Tendencies in Civic Education in Russia: The Perception of Patriotism among Secondary School Teachers

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Abstract: This paper discusses the ongoing patriotic education campaign in Russia and how school practitioners interpret patriotism and patriotic education. Patriotism is interpreted in Russia through terms that span the whole political and ideological spectrum from almost extreme left to extreme right, accurately reflecting the existing dichotomy deeply entrenched in Russian culture and mentality. In this study, more than 300 of Russia's teachers participated in a survey about the elements of patriotic education (return rate – 77%). The author argues that despite a strong tendency to rationalize patriotism in political and educational discourses through traditionalistic and militaristic frameworks, teachers' opinions about patriotism and patriotic education are more nuanced and pragmatic.
Keywords: civic education, Russia, patriotism, patriotic education, teachers

Introduction

On the very last full working day of 2015, December 30, the Russian Government endorsed a new *State Program of Patriotic Education of Citizens of the Russian Federation, 2016-2020* (Gosudarstvennaya Programma, 2015). This program was the latest in the series of four consecutive state-sponsored programs of patriotic education. The term *patriotic education* requires special explanation, particularly for readers outside China or the countries of the former Soviet bloc. Unlike education for patriotism or teaching patriotism, terms that are more familiar to educators in the U.S. and Western Europe, patriotic education is a much broader term that encompasses a system of centralized government-approved and sponsored activities aimed at instilling patriotic sentiments for the purpose of mobilizing the population to support official policies (Sperling, 2003). As such, the term is generally used in countries with authoritarian and semi-authoritarian governments, weak civil society, and centralized systems of education. In schools and other educational institutions, patriotic education is used as one of the major approaches to civic education (Lutovinov, 2006; Piattoeva, 2005). In many cases, it also determines the content of civic education.

A specific role of patriotism-related topics and an increasing emphasis on patriotic sentiments in educational and other discourses in Russia have been observed since the late 1990s. These tendencies became particularly distinct in 2001, when the first state program of patriotic education was adopted, to be followed by a number of other state-sponsored federal programs aimed at stirring up patriotic

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sentiments and loyalty among Russia's population, particularly youths (Bloom 2006; Golunov, 2012; Rapoport, 2015). The official purpose of the first program, *Patriotic Education of the Citizens of the Russian Federation for 2001-2005* (Gosudarstvennaya Programma, 2001), was "to develop the system of patriotic education of the citizens of the Russian Federation, that will develop patriotic sentiments and consciousness and will be capable of finding solutions to consolidate the society, maintaining societal and economic stability, and reinforcing unity and friendship among peoples of the Russian Federation" (p. 1). That program was soon followed by a new conception of patriotic education in 2003 (Kontseptsiya, 2003). The second state program for the years 2006-2010 (Gosudarstvennaya Programma, 2005) was aimed at providing a smooth transition from the initial program to a newer version, and adjustments of the patriotic education campaign to new conditions in Russia. Together with numerous local educational programs in Russia's regions, this campaign presented one of the most intensive patriotic education campaigns in Russian history. The third similar program was launched in 2011 (Gosudarstvennaya Programma, 2010). The preamble to the 930-word document stated that it was a continuation of the previous state programs of patriotic education from 2001-2005 and 2006-2010, and thus "preserves the continuity in the process of the development of patriotic consciousness of Russian citizens as a factor of the nation's unity" (p. 1). The reference to national unity in the text was particularly important: It clearly alluded to the main rationale of the campaign, namely the development of new identity and unification of the nation.

The intensification of the patriotic education campaign in Russia is explained by several reasons. Valerie Sperling (2003) contended that in a system where democratic institutions are weak and the attempts to develop civil society are suppressed by the state, government uses discourses of blind patriotism "to bring the population together in a common bond of support for the current regime" (p. 236). Another reason for the campaign is the concern that fewer and fewer young men have expressed their interest to serve in the military (Muckle, 2003; Sperling, 2009). This obviously heightened official attention to patriotic education, starkly contrasting with the more liberal model of civic education in the 1990s. Observers noted that the educational reform of the early 1990s, which was meant to humanize, democratize, and decentralize schools in Russia, drastically changed its direction (Ioffe, 2006), and the new model aimed at the promotion and restoration of some Soviet features, including "centralized control, curricular rigidity and political-ideological functions" (Karpov & Lisovskaya, 2005, p. 23). They argued that restoration of military education and a focus on patriotic education were vivid signs of stylistic re-Sovietization.

Challenges to Civic and Citizenship Education

A curriculum reform that started in the Russian Federation in the early 1990s has been influenced by two major challenges. With the reemergence of an independent Russia, an ideologically and politically new state appeared and distanced itself from the former Soviet Union by positioning itself as a new republic adherent to democratic development. Nation building and identity construction were among major governmental political concerns. Thus, the nation building rationale dictated the context, conditions, and priorities of education reforms launched immediately after 1991, particularly a reform in civic education (Piattoeva, 2005; Rapoport, 2011; Tolz, 1998).

The second challenge that the Russian Federation faced was globalization, which deeply influenced school reform development. Debates about globalization, curriculum, and pedagogy revealed the centrality of properly negotiated terms and meanings, as well as the importance of culture, both political and imaginary-traditional, or the lack thereof, in the understanding of citizenship. The most

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challenging curricular task in this new environment was to develop the ability to deconstruct previously unquestioned assumptions (Smith, 2003) in order to reconstruct and eventually renegotiate newly contextualized meanings.

During its short post-Soviet history since 1991, Russia witnessed two competing curricular models, namely liberal and traditional, which followed one another and mirrored two distinct social and economic developmental models during the last decade of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century. Both models were Russia's response to the two aforementioned major challenges: construction of the new identity and globalization. The choices were highly reflective and demonstrative of the type of citizens that the ruling elite intended to educate. The changes in civic education in the last decade seem to have been determined by ideological intents. Thus, civic education, which is particularly susceptible to even miniscule shifts in ideological and political paradigms, found itself at the very intersection of the organic needs of society and individual political ambitions.

Very few aspects of civic education have drawn as much attention from government officials and practical educators as patriotic education. Immense global processes that have occurred since the end of World War II, including societal and economic changes in the last 50-60 years, emerging new countries and the disintegration of former empires, and rapidly evolving new democracies confronted with much slower developing civil societies have resulted in inevitable tensions between the rationalization and comprehension of citizenship and the level of social and national cohesion. Thus questions about patriotism have come to the forefront of debates in political, cultural, and educational discourses.

Development of Patriotic Education in Contemporary Russia

Although patriotism means many things to many people, it is generally defined as a special affinity one feels toward one's country, a "sense of positive identification with and feelings of affective attachment to one's country" (Schatz, Staub, & Levine, 1999, p. 152). Despite the expanding theoretical substantiation of the need to shift popular allegiances to the rule of law and constitution rather than to an individual country (Habermas, 2001; Nussbaum, 1994), the majority of scholars correlate the paradigm of patriotic discourses with an individual country or locality. However, patriotic sentiments are seen differently by different people. On the one hand, patriotism denotes loyalty to the nation and a pride for the nation's culture and achievements (Finn, 2007; Fonte, 1997; Lutovinov, 2006; Ravitch, 2006). On the other hand, patriotic discourses are becoming more inclusive, and their materials more often question subjects and objects of national pride and critically revise and reevaluate national histories and myths (Apple, 2002; Gomberg, 1990; Merry, 2009; Nash, 2005; Nussbaum, 1994). Observers rationalize these variations by applying different terms: pseudo-patriotism vs. genuine patriotism (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950), loyal patriotism vs. critical patriotism (Merry, 2009), and blind patriotism vs. constructive patriotism (Staub, 1997).

Ontologically, patriotism is a social construct that gradually developed as a result of human cultural activity. In order to become an institutionalized concept, or in other words to be easily recognizable and ubiquitously acceptable, patriotism had to pass three important stages: habitualization, objectivation, and legitimation (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). An objectivized social construct and the society that created it are in a dialectical relationship: the society impacts the development of the

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construct, and the construct impacts the society. Eventually, the construct becomes internalized; in other words, people begin to believe in the reality that they themselves created. The last step in the institutionalization is the need to explain and justify the existence of the construct, to legitimize it. Berger and Luckmann (1966) argued that legitimization is needed to protect already-constructed reality so that it would be difficult to reverse the process.

Patriotism is interpreted in Russia through terms that span the whole political and ideological spectrum, from almost extreme left to extreme right, accurately reflecting the existing dichotomy deeply entrenched in Russian culture and mentality (Arkhipenkova, 2004). This dichotomy of loyal or blind patriotism, vs. critical or constructive patriotism, has been present in Russian political and educational thought since the time of early Russian Enlightenment. It is reflective of the two main philosophical and cultural traditions, namely progressivism and traditionalism, which have determined Russia's policies for almost three centuries. However, it should be noted that for the last 15 years, the position of loyal or blind patriotism has dominated political, cultural, and educational discourses in Russia. The official patriotic education campaign that started in 2001 is the best example of this dominance. The sheer number of federal and local programs of patriotic education is evidence of the seriousness of official attempts to use broadly the framework of patriotic education in civic instruction and for the purposes of national mobilization.

The official institutionalized approach to patriotism and patriotic education is best presented in the *Conception of Patriotic Education of the Citizens of Russian Federation*, adopted by the government in 2003 (Kontseptsiya, 2003). The document, which claims to "reflect the whole complex of officially acknowledged ideas" (p. 2) about patriotic education, unequivocally defines patriotism as "love for one's Motherland, commitment to one's Fatherland, strong desire to serve its interests, and readiness to defend it, even if it requires self-sacrifice" (p. 2). According to the Concept, patriotism is a specific type of self-realization and social behavior of citizens determined by the protection of the unity and sovereignty of Russia, its national security, stable development, duty, and responsibility. By the latter, the authors mean the priority of public and state interests over individual and personal interests. The specific features of patriotism in Russia identified by the Conception – togetherness, integrality, obedience to the laws, the need of collectiveness – remarkably resonate with the basic principles of the famous Russian triad of *Autocracy, Orthodoxy, Nationality*, which constituted the quintessence of the policy of State Patriotism in the second quarter of the 19th century during the reign of Nicolas I. In general, the emphasis on the overall subordination to state interests at the expense of individual interests is central to the concept of patriotism as well as the idea of patriotic education, which is interpreted as a "set of systematic and goal-oriented activities of state bodies and institutions as well as public organizations aimed at forming and inculcating in citizens heightened patriotic consciousness…, readiness to carry out one's civic duty, and constitutional obligations to defend the interests of the Motherland" (p. 4). The document specifically accentuates a military component in patriotic education, declaring military education an inseparable part of patriotic education. It is symptomatic that the Concept, which is presented as a traditionalist type of narrative that internalizes uncritical loyalty to the nation and the state, still twice mentions civil society as one of the beneficiaries of proper patriotic education outcomes. Although the text does not clarify how the development of civil society can benefit from a hyper-centralized and ideologically conservative system of patriotic education, the very reference to it was at the time indicative of possible shifts, however insignificant they might have been, in the rationale of value-related education among the traditionalists in Russia.

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The four consecutive five-year state programs of patriotic education passed by the Russian government in 2001, 2005, 2010, and 2015 (Gosudarstvennaya Programma 2001; Gosudarstvennaya Programma, 2005; Gosudarstvennaya Programma, 2010; Gosudarstvennaya Programma, 2015) are based on the ideas and goals set in the Conception of Patriotic Education of 2003. Although symbolic in nature (the state-funded portions of each five-year program's budget is about $20-22 million), the programs are eloquent in categorizing and pointing out the directions of ideological development in Russia in general and patriotic education in particular. Claiming that the ultimate goal of patriotic education is the revival of Russia's greatness and prominence, the programs recommend state activities that would enhance patriotic education, including such elements as an increase of the military component in all areas of education, more careful attention to history textbooks, influence on electronic and printed media, and assuming more control over children's organizations.

The most conspicuous feature of the contemporary patriotic education campaign is probably its military spirit. The word *military* is used only three times in the text of the program of 2006-2010, but in the most recent program of 2016-2020, *military* is used 34 times. (Both texts are similar in length.) Nonetheless, whether the word *military* is formally mentioned or not, the term *patriotic education* itself is a code phrase that implies military education, military training, and military preparation. Thus, it is not at all surprising that almost all materials about patriotic education, or the implementation of each new program, include information about the military or examples of military training. By 2006, there were 1,350 youth military clubs with membership of 300,000 or more; the Russian military established cooperation with 1,130 military-patriotic clubs and organization;, and there were 452 summer military camps in all regions of Russia (Surzhko, 2006). The 2016-2020 program reported that by 2015, there were 2,000 summer military camps and 22,000 youth military clubs and centers; almost 22% of Russia's youth participated in regional and local patriotic education programs.

The list of examples of militarization of consciousness is long and almost emulates, stylistically and operationally, activities and programs from the patriotic education curricula from Soviet times (Sredin, 1988; Vyrshchikov, 1990). This striking resemblance to Soviet curricula explains why many in Russia see patriotic education as a rationale with a dominating military agenda. The term that was commonly used in the Soviet Union for patriotic education was *military-patriotic education*. Interestingly, this term was never used in the second program of 2006-2010, but it appears 13 times in the 2016-2020 program. The military rationale of the patriotic education campaign does not need to be explicitly explained or clarified: the mutually shared codes *patriotism* or *patriotic education* are normally "correctly" decoded by educators. The centuries-long tradition of military/patriotic symbiotic unity also explains the fact that almost 75% of respondents related patriotic education to military games or military clubs and camps (VTsIOM, 2007).

How effective is the patriotic education campaign? It is not surprising that the attention to patriotism and patriotic education resulted in more research and more empirical evidence of attitudes and perceptions held by various groups in Russia's population regarding concepts within the patriotism paradigm. Mainstream political, sociological, and educational journals focus on such traditional aspects of patriotism, such as love for one's Fatherland, pride in one's Fatherland, devotion – sometimes sacred – to one's Fatherland, and commitment to serve its interests (Bykov, 2006a, 2006b; Ivanova, 2003; Lutovinov, 2006; Mikryukov, 2007; Pulyaev & Shelyagin, 2001). Patriotism is a traditional Russian moral value that is instilled in the patriotic idea of "a spiritual unity of a person and the Russian society," contended Pulyayev and Shelyagin (2001, p. 71), who specifically pointed at the incompatibility of patriotism and nationalism or cosmopolitanism. Ivanova (2003) developed a

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typological paradigm of patriotism based on the moral function of the latter. The author argued that state patriotism is "an expression of subjects' pride of the Fatherland, their active participation in consolidation and strengthening the state and statehood for the purpose of efficient functioning of social institutions, development of the society and individuals" (p. 295). Analyzing relations between patriotism and citizenship in the framework of civic-patriotic education, Lutovinov (2006) asserted that compared to vague, blurred, and badly defined concepts of citizenship, patriotism is a clear and theoretically better developed construct that represents a unity of spirituality, civic maturity, and social activity, qualities which motivate a person to serve their Fatherland. Therefore, patriotism, not citizenship, should be a leading component of civic-patriotic education because "overestimation of citizenship that assumes depatriotization of education of citizens, is a deformation unacceptable for the state, society as well as for the individual whose ultimate predestination is to serve their Fatherland" (p. 54).

It should be noted that there is also literature in Russia that aims to address various aspects of patriotism from a critical-analytical standpoint. In an article with a self-explanatory title, *The problematic character of patriotism as a value of contemporary Russian culture*, Bolshakov (2004) argued that those who were mostly worried about the lack of patriotism in Russia were people of the older generation. They were disappointed in what they saw around them. Patriotism for them was the embodiment of the lifestyle that they were used to; therefore, they constantly called for a revival of patriotism. Obviously, the patriotism they wanted to revitalize was Soviet, imperial-state patriotism. Grigoryev (2005), in his attempt to determine the real meaning of pride in one's nation, called for more debates and deliberations in patriotic education. Galkin (2005) argued that although patriotism and fascism are considered opposing concepts semantically, they are both socio-psychological phenomena with more similarities than differences. A detailed analysis of patriotic education is presented in Golunov's *Patriotic Education in Russia: Cons and Pros* (2012), in which the author argued that one could trace certain questionable and dangerous tendencies in Russia's patriotic-educational discourse, namely failure to focus on teaching honesty and integrity, lack of resistance towards aggressive nationalism and intolerance, and latent support for the "official history" policy (p. 271). Although both critical and traditionalist positions on patriotism are presented in Russian journals and media, the traditionalist position is much more obtrusive and much more often presented in official Russian literature.

The results of empirical studies (Milyukova & Vinokurova, 2007; Ovchinnikova & Ulianova, 2010; Sinyagina, 2011; Sperling, 2009; Tsylev & Mulina, 2010) and opinion polls (Levada, 2015) demonstrate a certain tension between the perceived and expected goals of the patriotic education campaign and its actual intermediate or final outcomes. The studies about aspects of patriotic education conducted in various regions of Russia demonstrate contradictory numbers that are interpreted with caution by researchers. In Karelia, 78% of high school graduates understand patriotism as a responsibility for the Fatherland, 68% are ready to defend their Fatherland, and 81% are proud to be Russian citizens. At the same time, only 58% of the respondents called themselves patriots (Milyukova & Vinokurova, 2007). Very similar results are found in the study conducted in the Khabarovsk region: 72% of the respondents believe that patriots are those who love and respect their Motherland and actively participate in state affairs, and 86% are proud to be citizens of the Russian Federation; however, only 55% consider themselves patriots (Bykov, 2010). A survey conducted among 148 high school students in the rural area of Arkhangelsk oblast (Ovchinnikova & Ulyanova, 2010) demonstrated that the respondents' idea of patriotism is fragmentary. Only one third linked patriotism to practical action. Although 67% related patriotism to certain moral feelings, such aspects as civic responsibility, civic

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duties, and national dignity were left out. Of those surveyed, 46% said they either doubt whether they are patriots or do not consider themselves patriots at all (p. 77). In the Murmansk study of 775 participants aged 15 to 29, 70% said they were patriots, 23.3% said they lacked feelings of patriotism, and 6.4% could not answer the question (Tsylev & Mulina, 2010).

One number must be particularly disappointing for the organizers and conductors of the patriotic education campaign: The majority of polls conducted in different years and in different locations demonstrate that 45-55% of the surveyed young people would like to leave Russia after graduating from college (Bykov, 2010; Milyukova & Vinokurova, 2007; Sinyagina, 2011; Sperling, 2009). Of those who want to leave, 65% explain their choice by pointing at a "better life abroad … and better opportunities for self-realization" (Sinyagina, 2011, p. 24). The high percentage of those who would prefer to leave Russia permanently, or even temporarily, is particularly discouraging because it is one of the most sensitive issues of the Russian mentality: Real patriots cannot live outside Russia – only traitors leave their countries (Sanina, 2011). Ostensibly, the allegation of non-patriotism of all those who left the country for whatever reason is a characteristic of many traditionalistic, highly centralized societies. That was also one of postulates of both propaganda and domestic policy in the Soviet Union since the late 1920s. Decreasing the level of emigration was also among the goals of the Patriotism programs.

Considering the importance of formal education in children's socialization and the development of civic competences, this study investigated what classroom teachers think about patriotic education. The purpose of this study was, on the one hand, to determine how patriotism and patriotic education are interpreted and rationalized in official programmatic texts that aim at a proper institutionalization of patriotic education, and, on the other hand, how practical educators interpret patriotism and patriotic education. I argue that despite a strong tendency to interpret patriotism in political and educational discourses through traditionalistic and militaristic frameworks, teachers' opinions about patriotism and patriotic education are more nuanced and pragmatic.

Methodology

An 11-item questionnaire with multiple choice questions and descriptive evaluative items regarding aspects of citizenship and patriotic education was administered in 2013 to participants of several teacher professional development workshops (N=304, n=238) who came from 14 regions of Russia. All respondents (return rate = 77%) were in-service teachers or building administrators, with 2 to 38 years of work experience in education. Eleven respondents (almost 5%) identified themselves as building administrators (*director shkoly*, *zavuch);* 136 respondents (57%) identified themselves as subject teachers; and 91 respondents (38%) identified themselves as subject teachers with additional administrative or teaching responsibilities such as subject area department head (*predsedatel' metodicheskogo ob'edineniya*), teaching methods specialist (*metodist*), after-school study group teacher (*uchitel' gruppy prodlyonnogo dnya*), or librarian. The numerical data of the survey were processed to find the measures of central tendency and frequency distribution. The processed data are presented in the following tables.

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Table 1. **Do you know what patriotic education entails**?

Age/ Number of responses	I know what patriotic education entails			
	YES	Rather YES than NO	Rather NO than YES	NO
> 30 y. o./32	38%	62%	-	-
31-40 y. o./66	64%	29%	7%	-
41-50 y. o./90	78%	22%	-	-
< 50 y. o./48	71%	25%	4%	-
Total 236	67%	30%	3%	-

Table 2. **How important are the following components of patriotic education?**

	>30 y. o. /30	30-40 y. o./66	41-50 y. o./90	<50 y. o./46	Total 232/ %
How important is teaching/inculcating love for the place where one lives?					
Very important	93%	82%	80%	87%	84%
Important	7%	18%	20%	13%	16%
Not important	-	-	-	-	-
How important is teaching/inculcating love for one's nation/country?					
Very important	93%	91%	84%	83%	87%
Important	7%	9%	16%	17%	13%
Not important	-	-	-	-	-
How important is teaching/inculcating love for one's state?					
Very important	53%	55%	40%	33%	44%
Important	33%	36%	51%	34%	42%
Not important	14%	9%	9%	33%	14%

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How important is teaching/inculcating pride in one's nation/country?					
Very important	80%	67%	73%	70%	72%
Important	20%	28%	24%	22%	24%
Not important	-	5%	3%	8%	4%
How important is teaching a critical attitude to one's nation/country?					
Very important	20%	12%	16%	15%	16%
Important	53%	76%	58%	53%	60%
Not important	27%	12%	26%	32%	24%
How important is teaching a critical attitude to one's state?					
Very important	20%	9%	18%	24%	18%
Important	67%	79%	58%	66%	67%
Not important	13%	12%	24%	10%	15%
How important is military training for patriotic education?					
Very important	7%	12%	14%	23%	14%
Important	53%	45%	51%	44%	48%
Not important	40%	43%	35%	33%	38%

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Table 3. **Are you satisfied with patriotic education in**:

	>30 y. o./32	31-40 y. o./66	41-50 y. o./90	<50 y. o. /48	Total 236
Family					
Satisfied	44%	27%	31%	13%	28%
Not satisfied	56%	60%	47%	67%	56%
Do not know	-	13%	22%	20%	16%
School					
Satisfied	50%	45%	44%	20%	41%
Not satisfied	38%	39%	40%	67%	45%
Do not know	12%	16%	16%	13%	14%
Extracurricular educational institutions/clubs					
Satisfied	18%	33%	29%	13%	25%
Not satisfied	38%	45%	31%	58%	42%
Do not know	44%	22%	40%	29%	33%
Mass media					
Satisfied	31%	9%	11%	8%	13%
Not satisfied	69%	81%	80%	88%	81%
Do not know	-	10%	9%	4%	6%

Discussion

Almost all participants of the survey were generally confident that they know what patriotic education entails. However, the degree of confidence was visibly lower among teachers younger than 30 years old. This may be a result of two phenomena: First, these teachers belong to the generation that went to colleges and universities in the middle and late 1990s, at the time of painful but healthful reevaluation of the authoritarian past; second, this generation is probably the first to be directly impacted by globalization, which has generated new discourses and has provided new multiple perspectives.

The majority of participants of all age groups believe that within the framework of patriotic education, it is either important or very important to instill love for the place where one lives and for one's nation. Although the percentage of those who believe that teaching love for one's nation/country is very important, similar to the percentage of those who believe that teaching love for the place where one lives (the Russian term "little Motherland") is also very important, it is interesting that many

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participants tried to explain in their comments why it is important to teach about "little Motherland." Normally, the focus of the general patriotic narrative in media, educational, or political discourses is an abstract love or affinity for the country. It seems that, per additional comments, the participants tried to demonstrate their personal approach to the topic and thus distance themselves from the well-orchestrated general narrative.

Almost a quarter of the surveyed teachers believe that it is not important to teach children to look critically at one's nation, and more than half believe that it is important but they are not confident about it. In the same vein, over 80% of respondents considered love for the state an important or very important component of patriotic education. It is essential to keep in mind that *state* is conceptually very closely linked to *government*. These data can be interpreted twofold. On the one hand, the number of teachers who reject the critical perspective as an aspect of patriotic education demonstrate that patriotism is still interpreted mostly through its traditionalistic framework. On the other hand, the number of teachers who think that students should be taught to form critical opinions about their nation or state is much higher than the average number of people in Russia (12%) who think that it is patriotic to criticize the shortcomings of their own country (VTsIOM, 2006). It is also important that unlike, say, personal patriotism, the idea of state patriotism has dominated patriotic narratives in practically all public discourses for decades, if not centuries. First appearing as a reaction to the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars in Europe (Yanov, 1999), the concept of state patriotism outlived both the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, and it is successfully promoted in contemporary Russia. For example, Ivanova (2003) argued that among all types of patriotism, state patriotism plays the most important consolidating role in society because it manifests the individual's "active participation in consolidation and strengthening the state and statehood" (p. 295).

A stunning 86% of the surveyed teachers do not believe that military training is a very important part of patriotic education, including more than a third that believe that military training is not a part of patriotic education at all. The data call into question official efforts that heavily rely on a military component in promoting a traditionalistic type of patriotism in Russia. These numbers are particularly intriguing considering the specific militaristic focus of the latest state program of patriotic education, in which patriotic education is both semantically and contextually synonymous with military training (Gosudarstvennaya programma, 2016). Another important component is the distribution of choices among age groups. Only 7% of teachers under 30 considered that military training is a very important aspect of patriotic education, compared to 22% of those over 50.

Another interesting and unexpected result is the participants' dissatisfaction with the role of the media. Eighty-one percent of participants said that they were not satisfied with the role of the media in patriotic education, compared with only 13% who were satisfied. The number of the unsatisfied is even higher among veteran teachers who are over 50 years old. Traditionally, the media are blamed for problems in all societies, and it would not be surprising to observe some criticism of the media in this survey. However, two factors make this result intriguing, namely the number of the unsatisfied among participants and the fact that the object of severe criticism is the media, which is overwhelmingly either run or sponsored by the state and is usually accused of unbalanced representations of opinions in the society.

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Limitations of the Study

At various stages in this study, I encountered limitations that could potentially affect its reliability and validity. First, I had to utilize a convenience sampling procedure rather than random sampling, due to limited time and resources. Convenience sampling prevented me from collecting data from a broader and more diverse range of informants.

Second, the locations and conditions of data collection determined the categories of educators that were surveyed. Traditionally, teacher conferences and professional development workshops that require long distance travel are attended by educators who were specifically selected by school administrators and coould afford such travel. This explains a high percentage of administrators among workshop attendees.

Finally, my own background and active involvement in international programs could make me unintentionally biased regarding the content of the questionnaire, the construction of questions, and also the process of translation.

Conclusion

Since the inception of the first state program in 2001, the patriotic education campaign in Russia has become one of the defining factors in education, particularly in civic education. As evidenced from policy documents and representations of the campaign in the Russian media, the three major rationales of the campaign are: control of the discourse, national unification along with mass mobilization, and the militarization of society. With the demise of Communist ideas and pseudo-Communist reality, and in the situation of the emergence of a new state, any new ideological paradigm offered by the new national elites should include some form of nationalism and patriotism. Patriotic education as a particular form of cultural hegemony has been and continues to be a concentration of very specific codes and symbols. For decades, Russia's population has developed a certain pragmatic competence and awareness that help to decode and deconstruct all types of narratives related to patriotic education and to elicit meanings that adequately correlate with the intents of all agencies involved in the development of official patriotic education campaigns. These competences are the result of the long experience obtained in the time of the reign of Soviet ideology and phraseology. In this situation, teachers and other education practitioners have become a critical element of the system – they mediate and interpret meanings and help students, as well as other agents of education, to decode symbolic discourses. Due to this role of mediator, gatekeeper, interpreter, and decoder, a teacher has a special place in the society, particularly in a hierarchical semi-authoritarian society.

This study demonstrated that the participants understand their roles as mediators and facilitators in the development of students' civic competences. Despite an overwhelming and persistent pressure of a traditionalistic approach to patriotism in all dominant discourses, many participants questioned such an interpretation and offered a more critical approach. Although the majority of responses were consistent with themes of the patriotic education campaign, such as the family's or school's responsibility for children's patriotic education, some responses were reflective of an existing resistance among educators to the militaristic rationale of the patriotic education campaign or the role of the media.

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