeply incorporated in the emotional and behavioral patterns for group members- unquestionable beliefs and norms, to the extent that any challenge to them is very likely to face intense resistance –at least at the level of initial, instinctive responses.

In the case explored in this study, these defensive instincts provided the material upon which, either subconsciously or through conscious efforts by actors promoting their own ends, a popular narrative of resistance was formed. Within this narrative, the

controversy undertook existential dimensions, a development that had an immense polarizing effect in the public dialogue at the time. Within such a context, a number of voices supporting the revision initiative failed to engage constructively with critical voices and effectively address popular concerns, thus toxifying the dialogue even further. This hindered a potential synthesis of different views on the issue, as the discussion was placed within a winner-take-all frame.

Importantly, the study also indicated that the intensity of such controversies is also a function of the locus in which the new narratives are introduced: not a peripheral, alternative institution, but the Ministry of Education, through which the new narratives will reach the country's youth. This adds another level of complexity, as the discussion touches not only upon questions of group identity and collective memory per se, but also upon the institutionalization of the new narrative through public history education, thus vesting it with an aura of increased legitimacy. The notion of an officially sanctioned narrative, and the authoritative status this narrative is endowed by the very fact that it is approved by a high-level governmental institution, renders the realm of history education an arena of contestation among different actors/groups within a society over who determines the nature, content, and centrality of certain ideas, practices, groups, events, and historical figures in the discursive constructs constituting this officially sanctioned narrative. The outcome of this contestation is a function of each group's embedded power and perceived legitimacy in any given society. The groups/forces that are powerful enough and enjoy the highest degree of legitimacy within a society are better positioned to exert an influence on what the dominant approach to the collectivity's past will be and

what representations of the collective Self will have a central place in it. As discussed earlier in this study, in Foucauldian terms what happened in Greece in 2006-2007 reflected a multiparty contestation among different groups over who will have the greater influence in the institutionalization of collective memory and in the production of the Greek society's 'regime of truth'.

Overall, the present research showed that such revision initiatives are likely to have an unfortunate end if: they are not part of an orchestrated effort that addresses gradually and strategically broader parts of a country's educational system; and identity considerations and related anxieties among the population are not effectively addressed prior to the introduction of the new curriculum through broad dialectic engagements among historians, didactics experts, relevant institutions and organizations and the general population. Absence of these, as largely happened in the case explored in this study, may lead to the radicalization of a society, toxify the public realm and shape in similarly toxic ways the terms of subsequent public discussions on similar issues. Importantly, they may even backfire, leading not toward a progressive path, but toward a reversal of the effort to develop less exclusivist, axiologically more balanced identity representations. As noted earlier in this study, in the years following the 2006-2007 controversy, the new textbook acquired a symbolic negative status any time the public discussion approached –even peripherally- issues of collective identity: from that point on, it symbolizes a threat against which the Nation should be alerted.

Of course, as indicated throughout the study, other factors going beyond identity dynamics and issues of collective memory also seemed to play a role in shaping popular



responses to the given history textbook revision initiative: questions about the textbook production process; the place of teachers in it; the pedagogical approach that informs the curriculum; as well as the role of relevant institutions and political actors in the process. These were analytically presented in previous parts of the study and definitely have their own place in informing practical recommendations for future initiatives, as to the factors that need to be addressed when attempts are made to introduce a revised history curriculum in the schools of the country. The following section is an attempt to provide such a set of recommendations.

### **Practical Implications**

In this section an effort is made to briefly compile a number of recommendations for future action, informed by the findings of this study, as presented in previous chapters. Overall, findings indicate that, in order to increase the likelihood of success in the introduction of new, more balanced history curricula, actors involved in revision initiatives need to take into consideration the following parameters:

*Popular meanings of identity need to be taken into consideration and related sensitivities need to be addressed*

It was clearly indicated throughout the study that identity dynamics have a central role in informing popular responses to attempted discursive shifts. They constitute key determinants as to whether the product of the initiative will be embraced by a society or resisted and ostracized. This needs to be realized early on in any revision initiative and this realization should inform subsequent planning and implementation. Instead of being

a specific recommendation, this is more of an overarching approach to help people involved in revision initiatives look for ways to address popular sensitivities and ameliorate natural, instinctive reactions that follow the introduction of alternative narratives. Some of the specific recommendations offered below, are meant to provide solutions to this end. Importantly, affective dimensions in the workings of collective identity are not to be dismissed; if they remain unaddressed the affective realm may become prey to extreme voices that will capitalize on popular insecurities to promote extreme agendas.

*The aims need to be clearly communicated to a society in non-threatening ways*

In order to mediate popular anxieties and increase transparency, it is important for the institution carrying out the initiative, or individuals involved in it to communicate what stated goals are, especially in relation to issues of identity. To this end, there is a need since the early stages of the initiative and throughout to convince the public about the need for the attempted discursive shift using non-threatening frames, so as to address popular perceptions of the collective identity being under threat. Part of this endeavor may include a broader discussion with Media representatives so as to ensure their assistance in communicating the aims of such efforts on a realistic basis, and that the issue is not covered using polarizing language and practices.

*Efforts to eliminate unbalanced axiological comparisons as a source of self-esteem, need to be coupled with the provision of alternative sources of self-esteem maintenance*

Among of the key messages to be communicated to wider parts of the society a revision initiative intends to address should be that sources of self-esteem may very well lie in loci other than axiological comparisons between Ingroup and Outgroup, such as positive experiences and constructive interactions across identity lines. In addition, part of the message should center on promoting the view among a broader audience that inclusive, axiologically balanced representations of identity are not national identity-corrosive; rather, they constitute a healthier, and more responsible form of patriotism. The goal here is to facilitate the process of moving from an external locus of self-esteem into an internal one. Offering in a clear way such alternative sources of self-esteem maintenance may ameliorate feelings of anxiety experienced by the population of a country when long-established, familiar representations are challenged.

*Revisions need to be preceded by orchestrated, systematic, and inclusive dialogue both horizontally and vertically*

As discussed earlier in the study, it is important for an initiative to emerge organically through participatory dialogue at different levels: a) among historians, as well as experts in didactics, coming from different traditions, who will have regular meetings over a sustained period of time to discuss history education-related matters, such as identity representations in history curricula. Dialogue among political parties may facilitate the development of a minimum basis of consensus, so as to lay the ground to the revision initiative; b) at a second level, in a vertical direction, these discussions should engage broader social strata through a variety of media, aiming at communicating the

results of the academic discussion, as well as at eliciting popular views. These processes will facilitate the forging of wider academic, political, and social alliances that will embrace and support the initiative. The role of Mass Media is important, as depending on how they approach public discussions on the issue, may have a deleterious effect on it, or a positively catalytic impact. Such broader engagements may facilitate a number of processes, necessary for the success of the initiative: a) build a basis of consensus; b) foster a culture of respectful public dialogue; c) communicate academic discussions to a broader audience; d) give voice to the population to communicate their concerns and views, thus feeding them into the academic, as well as policy-making level; and e) increase a sense of ownership of the initiative within a society.

*Revisions should be of a gradual nature and target broad parts of a country's educational system*

Processes introduced suddenly in a society may feel as impositions from the top-down and instigate intense defensive reactions. It is important for history curriculum revision initiatives to take a gradual approach, with small steps taken at a time. In addition, revisions that aim at changing only small parts of a country's school reality seem to be less likely to succeed placed, within a broader context that has otherwise remained the same. For revision initiatives to flourish, they need to be part of broader efforts meant to instigate similar changes and deliver similar results at different levels.

*The question of reconciliation: Controversial topics and traumatic experiences across identity lines are not to be eliminated from the curriculum, but approached analytically*

As revealed in several parts of this study a number of popular reactions to the revision initiative centered on what was perceived as a ‘light’ approach the new textbook took toward a number of traumatic events and negative interactions with the outgroup in the collective historical past of the Greek nation. In addition, independently of whether this was an intention of the team of authors or not, it appeared to be a commonly held view that this approach came as a result of a broader reconciliation effort among different nations in the region. It was argued in the present study that controversial topics and traumatic experiences, and conflictual interactions with the national Outgroup should indeed be part of history curricula, but need to be approached analytically, that is, to be studied as phenomena that were products of specific historical processes, with certain roots, dynamics and impact. The goal here is not to ostracize them from the new narrative, but to explore them in all their negative dimensions, so as to avoid committing the same mistakes in the future. In other words, these topics and events are important in what they can teach us and a country’s youth. Including them in the curriculum, may also prevent perceptions of offenses to a group’s collective memory.

*Competitive, open processes increase transparency and safeguard the quality of the product*

In terms of process specifics, it is a desideratum that the development of the curriculum within a specific initiative should come out of a competitive, open process.

This increases the overall transparency of the process, thus vesting it with a higher degree of legitimacy, while at the same time ensures the quality of the deliverable. Finally, this may serve the purpose of depoliticizing the process.

*Inclusion of teachers/educators in all parts of the process*

As discussed in previous parts of the study, the role of teachers in a revision process is not only important, in that they are the ones who will deliver the final product in class, but it may also have a positively catalytic impact in facilitating the initiative's success. Teachers, based on their idiosyncratic experiences from the classroom, can offer insights during the development of the curriculum, so as for the latter to be better fit to the classroom reality. In addition, after the production of the educational materials, they can be involved in preliminary testing and provide their feedback. Overall, involving teachers, also increases the sense of ownership of the process on their part, which is actually an indispensable, organic part of any educational process.

*No single textbooks –importance of multimodality*

One of the recommendations that came out of the discussion with research participants centered on what the nature of the deliverable will be. As the practice of using a single textbook appears to be pedagogically parochial, curriculum development should aim at delivering multiple and diverse educational materials toward achieving set learning objectives.

### *Pilots and Trainings*

It is also important for the produced materials to be piloted prior to their introduction to schools. This may sound basic, but unfortunately, it does not necessarily happen in all cases. Especially when the curriculum production in a country is centralized, meaning that produced curricula target all schools of the country, piloting may not only allow people involved in the initiative to see what seems to work and what not, but can also indicate whether there are regional peculiarities that make the produced material unfit for certain parts of the country, despite the fact that in other parts the same material may work perfectly well. Similarly, it is equally important to train teachers with the new material, so that they get familiar with the content and the overall didactic approach, and are effectively prepared to deliver it in the classroom.

### *Expectations management: transformations may take time to flourish*

Finally, managing expectations is important in this process. Changes in history curricula are not a panacea that brings about quick solutions as to eliminating exclusivist discourses and unbalanced conceptions of Self and Other identities. As indicated earlier in this section this is to be seen as a gradual, multifaceted process, requiring synergistic efforts among a variety of actors. Importantly, time should be given so as for such efforts to flourish and lay the foundation for the development of healthy forms of Self and Other representations and positive relations across national identity lines.

The above recommendations center on a set of key parameters that need to be taken into account when conceptualizing and implementing history curriculum revision

initiatives. The intended audience is multiple: academics, policy makers, educators, journalists, as well as any actor within a society that is interested in issues of history education. The present research indicated that when the parameters presented here remain unaddressed, then it is very likely that revision initiatives will not be embraced by the societies they intend to address. The last two sections of this work discuss study limitations and offer directions for future research.

### **Study limitations**

This research constituted an attempt to provide a comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon concerned, through the use of different data sets. Yet, the study is not devoid of limitations. One of them centers on the fact that history textbooks, an important role as they may play in shaping young people's understanding of their national collectivity's past and present, are just one out of a multiplicity of factors that inform students' perceptions on this past, as well as Self and Other representations. Key role to this end have other reference groups as well, such as family, religious institutions, and political groups. While history textbooks, and the way a society approaches them, are and should be subject to systematic inquiry, one needs to note that they provide a part only of the reality surrounding the phenomenon studied in this research. Also, due to research limitations, the study did not involve the ultimate recipients of the new textbook's narratives. This would allow the researcher to see whether and to what extent the new narrative was internalized by students. In other words, this study did not look at how the new textbook was received by students themselves; it largely focused on the message itself and the reactions this message triggered among different social constituencies, but



not the students. As discussed earlier in the study, engaging a textual or visual material is a process of meaning-making, with the meaning resting not with the material alone, but with the interaction between the material and the receiver. The nature of this research did not allow for capturing this interactional dimension, when it comes to students. Similarly, it would have been beneficial for the study to involve more teachers, possibly developing specific questions targeted toward their classroom experiences with the new textbook. This would have allowed the researcher to get insights on how the new textbook was used by educators in the schools of the country and, based on teacher testimonies, how it was received by students. Unfortunately, time and other resource constraints did not allow for this extra step. Another limitation of this study is that insights informing the analysis throughout this research were drawn from a single case (2006-2007 controversy over the new history textbook) which took place within a specific context (Greece). Thus, despite the fact that the analysis provided valuable nuances for the case explored and developed recommendations that could potentially prove useful in a variety of settings, there is a limited degree of generalizability of the findings. Finally, it was noted in the methodology chapter that initially the researcher approached the issue through the perspective of an in principle supporter of such history curriculum revision initiatives. This may have colored the way some specifics of the phenomenon were approached and discussed at the early stages of this research. However, once this was understood by the researcher, an intentional effort was made to go back and read through the work produced that far and ensure that the product of this work is devoid of biases.

### **Directions for future research**

In terms of lines for further inquiry, future research could engage with a larger number of cases, where defensive responses on the part of a country's population led to sustained reactions against textbooks that attempted to introduce alternative, more balanced narratives. This would allow to identify common patterns of thought and action across a number of cases, and could be coupled with analysis of cases where the new narrative appeared to be embraced by the society(ies) they meant to address; insights drawn from such a positive and negative comparative analysis could inform general recommendations and assist in the development of a set of best practices when introducing alternative discursive schemes.

Another area for future research could focus on a topic that was only touched upon briefly in this study: the role of teachers, who serve a mediating function between the educational material and the students, in facilitating or hindering the positive reception of alternative narratives by students. Teacher's catalytic function was emphasized by a number of interviewees in their discussion with the researcher, and it would be valuable for actors interested in carrying out curriculum revision initiatives to be able to understand –through the findings of systematic inquiry- the multiple ways in which teachers' positioning in this process can be used to: a) inform such revisions; and b) to assist in the effective delivery of the new narrative in the schools.

Similarly, future research could focus on the role of parents in the process in at least two levels: a) the extent to which reactions by parents have catalyzed –either positively or negatively- the reception of new educational material in the schools of a country; and b) the ways in which parental responses have informed the attitude of

students vis-à-vis the new narrative, from positive reception to rejection. As family is the core reference group for young students, paying attention to parental attitudes toward new educational materials introducing alternative narratives, might not only shed light on their role, but could also suggest practices for proactively engaging parents in a dialogue on the new material, as well as prepare them for the introduction of this new material in schools.

Finally, in a highly complex, but much needed endeavor, it would be of much value to systematically study the time a new historical narrative needs to be at place through the schools of a country, so as to be internalized by students, as well as be reflected on popular discourse. In other words, systematic research could focus on answering the question of how much time it takes for a new, alternative historical narrative to exert an impact on pre-existing discursive constructs. On the one hand such a long-term endeavor would require regular student participation in this research project so as to assess the narrative internalization process on their part; on the other hand, part of the project would focus on systematic analysis of the popular discourse within the given context, so as to identify instances of the new narrative constructs being reflected in public discourse. Knowing the time cycle between the introduction of a new historical narrative through schools and its active, demonstrated embracement by a population, could greatly facilitate the planning and delivery of revision initiatives (e.g. what resources need to be allocated and for how long), as well as manage expectations.

The above are just a few preliminary suggestions. Undoubtedly, as shown throughout this study, introducing a new, balanced, inclusive historical narrative at a

societal level is a complex, long-term, and resource-intensive endeavor, which also runs the risk of not being embraced positively by wider social strata. It is a much needed endeavor, however, and it is definitely worth the time and effort allocated to systematic research so as to develop best practices –practices that will increase the likelihood of succeeding in instigating positive discursive transformations within a society.

## **APPENDIX I. CODING SCHEMATA**

### **Coding Schema for Text References**

#### **Axiological Balance**

##### **1. Reference to 'Self':**

- a) Positive attributes of 'Self' (e.g. heroic, moral, culturally superior);
- b) Neutral; and
- c) Negative attributes of 'Self' (e.g. aggressive, immoral, imperialist)

##### **2. Reference to 'Other':**

- a) Positive attributes of 'Other' (similarly to above);
- b) Neutral; and
- c) Negative attributes of 'Other' (similarly to above)

**Source of positive or negative evaluation** (e.g. military successes? political, cultural, economic achievements? group's inherent characteristics? reference to a group's historical past?)

#### **Collective Generality**

##### **1. Reference to 'Self':**

- e) Dimension of Homogeneity:
  - a. 'Self' is represented as a homogeneous group
  - b. Within-'Self' differences are acknowledged
- f) Dimension of Evolution
  - a. 'Self' exhibits unchanged behavior/ beliefs over time
  - b. 'Self' is represented as an evolving community

##### **2. Reference to 'Other':**

- a. Dimension of Homogeneity:
  - a. 'Other' is represented as a homogeneous group
  - b. Within-'Other' differences are acknowledged
- b. Dimension of Evolution
  - a. 'Other' exhibits unchanged behavior/ beliefs over time
  - b. 'Other' is represented as an evolving community

## **Coding Schema for Visual References**

### **Axiological Balance:**

1. Visual Reference to 'Self':
  - a) Material illustrating positive attributes of 'Self' (e.g. heroic, moral, culturally superior);
  - b) Neutral; and
  - c) Material illustrating negative attributes of 'Self' (e.g. aggressive, immoral, imperialist)
2. Visual Reference to 'Other':
  - a) Material illustrating positive attributes of 'Other' (similarly to above);
  - b) Neutral; and
  - c) Material illustrating negative attributes of 'Other' (similarly to above)

### **Overarching Dimensions of the Visual Representation\*:**

- a) Direction of Representation (Action vs. Static);
- b) Who is represented in character portraits (e.g. military, diplomatic, political, cultural leader; man, woman); and
- c) Intergroup relations (peaceful coexistence/ cooperation vs. conflict).

\* This second code for analyzing visual representations is inductive, meaning that more categories may be added here, if need be.

## APPENDIX II. LIST OF 100 ARTICLES ANALYZED

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## **APPENDIX III. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**



**George Mason University  
School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution**

### **Dissertation Research**

**Representations of `Self` and `Other` in History Textbooks:  
Exploring Popular Responses to Attempted Changes in the Dominant Discourse  
The case of 6<sup>th</sup> Grade History Textbook Revision in Greece**

### **Interview Protocol**

#### **Protocol Sections:**

- A. Demographic Information
- B. History Education, Textbooks and National Identity (General)
- C. The 6<sup>th</sup> Grade History Textbook (Case Study)
- D. Public Debate on the Textbook
- E. Lessons Learned and Future Steps
- F. Last Comments/ Additional Issues Discussed

**A. Demographic Info**

Name:

Occupation:

Political orientation (optional):

**B. History Education, Textbooks and National Identity (General)**

1. What, in your opinion, should be the purpose of a history textbook?
2. What are in your opinion the key elements of Greek identity? Are you satisfied with the way the Greek identity is represented in the existing history textbooks? If not, why?
3. Do you feel that there is a need for revising history textbooks in our country, and why? How do you envision this revision: a) in terms of content; b) in terms of pedagogic approach; c) in terms of process that needs to be followed?

**C. The 6<sup>th</sup> Grade History Textbook –Case Study**

4. What is your overall opinion on the textbook? What were its strengths and weaknesses?
5. What is your opinion on the representation of Greek national identity in the textbook (especially vis-à-vis other national groups)? Do you feel that the new narrative offered by the textbook appeared as a threat to established notions of Greek identity, consciousness, and collective memory? If so, in what ways?
6. What is your opinion on the overall ideological/ political orientation of the book?
7. What is your opinion on the overall methodological and pedagogical approach of the book?

**D. Debate on the Textbook –Popular Reactions and Terms of the Debate**

8. What were, in your opinion, the reasons behind the reactions the textbook triggered? Why did large parts of the Greek society respond negatively to it (e.g. identity reasons/

ideological reasons/ pedagogical reasons/ perceptions of privileged status being under threat)?

9. How would you evaluate the debate on the textbook? What is your opinion on the arguments heard for and against it?

Comment/ sub-question: A part of the public dialogue on the textbook, as was expressed by some participants in this dialogue, seemed to revolve around the question of the relationship between academic research, on the one hand, and ideas rooted in the collective consciousness of the Greek society, on the other; these two may –at times- be in divergence from each other. What is your opinion on this? When it comes to history education, what is the relationship between the two?

10. To some, the new textbook came as a part of a reconciliation effort across national borders. What, in your opinion, is the relationship between history education and reconciliation?

11. What was, in your opinion, the role of relevant institutions in the debate (Ministry of Education; the governments as a whole; the Pedagogical Institute), and how would you evaluate this role?

12. What is your opinion on the textbook development/ writing process? Should there have been broader and more inclusive dialogue? If so, who should have participated and what its form/ process could have been?

#### **E. Lessons Learned and Future Steps**

13. What are, in your opinion, some lessons learned through this experience? What could have been done differently so as to make this revision more likely to succeed?

14. What are the factors that need to be taken into consideration in future revision initiatives, so as to address potential challenges and increase the likelihood that the end product of the revision initiative will be embraced by the Greek society? (Any sensitivities that need to be taken into account?; Broader synergies that need to be created to this end?)

#### **F. Last comments/ Additional Issues Discussed**

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.....  
.....

## **APPENDIX IV. CONSENT FORM**

**George Mason University  
School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution**

**DOCTORAL RESEARCH:  
Representations of `Self` and `Other` in History Textbooks:  
Exploring Popular Responses to Attempted Changes in the Dominant Discourse –  
The case of 6<sup>th</sup> Grade History Textbook Revision in Greece**

### **Consent Form**

*The following information is being presented to help you decide whether or not you want to take part in a research project. Please read this document carefully.*

#### **PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR/ STUDENT RESEARCHER**

Dr. Karina Korostelina/ Mr. Athanasios Gatsias

#### **RESEARCH PROCEDURES**

This doctoral research is being conducted to explore popular responses to a history curriculum revision initiative which took place in Greece in 2006-2007 (6<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook). The study aims to identify factors that shaped popular responses, draw a series of lessons learned through this experience, and develop recommendations for future initiatives. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to offer insights based on your experiences and expertise on a number of issues related to the given initiative. These insights will be elicited through individual interviews conducted by the student researcher (Athanasios Gatsias). The expected duration of the interview is approximately 1 hour.

The interview will be audio-recorded so as for the researcher to capture your responses holistically. Audio records will be securely stored at the George Mason University School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution John Burton Library. No audio records or any individually identifiable information will be shared outside the researcher team.

#### **RISKS**

There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research.

#### **BENEFITS**

There are no benefits to you as a participant other than to further research in identifying

popular responses to attempted changes in dominant historical narratives, and especially in representations of ‘Self’ and ‘Other’ in history textbooks

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The data in this study will be confidential. While personal information (name, occupation, and political orientation, with the latter being optional) will be included in the interview questionnaire, this info will be coded by the student researcher, who will be the only person that will have access to the identification key. Moreover, the dissertation that will come out as a product of this research will include no individually identifiable information. Audio recordings will be securely stored at the George Mason University School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, John Burton Library for 5 years. Upon the completion of the 5-year period, audio recordings will be destroyed.

### **PARTICIPATION**

Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There are no costs to you or any other party.

### **CONTACT**

This research is being conducted by Athanasios Gatsias, PhD Candidate at the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University. He may be reached at 0030 6978187142, or at [agatsias@gmu.edu](mailto:agatsias@gmu.edu) for questions or to report a research-related problem. The faculty advisor supervising this doctoral research is Dr. Karina Korostelina, Associate Professor of Conflict Analysis and Resolution, School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University. You may contact Dr. Korostelina at 001 703 993 1304, or at [ckoroste@gmu.edu](mailto:ckoroste@gmu.edu). You may contact the George Mason University Office of Research Integrity & Assurance at 001 703-993-4121 if you have questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant in the research.

This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your participation in this research.

### **CONSENT**

I have read this form, all of my questions have been answered by the research staff, and I agree to participate in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to audio taping.

\_\_\_\_\_ I do not agree to audio taping.

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Name/ Signature

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Date of Signature

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## **BIOGRAPHY**

Athanasios Gatsias (Thanos) has been a member of the SCAR community since August 2008. His areas of interest include culture, religion and conflict/ conflict resolution, as well as the place of historical narratives in collective memory and their role in the articulation of collective aspirations and grievances. His professional experience includes several semesters of Graduate Research Assistantship at Sabanci University (Turkey) and S-CAR, and three semesters of Graduate Teaching Assistantship in the Social and Political Science program at Sabanci University. He has, also, participated as a third party in a number of Interactive Conflict Resolution activities. Thanos holds an MA in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from Sabanci University, and a BA in Balkan, Slavic and Oriental Studies from the University of Macedonia, Greece. He speaks Greek and basic Russian and Bulgarian. Thanos currently serves as the Program Teaching Coordinator of the Dual MA in Conflict Resolution and Mediterranean Security that S-CAR offers in cooperation with the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies at the University of Malta.