

Citizenship Education in Ukraine and Russia: Reconciling Nation-Building and Active Citizenship

Jan Germen Janmaat School of LEID, Institute of Education. Email g.janmaat@ioe.ac.uk

Nelli Piattoeva Department of Education, 33014 University of Tampere, Finland. Email nelli.piattoeva@uta.fi

Abstract

This article examines the discourses framing citizenship education in Ukraine and Russia from *perestroika* to the present. We argue that there is a tension between the discourses of democratization and state consolidation and that the intensity of these discourses varies in time in both countries. Russia and Ukraine display both similarities and differences in the kind and intensity of discourses, which we relate to differential points of departure and domestic political events. An important similarity is the emphasis on state cohesion from the mid 1990s. This concern was sparked by the emergence of separatist movements in peripheral regions. Pressure from the Council of Europe to implement the programme Education for Democratic Citizenship in the national curricula is not seen as an important factor shaping the citizenship education policies of Ukraine and Russia. From this we conclude that national politics and anxieties about state cohesion still far outweigh international pressures in the realm of citizenship education.

Introduction

The relationship between citizenship education and authority has been hotly debated by scholars from a range of disciplines. Central to this debate is the question of whether citizenship education should nurture loyal law-abiding citizens aware of their duties and responsibilities to state and society, or produce citizens who stand up for their rights, question state authority and are open to other views and cultures (McCowan, 2004). This article will not touch on the normative dimension of this debate. Rather, it seeks to explore how two new states arising from the ashes of the Soviet Union – Ukraine and the Russian Federation - have come to terms with this dilemma in their citizenship education policies following independence.

New states are interesting arena in which to examine citizenship education, as these states tend to give priority to *nation-building* policies in the first decades of their existence, i.e. to policies promoting cultural unity and unconditional loyalty to the state (Coulby, 1997; Green, 1997). Moreover, it seems particularly relevant to examine *post-communist* new states as it has been noted that a history of communist rule has not been conducive to civic attitudes, pluralism and tolerance. Schöpflin (2000) for instance contends that communism destroyed civil society and the social fabric of communities, leaving people isolated and distrustful of the state and of their fellow citizens. After the Soviet break-up, he argues, intolerant ethnonational identities filled the vacuum that the communists had left behind. Assuming this view to be valid, balanced citizenship education policies aimed at both conformity and critical thinking may not be possible at all in the transition states.

Among the post-communist states Ukraine and Russia provide fascinating case studies because they have different points of departure. Whereas Russia considers itself to be the successor state of the Soviet Union and therefore has to come to terms with a loss of territory and a declining status as superpower, Ukraine is a new state insecure of the loyalty of its citizens. While Russia is still a powerful state possessing nuclear arms and an abundance of natural resources, Ukraine relies on conventional weaponry for its defence and is dependent on other countries for its gas and oil consumption. This situation makes Ukraine much more concerned about its external security than Russia. Whereas Russians can be confident about the continuing strength and appeal of their language and culture, Ukrainians are struggling to gain acceptance for their cultural heritage, which has often patronisingly been identified as *Malorussian* (little Russian), i.e. a simple peasant offshoot of Russian culture. We assume that these different starting points and the national political developments emanating from them affect the discourses of citizenship education.

Lastly, both countries are embedded in numerous global networks which seek to influence their domestic policies including citizenship education. The involvement of the Council of Europe (COE) is interesting in this regard. From the mid-1990s this intergovernmental organization has developed a range of activities to promote the idea of active and critical citizenship in its member states. Thus the COE fosters the very side of citizenship education that is difficult to reconcile with the objective of achieving unconditional loyalty to and identification with the state and the nation. In the ensuing analysis we aim to explore whether elements of the COE's vision on citizenship, which is critical, multicultural and post-national, are included in the national policy documents. We will interpret a complete absence of these elements in the policy documents as a sign that nation-building issues are (still) of overriding importance to the national authorities.

The comparative dimension employed in this article is both horizontal and vertical. Horizontally, we compare Russia and Ukraine in the realm of citizenship education policies, taking into consideration their similarities and differences in socio-political and educational contexts. Vertically, we seek to "read the global" (Cowen, 2000), i.e. to understand the complexities of the global context in which national citizenship education policies are developed and often contested. In view of the tendency of international actors to offer universalised policy programmes for all contexts, we want to examine the "blockages" and "permeabilities" (ibid) of Russian and Ukrainian citizenship education policies regarding the citizenship education ideology of the Council of Europe.

Briefly recapitulating, our study is guided by the following questions:

1. Which discourses have framed citizenship education in Russia and Ukraine since the late 1980s and have there been changes in the intensity of each of them?
2. To what extent can possible differences between Russia and Ukraine in the nature and timing of these discourses be attributed to differential points of departure and national political developments?
3. Can the COE's critical and pluralist vision on citizenship education be observed in the educational policies of the two countries?

As our focus is on the discourses framing citizenship education, we examine the subject through curricula, policy documents, and articles in the educational press. We are primarily concerned with the ideas these texts convey rather than with the implementation of citizenship education policies. The article starts with the introduction of the tensions inherent in citizenship education. It is then followed by a brief discussion on the Council of

Europe's citizenship education initiative. Subsequently we examine the educational developments in Ukraine and Russia.

We argue that the discourses of active democratic citizenship and nation-building do not easily co-exist in the citizenship education policies of both countries following the break-up of the Soviet Union. An increased salience of one tends to coincide with a diminishing importance of the other. Particularly in times of turmoil and separatist confrontations, nationalizing programmes emphasizing unity, conformity and loyalty quickly overshadow initiatives promoting democratization, individual autonomy and respect for diversity. In recent years Ukraine and Russia seem to drift apart, as Ukraine embraces democratic citizenship principles in an effort to partake in European trends while Russia prioritizes patriotic education. However, given the unsettled nature of post-communist politics, it would be premature to interpret these developments as signs of permanently diverging trajectories.

Citizenship education

Citizenship is membership in a political and national community, which requires knowledge and skills to act in the community as well as a sense of identification with this community. By citizenship education we understand all those educational norms and practices which seek to socialise future generations into the realm of the state and the nation. From this perspective, citizenship education is always a future-oriented process guided by visions of the desirable society. As these visions are multiple and change with time and within different segments of the society, citizenship education is always a political endeavour, both in terms of agreement and implementation, as well as its consequences for the future. The contested and deeply political nature of citizenship education explains why there are shifts in the content and relative strength of various discourses depending on the political and societal contexts.

Philosophers and political thinkers have for a long time debated on the nature of citizenship and citizenship education. Aristotle, for example, argued that citizenship education should serve the requirements of the state. That is why he admired the Spartan model of civic training, which turned young boys into obedient soldiers and eventually brought them to full citizenship (Heater, 1990, pp. 7-8). A later tradition, rooted in the writings of Locke, advocated citizenry which is critical and ready to change the existing societal and political structures. In line with these views Paolo Freire, for example, argued for citizenship education that helps to uncover the unjust nature of society and to encourage deliberate action. The first view can be rightfully criticised for treating people as mere objects of citizenship indoctrination, whereas the latter might easily promote centrifugal forces and thus endanger societal stability.

Adding to the complexity of this debate is the fact that citizenship in the modern times has been linked to the ideology of nationalism and nationality. Affiliating the political concept of citizenship with the nation meant that modern citizenship had to incorporate not only rights and duties but also a sense of tradition, community and identity (Heater, 2002, p. 99). In Ancient Greece citizenship meant participation in the political affairs of the city-state, the *polis*. But already then Aristotle claimed that "the citizens of the state must know one another's characters" (quoted in Heater, 1990, p. 3). In the modern state, the required intimacy was replaced by the myth of belonging to one nation, the "imagined community".

The nation was supposed to turn a mere bureaucratic state into our state, which expressed the will of the people and captured their loyalty (Canovan, 1998, p. 23).

Thus, the dilemma regarding the allegiance to the state vs. critical evaluation of its institutions is further deepened by the fact that citizenship education should create and strengthen the bond between the citizen and the nation. Among others, the creation and maintenance of nations involves the invention of tradition, the re-writing and even falsification of history and assimilation of ethnic groups. In order to maintain the nation, the future generations are not supposed to question the inherited cultural norms and myths. Otherwise an independent critical mind could easily put the fate of the nation at danger. Even older nation-states, such as the UK or France, continue to inculcate the feeling of belonging to the nationhood. The Crick report (1998), which forms the basis for the English citizenship education curricula, declares the main aim “to find or restore a sense of common citizenship, including a national identity that is secure enough to find a place in the plurality of nations, cultures, ethnic identities and religions long found in the United Kingdom” (quoted in Osler & Starkey, 2001, p. 293). The French programmes also stress national identity and nationality in all grades (Osler & Starkey 2001).

If these tensions continue to haunt citizenship education in the established states, how do they influence the emerging states, such as Ukraine and the Russian Federation? The recent history of these countries has shown that the task of forming a state and identifying who belongs to the nation are not easily fulfilled. The situation in these countries is further complicated by the fact that they are embedded in the global networks, which seek to influence national processes including the ideology of citizenship education.

The Council of Europe and the ideology of critical citizenship

The Council of Europe represents an important European agent promoting democracy, human rights and the rule of law in the societies of its member-states (46 by October 2004). Having been established immediately after the Second World War, the organization initially drew its members mainly from Western Europe. More than half of the current member-states, including Ukraine and Russia, joined the institution only after the collapse of the iron curtain (1995 and 1996 respectively)¹.

At the summit meeting of the Heads of State and Government held in Strasbourg in October 1997, it was decided to launch an initiative for Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC). The year 2002 played a crucial role in the further development of the project, as the Committee of Ministers adopted the Recommendation to member states on education for democratic citizenship (Rec (2002)12). As a result, the year 2005 became A European Year of Citizenship through Education². Among the multiple objectives of this initiative the one that has captured our attention seeks “to strengthen the capacity of member states to make the EDC a priority objective of educational policy-making and implement sustainable reform at all levels of the education system” (Council of Europe, 2004). Such statements prove that the Council’s citizenship work has grown into an ambitious project, which is expected to have a tangible effect on both policy level and grassroots’ activity in all member-states.

¹ For a brief history of the Council of Europe see http://www.coe.int/T/e/Com/about_coe/

² For more information on the EDC project see http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/education/E.D.C/

In the context of the article it is important to note that the COE's understanding of citizenship is largely based on the notion of active participation, tolerance and critical evaluation of institutional arrangements. Lucas (2001, 820) has noted that the supranational postmodernist dynamics essentially pressure states to recognise the multicultural composition of their populations. This pressure, he explains, is likely to conflict with the 'modernist' approach to nationhood in the newly independent states:

In ex-Communist, newly independent states, national governments are confronted with the task of designing policies and development paths that forge a compromise between modernist and postmodernist, supranational projects. This is not easy due to the fact that these two approaches are at odds with each other. States that prioritise the modernist, ideologically dominant traits of nation-statehood to the exclusion of multicultural openness and pluralist political culture will tend to exclude themselves from the rapidly evolving "glocalised" environment in which all nation-states increasingly find themselves. But the modern nation-state cannot truly open itself to its postmodern social and cultural environment without becoming self-critical of its traditional historical heritage and its own history of discrimination against "foreign" and minority cultures. (ibid, 821.)

What Lucas points at is the conflicting logic of national and post-national projects, the latter being increasingly promoted by supranational agents, such as the Council of Europe. In order to concur with the post-national transition, states should permit a multiplicity of identifications among their populations, as well as an atmosphere of pluralism and critical questioning regarding the state, the nation and their historical legacy.

In the educational context these contradictory objectives could be described in terms of "citizenship education" and "education for citizenship" (Forrester 2003). Whereas the former promotes democratization, individual autonomy, respect for diversity, challenging authority and standing up for one's rights, the latter emphasizes responsibility, conformity, national loyalty and service to the community. Obviously, the Council of Europe's critical and multicultural initiative can be equated with "citizenship education", while a traditional nation-building project is more in line with "education for citizenship". It is precisely the latter that is likely to be prioritized in the former communist states, as they are reconstructing their national statehood. As members of the COE, does this mean that Ukraine and Russia will contest the COE's policy on EDC? These issues along with the tensions inherent in the notion of citizenship provide the background to the following discussion of educational developments in Ukraine and Russia.

Ukraine

Since the late 1980s several discourses have been competing for primacy in the broad area of citizenship education. There have been clear shifts in the relative strength of each of these discourses over time. We can roughly distinguish three periods. The first period finds its origins in the late *Glasnost* era and is characterized by the uneasy coexistence of the discourses of democratization ('citizenship education') and nation-building ('education for citizenship'). The second period, starting with the presidential elections of 1994, is marked by a continuation of state and nation-building rhetoric and a marginalization of issues relating to school autonomy, democracy and pupil centred pedagogy. From the end of the 1990s nation-building concerns have gradually moved to the background and the notions

of democratization and active citizenship have reappeared as part of a desire to link Ukrainian education to European trends. The discussion of the three periods will highlight the tension between the discourses of nation-building on the one hand and democratization and active citizenship on the other. It will also point to the significance of domestic political factors in shaping the educational agenda.

1989-1994: democratization and nation-building

Democratization and nation-building issues have dominated much educational thought in Ukraine from the late 1980s to the mid 1990s, when oppositional movements enabled by *Glasnost* and *Perestroika* first began to challenge the communist monopoly on power. These discourses were directly related to the break down of communism as the central state ideology. Democratization, for instance, was expressed by sharp condemnations of the monolithic Soviet pedagogy and by appeals for pupil-centred pedagogy and grassroots' involvement in education. Thus, one observer noted that "unfortunately, the bureaucratization and over-regulation of all aspects of school education and the command-administrative style of leadership have given rise to such formalism and humbug that high-quality secondary education truly remains an ideological myth if these obstacles are not overcome" (Goncharenko 1991, p. 2).

The Communist Party was also heavily criticized for its cultural policies. Dissidents and Ukrainian intellectuals accused the Soviet government of pursuing a policy of gradual cultural attrition of the Ukrainian nation by russifying all sectors of public life. Towards the close of the 1980s, they established the oppositional movement *Rukh* which began to mobilize public sentiment on the Ukrainian national revival issue (Hrycak 2004). Education was identified as the key domain to reinvigorate the Ukrainian language and culture.

The Law on Languages of autumn 1989 marked an early victory for these nation-building activists. Passed by a still communist Supreme Soviet, which increasingly felt beleaguered by *Rukh*, it proclaimed Ukrainian the sole state language of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic (Arel, 1995). To the present day this law regulates the use of Ukrainian in education and in other public domains. As a vital instrument for later governments to base their language policies on, the law marked the onset of a cultural nation-building project that sought to redress russification and to (re)affirm Ukrainian distinctiveness vis-à-vis Russia.

The years prior to independence also saw the first attempts to reform the education system in a democratic direction. Amidst unstoppable centrifugal processes at the Union level, the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet passed the 1991 Education Act. Surrounded by ever louder calls for democratization and a humanitarian orientation of the curriculum (e.g. Krasna, Shevel'ov & Biloshyts'kyi, 1991; Yakymenko 1991), this law marked the beginning of a process to dismantle the rigid, centralised Soviet education system. It stated that the key objectives of the new educational policy were to establish ideologically-neutral school curricula, to develop the personal talents and skills of youngsters and to raise them as multifaceted individuals on their way to become invaluable contributors to society. It further noted that "Education in the Ukrainian Soviet Republic is based on the principles of humanism, democracy, national self-consciousness and mutual respect between nations" (1991 Education Act, p. 276). As a complete novelty, it offered schools autonomy in the planning of the teaching process, in the employment of teaching staff, in financial and administrative matters and in commercial activities.

After the sudden advent of independence in August 1991 and the election of communist turned nationalist Kravchuk as Ukraine's first president, a new *Rukh*-dominated government was installed, which energetically took up the twin tasks of nation-building and educational reform. It laid down its vision in the "State National Program 'Education' (Ukraine of the XXI Century)", a strategic policy document prepared by a group of scientists and teachers. This document took the new spirit of the 1991 Education Act one step further by condemning Soviet educational practices in particularly harsh terms and by proposing radical reforms. It, for instance, lamented "the authoritarian pedagogy instituted by a totalitarian state which led to a levelling of natural talents, skills and engagement of all educational practitioners". This was meant to be replaced by a system offering a wide range of educational methods, approaches and orientations to accommodate the varying talents and preferences of individual pupils. It also called for "a radical restructuring of the administration of education through democratization, decentralization and the institution of a regional system of educational authorities" (State National Programme 'Education', 1994, pp. 7-8).

Parallel to the emphasis on democratization and pupil-centred pedagogy, the document advocated the education of national traditions. It accused the Soviet regime of having given rise to "a devaluation of general humanistic values, national nihilism and a disconnection of education from national origins". The program thus saw values formation, national consciousness and education in national traditions as closely linked phenomena. Consequently, to undo the Soviet legacy and restore moral standards, the new education system was urged to exhibit:

a national orientation which proceeds from the indivisibility of education from national foundations, the organic unity with national history and folk traditions, the preservation and enrichment of the culture of the Ukrainian people and (...) harmonious interethnic relations (ibid, pp. 7, 9).

The program thus expected public education to reflect and cultivate a national identity that is grounded in history and culture.

The dual objectives of democratization and cultural nation-building held each other in an uneasy balance, however. The tension between the two concepts surfaced in an ambivalent official statement by education minister Talanchuk: "We must overcome the former overemphasis on collectivism, which caused an underestimation of individuality, but we have no right to foster unrestrained domination of individualism which contradicts our people's collectivist traditions originated in the customs of Cossack communities" (quoted in Stepanenko, 1999, p. 102). In terms of actual policy, it was soon evident that the government gave priority to nation-building, as it mobilized all levels of the state apparatus to ukrainianize primary, secondary and higher education (Janmaat, 1999). In cases where the two objectives conflicted, nation-building overruled democratization, as happened when education minister Talanchuk prohibited students in higher education to vote on the language of instruction at the beginning of the 1993-4 academic year (Janmaat, 2000a).

The reform of history education in schools also testified to the priority given to identity construction. The Ministry of Education endorsed a narrative that interpreted the history of Ukraine as an age-long struggle of Ukrainians to free themselves from foreign domination, and presented this narrative as the unquestionable historical reality. The new nationalist

inspired account was formalized in a separate History of Ukraine course, which reinforced history as a marker of national identity. According to Wanner (1995, p. 3) “This ‘restructuring’ of historical interpretation, exchanging a communist ideology for a nationalist one, did little to reduce the oppressive politicization of history. Once again, historical interpretation is made a slave to the political machine”. Stepanenko (1999) expresses a similar concern by noting that both the Ukrainian and the Soviet variants of history aim to affirm their own version, suppressing other historical perspectives. Because of this, he argues, there is a genealogical relatedness of the Ukrainian nationalist mentality to its communist predecessor³. Interestingly, the re-institutionalization of a single narrative can be seen as a step backwards in comparison to the *Perestroika* period, as the Soviet authorities in 1990 formally permitted the teaching of history from various perspectives (Wanner, 1998).

1994-1999: consolidated state and nation-building

Political developments in the mid-1990s underlined that democratization had been more token than real. A desire to give local stake holders more say in policy matters, including in education, quickly lost out to concerns about state unity and integrity among the political elite in Kyiv. This elite was alarmed by the separatist movements in the Russian-speaking Donbass and the Crimea, which had gained considerably in strength during the Kravchuk presidency. For the new president Leonid Kuchma, elected in July 1994, curbing these secessionist tendencies and enhancing state unity was the key policy objective (Kuzio 2002). The logical consequence of this agenda was a resumption of central state control. The Constitution of Ukraine, adopted in June 1996, clearly reflected the renewed centralization, as it established Ukraine as a unitary state with a single state language and a strong presidency (Constitution of Ukraine, 1996). The status of the Crimea as an Autonomous Republic was confirmed, but the powers offered to the republic were restricted to the domains of agriculture, infrastructure and culture, and did not include education.

Recentralization also manifested itself in the 1996 Education Act. This law established the State Standards of Education, requirements as to the content, level and volume of education that were mandatory for both state and private schools (1996 Education Act). It divided the curriculum for schools into a compulsory state and a facultative school component with the latter claiming up to 24 percent of the teaching time. For Stepanenko (1999, p. 104) the school component is an indication that some progress has been made regarding the democratization of the educational process, as it “presupposes choice and an initiative from below”. Others however are more sceptical. Wanner (1998, pp. 119, 120), for instance, notes that “the monolithic educational bureaucracy and the structures and practices of Soviet schools remain virtually in place despite decrees and announced reforms” [the aforementioned State National Programme] that suggest otherwise. In similar vein, Stepanyshyn (1997) maintains that school education in Ukraine in the second half of the 1990s has by and large retained Soviet features. He advocates the right for schools and regions to modify the mandatory components of the curriculum and argues that school councils should be given a greater role in contracting new staff.

³ It must be noted here that Ukraine is by no means an exception in the post-Soviet world for exchanging a communist for a nationalist-inspired account of history. Kissane (2005) has observed that the very same transformation has occurred in Kazakhstan. She argues that the Kazakh government is struggling to find a balance between a Kazakhified history curriculum, serving identity construction purposes, and a more internationally oriented history programme.

To the surprise of many Western observers and Ukrainian nationalists, president Kuchma, whose native language was Russian and who had promised to make Russian the second state language in the run-up to the elections, continued the nation-building project of his predecessor after he assumed office. The new education minister Zgurovsky, though a dull functionary replacing the inspiring intellectual Talanchuk in the eyes of one observer (Ryabchuk, 2002), proceeded with the Ukrainianization of the education system. This was most of all reflected in policy results and administrative measures rather than in sweeping visions, as no new strategic documents appeared during his term of office.

Parallel to ukrainianization, the educational authorities consolidated the cultivation of the Ukrainian national idea as laid down in history, geography and literature courses by preparing new programs of study, textbooks and central exams. They further ensured that these materials were disseminated and used in all corners of the country, overruling regions (notably the Crimea) that had appropriated considerable autonomy in educational matters in the early 1990s (Janmaat, 2000b). As the central programs and textbooks were mandatory for all schools irrespective of status or language of instruction, national minorities and regional groups had little opportunity to familiarize their children with alternative ideological or national perspectives (Koshmanova, 2006).

According to Kolstoe (2000), Kuchma's decision to continue the cultural policies of his predecessor reflects the conviction among Ukraine's ruling elite that language, national identity and loyalty to the state are intimately related. He postulates that this elite, although Russian-speaking, thinks that Ukrainian statehood can only be secured in the long run if it is supported by a cultural identity distinct from that of Russia. Kolstoe's argument in fact seems to be supported by the shift in rationales underpinning the nation-building project. Whereas *cultural* concerns relating to the ethnocultural survival of the Ukrainian nation and the legacy of russification had been characteristic of the early 1990s, a *political* motivation seeing the Ukrainian language as a necessary component of Ukrainian statehood prevailed in the second half of the 1990s. As Wilson (2002, p. 195) put it: "Ukrainianization was quietly forgotten, but not reversed – even promoted in some areas if it coincided with Kuchma's vision of *raison d'état*". The central elite thus considered the cultural nation-building project a convenient tool to enhance state cohesion.

The emphasis on state consolidation, however, did not preclude international exchanges on history and citizenship education. From 1996 the Council of Europe in cooperation with the Ukrainian Ministry of Education organized a series of seminars and conferences in Ukraine on reforming the teaching of history and on the COE's Education for Democratic Citizenship initiative (Poliansky, 1998; Duerr, 1999). Remarkably, the Ukrainian participants of these seminars (civil servants, teachers and textbook writers) did not recoil from being highly critical of history education in Ukraine. One civil servant, for instance, denounced the current textbooks for presenting "black and white, uncompromising pictures of the past" and ascribing intentions to historical leaders that they could not have possessed (Poliansky, 1998, p. 13). In the overall conclusions and recommendations emanating from the seminars, textbook authors were urged to write books that encourage student creativity and critical thinking and present multiple vantage points including those of minorities. These recommendations, according to the paper reporting on the seminars (*ibid*), would be taken into account by the Ministry of Education in drafting new policies and revising existing curriculum guidelines.

1999-present: nation-building in retreat and the reappearance of educational reform

Kuchma's second term of office announced yet another change in discourses affecting citizenship education. The change can best be characterized as a gradual decline in nation-building priorities and a re-emergence of educational reform, this time going hand in hand with a discourse of internationalization and competitiveness. As before, internal political developments lay at the root of this change. Having alienated the communists by his policy of (limited) economic reform, state consolidation and Ukrainian nation-building, Kuchma depended on the support of a motley crew of oligarchs, centrists, nationalists and reformers to win the 1999 elections (Kuzio 2005). After assuming his second term of office he rewarded his supporters by appointing the reformer Viktor Yushchenko, the former head of the national bank, as prime minister. Under the latter's leadership Vasil' Kremen', an academic who chaired the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, succeeded Zgurovski as education minister. Identifying globalization and individualization as global trends that necessitate educational reform, the new minister established three policy priorities for the Ukrainian education system: lifelong education, education fine-tuned to the needs and talents of individuals, and skills-oriented teaching in vocational education and the humanities to enhance the social capital of individuals (Kremen' 2006, pp. 1, 2). His key policy objective was to bring the education system in line with European and international standards in order to improve Ukraine's competitiveness. Once in office, he immediately launched an ambitious school reform which aimed at transforming the Soviet inherited system of ten years all-through comprehensive schooling into a twelve years system of elementary, lower secondary and upper secondary education (Kremen' 2004). In higher education all efforts were geared at participating in the Bologna process.⁴

The shift in priorities was noticeable both on paper and in practice. While for instance the periodicals *Osvita* and *Osvita Ukrainy* had regularly reported on nation-building issues until the close of the decade, they increasingly published articles on the Bologna process and on other themes relating Ukrainian education to international trends from 2000 onward. The decline in relative importance of nation-building was also reflected in the steady reduction of the number of hours devoted to the mandatory disciplines of History of Ukraine and Ukrainian Culture in higher education,⁵ a development that was much deplored by the advocates of Ukrainian revivalism. These intellectuals were equally disturbed by the Ukrainian-Russian agreement on the streamlining of the content of school history textbooks in the two countries. According to the National Association of Ukrainian Writers (NSPU) these policies reflected the "anticultural, immoral posture and snobbish attitude towards the titular nation [the ethnic Ukrainians], which is openly supported by the highest echelons of power, including the president and the patriarch of the Moscow-based Orthodox church" (NSPU 2002, p. 1). Further, in relation to language issues the government pursued a more pragmatic course by ratifying the Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, which commit states to the protection and endorsement of minority languages in a limited number of public domains, including education.

⁴ The Bologna process seeks to establish a European Higher Education Area in which the participating institutions issue comparable degrees, recognize each other's diplomas and operate a system of accumulation and transfer of credits with the aim of increasing student and staff mobility.

⁵ All institutes of higher education have to teach these courses, regardless of their profile or status (public or private). The courses replaced a number of core disciplines from the Soviet era designed to impart Communist ideology.

Finally, the change could also be detected in the National Doctrine for the Development of Education (NDDE), a strategic document replacing the aforementioned State National Programme and outlining the government's long term vision for education. It stated that "Education is a strategic resource for improving people's well-being, assuring the national interests, and strengthening the authority and competitiveness of the Ukrainian state on the international scene" (NDDE 2002, p. 4). A close reading of this quotation reveals that it includes some elements referring to state consolidation ('assuring the national interests'; 'strengthening the authority (...) of the state'). The idea of state unity is further underlined by the stipulation on language education saying that the state will guarantee the mandatory command of the state language (i.e. Ukrainian) by all citizens. Elsewhere, the document repeatedly states that the aim of education is to enhance patriotism. Nonetheless, the stress on state consolidation did not preclude elements of citizenship education promoted by the Council of Europe from entering the text. On the contrary, references to democracy, civic attitudes and self-rule outnumber remarks pointing to unity and cohesion. Thus, the document calls on education to develop people with "a democratic state of mind, adhering to civic rights and freedoms" and capable of making "an independent judgement and a reasoned choice" and pursuing "civic activities" (ibid, p. 4). It further promised local authorities and parents a greater say in educational matters.

The reformist government was short-lived, however. In April 2001 Yushchenko was removed from office by a parliamentary vote of no confidence (Kuzio, 2005). Thereafter Kuchma's regime steadily became more defensive and authoritarian. It acquired an increasingly bad reputation in the West for corruption, abuse of state power and muzzling the press. Feeling ever more isolated internationally, Kuchma allied with Putin's Russia to find support for his unpopular regime.

Surprisingly, this change seems not to have affected educational policies much. Kremen' continued his school reform and internationalization agenda. The citizenship education elements from the National Doctrine were translated into state standards prepared for the new school system. The new standard for the theme 'Knowledge of Society', for instance, mentions the cultivation of tolerance and respect for other nations, critical thinking, responsibility, independent judgement, and the ability to make a conscious choice as key assignments for school education (Government of Ukraine, 2004, p. 3). To meet the requirements of this standard, the Ministry of Education devised a series of new courses (philosophy, 'man and world', law and economics) for upper secondary education under the heading 'Civic Education' (*Hromadians'ka osvita*) (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 11). This meant that, for the first time since independence, citizenship education was given a formal place in the school curriculum.

After the turbulent events of the Orange Revolution and the election of Yushchenko as president in December 2004, many members of the Ukrainian intelligentsia expected the new national democratic government to reinvigorate the Ukrainian renaissance project. So far, however, these expectations have not been met. Stanislav Nikolaenko, the new education minister, by and large continued the pragmatic, competitiveness-driven course of Kremen'. Among the five policy priorities that he established for his term of office (European quality and accessibility of education, teacher salaries, democratization, overcoming the moral and spiritual crisis, and close cooperation between education, science and industry) nation-building concerns are conspicuously absent (Zhovta, 2005, p. 2). Moreover, on the 17th of May he made the dream of his predecessor come true by organizing Ukraine's formal accession to the Bologna process. According to one observer,

the Orange Revolution has even transformed Ukrainian national identity itself, bringing in notions of tolerance, inclusion, openness and democracy that will inspire future educational reform (Koshmanova 2006).

Russia

In this section of the article we will briefly introduce the changes in the education of citizens in the USSR and the Russian Federation. As in the Ukrainian part, the time to be discussed in the following could be roughly divided into three periods during which three discourses have competed for primacy in the education of citizens. During the *Perestroika* reforms and the first years after the establishment of the sovereign Russia, education was expected to revive the sub-national identification of various ethnic groups (1985-1992). The second period is concerned with Boris Yeltsin's time in the president's office (until 1999). In educational terms, this period emphasised citizenship education for the establishment of a democratic state based on the rule of law. At the same time, since mid 1990s we witness the return of the Russian national ideology. The third period covers the presidency of Vladimir Putin until summer 2005 and is characterised by a co-existence of the democratic and patriotic citizenship education discourses in which the latter dominates.

1985-1992: regionalization and education in the ethnic spirit

The dissolution of the Soviet Union was preceded by some fundamental changes in the political visions of the elites. Within the frame of the communist ideology, Mikhail Gorbachev's *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* aimed at making the Russian society more open, more plural and more critical to the authority of the state and the Communist Party. The developments in the wider society were echoed in the educational sphere, though not without considerable resistance on behalf of the conservative party leaders and some members of the teaching profession. But in 1989 Gorbachev himself referred to education as "his overall promotion of perestroika" (quoted in Webber, 1999, p. 25). Among the main aims of the educational restructuring was the democratization of the educational relations and management, which meant more say in the educational matters for regional authorities and parents. In addition, the nationalization of education was expected to transform schools into cultural institutions reviving and passing on the traditions and languages of various local cultures⁶. At the same time, the humanization of education emphasised the primacy of the individual in the educational process, whereas the de-ideologization was expected to empty the school of the over-politicised (communist) contents. (Dneprov, 1998; Long & Long, 1999; Webber, 1999.)

According to the reform goals, the educational system was expected to raise an individual, who is strongly attached to his/her ethnic group, but who paradoxically lacks a connection to the whole state and the nation. Isak Froumin (2004a, p. 280) has written that the emphasis on ethnic education was one of the most important features of the Russian education in the early 1990s. In addition, he identified a growing emphasis on the "universal human values" illustrated, for instance, by the Ministry's recommendation to

⁶ In the Russian language the word "national" (*natsional'nyi*) bears two separate meanings. On the one hand, it is often applied to a particular ethnicity or nationality (*natsional'nost'*). When used in this way, the term does not imply all citizens of the country, but a particular ethnic group living on its territory. On the other hand, the word is also used exactly in the sense of the whole country. In this case, *natsional'nyi* is often applied to matters like national educational policy, national security etc.

introduce an interdisciplinary course titled “Mankind and Society” in the upper secondary school (ibid, p. 282).

To use the metaphor cited by Eduard Dneprov, the Russian minister of education in 1990-1992, the country was supposed to grow into a garden where all flowers bloom⁷. Whereas Dneprov’s predecessor, Gennadi Yagodin, mainly believed that education in the local languages must be expanded, Dneprov insisted on each nationality and region to develop an educational platform in accordance with the local conditions. He stated that “the mission of the ministry must be, above all, not to unify, but rather to stimulate in all possible ways the expeditious development of such programmes”. (Long & Long, 1999, pp. 89-91.) Eduard Dneprov contrasted this initiative with the Soviet times, when the school played a crucial role in the de-nationalization of the people and constituted one of the main instruments in russifying the non-Russians and de-russifying the ethnic Russians (Dneprov, 1998, pp. 47-48).

In line with the reform agenda, the document titled “The conception of the national school of the RSFSR and the scientific and organisational mechanisms of its implementation” adopted in 1990 argued that the system of compulsory education, which affects the entire population of the country, should be re-directed at the revival and satisfaction of people’s national and cultural demands. The document emphasised that

the school will turn into the real agency of cultural revival of the Russian nations only if it will be restructured as national in the true meaning of the word, if the national dimension in schooling and up-bringing will form its fundamental core (ibid, p. 26).

The growing interest in the system of national schools is closely linked to the political context of those years. In 1988, after years of misapprehension or denial, Gorbachev finally identified the nationality policy as “the most fundamental vital issue of our society” (quoted in Lapidus, 1992, p. 46). Amidst increasing critique with regard to the Soviet nationality policies, ethnic conflicts and threats of disintegration, Gorbachev was forced to assert that

we cannot permit even the smallest people to disappear, the language of even the smallest people to be lost; we cannot permit nihilism with regard to the culture, traditions and history of peoples, be they big or small (Gorbachev 1989 quoted in Lapidus, 1992, p. 60).

Remarkably, in 1989 *Uchitel’skaya Gazeta* (the Teachers’ newspaper), one of the leading professional publications for educators, introduced a column titled “Ethnos” to mark the importance of education in the ethnic spirit. In the time of political struggles and uncertainty, it was believed that inter-ethnic tensions and disintegration could be prevented with the help of national schools (Dneprov, 1998, p. 48). For the sovereign Russian Federation the nationalization and regionalization of education were also the instruments of building a federal state. The political leaders assumed that stronger national identifications of the regions will help them to achieve firm positions in the political and economic fields. On the societal level, the nationalization was expected to pave the way for the establishment of a democratic civil society (interview with Eduard Dneprov in Moscow 27.5.2005; Srarovoitova 1989 quoted in Ossipov, 1999, p. 191).

⁷ Nelli Piattoeva’s interview with Eduard Dneprov in Moscow 27.5.2005.

At the same time, while stating that the school is the cradle of democracy and humanism, the implementation of democratization was more focused on educational management (shifting the decision-making process from the federal to the regional and municipal levels and from there to the schools) and on the teacher-student-parents relations (more influence on the educational process for all stakeholders). However, on the federal level less attention was paid to equipping children with the necessary knowledge and skills to build a democratic society and to encourage them to take an active role in it. Instead, as a reaction to the over-politicised nature of the Soviet *vospitaniye* (political and moral education) and the unpredictable situation in the society at large, the educational authorities wanted schools to preserve peace and stability and prevent any political movement or ideology from entering the school. (On the democratization of up-bringing work in comprehensive schools of the RSFSR, 1991.)

1992-1999: the development of legal education

The Yeltsin period (1992-1999) was marked by ambiguities. On the one hand, the reform agenda of *Perestroika* was carried over and formalised in various legislative acts arranging the introduction of human rights and legal education in the school curriculum. On the other hand and increasingly so from the mid-1990s, we see a return to a discourse stressing unity and loyalty to the state, running in an uneasy manner parallel to the democratic reform agenda in the remainder of the 1990s.

The 1992 Law on Education, which was hailed as the first legislative act of the sovereign Russian Federation, clearly reflected the spirit of reform. The act declared the humanitarian character and the priority of universal human values as the first principles of the state policy in education (article 2). It also confirmed the right to receive comprehensive education in other than the Russian language (article 6, point 2). At the same time, the law stated that Russian should be studied in all state licensed schools, except pre-schools, according to the federal educational standards (article 6, point 5). The federal curricula published in 1993 declared that Russian, being the official language of the Russian Federation, should be taught in all schools, but in varying amounts depending on the linguistic situation in the region and the school. However, such statements do not necessarily imply that all federal authorities were aiming at the purposeful consolidation of the Russian nation. In fact, already in 1992 a group of civil servants from the Ministries of Education and Defence drafted a programme of patriotic education, which was rejected by the Ministry of Finances due to the lack of funds, only to be modified and adopted in 2001⁸.

During the second period in the development of Russian citizenship education the contents of history and the social sciences were revised. More so, the importance of a well-organised citizenship education programme was explicitly stated. The ministerial letter “On citizenship education and the study of the Constitution of the Russian Federation” (1995) claimed that “the establishment of the legal state and the civil society in Russia will in many ways depend on the progress in citizenship education”. The emphasis on law studies is evident in the ministerial materials published between 1994 and 1999 (see also Morozova, 2000; Vaillant, 2001). The issued documents discussed the implementation of constitutional studies, studies in the electoral process and human rights. For example, the

⁸ Nelli Piattioeva’s interview with Igor Melnichenko 27.5.2005, specialist in patriotic education, deputy director of the Department of Youth Affairs at the Federal Agency of Education.

letter “On Citizenship and Legal Education of Students in Comprehensive Schools of the Russian Federation” (1996) highlight the need for legal knowledge. It referred to Boris Yeltsin’s speech on 6 March 1996, in which he argued that one of the prerequisites in the transition to a legal state is the legal education of citizens.

The first references to the Council of Europe’s activities are found in a document which urged comprehensive schools to teach about human rights (On the study of human rights in the comprehensive schools of the Russian Federation in the school year 1998-9, 1998). The document claimed that since Russia’s membership of the COE, the country has been adopting the organisation’s instructions in the field of citizenship education, i.e. the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers on teaching about human rights. The section on human rights was incorporated into the compulsory syllabi for social studies in the secondary school. During these years we also witness the emergence of innovative courses like “The basics of law studies”, “Citizenship education”, “To school children about the law” and others, many of which were developed in co-operation with foreign partners. However, these courses were not part of the federal (compulsory) curricula and their implementation depended and still depends on the regional authorities and the school (the regional and the school curricula)⁹. The first federal standards of higher education also contained courses related to citizenship education. The federal standard for primary teacher education (1995) introduced courses in political and law studies and, remarkably, exchanged the course of homeland history for the “The history of world civilisations”.

Nevertheless, this period is also marked by a slow return to the unifying national ideology. In line with the ideas of the early 1990s, “The development strategy of historical and social science education in comprehensive schools” published in 1994 acknowledged the importance of teaching about ethnic, Russian and universal values, but assigned primacy to the national Russian ones. The following quote illustrates it well:

When working on the content of school history education, it is necessary to guarantee the balance of political, cultural, ethno-national and other values but the national ones should prevail.

The reading of the document leads one to think that the aim of education was converted into strengthening the national Russian identity and lessening the role of the local ethnic ones. And indeed, the above-quoted document expressed worries about the uneven illustration of national vs. ethnic aspects in the regionally published textbooks. It claimed that such an imbalance may lead to the “deformation” of interethnic relations. These changes closely followed the general political atmosphere in the centre. As has been well documented, in 1996 Boris Yeltsin appealed to the entire society to search for a new “Russian idea”. Most suggestions, published in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* - the official periodical of the Russian government - supported *state* patriotism (Tolz, 2001, p. 256, our emphasis).

The renewed drive to inculcate collectivist loyalties must be seen in the political context of the mid 1990s which was characterized by intense political rivalries in the centre and by movements for more autonomy in the peripheral regions. The elite in Moscow watched the

⁹ The Law on Education introduced a decentralised form of curriculum consisting of the compulsory federal component taking 75 percent of the overall curriculum and a combination of the regional and school components filling the rest of the curriculum. The regional and the school components gave local stakeholders a chance to enrich the curriculum with subjects and contents meaningful for their local environment, e.g. local languages, history, geography etc.

nation-building attempts of the ethnic minorities in these regions with great concern, fearing that they “moved from cultural revival to well-organised political movements” (Tishkov, 1997, p. 241). This concern was not unjustified. Whereas the secessionist actions of the political elite of the republic of Tatarstan were still kept under control and were finally resolved in a peaceful agreement, the separatist tendencies in Chechnya have had much gloomier consequences (ibid, pp. 242-243). At the same time, the amount of votes received by Vladimir Zhirinovsky’s party and the communists, whose primary election slogans referred to the restoration of the Soviet Union, patriotism and the inferior position of the ethnic Russians, forced liberal politicians to pay more attention to the questions of national identity (Tishkov, 1997; Tolz, 1998; Simonsen, 2001).

1999-2005: the rise of patriotic education

In the context of political struggles and fears of national disintegration, the new administration chose to focus on patriotic education of the Russian citizens. One indication of such a trend lies in the growing emphasis on *vospitaniye* (political and moral education), as one of the central responsibilities of the state educational system. In 1999 the Ministry of Education, for the first time since the break-up of the USSR, adopted “The Up-bringing Development Program for 1999–2001,” followed by another program for 2002–4. The key message of the programmes is the re-consolidation of the people: social, ethnic, cultural, generational and political. According to the programmes, citizenship and patriotic up-bringing are among the main goals of state educational policies. In the institutions of higher education we witness the return of homeland history in the second generation of the educational standards adopted in 2000. The federal curricula for the comprehensive school published in 2004 contain more hours of Russian language and introduce Russian in the upper secondary school¹⁰. But at the same time, foreign language is now to be taught from the second grade of the primary school, which indicates a greater importance assigned to learning international communication competences.

On the basis of the documents produced in 2001, especially the “The State Programme of Patriotic Up-bringing”, it could be suggested that Vladimir Putin and the current administration adhere to the idea of state patriotism, which first appeared under Yel’tin’s presidency. Without a doubt, there is a growing tendency to stress a uniform national identity in educational policies. This is demonstrated by the fact that in 2001 the Ministry of Education issued a letter titled “On the official rituals related to the use of the state symbols in comprehensive schools” and in 2002 the Ministry distributed another letter that aims at improving teaching about the national symbols (About the Organisation of Up-bringing Activities Aimed at Familiarisation with the History and Implication of Official State Symbols of the Russian Federation and Their Popularisation). The Ministry of Education classifies this activity as an important element of patriotic and citizenship education, which is expected to guarantee generational continuity and to ensure societal unity. The students are expected to develop a strong bond and understanding of the state symbols, while the educational institutions should insure that the state heraldry is rightfully exhibited.

More so, in 2003 the Ministry established a Coordinative Council on the patriotic up-bringing of young people. The work of the Council is directly related to “The State

¹⁰ Previously, the last two grades of the upper secondary school offered lessons in literature and non in the linguistic proficiency.

Programme of Patriotic Up-bringing” (2001). Patriotic up-bringing is defined as a systematic activity of *state* authorities and other organizations aiming at the development of patriotic consciousness, sense of loyalty to the Fatherland, willingness to fulfil one’s civic duty, and constitutional responsibilities to defend the interests of the homeland. (Piattoeva, 2005, 45, our emphasis). The Programme and “The Concept of Patriotic Up-bringing” (2003) both focus on the development of love and devotion to the Motherland Russia. It is stated that patriotism originates from love toward the “minor Motherland” and matures up to the point of state patriotic consciousness and love toward the Fatherland (The concept of patriotic education, 2003, p. 3). Thus Russian patriotism, as an expression of national identity, is superior to any other identification, including that with one’s home region or ethnic group. Other researchers have also noticed that in contrast with the 1980s, contemporary history textbooks have become more like books about “the Russian people, Russian statehood and Russian culture”, thus eliminating sections on different ethnic groups living in Russia (Bogolubov, Klokova, Kovalyova & Poltorak, 1999, p. 540). Such discourses are common among politicians who criticise Russia’s ethnic federalism and want to establish a more centralised state (Ossipov, 1999, p. 191). In order to diminish the influence of ethnically defined regions, the federal government has already instituted seven federal districts, which do not respect the established “ethnic” borders¹¹ (Tolz, 2001, p. 261).

The promotion of state patriotism could imply that Russia is on its way to build a civic national ideology as opposed to the ethno-cultural conception of the nation promoted during the final years of *Perestroika*. Some minor steps in this direction were taken by Yeltsin’s administration already earlier, when they adopted the civic term *Rossiyanin* (Russian citizen) as opposed to *Russki* (ethnic Russian) and declared the importance of building a legal state. However, the recent conception of state patriotism contains a few dangerous elements. It narrowly equates the state to the administrative apparatus in charge, it puts an explicit emphasis on servitude and it has a distinctive militaristic character.

Nevertheless, we should not mistakenly think that the attempts to introduce a democratic citizenship education have completely faded away. The ministerial letter “On Citizenship Education of Comprehensive School Students of the Russian Federation” (2003) takes citizenship education away from the bare realm of legal studies. Citizenship education as a means of educating politically literate active participants of societal life should be achieved through a multifaceted combination of interdisciplinary approach, democratic school ethos and active teaching methods throughout all school grades. In this document we also observe the importance of patriotism, but in a more delicate phrasing. It argues that students’ up-bringing should be based on socio-cultural and historical achievements of the multinational Russian nation, accomplishments of other countries, and cultural and historical traditions of the home area. In line with other educational documents (i.e. The National Doctrine of Education of the Russian Federation, 2000) it expresses concern about the harmonisation of national and ethno-cultural relations and the preservation of and support for languages and cultures of all nations of the Russian Federation. These documents combine two important components of democratic citizenship education, i.e. the development of a civic multinational Russian identity and education of politically active citizens.

¹¹ Russia is a federal state, which is divided into 88 constituencies. Continuing the legacy of the Soviet Union, many of these constituencies are formed on the basis of the ethnic principle, i.e. they are seen as a homeland of one or more ethnic groups.

Despite the apparent development in the understanding of democratic citizenship education – its progress from legal studies to a multifaceted interdisciplinary concept - patriotism has been given clear priority at the governmental level. Such a conclusion can be drawn when comparing the relative significance of the published documents. The state supported federal programme gives a clear sign of where the government's priorities lie. Furthermore, in the summer of 2005 the government approved a new programme of patriotic up-bringing for the years 2006-2010 with an extensive financial backing. At the same time, scholars and politicians advocating democratic citizenship education in line with the ideology of the Council of Europe have prepared a preliminary proposal for a federal programme of citizenship education for years the 2005-2010 which is still awaiting approval.

Conclusion

Our discussion of discourses framing citizenship education in Russia and Ukraine has revealed interesting parallels and differences between the two countries. During *Glasnost* and *Perestroika* both republics witnessed ever louder calls for the democratization and humanization of the education system. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the establishment of Ukraine and the Russian Federation as independent states, this discourse soon gave way to anxieties about state integrity. In both countries these anxieties were fuelled by ethno-culturally based separatist movements who had gained considerably in strength in the early 1990s when central power was at its weakest. From the mid-1990s concerns about state cohesion increasingly found their expression in re-centralizing policies and patriotic education programmes.

By the same logic, circumstances in which the two countries differed have given rise to diverging policies. In Ukraine, anxiety and indignation about the vulnerable position of Ukrainian vis-à-vis Russian led to the adoption of an early cultural nation-building programme which sought to redefine Ukrainian language and culture in opposition to the Soviet past. Given the dominant position of the Russian language and culture, a similar cultural anxiety was not expressed in Russia in the late 1980s. Instead of initiating a Russian identity project, reformist education ministers promoted a policy aimed at the resuscitation of minority cultures within the Russian Federation. Only well into the 1990s was this policy overshadowed by the state cohesion discourse.

The rather different trajectories in citizenship discourses that Ukraine and Russia have followed from the end of the 1990s also have their roots in diverging domestic political developments. In Russia president Putin reinforced the centralization and state cohesion agenda that his predecessor Yeltsin had pursued with a varying measure of success. Respect and understanding of state symbols and unconditional love and devotion to the Motherland are the key objectives this policy was designed to achieve. Some initiatives in democratic citizenship were incorporated into the curricula and the ministerial documents, but they were not given the same urgency as the patriotic education programme promoted at the federal level.

In Ukraine, on the other hand, the education minister Kremen' was primarily motivated by a desire to bring the education system in line with international standards in order to improve the country's competitiveness. Nation-building was made secondary to a comprehensive school reform and participation in the Bologna process. As part of the effort to keep up with international trends, the government integrated EDC ideas advocated

by the Council of Europe in the National Doctrine of Education and in central curriculum guidelines. Nonetheless, some of the nation-building rhetoric was retained in these documents.

It is tempting to interpret these recent differences between Ukraine and Russia as evidence of the two countries showing diverging trends. We would argue, however, that it is still too early to state this conclusion with certainty. The political situation in the post-Soviet world is still volatile, as witnessed by the recent revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, and policies may change abruptly when a new regime comes to power. Until now these turbulent developments have all been moving in the direction of democracy and the rule of law, but there is no guarantee that these trends are irreversible. Seen in this light, the recent relaxation of the nation-building project in Ukraine may well be only a temporary phenomenon.

Interestingly, a report commissioned by the Council of Europe expresses doubts about the willingness of the post-Soviet states to support education for democratic citizenship (EDC), noting that most of them do not have explicit EDC policies. It further observes that EDC is challenged by “patriotic forces, which criticise democratic citizenship education for promoting simplistic universal values” (Froumin 2004b, p. 76). These forces, it argues, are more compatible with the traditional culture of an authoritarian society than the ideas promoted by EDC, and as a result EDC is relegated to the margins of citizenship education. The Council of Europe thus realizes that its EDC recommendations are not welcomed in all regional contexts, particularly when they conflict with nation-building projects.

In sum an education agenda promoting active citizenship and independent thinking faces considerable obstacles in new states emerging from totalitarianism such as Ukraine and Russia. In these states the adoption or rejection of the democratic citizenship principles is very much dictated by the whims of domestic political events and will depend in large measure on the confidence of the authorities in the national loyalties of their citizenries. In times of instability and challenges to central state authority a discourse stressing pluralism, democracy and autonomy is easily exchanged for a programme sanctioning conformity, loyalty and patriotism in the broad area of citizenship education.

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