

HISTORY EDUCATION REFORM
IN POST-COMMUNIST POLAND, 1989-1999:
HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY EFFECTS ON
EDUCATIONAL TRANSITION

DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation will describe and analyze how state officials, educators, publishers, and historians in Poland have addressed the task of reforming its national curriculum standards and supporting textbooks in the period of transition from the end of Communist rule in 1989 to the introduction of a new system of education in 1999. The goals of this study are to determine (1) the sources of transitional curriculum policies in history education and the role of reform actors in Poland since 1989; (2) why the history education curriculum reforms changed as they did between the creation of proposals and the eventual codification of the reform into law; (3) the influences on the reform of history textbooks during the transitional period; (4) the differences between anticipated goals and actual outcomes of the curricular and textbook reforms, and (5) how to account for those changes in light of the greater scope of the historical development of democratic education in Poland.

This grounded study is based on multiple data sources, including documentary evidence, professional journals, and personal interviews with individuals participating in the reform of the history curriculum. The reader is presented with a historical summary of educational development of Poland since the 16th century, as well as with descriptions of history textbook reform and the process involved in rewriting the national standards for history. Textbook reform was influenced mainly by economic factors, which affected both the speed and direction of the reform. Curriculum reform was heavily influenced by both the historical inheritance of Communism and of pre-Communist educational development, as well as by the contradictory context of transition itself. The study concludes that the reform of history education in Poland during the transitional

period 1989-1999 is best understood through the application of institutional frameworks which offer the most explanatory power for the events that transpired.

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

In June 1999 in Oslo, Norway, an international collection of education officials, historians, history teachers, and scholars of history education convened at a conference on the misuses of history in Europe. Sponsored by the Council of Europe's Council for Cultural Cooperation, the conference was to serve as a forum for discussion about the misuses of history that have occurred in the past, why those misuses occurred, and how such misuses may be addressed in a way satisfactory to both individual nations and the European Union as a whole. A number of the papers presented dealt with the unique problems faced by the countries of the former Soviet bloc. As different as they are from each other, all of these nations grappled with a similar educational dilemma in the early 1990s: How would the gaps and falsifications of Marxist-Leninist history of the Communist era be filled and corrected, and what would fill them?

Re-imagining history education requires educators and policymakers to re-think fundamentally the content and purpose of school history, the school in general, and the way school history is produced, distributed, and transmitted. My dissertation will describe and analyze how one post-Communist society – Poland – has addressed the task of reforming its national curriculum standards and supporting textbooks. More specifically, I focus on the political, economic, historical, and pedagogical debates surrounding the development of “new” history textbooks and the national basic curriculum requirements in history. This study will demonstrate how the history curriculum has become the nexus which connects several

institutions also undergoing substantive transformation in the post-communist period. Drawing on general theories of educational change (Fullan 1991; 1999; 2000), educational reform (Levin 2001; Tyack & Cuban 1995), and – most importantly – educational transition (Cowen 2001, McLeish 2000), this study understands educational transition in Poland to be a complex process involving many actors interacting on a shifting policy landscape. Not all actors have the same kind of power, nor do they have power over the same parts of the process. All, however, do have objectives to be reached even if these objectives may not be the same for all actors, even those who ostensibly hope to achieve the same outcome. The goal of this project is to determine the following four elements of the reform of history education as they relate to the Polish context since 1989:

- *The sources of transitional curriculum policies in history education and the role of reform actors
- *Why the history education curriculum reforms changed as they did between the creation of proposals and the eventual codification of the reform into law
- *The influences on the reform of history textbooks during the transitional period
- *The differences between anticipated goals and actual outcomes of the curricular and textbook reforms and how to account for them

The study is further guided by the following sub-questions:

- *How have the changes in political leadership in the legislature and Ministry of National Education affected the curriculum reform process?
- *How has the publishing industry reacted to the simultaneous emergence of free market principles and the decentralization of educational publishing?
- *What historical factors play a role in the debates over curriculum reform?

Significance of study

Little has been written in English on the educational transition occurring in Poland since the end of socialist rule in 1989. This is an unfortunate situation for several reasons. First, Poland possesses a long and rich history of education, and played an integral role in the founding of public educational systems in Europe. The establishment in 1773 of the *Komisja Edukacji Narodowej*, or National Education Commission, marked the dawning of a new era;

secular, state-controlled and –funded schools that would educate all children to be citizens of the Polish nation. The roots of a national consciousness that helped the Polish people survive over 120 years without a sovereign nationhood were planted during this era, as were the foundations of universal public education. The path of educational transition between 1989 and 1999 is but the most recent addition to the continuing story of Polish educational development, a subject that deserves a more thorough treatment in English.

Second, the educational transition in Poland serves as a relatively rare example of a “successful” move from socialist authoritarianism to capitalist democracy (Taras 1997), and is one of the most comprehensive attempts to restructure a national educational system in post-communist Europe. Insight into the path of this transformation, and into the forces that shaped and continue to shape it, adds to a growing literature on educational transitions. The story of Poland’s transformation may also serve to inform educational policymakers at the international level in their quest to assist educational reform elsewhere in the world: the course of educational transition in Poland reveals the dynamics of systemic change and lays bare the assumptions made about how that change would progress.

Lastly, it is often the case that the study of educational transition and reform movements focuses on objective outcomes, policy pronouncements, and static documentary evidence. This study aims to reflect on the more human experiential side of educational transition as it affects educational reform undertaken in this period, as well as to bring to light more concrete information on Poland’s quest for democratic education. Such information may also help in the creation of reform paradigms better suited to the field of education, where subjective beliefs play a role in both policymaking and implementation.

Rationale and background of the study

History is not only well-contested within academic circles, but also beyond the school among ethnic, political, religious, and other social groups with a vested interest in it. In the United States, for example, members of various minority ethnic groups, as well as religious and political interest groups, have protested if they felt that their group had been portrayed negatively – or not at all – in school textbooks (Stille 1998). Groups fight to be represented in textbooks because to be mentioned at all in a school history textbook is to have one's presence in history validated, in at the very least a symbolic fashion. Women's groups in the US have protested the absence of notable female historical figures, while Native Americans have argued that they are too often portrayed as uncivilized savages who tormented the noble early settlers (ibid.). Conservatives complain that an overly-negative portrayal of America's historical heroes for the sake of historical accuracy threatens to make entire generations of American children ashamed of their heritage (Schlesinger 1992), while many historians lament that history textbooks perpetuate overly simplistic, even fallacious, ideas about the past (Loewen 1995). These groups have all fought for and won a voice in the textbook editing process; publishers allow various interest groups to review manuscripts before they are printed to remove any objectionable content or interpretations. As a result, the content of school history is vulnerable to interference from parties outside of education who seek to protect their own political or ideological interests, even if it is at the expense of history and history education as distinct disciplines, history practitioners, and history students.

In any society, during the transposition of scholarly historical knowledge to the school environment, a space is opened where forces beyond the school may use history to serve their own motives (Wirth 2000). This was certainly the case with the Communist regime of the People's Republic of Poland, which in the post-World War II years oversaw the re-writing of Poland's history according to the tenets of Marxism, thus subjugating historical science to

political motivations. In the post-communist period, many interpretations of history may exist side by side in society as a whole, but students in the school classroom are only exposed to the point of view presented in their textbooks. For this reason, what appears on the pages of those books is important. And it is not only political or ideological interests that may be served by school history; economic motives are also at work. The textbook is more than a compendium of knowledge; it is also an economic commodity that is bought and sold, and from which profit can be made (Apple 1991). The writing of textbooks is thus influenced by a number of assumptions about the goals of history education, what happens in the history classroom, how students learn, how teachers teach, as well as how to make a textbook attractive to the consumer.

The meaning(s) of democratic freedom

In the early 1990s, with the end of Communist control over education came the beginnings of democratic reform. Educators, historians, and curriculum developers expected that in a new atmosphere of political and intellectual freedom, school history would finally become what its practitioners long desired it to be; a subject that allowed the student to learn the history and culture of his/her native land while honing critical thinking skills and habits of independent intellectual inquiry (MEN 1999b). The goal of education in general is, according to official statements, to "prepare the student to fulfill his duties ... as a citizen based on principals of solidarity, democracy, tolerance, justice, and freedom" (MEN 1991). In comparison with some of its other, former Soviet-bloc neighbors, Poland has made a successful transition towards a more democratic educational model. Foremost in many early writings on the goals of educational change in Poland is the requirement that education no longer be subject to total state control. Wirth (2000) sums up the connection between freedom and democracy in education this way:

“[F]reedom is a necessary component of democracy. In a democratic, pluralist system, academic research must be free from interference by the political regime: the history teacher has no ‘official truth’ to impart on behalf of that regime. ... For history teachers to have freedom, they must have textbooks available to them which allow them to exercise that freedom fully” (50-51).

There are a number of messages embedded in Wirth's statement. He emphasizes two ideas here: truth and freedom. In the Communist past in Poland and elsewhere in the Soviet bloc, "official truths" that adhered to Marxist-Leninist principles were the only "truths" considered acceptable for inclusion into textbooks; the state officially repudiated, denied, or ignored other historical view points. In the present, without the all-controlling hand of the Communist state, truth should be the criteria for selecting textbooks. Freedom, then, is the condition that allows truth to be revealed by the presentation multiple perspectives and debate, as well as the means by which people get to articulate that truth. These are grand ideas in theory, but, as will be shown, not what happens in reality. It is practicality, not the search for truth, that governs choice.

The last sentence of Wirth's quote above alludes to a point that also requires closer inspection. Is the ability of teachers to select the textbooks that they will use a true exercise of those teachers' freedom? On the one hand, we may agree that teachers ought to select the textbooks that they utilize in the classroom. But teacher's right to choose their texts may not be directly related to Wirth's underlying assumptions regarding the impact of the liberalization of economy and the way that knowledge is disseminated – on the emergence of truth. Wirth's expectations can only hold true if there is real choice in textbooks: that texts will offer different content and that texts will be equally available. Without authentic choice in textbook selection, in other words, history teachers do not have freedom. Choice is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for the proper exercise of freedom. Therefore, if Poland's educational system is to meet the qualifications for democracy described above by Wirth, the reform of textbooks

concerns more than just their content, but fundamentally requires the possibility of real choice in the marketplace and equal access to all materials by all teachers.

Textbooks, curriculum, and society

The scope of educational reform in Poland since 1989 extends far beyond textbook choice to include both instructional content and structural transformation. In addition to introducing new finalized curricula for all school subjects, the reform law of February 1999 changed the way that public schools are funded and administered; how teachers are trained and re-trained; how students are evaluated by the exam system; and how textbooks are created, sold and approved for use in schools. Discussion of all of these areas is necessary to understanding how history education is changing because they are all integral parts of the reform and together constitute a whole.

It is not enough, however, to look just to educational institutions for insight into the transition process. Educational transition involves much more than just the institution of the school; it also is heavily influenced by the interplay of politics, economics and history. Politically, school history is a subject that embodies the goals of a nation and the ideal image of itself to be perpetuated from generation to generation and defines the historically proper role of a citizen to the state (MEN 1991). Therefore, those who seek to define these relationships between the citizens and political institutions have a vested interest in determining the model of citizen-government relations taught in schools. For example, one of the earliest constitutional issues that had to be clarified after 1989 was the definition of a Polish citizen. Some argued that one must be an ethnic Pole and a Roman Catholic to be a citizen, while others argued for a more inclusive definition (Osiatyński 1997). This debate over who is a citizen is extended into the school when one must decide how – or whether – to include the experiences of non-Polish, non-Catholics when teaching and writing the history of Poland. Economically, the opening of the

free market in Poland has brought about unexpected changes and limitations for reformers. No longer is the telling of history controlled solely by the government. Now publishers with a financial interest in selling educational materials have a vested interest in history reform and have forced educators to recognize the role of the market in education. No longer is educational change limited only by what the government of Poland may or may not allow for political or ideological reasons. In the era of privatized publishing, change may also be limited by what the market can support and how much publishers are willing to invest. As I will show, history educators' desires for completely new teaching materials and publishers' need to keep productions costs low to stay afloat financially are not always compatible.

Economics also affect the content and form of history education in subtle but meaningful ways (Apple 1984, 1989a, 1991). A publisher may not dictate content, but the ability of a publisher to convince more teachers to use their books results in the content of that particular book reaching more students than may another book. Historically, Poland has a rich educational history which arguably serves as part of the impetus behind the changes seen here, affecting both the goals and the content of the reform as well as the means by which the reform had been carried out.

History also plays a defining role in educational reform in Poland. Unlike many developing nations struggling to erect democratic governments and national systems of education, Poland has its own national traditions of democratic education to build on which predated the Communist era. Despite prolonged periods of political instability and loss of sovereignty during the partitions of the late 18th through early 20th centuries, both formal and non-formal Polish educational institutions continued to operate and perpetuate Polish national consciousness. The highpoint of Poland's educational history – the Commission of National Education in 1773 – was the creation of one of the first national systems of education in Europe. Thus, in the post-Communist era, Polish education reformers may look to their own history of

democratic educational institutions and build a new system that is truly their own, and not one imported from abroad and formulated by or dictated to Poles by foreigners. Some reformers believe that to rely too heavily on foreign advisors (particularly Americans) to rebuild the Polish system will mean too much foreign influence in Polish internal affairs (Zieliecki 1999). This kind of remark reveals the world of influence with which a now-independent Poland must contend. Not only do they need to find a balance among Polish stakeholders in education reform, but external geo-political demands on reformers must also be satisfactorily addressed if Poland is to be successful as a member of the European Union, world markets, and the world community as a whole.

Definition of terms

Before proceeding farther, it is important to define some key terms that will appear regularly in the text to come. While these terms are quite often used interchangeably elsewhere, they do have specific meanings that should not be overlooked because they allow us to discern important differences among the various theoretical frameworks and to limit the proper application of certain ideas to certain contexts.

(1) *Educational Change* – This term is the most general of the three terms that are discussed here, and will be used to denote any kind of shift or difference in educational practice, structure, philosophy, or context. Change may or may not be intended, and it may or may not be desired. Change may be progressive or regressive, and it may be brought about either consciously or unconsciously.

(2) *Educational Reform* – Reform is a specific type of educational change. This term will be used to describe deliberate, planned attempts to change aspects of educational systems with a

goal of improvement or progress in a desired direction. As Benjamin Levin (2000) asserts, the word *reform* “often has a positive normative character, implying something desirable” (19). He uses the term to refer to

“programs of educational change that are government-directed and initiated based on an overtly political basis. The changes examined are driven primarily by the political apparatus of government rather than by educators or bureaucrats, and justified on the basis of the need for a very substantial break from current practice. In other words, ... reforms are those changes in education governments have undertaken to make. ... This definition of reform also stresses the political element in education reform in contrast, for example, to reforms that may emanate from within the school system itself” (ibid.).

Levin’s model consists of four elements: *origins* – the sources of reforms, the role of actors, the assumptions behind the proposals; *adoption* – what happens to reforms between proposal and actual codification into law; *implementation* – the process and difficulties involved in putting theory into practice; and *outcomes* – the effects of reforms, both intended and unintended (19-20). Levin accepts that education is related in important ways to “broader issues of power and social policy” (21), but stresses that those relationships are not as cut-and-dried as they are often described. “Politics” he says “is intentional, but it is also frequently provisional and ad hoc, and may be shaped as much by the vicissitudes of the moment as by well-defined intentions. One finds a high level of ambiguity and contingency in every aspect of the political process” (ibid.). Thus both rational policy planning and “the underlying contingency of life” must be taken into account when formulating a theory of educational change (22). Therefore educational reform may be understood as pre-planned change in a desired direction, but due to the shifting nature of politics, it also may have to adapt along the way to cope with changing external realities.

Levin also mentions another important point: when speaking about reform, we often assume that we are referring to change for the better at every level of the educational structure, when more likely we are actually speaking of policy changes that are only *intended* to improve education, and whose results are by no means guaranteed. Taking a cue from other scholars of

educational change, Levin points out that many reforms “are not primarily aimed at actual teaching and learning, but focus instead on school organization, governance, finance, curriculum, and assessment” and that “reform advocates make the assumption that changes in the latter will result in changes in the former” (27). However, organizational structure has little bearing on what goes on in classrooms, where education itself really takes place, and hence has little effect on academic performance. Therefore, actual reform at the policy level (in the form of new goals outlines in policy documents) does not necessarily mean reform at the level of teaching and learning (in the form of changes in teacher practice or student achievement).

Tyack & Cuban (1995) are two scholars who have looked more closely at the different layers within the educational structure and the ways in which reform is practiced and understood. There are, Tyack & Cuban claim, two important aspects of reforming education that are often overlooked by change actors. First, reforms do not exist in a vacuum, but rather are laid down on top of previous reforms that have been implemented in the past: “For the most part, reforms tend to accumulate, one on top of another, adding to rather than simply replacing what went before. ...[R]eformers [can] not start with a clean political and institutional slate. Each governance reform built on layers of previous changes....” (63) Second, policy makers often assume that reforms will be applied to schools in exactly the way that the policy makers intended, and thus do not acknowledge how schools change reform policies to suit their own needs and resources: “For the most part, reforms have become assimilated to previous patterns of schooling, even though they may... [insert] alternative practices into the work of schools. Reforms have rarely replaced what is there: more commonly, they have added complexity” (83).

Moving through each stage of reform implementation inevitably creates more complicated issues to be dealt with by the end of the process, since the way that policy is accepted, changed, and interpreted, has as much to do with intended goals as with what previous

practices and beliefs existed before the reform. Thus, it must be stressed that the term *reform* as it will be used here refers not just to the *creation* of official educational policy documents, but also to the *implementation and adaptation* of educational policy as it is passed down successive levels of administration and bureaucracy.

(3) Educational Transition – This term is the most specific of the three to be defined here, and will be used to denote the reform of an educational systems that occurs in the wake of regime change. Thus, while reform is a particular type of educational change, transition is a particular type of reform necessitated by certain broader social and political conditions. Educational transition is a more complex process than is either reform or change because it by definition only happens when some other institution is undergoing transition. The shift from a socialist economy to a capitalist economy ruled by the free market, or the move away from communism towards democracy as occurred in most of Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s are examples of institutional transitions (McLeish 1998). McLeish notes how difficult it is to define a starting and ending point to educational transition (18). She suggests that the starting point of active educational transition be the collapse of the prevailing ideology that supported the previous status quo (16). The transition moves from the macro-level, where legal and structural change is implemented, and finally comes to an end at the micro-level of society, at the level of individual schools, teachers, and students (19). However, no country transitioning from one type of educational system to another can be said to have completed the final stage of transition at the micro-level until they have reached the final step, which involves intellectual and psychological transition, i.e. full adoption of the new mindset required to accept the new order (ibid.).

On the other hand, Cezar Birzea (1994) argues that “Although the expression usually refers to former communist countries, a closer analysis shows that transition is in fact a

universal historical phenomenon” (7, emphasis mine). The history of human civilization, he says, is the history of continuous movement and change, which is motivated by contradictions which urge societies towards the next stage of development (16). So transitions, if they are understood according to Birzea’s model, are only accelerated periods of change. Despite the fact that scholars speak of transition and change as if they were distinct, in Birzea’s definition the difference between change and transition thus becomes one of degree, not type.

All of these understandings of educational transition share two important features. First, they emphasize that educational transition is different from educational reform. Transition is a long-term, goal-oriented process during which the fundamental principles of education shift. It is through individual reform strategies – the changing of written policies, the re-writing of educational materials, the re-structuring of teaching preparation – and the altering of practices that transition is enacted and eventually completed. The second feature that multiple theories of transition share is the assumption that educational transition is catalyzed by profound changes in social, economic, or political context. Transition is not necessitated by internal mechanisms, but by external forces. In the absence of such fundamental change in the surrounding society, transition does not occur, though reform may.

(4) Meaning – One of the goals of this dissertation is to determine how various people involved in reforming the history education curriculum understood the task at hand, i.e. what the meaning of the reform is. Therefore, a definition of *meaning* is in order. I choose to use Cherryholmes’ (1988) understanding of the term. To Cherryholmes, *meaning* is more than what the writer or speaker intends to convey through the written or spoken word. Instead, he places *meaning* at the center of ongoing discourses; to understand what a word or utterance means, one must look beyond the word or utterance to the context – historical, cultural, political, etc. – in which it exists and is used (66). For this reason, the same word may be used by different people and

mean something different to each of those people. To understand what each person means, one must look to the context in which that person speaks or writes. In the present study, each person's situatedness vis-à-vis the reform and his or her place within the reform process must be considered when interpreting his or her opinions.

(5) Curriculum – As noted by Tyler (1981), *curriculum* can refer to many different things, from a simple plan for a course of study to “everything that transpires in the course of planning, teaching, and learning in an educational institution” (17). The term *curriculum* will be used here to denote a document that outlines: (1) the plans for an educational program as laid down in official documents of state educational authorities, (2) what ought to be taught in schools, and (3) the basic building blocks of instruction. This definition echoes that of Beauchamp (1981). In the Polish context under review here, the *podstawa programowa*, or Basic Curriculum, lists the mandatory elements that must be present in any educational program in a public school in Poland, as well as the educational objectives to be met by the school, and the skills and abilities to be developed in the student. For the purposes of this paper, *curriculum* does not include that which transpires in the classroom context as part of the teaching-learning process. The work of the teacher and what students learn in school will only be mentioned when they are the subject of assumptions that educational policymakers make about the teaching and learning process.

(6) Post-socialist and post-communist – These terms refer to economic and political states, respectively. The post-socialist period begins in Poland with the end of state socialism as the main organizing economic principle. The post-communist period begins in Poland when as a result of the Round Table talks in 1989, the Solidarity union won the right to put forth a candidate in the race for the President of Poland who was not a member of the Communist

party. Because these two periods coincide so closely in time, they are often used interchangeably. Generally, the terms simply refer to the period since 1989.

Overview of the study

Chapter 2 will present the review of the literature relevant to this study. The first part of this chapter will provide an overview of educational transition, i.e. studies of educational reform and transition that frames this study. As will be shown, the reason why it is so difficult to find a theory of educational transformation that can be generally applied is that scholars have tended to take a structural approach that is specific to one political and/or economic context. A more general theory would be required to divorce itself from specific regime types, and focus instead on what all have in common, regardless of level of economic development or social arrangement. This study suggests that we view educational transition as a conflict among competing stakeholders who seek to create an educational system that best serves their needs. Educational transition involves conflict among competing ideas of what education should include and what its outcomes should be. Education exists, but what form it takes, what its goals and principles are, how it is organized, funded, and controlled – these are the things that are contested and undergo change. Conflict also exists at each of the general stages traditionally outlined to describe the process of educational transition: policy creation and implementation. Factors external to education such as politics and economics weigh in on different sides of these conflicts, and help to determine which side will control the process. The second part of this chapter will present theoretical ideas concerning the teaching of history – what is taught, how, and why – and the history textbook – what it is, what it does, how it is created, what purposes it serves, and what it symbolizes. Understanding the social construction of history and the economic importance of the history textbook helps us uncover the reasons why history curriculum reform is so hotly contested in Poland and elsewhere.

Chapter 3 will provide a description of the study's methodology. The data consist of government documents, journal articles, historical works, and interviews with historians, educators, and others who participated in the reform of the history curriculum and/or history textbooks. From the documentary evidence one can trace the development of the history curriculum through several draft versions and describe the changes that appeared. Journal articles from Poland's primary history education journal *Wiadomości Historyczne* and others provide professional opinions of the curriculum and textbook reforms. Personal interviews with Polish educators who participated in the reform describe the reform process, their goals for the reform, and their opinions on the results of the reform.

Chapter 4 will provide an historical overview of educational reform in Poland from the beginnings of democratic educational tradition in the 18th century to the present day. This summary is intended to orient those unfamiliar with Poland's history and this nation's contribution to modern educational development in Europe, as well as to show how Poland's educational traditions have changed and currently influence present-day discourse. This summary will provide information about the major educational laws and the historical context in which those laws were enacted, with special attention given to the form and function of history education.

Chapter 5 will describe the reform of history textbooks and the factors which affected the speed and direction of that part of the reform. Controversy has surrounded the process by which those books are approved for use in schools, and is mostly centered on the preferential treatment given some prominent authors, the escalating cost of textbooks for parents, and lastly, on the fact that the textbook review process is not blind. Because authors actually get to choose who reviews their books, it is felt by some that school history is not being subjected to the necessary levels of criticism and evaluation by the historical profession. Public criticism of the content of some textbooks has drawn attention to the textbook process, but has not necessarily

resulted in significant changes to this process. Additionally, the freedom that teachers have to choose their own materials is now affected by new economic factors – marketing strategies, textbook availability, and cost – that were not an issue just a few short years ago. The textbook creation process will be presented as a place where economic and educational goals – two things often at odds – come together, where the most powerful forces determine what constitutes historical “truth” for the youngest generation, and what society believes should be believed about the past, present, and future. I will show how the “freedoms” of historical interpretation and textbook choice that Wirth spoke of were unavoidably constrained due to market factors affecting the publishing industry, i.e. institutional changes stemming from the transition from a socialist to capitalist economic system.

Chapter 6 will describe the specific changes to the Polish history education curriculum since 1989. This chapter will provide descriptions and analysis of personal interviews with members of the history curriculum reform committee, the official reform process and the reform documents themselves, including the projects and policies regarding the national curriculum standard and the rules governing textbook recommendation.

The final chapter will present a concluding discussion regarding post-communist Polish history education reform as it has been affected by the transitional political and economic context and the historical development of Polish education. I will revisit the theoretical constructs presented in Chapter 2 to determine what could have been predicted from the theories summarized, and what, if any, new information or understandings emerged from the data collected. It is hoped that this study of one former Soviet-bloc nation will contribute to a greater understanding of post-socialist democratic transition and the role that educational change may play in the building of successful democracy.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

To begin to understand the path of educational transition in Poland in the post-socialist period, it necessary to look not just to the works that focus specifically on education, but also on works from a number of different fields which influence and shape the way that education is conceptualized within transitional contexts. It is also important for the reader to understand the complex nature of transitions themselves and the challenges that are faced by those participating in reform under such circumstances. Once the policy landscape has been described, the next step is to look more closely at the field of history education, which constitutes the lens through which the transition is to be observed. History education will be discussed both in terms of its content – the curriculum – and the primary means of its transmission in schools – the textbook.

The goal of this study is to describe and analyze the process of educational transition in Poland between 1989 and 1999. Because the focus is on the process and not simply the outcome of the transition, I decided when formulating the study that it was important to turn my attention to an area of education that required significant alteration in the post-socialist period. The radical transformation of history education necessitated by the regime change in Poland after 1989 created a particularly unstable context for reform, one that I anticipated would cast into greater relief the process of planned change and the influences that acted upon it. The reform of history education required alteration of two connected, yet separate, components: the curriculum which mapped out the goals and basic contents of history education, and the textbooks which are the primary conduit for historical knowledge in a school context.

In addition to necessary changes to textbooks and curricula, another crucial component of the reform concerns the attitudes and beliefs of the people charged with creating the new vision for Polish schooling. Determining where these attitudes come from is not a simple or precise task; it may not even be possible to isolate the exact events or experiences in someone's life that can explain why that person acts or feels the way he or she does. However, it is possible to speak more generally of the forces at play that may influence educational reform work in a given time and place. People's – specifically reformers' – attitudes and beliefs regarding what is right or appropriate or needed in a transitional context are rooted simultaneously in both the past and the present. Reformers look to the past for traditions to be perpetuated, as well as for mistakes to be avoided and models to be emulated. The past plays a role in determining what questions are asked and what options will be considered. But reformers must also always have one foot in the present context to determine both what is desirable and what is possible. In a transitional context, the present is unusually unstable, and the future even more uncertain perhaps than is typically the case, so reformers must make assumptions about what society and the economy will become in order to create goal-oriented policies. What underlies those assumptions will be discussed in the following chapters. The present chapter will outline the numerous theories that purport to explain educational transitions; history education and its role in transitional contexts; and the school textbook as both pedagogical device and economic commodity.

I. EDUCATIONAL TRANSITION

The path of educational transition is an unpredictable one. Despite the emergence of scholarly works attempting to explain and describe transitions, there is much that remains to be done to create a more unified theory. Those who study transitions do so from a variety of points

of view and use a number of different frameworks. Scholars have described educational systems in transition in terms of everything from institutional theory (Fullan 1991, 1999, 2000), political transition (McLeish 1998), economic transition (Bray & Borevskaya 2001), political and economic transitions (Carnoy & Samoff 1990), immune systems and transitologies (Cowen 2000), dysfunctional societies (Lewowicki 1997; Bogaj et al. 1998), universal historical trends (Birzea 1994), and institutional policymaking (Levin 2001; Taylor et al. 1997). Others focus more closely on the interpersonal relationships among people that take place during times of transition and reform (Weiler et al. 1996; Bowe et al. 1992; Kapron & Stephan 1991; Ball 1990; Karns 2001). One reason why it is so difficult to find a theory of educational transformation that can be generally applied is that scholars often take a structural approach that is specific to one political, social, and/or economic context, and cannot be applied to other societies with fundamentally different systems. This lack of general conceptualization makes it difficult to meaningfully compare the experience of educational transition in different countries (Bray & Borevskaya 2001). A more general theory would be required to divorce itself from specific regime types, and focus instead on what all have in common, regardless of level of economic development or social arrangement.

If one thing can be said to be common to all of the abovementioned works at some level, it is that people – both directly and indirectly, consciously and unconsciously, via both action and inaction – play important roles in the process of educational transition. People bring into the transition process their knowledge and limitations, their hopes and expectations, and their past experiences and deeply-held values, all of which affect the decisions that they make, their behavior, and their attitudes toward the transition. Because of their subjectivities, even people who come together during transitions with ostensibly the same goal in mind may have very different understandings of their roles in the process, different motivations for the work that they do, and divergent opinions regarding the best means by which desired goals are to be

reached. For some, the integrity of the process of educational change is just as important – perhaps even more important – than seeing the stated goals of such change come to fruition. For others, the successful achievement of pre-conceived goals is the main driving force behind their work, while the means by which goals are reached is of secondary concern. While the human component of educational change is hardly a new idea, it is one that justifies a closer investigation into 1) the beliefs and attitudes of individuals who participate in educational reform during transitions, 2) how those beliefs and attitudes may affect those individuals' interactions with other educational reform actors, and 3) ultimately how the success or failure of the transition is measured.

The way that people feel about the educational reform process is important because people's attitudes and beliefs can affect the way that reform is received by those charged with implementing it. Fullan (1991) emphasizes that the content as well as the process of change need to be shared by change actors; both what the school should look like and the way that change will be enacted need to be agreed upon in order for reforms be successfully implemented. The meaning of change is important (if not obvious from the outset) because change may be difficult to implement successfully if change actors do not share the same conceptions about the meaning of change. Elsewhere Fullan (1999) also elaborates on the idea that organizations, including educational organizations, are like living systems, and 'it is the quality of the relationships among organizational members...that makes for long-term success' in implementing change (13). However, not all commentators view educational systems the same way that Fullan does. His is but one out of many views that purport to explain transitions.

A. General theories of educational transition

The study of educational transition, the true theme of the coming chapters, is informed by several different fields of inquiry. The vast majority of the traditional transition (also referred

to as transformation) literature since the 1990s neglects education altogether, and focuses mainly on the changeover of economic and political systems. This dominance of neo-liberal ideology¹ is commonly attributed to the US government and international financial institutions, which some commentators believe monopolized the transition discourse in the early 1990s (Bönker et al. 2002, 8). Instead, those wishing to better understand what happens to educational systems during transitions must rely on three main groups of literature: that focusing specifically on transitions, that dealing with planned reform more generally, and that dealing with institutions and institutional reform. Within these fields, some scholars focus on the structural nature of educational systems and the socio-political context in which they exist, while others draw attention to more human, subjective factors influencing the course of transition. Four general frameworks emerge that can help us better understand what happens during educational transitions: transition as conflict, transition as planned institutional change, transition as dysfunction, and transition as adaptation to structural changes beyond the realm of education.

Transition as Conflict

Educational transition may be understood as precipitated mainly by *conflict among competing stakeholders* who seek to create an educational system that best serves their own needs, as well as the “needs of society” as perceived by stakeholders. Conflict among stakeholders can both necessitate transition as well as define its path as it progresses. This general category of conflict goes beyond the classic conflict theory outlined by Marxist scholars, which primarily defines class difference as the source of conflict (Collins 1971; Weber 1968). Ball (1990) is just one of many scholars who sees policy making as a projection of

¹ Neo-liberalism combines political beliefs in social justice with an emphasis on economic growth.

certain values into the realm of legislation, and who believes that power relationships play an integral part in the process of creating educational policy. Because policy embodies ideal images of educational systems, it cannot be free from partisan wrangling. Ball does not believe that policy is shaped only by a dominant social or political force, but instead is shaped by the complex relations between many competing groups (3). Stakeholders may be differentiated from one another by political ideology (Nash et al. 1997), socio-economic class (Bourdieu 1973), religious affiliation (Burton 2001), gender (Arnot 2002), or demographics (McLaren & Giroux 1990), just to name a few. Stakeholders may or may not directly be a part of the “official” personnel in charge of the transition of education appointed by the state. Stakeholders may influence the process of change through indirect means, such as elections of political leaders who then appoint educational personnel, or the media, where issues pertinent to education may be debated publicly.

Educational transition resulting from conflict may occur at different organizational levels. First, conflict may occur among official change actors in the upper levels of the educational system who hold competing ideas of what education should include and what its outcomes should be. Education always exists in some shape or form, but what form it takes, what its stated goals and principles are, how it is organized, funded, and controlled – these are the things that are contested during transitions, but not always according to clearly-defined political lines. Conflict may exist both during the process of policy creation (Nash et al. 1997) as well as during the implementation stage (Fullan 2000; Tyack & Cuban 1995), but not always for the same reasons. While at the creation stage curriculum writers may argue over what specific content should be included in the national curriculum, those in charge of actually implementing that curriculum in the classroom may argue over how best to do so, or over how to interpret the policy documents that are handed down from above, or even argue against change in principle (Weintraub 2000).

Second, there can be conflict within the same level of the educational structure; even at the level of the state, uniformity of purpose should not be expected. As Taylor, et al. (1997) stress, “the state itself is not a unitary entity” and can itself be torn by conflicting goals and values (29). Drawing on the work of Claus Offe, (1975, 1984) who defines the capitalist state as “a set of institutions which has to balance irresolvable tensions”, Taylor et al. assert that there is no way out of conflict; it is simply an integral part of the nature of the state (30). The state then must constantly work to maintain a sort of equilibrium or “settlement” to survive that round of conflict, at least until the next round begins. Thus, factors external to education such as politics and economics weigh in on different sides of all of these conflicts, and help to determine which side will control the process. In Bowe, et al.’s words: “[T]here is a deliberate empowering of certain individuals and groups over others. [Change] is as much about the redistribution of powers and privileges *within* institutions as it is about redistribution *between* them” (1992, 142).

Third, the lines of conflict may be drawn according to demographics. In Poland, it is the rural-urban dichotomy (rather than a strictly class, socioeconomic or race based one) that is the primary basis of educational inequality, a situation that had been inherited from communist times (McLaren & Giroux 1990). Zbigniew Kwiecinski, the foremost scholar of rural education in Poland, states in his interview with McLaren and Giroux that as a “result of [the] national curriculum the rural school was functioning in complete isolation from the local cultural background of its students. The unified curriculum became another instrument of discrimination because students and their families largely perceived the program as isolated and something very alien, distant, even hostile to their own identity as rural peasants” (157). This problem continues in the post-communist transitional period; as official educational policy becomes more supportive of the needs of the pro-Europe, pro-free market, secular urban intelligensia, the educational needs of the more politically- and economically-conservative rural areas continue to be less well served.

The situation in Poland, particularly now, is not all that different from that in the United States or other Western nations when it comes to rural/urban dichotomies. McLaren and Giroux emphasize that

“the current initiatives in school reform in both Poland and the United States, with their emphasis on reprivatizing schools and relying on the logic of the free market as guiding principles, are essentially coded attacks on those forms of cultural difference and identities that do not conform to the metropolitan-centered, Eurocentric model of culture and learning” (161).

Rural areas in Poland were and still remain at a large economic disadvantage, though now they fall short because they cannot compete in the free market in the same way that more urbanized, industrial areas with higher proportions of educated workers and higher wages can. Or, in Giroux’s words,

"[I]n a sense what we see happening here in the current phase of history in Poland, is the liquidation of schooling for the peasants, based on the ruthlessness of the market which suggests that public education in this case has to be subordinated to the dictates of the logic of the market and consequently who don’t perform well within the logic suffer the consequences" (158).

As a result of the shift in economic systems in Poland, there is a bold line of contention drawn between conservative agrarian interests closely aligned with the Catholic Church and the more pro-European urban intellectuals who control much of the educational reform process. Rural/urban economic disparities helped fuel the societal discontent with the Communist system that eventually led to its demise, and have also helped to define the recent discourse on educational transition. In this way, demographics, too, have both caused and guided educational transition in Poland. As transition progresses, each point of conflict serves to shape the structure and guiding philosophy of transitional education policy, and helps determine ultimately what will become a more permanent part of educational legislation.

Transition as Planned Institutional Change

Educational transition may also be understood as the transition of *institutions* that operate according to their own set of rules. The advantage of institutional theory is that it is generalized enough to apply to many different contexts, regardless of the political or economic order in which the institution exists. Levin (2001) discusses institutional theory, particularly that branch of institutional theory that deals with how institutions deal with external demands. According to Levin, the preponderance of research in this area suggests that when faced with external pressures for change, institutions will try to maintain the status quo (28). Levin's claim is supported by other studies on reform which suggest that reform policies and new practices, when perceived as originating outside of the educational establishment, are more likely to be rejected at the local level (Lewowicki 1997; Cuban 1998; Fullan 1999; Kaser & Phillips 1992).

Another area of institutional theory that Levin discusses deals with how "organizations try to manage uncertainty by creating standard ways of thinking about and acting on issues and problems" (Levin 2001, 28). In other words, institutions create the perception that what they are doing is right, controlling the dialogue so that they appear to be the most knowledgeable and qualified body to be doing what they are doing even under conditions of uncertainty. What is interesting about this idea is that it emphasizes how educational institutions are in a position to control the public's perceptions about what schools can do. As long as they can define and delimit educational discourse, institutions don't necessarily have to be successful; they need only put forth the appearance of being successful to gain society's trust (ibid., 29). In other words, educational institutions can simply appear to change, and still manage to gain society's approbation for doing so, even if in reality little has really changed. Despite its underlying cynicism, this idea does have support in the Polish case (Kapron & Stephan 1991).

A final principle outlined by Levin asserts that institutions tend to stick with what they know, and will avoid the expensive process of developing new ways of doing things. To avoid

excessive costs, the development of new methods is usually left to outside organizations (Levin 2001, 30). If true, the last claim suggests that it would be understandable, even expected, that the educational establishment be influenced by and interested in assistance from actors from outside education in times of transition.

While institutional theory can be useful in understanding educational transition, there are weaknesses inherent in treating school like any other kind of institution. Fullan (1999) draws a vital distinction between educational systems and other types of institutions. Unlike capitalist business institutions, schools are a site of *moral change agency*, and it is precisely because of the moral aspects of education that reforming education becomes a much more complex exercise than institutional theory would suggest. Moral purpose, according to Fullan, can only be achieved through the building of relationships among change actors, despite differences and conflict (2). In his model, Fullan accepts that complex, changeable social environments are an unavoidable feature of modern society, and that true success in the realm of educational reform (including reform during transitions) is to be found in managing the chaos and coping with and utilizing conflict (3).

Fullan continues his discussion of educational reform² – which by extension may apply to transitional contexts – by focusing on two other concepts found in institutional models of reform: complexity theory and evolutionary theory. *Complexity theory* claims that organizations are non-linear, paradoxical creations that are impossible to control (though they may be shaped) and operate most effectively when balanced on the edge of chaos. According to this model, long-term future outcomes can be neither controlled nor guaranteed; long-term development comes only from how agents react in the short-term as the environment changes

² Though Fullan uses the term “change” throughout his book, he is referring to planned change, or reform, as defined in Chapter 1. Thus the term “reform” will be used here for consistency.

(5). This model seems particularly well-suited to understanding educational transitions since, by their very nature, transitions occur in a changing environment whose final form is uncertain.

The second of Fullan's models, *evolutionary theory* addresses the kinds of relationships among reformers that are more likely to lead to desired goals. It is not enough for individuals within an institution to have insight and knowledge applicable to the reform effort; it is crucial that people work together. According to the evolutionary theory, the more interaction and shared motivations among reform actors there are, the more successful the reform will be (8). In order to motivate people to work together (not always easy in the short-term if people feel that they will lose something in the wake of reform), it is helpful to have political support, a common moral goal that all can agree on, and a clear elucidation of how not working together can lead to more harm than good for society as a whole (9).

Fullan's ideas as summarized above are useful to understanding educational transitions because he accepts the contingent nature of reform as an expected part of the task at hand. This attitude allows more flexibility at the theoretical level which is necessary when discussing transitions. For example, if a theory purporting to explain reform is very rigid and does not allow for variations from the preconceived plan, then that theory would inevitably fail to explain the outcome of every reform. However, acknowledging that the path of educational reform is unpredictable – particularly in transitional societies – allows one's theoretical model to encompass and accept even those outcomes that were unseen.

Fullan's ideas are also useful for understanding transitions because he draws more attention than do most commentators to the role of people in institutional reform. In doing so Fullan makes it clear that even the best, most well-considered policy documents will not result in effective reform if the human element is neglected; the beliefs, desires, and attitudes of people greatly affect the way transition progresses, how reform policy is conceived, and how it is received by those charged with implementing the reform. "It is," he says, "the quality of the

relationships among organizational members...that makes for long-term success” in implementing reform (Fullan 1999, 13).

Transition as a State of Dysfunction

Closely related to institutional theory is the theory in which educational transitions are defined in terms of *dysfunction*. Unlike many of the scholars who look at school reform through organizational or structural frameworks, Karns (2001) outlines similarities between dysfunctional schools and dysfunctional families. “Schools” she says “are unusual types of organizations. They are not strictly service oriented, and they lack the market-based accountability of big business” (28). Rather than profit, schools’ bottom line consists of students who are successful in all the ways educational pundits desire.

Using family systems theory³, Karns draws attention to how schools and families deal with dysfunction, defined as “actions that have negative consequences” (Curry et al. 1999, 16) or more simply as behavior that cannot ever lead to desired goals. Dysfunction, according to Karns, persists because members of the family or school develop coping strategies that do not or cannot change the underlying problem (29). Rather than focusing on one actor or member of the family as “the problem,” family systems theory observes the entire family unit and the relationships within the family as problematic. Interventions intended to help the family overcome dysfunction include motivating the family to deal with the problem at hand, changing or eliminating the problem behavior, and helping each member to cope with change (ibid.).

In her article, Karns specifically argues against overly-structural or abstract approaches to educational reform. She emphasizes that schools consist of people, and thus cannot be depersonalized to such an extent that human emotion is excluded from the analysis. Karns

³ Both family systems theory and institutional theory are types of system theories, and thus share fundamental assumptions about how the relationships among members of a system (however they are defined) determine the overall health of the system (von Bertalanffy 1976).

develops her model further, drawing out more similarities between 12 Step programs and the steps that schools must go through in order to address problems. She notes as underlying assumption to such programs:

“Within the recovery metaphor and the 12 steps is an inherent bias that individuals will only do things that benefit them. No one will sustain any kind of process unless the benefits outweigh the problems associated with the change. ... Choosing to return to a prior problem behavior is called “relapse” in the recovery literature and called “failure” among practitioners of school reform. Reverting back to what is familiar is considered “normal” and is expected in early recovery” (30).

She notes that reform is difficult to sustain without commitment, support, and dialogue among actors (*ibid*). This is no less true of reform during periods of transition due to uncertainty created by the shifting political and economic context and the long-term nature of transition. Cowen (2000) maintains that a true transition takes at least ten years to progress fully, so concrete policy change during transitions may come to fruition only after years of work. Karns’ argument suggests that the most difficult time in the reform process is in the early stages when success is hard to see, and progress difficult to sustain in the face of difficulties and few obvious signs that change is occurring for the better. If this is true, then teachers will tend maintain older, dysfunctional practices and values, rather than change to meet some ambiguous or contradictory new goals in the early period of transition. This theory is borne out in Poland, where even a decade after the end of Communism, some teachers continue to use the same books and teaching methods inherited from the old system (Mikołajewska 2000).

This framework of dysfunction finds reflection in the work of other scholars as well. Polish scholars have also utilized the idea of dysfunction as it applies to their situation, defining it in more structural terms than did Karns (Lewowicki 1997; Bogaj et al. 1998) but at the same time in a way that strengthens the parallel Karns draws. In their view, transitions are fueled by irreconcilable differences between the stated goals of education and the actual ability of the educational system and its personnel to function in a particular environment.

The highly-centralized educational system that existed in Poland during communism is unacceptable in a society that now values decentralized, local control and the participation in decision-making of educators and others. With the end of socialism, the inherited system became suddenly obsolete, incapable of serving the needs of the new socio-political order, and hence dysfunctional. The transition process thus acts to eventually create a functional system that suits the needs of a new social order. For example, in his discussion of educational change, Lewowicki (1997) examines the concept of *dysfunction* as it applies to educational systems generally, and to Central European systems in particular. He defines dysfunction as

“the separation of the content of learning from the social and economic realities that surround the school; a distinct gap between the content of education and the needs, interests, and desires of children and adolescents; ... erosion of the universal system of values promoted through education; ... the particular helplessness of educational institutions in the face of deepening social stratification; and even ... the exclusion of a significant portion of youth from education altogether (mainly impoverished young people from families with little education or exposure to culture). At the societal level, educational dysfunction manifests itself in the weakened connections between educational attainment, satisfaction with one’s material conditions, and social mobility” (19).

Lewowicki argues that dysfunction is both an impetus for and a condition of educational transition. Until 1989 communist education served the state’s needs above those of any other institution, as well as above those of the individual. But now the educational system must be reformed to serve the needs of society as a whole as well as society’s individual constituents, i.e. its citizens, in order for democratization to proceed. The school system inherited from communist times fails to prepare students for participation in social life (national, local, and even at the family level), for the world of work, and often they are not even prepared for self-development, such as furthering their education (31). Under conditions of widespread social, political, and economic transition, educational transition often disappoints because expectations are unreasonable; the reality of social, cultural, and economic conditions limit what schools can do for themselves and for the entire society.

Transition as Adaptation to Planned Structural Change

Educational transition is sometimes also defined as being wholly dependent on *structural change* occurring elsewhere within the given society. The frameworks previously mentioned above primarily focus on education and on how educational systems adapt internally to external change. Structural studies use political, economic, or social transition as the starting point of the discussion about educational transition rather than the other way around. In other words, in structural studies educational transition is part of, but ultimately subordinate to, transitions in other areas. For example, according to Bray & Borevskaya (2001), in nations transitioning from socialism to capitalism, educational changes are motivated by the changing needs of the new economic system. On the other hand, McLeish (1998) defines educational transition in terms of political transitions, since it is the political realm that wields the most influence over what form education will take in the new regime. Carnoy & Samoff (1990) also focus primarily on the role of the state in educational transition, claiming that “the theory of the state is even more crucial in understanding ... transition societies in the process of social transformation, for in them politics is the primary arena in which that transformation is played out” (9). Structural theories, because of their specificity, will be discussed further in the section on transitions from authoritarian to democratic regimes below (see page 37).

But one important point to make is that the goal is decidedly not to “solve” the problem of systems in transition, because there is nothing to solve, despite what “professional myths” may assume or imply about educational experts’ ability to “fix things” (Cowen 2000, 1-12). We need, Cowen says, new terminology to describe what is going on, to step “away from ideas about pragmatic fine-tuning” and to find a metaphor that embraces the image of chaos rather than that of stability (5). Ultimately Cowen describes educational transitions as:

“the more or less simultaneous collapse or deconstruction and then reconstruction of state apparatuses, political visions of the future, economic and social stratification systems and the deliberate incorporation of the education system, as an active agency and as a message system, into this social transition” (6).

The educational system is profoundly affected by societal transition, but then after a certain period of adjustment is able to assert control over itself and influence other sectors of society. Thus Cowen views education as both an active and a re-active participant in societal transition (ibid.). His definition also emphasizes the uncertainty that underlies transitional educational systems; one can't be sure exactly how it all turns out when one is in the midst of the process of transition.

What these four approaches to understanding educational transition share is their focus on what motivates and guides it, and which influences carry more weight on a shifting landscape. Because the relationship between education and the rest of society is so complex, there are countless feedback mechanisms that allow education to affect other institutions and vice versa. However, there are certain factors which weigh heavily on the path that transition will take and which should be investigated more fully. Specifically, attention must be paid to the political context of transition in Poland – the move from a Communist to a democratic government – in order to understand where it began and where it is headed.

B. Transitions from authoritarian to democratic systems

Transitions from authoritarian to democratic systems share some general features with other kinds of transitions, but are characterized by some unique features as well. Rather than being the result of a violent revolution led by a small number of people, movements against communist rule in Eastern Europe developed gradually over many years. Anti-communist activism was fueled to a great extent by the inability of communist rulers to either create and maintain a material reality that lived up to the promises of socialism, or to support institutions

that served the social and spiritual needs of their subjects (Bauman 1994; Bryant & Mokrzycki 1994). Both of these shortcomings of communism as a political ideology were reflected in the educational systems of communist countries, and are described by Lewowicki (1997) as two of the main problems that must be overcome by post-communist reforms.

Because neo-liberal discourse is so dominant, a great deal of literature on the subject of educational transition as an extension of, or at least closely related to, political transformation. Recent research into educational transition focuses to a great extent on the events occurring since the end of communist rule in the former eastern bloc countries moving from authoritarian, centralized rule to more democratic modes of governance, changes which are usually also accompanied by a shift from communist/socialist to capitalist economic systems. Cézar Birzea (1994) was one of the first to focus his attention on educational transition in Eastern Europe and to attempt to create a theory that could be used to analyze the events occurring there. Birzea's work demonstrates how early research into educational transition in Eastern Europe was heavily influenced by political and economic models, and was seen by many as simply a dependent on changes occurring in those areas. But Birzea's work is valuable for this study in particular because he acknowledges the role that history and historical consciousness plays in educational transition. Because his work is so seminal to the field, it will be summarized in fairly close detail.

Birzea (1994): initial attempts at conceptualization

Birzea defines four dimensions of transition from authoritarian to democratic rule: the actual transition from one economic and political system to another, the effect that this transition has on the society, the attempts to interpret this transition in historical perspective, and the way that society learns to adapt to the new order (9). First, the transition from a totalitarian society to an open society – “two asymmetrical and mutually incompatible models”

(12) – occurred in Eastern Europe in a relatively short amount of time, but did not proceed at the same pace in all areas of society. Political and constitutional reforms, he says, were introduced fairly quickly in comparison to economic and social reforms (which take several years) or moral and educational reforms (which take decades). Reform does not proceed at the same pace in all arenas because a certain amount of stability must be attained before reform can safely proceed, but also because legal reforms requiring a small group of change actors can be passed through significantly faster than can other reforms that require the participation of hundred or even thousands of people. Economic reforms in particular took time because of enormous foreign debt, dependence on the Soviet Union for energy supplies, and foreign trade structures geared to serve the controlled markets of the Comecon⁴ rather than to open market competition (Birzea 1994, 14, after Tyson 1991). However, there were short-term reforms of educational systems immediately following the fall of Communist regimes to bring the schools to some degree in line with the new political order.

In the wake of such widespread change comes a state of *anomie*, a term introduced by Emile Durkheim in his 1893 work *The Division of Labor in Society* to describe how change affects both the individual and institutions. As defined by Durkheim, *anomie* is

“the situation individuals find themselves in when the social rules guiding their existence lose their force, become mutually incompatible or, under the impact of certain social changes, have to be replaced by others. Since the individual always needs a stable social framework in order to feel secure, when this changes too abruptly without immediately being replaced by another, a moral vacuum is created. This is expressed by a state of axiological disorientation and affective insecurity, by lack of perspective, by anxiety about the future and by certain types of deviant and erratic behavior” (Birzea 1994, 15-16).

⁴ Established in 1949, the Council for Mutual Economic Aid, or Comecon, was a centrally-planned economic partnership which eventually included Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, East Germany, Vietnam, Cuba, Mongolia, and the USSR. Comecon was intended to aid partner countries in developing their economies in a mutually supportive environment. Comecon was replaced in 1991 with the Organization for International Economic Cooperation, which continues to offer advice and support to member countries now functioning in the free market.

Birzea believes that the causes of post-communist *anomie* are all linked in some way to the sudden release of state control over all aspects of life without immediate replacement of that control by other forces. Citizens, used to the support and protections of the state, were left feeling abandoned, lost, and vulnerable (17). In many cases old, familiar structures were disappearing, but were not being replaced with anything, or were being replaced by insufficient or unstable alternatives. **People begin to look back toward the past, not because it was better, but because it was stable and predictable.** Older social and political ideologies such as nationalism, which had been suppressed in communist times by the rhetoric of proletarian internationalism, may re-emerge during times of *anomie* as an expression of social cohesion lacking in the transition society (Anweiler 1992). Lastly, old and new structures were suddenly coexisting side-by-side: people wanted freedom but didn't know how to exercise it; they wanted capitalist-style wealth but aren't willing to work and take the chances inherent in the market system; they wanted free elections but did not vote, or they wanted to own things but not liberalize prices (Birzea 1994, 17-18).

Szkudlarek (1994) also mentions two basic ways that societies struggling with *anomie* attempt to create meaning for themselves in the form of new identities: scapegoating and discursive hegemony (132). Through finding scapegoats, local communities and politicians striving for power in Poland are using "others" – often Jews, but also foreigners of various sorts – as a source of unity. This tendency to try to define oneself in opposition to some other is part of "the drive for discursive hegemony", a movement to differentiate oneself or one's party from others in the quest for political power, and thus control the dominant discourses (ibid.). While the major political parties seek to define themselves in opposition to both the recent past and each other, more marginalized political groups – such as nationalists, the Catholic church, European integrationists – fill the discursive void by offering more cohesive platforms that appeal to a public striving for stability and clearly defined identities.

To overcome *anomie*, societies struggle to understand their new realities and what forces brought them to this state of affairs. Change is not unnatural in and of itself. As Birzea points out, the history of human civilization is the history of continuous movement and change, which is motivated by contradictions that urge societies towards the next stage of development. But what motivated this particular change at this particular time? Birzea enumerates five historical interpretations of transitions out of communism that were popularized during the early 1990s, each of which posits a slightly different source of inspiration for change and thus a different direction in which change may proceed. Each of these interpretations of the transition from communism serves as a basis for different views on how educational transition in turn should be conceived.

B. The end of communism as...

The end of communism according to Birzea (1994) can be understood as: the end of history, the return to history, post-industrial convergence, the diversion of modernity, or integration into the modern global system. The first of these, *the end of communism as the end of history*, comes from Francis Fukuyama in his book *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992). According to Fukuyama, Western-style democracy is the goal of universal social and political development, so the transition from Communism to democracy is natural and inevitable. In this model, the Western democracies with their superior knowledge and experience have an important role to play as models of democratic governance and advisors to nascent democracies. Thus reformers are encouraged to borrow or seek inspiration from other nations when rebuilding their own educational institutions.

Another interpretation which has a strong following among some educators in Poland is that of *the end of communism as the return to history*. According to this view, communism is an aberration that diverted Eastern European nations from their proper courses of development.

Now these nations are returning to an “historical normality” (20) which is rooted in the history of specific societies. In this interpretation, foreign nations should play less of a role in advising post-communist societies. New democracies must look to their own traditions and history for inspiration and continuity.

The third interpretation of the end of communism is that of *post-industrial convergence*. According to this Leninist theory, the establishment of a thoroughly industrialized society is the goal of modernity. Once industrial society is accomplished, the communist system could relax, become more flexible, and join with other industrial nations of the world. This particular view is perhaps the least popular of the six, since events since 1989 have demonstrated the untenability of the communist system as it functioned in Eastern Europe. Birzea stresses that communism went away not because it realized industrialization and merged into a universal post-industrial society, but because it simply didn’t work (ibid.).

The fourth interpretation of the end of communism is *the diversion of modernity*. The Soviet system accelerated modernization too fast, so that even though it quickly industrialized and became a global superpower, socially and politically it remained pre-modern for all intents and purposes. Thus the goal of the post-communist transition is to return to the modernization process that communism interfered with (21). This model also requires new democracies to look back to their own histories and create new ideals that complement their beliefs and traditions. This understanding of the post-communist condition compliments the *return to history* interpretation, and adds to it a more critical assessment of the past. The past is revered, yet flawed; it can inspire the work of the present but cannot supply all of the answers to current questions.

Lastly, the end of communism can also be understood as an *integration into the modern global system* (22). Communism in this view was an imbalance in the world system that underwent a natural and expected correction, thus bringing communist nations into the global

sociopolitical and economic mainstream. In this last model, new democracies must catch up to and adapt to a world already moving properly toward the future, and will initially be in a dependent position vis-à-vis more mature democracies.

These differing interpretations offered by Birzea attempt to account for why post-communist societies have not developed the same way or at the same pace, since each serves as a slightly different starting point for a re-conceptualization of national educational models and the principles that support them. Reformers in former Soviet-bloc nations must ask themselves: Do we look backward or forward? Outward or inward? Can we do both? How will we define ourselves vis-à-vis the rest of Europe and the world? The answers to these questions are not the same for every nation, not even for all reform actors within each nation. Most importantly for this study, Birzea emphasizes that educational transition occurs as part of the ongoing historical development of a nation. To ignore the role of the past in transitions is to lose touch with the source of people's beliefs and attitudes, and to deny the explanatory power of historical context.

Wolfgang Mitter (1992) expands on the question of why post-communist societies have not developed in the same way, noting that Eastern Europe was not and is not a very uniform or homogeneous place (15). Far from being monolithic, the Eastern bloc countries displayed much variation in how their political and educational authorities implemented the socialist model of schooling during the communist era. Differences may be attributed to a number of factors: the speed of development of the socialist model; the dominant religion of the region; the nature of that country's relationship with Moscow; the degree of industrialization present during the formation of socialist system of schooling; and the specific “historical antecedents” of individual educational systems, which affected pedagogy, content, and amount of compulsory schooling (17-18). In particular, those countries with a more fully developed educational system before the Communist period, such as Poland and Hungary, as well as those that had higher degrees of industrialization, such as Czechoslovakia, tended to exhibit more autonomy

vis-s-vis the Soviet Union and the Marxist-Leninist model of education. After the fall of the communism in the late 1980s and early 1990s, we do see some similarities partnered with significant variation across societies with respect to schooling. All favored “a removal of all indoctrinating pressures” as well as a devolution of decision making power over education, but the governing and funding structures which took the old ones’ places vary greatly (21).

Once education becomes the focus of transition, changing ideologies begin to have educational consequences. What is required of educational transition is a re-definition of educational goals and principles that are compatible with and supportive of the new social order(s), be it of liberalism, nationalism, Christian democracy, social democracy, traditionalism, populism, fundamentalism, or any number of other guiding ideologies. Once some form of educational organization is decided on by the state, that organization is outlined in educational legislation. Such initial “transition laws”, however, are by nature, temporary; they are created as a way to keep the educational system functioning without making permanent or long-range changes (Birzea 1994, 69). More complete restructuring of the educational system, if it occurs at all, is implemented once the transition is over, and relative stability is re-established. As Birzea notes, “reform is the instrument, not the aim, of transition” (70). In other words, the ultimate goal is not just to change the educational system for some random reason. The goal is to find stability in the new order. Reform is carried out in the hopes of reaching the final stage of transition.

C. McLeish (1998): political frameworks

Elizabeth McLeish (1998), unlike Birzea, focuses more on the role that politics plays in educational transitions in countries moving from communism to democracy. She purposely excludes a deeper examination of economics as they relate to educational transitions because the effects of economics on educational transition vary significantly from country to country.

Economic factors are relevant, she says, but only indirectly (13). Political transition should be investigated more closely because it precedes educational transition, and also because educational transition is so clearly rooted in political transition (14).

Rather than exploring how politics affects the actual content of education, McLeish focuses her attentions on democratic political principles as they relate to the building of democratic educational institutions. It isn't enough for the end result of educational transition to be a democratically-governed and organized system; it is also important how those institutions are created: "The greater the degree of democratisation which characterises the mode of transition employed, the more legitimate the end-product of that transition process and hence the more likely its long-term success" (15). Thus democratic education is not a *fait accompli* once democratic political institutions are in place; care still must be taken to be sure that authoritarian methods are not relied on to reach democratic goals. Kapron & Stephan (1991) similarly note that

"Involvement of the educated public in directing the reform process has been sought mainly for three reasons. First, the advice of experts in science/technology and incorporate economic management provides the technical/rational principles for much of the content of the reform. Second, recommendations from various groups directly involved in education ensure that certain pedagogical and administrative principles are followed.... Third, inviting the participation of the general public satisfies the liberal-democratic principle and thereby politically legitimates the reform" (320-321).

However, Kapron & Stephan make an additional distinction that McLeish does not: "In terms of general public participation, reformers have to ensure that this consensus [concerning national ideology, allocation of rewards, the legitimacy of the social hierarchy, etc.] is achieved or at least appears to have been achieved" (321). In other words, they feel that democratic participation in education reform does not necessarily have to be real; it is enough that the public perceive the reform to be the result of public participation and decentralized decision making.

D. Bray & Borevskaya (2001): Economic frameworks

Unlike McLeish and Kapron & Stephan, Bray & Borevskaya (2001) focus their attentions on the economic aspects of educational transition. Drawing on the theoretical literature on transitions from socialist to capitalist economic systems, Bray & Borevskaya (2001) enumerate those theories' shared characteristics. First, transitions from socialism to capitalism negatively impact educational opportunity (346). One of the primary objectives of socialist education is equal education for all, meaning the same goals are to be attained, and the same curricula and textbooks are to be used by all. Private schools were usually not allowed. While this principle of equality was not perfectly put into practice everywhere in communist Eastern Europe, the disparity between the most and least privileged members of socialist society was small compared to that in capitalist countries. When socialist state subsidy of schools is replaced by a more market-driven, locally-funded system, disparities between rural and urban areas, among different regions, and among different social classes increase substantially. The move to capitalism causes a shift in the meaning of public education, from serving the collective to serving the individual. In the free market, everything is commodified, including education (Apple 1995). Privatization spreads to education, allowing even state institutions to charge fees for books and tuition, which further hinders the ability of the less well-off to afford education. In reaction to the family having to take more financial responsibility for their children's schooling, enrollments often drop because families can't afford to have their children in school when those children could be working to support their families (Bray & Borevskaya 2001, 347).

Second, the move to capitalism also causes a shift in the organizational structure of public education: decision-making power is decentralized and devolved to allow for more local control over the content and funding of education. The reasons for this decentralization may vary, however. On the one hand, the state may decentralize as a result of the need to be more

flexible to the needs of the people, and to allow for more local control over education as is fitting in a democratic state. On the other hand, decentralization may also be the result of the need to pass the heavy burden of financing schooling away from the state that during the transitional period may no longer be able to carry. Generally speaking, transitions from socialism to capitalism cause the quality of education to deteriorate (ibid.). There is also ample evidence that economic transition in Poland impoverished public education for the first several years of the transition (Bartz & Kullas 1993; Krajewska 1995). For example, local educational officials, who were given fiscal control over kindergartens in the early 1990s, closed many of them (Janowski 1992, 55). Balanced against other, seemingly more pressing needs, education was less of a priority.

E. Effects of democratic transition on teachers

This tendency for democratization (in its Western model) to increase inequality while decreasing quality of education is but one reason why transitions can be so traumatic and unwelcome. By extension, the reform efforts that are put forth to ease transition and create a new educational order are not always embraced by all parties involved. Teachers, for instance, are in a unique position during educational transitions. The same *anomie* that strikes transitional societies as a whole also strikes teachers in regards to what their roles are in the changing work environment, what values and principles guide their work, and what the goals of teaching are. Until the new guidelines for their work are laid out, teachers are forced to make due with what materials and knowledge they possess in order to cope with the shifting uncertainties of their jobs.

Weiler, et al. (1996) describe the situation of East German teachers after the reunification of Germany, noting how persistent older methods and values are in the new reality: "...[T]eachers heavily borrow from their past experience and traditional assumptions in

order to fill the gaps and make sense of the systemic markers that communicate the new institutional shell” (107). The teachers profiled by Weiler, et al. easily sloughed off their socialist mantles at the end of the communist era, but on the other hand stressed “continuity over change with regard to their values and teaching styles” (110). In East Germany, the chosen method of reforming the educational system was “recreation of one school system in the likeness of another one [that of West Germany] with all its good and bad sides. ... Reforming teaching methods...is still on the back burner” (112). Weiler, et al. also found that classroom practice was “remarkably resistant to institutional change, particularly if it is imposed from above with little participation from crucial change agents at school sites” (108). Teachers often end up being the reluctant recipients of reforms necessitated by transition, and are unlikely to be involved in the formulation of transitional programs, materials, or curricula whose implementation teachers are more likely to hinder than help (Kaser & Phillips 1992).

Besides the fact that teachers are often left out of reform planning, there is another reason why they may be reluctant to embrace new models. Lewowicki (1997) draws attention to a tendency among Polish teachers (though not unique to them) to reject new ideas in education out of a general lack of belief in the efficacy of large-scale reform (137). Teachers who made the transition from the communist to the post-communist era carry with them the memory of massive reform measures that promised much but resulted in little or no improvement in educational achievement or quality. For many teachers, there is little reason to think that this new round of reforms will be any different. This problem is not limited only to post-communist nations like Poland (Kozakiewicz 1992); teachers who have seen educational fads and fixes come and go in other places show similar attitudes (Weintraub 2000). Thus, the reform projects instigated in transitional societies may be rejected not simply on the basis of their quality or content, but rather because of a general distrust and rejection of the new. However, this is not to say that educational reforms ushered in during the immediate post-communist period weren't

flawed in some way, and that those flaws – overly ambitious pedagogical goals and lack of teacher support and adequate financial investment – did not also affect how teachers reacted to proposed changes.

F. Reform during transitions: unique challenges

One of the most consistent characteristics of initial post-communist educational plans was their reactivity (rather than their pro-activeness). In other words, the new models were often reactions against the past rather than carefully thought out, empirically-tested programs (Anweiler 1992, 37). This reactivity could be expressed in different ways. In some cases, the best way to turn away from the communist educational past was the whole-hearted embracing of Western models of education, which can be problematic for both cultural (the underlying ideology of the imported model may clash with native values regarding education) and economic (the new model may require greater expenditures at the local level, or from individuals who cannot afford the costs of education for their children) reasons.

In other cases, the content of and principles guiding the new educational model were defined solely in terms of their opposition to the previous regime. With their emphases on unique national language and cultural heritage, native traditions of education that pre-date the imposition of communist rule may also be used as models for post-communist educational systems. The drawback to this latter method is that circa-1930s educational principles may not be appropriate to the needs of a nation at the beginning of the 21st century, where geopolitical relationships and concepts of statehood and European union have developed far beyond the more parochial ideals of the past. Anweiler (1992) notes that these two different trends – borrowing from abroad and mining native traditions – can exist in the same system, and often do; while vocational and professional education could look to Western models that functioned

in a free-market economy, humanistic education could look to traditional native models to continue the moral aspects important in society (38).

G. Educational transitions: summary

There are those who claim that despite the multitude of theories out there, there isn't a single one that can adequately explain all cases of educational transition, or that can allow transitions in two different societies to be meaningfully compared (Bray & Borevskaya, 2001). Carnoy & Samoff (1990) agree, asserting in the conclusion to their volume on educational change that "each transition is set in a particular historical and cultural context, with its own process of change and conflict, conditioned by its ... history, its geopolitical situation, its physical size, and its available resources. Global similarities are rooted and shaped in national and historical uniqueness" (361).

While the theories summarized above suggest that a truly unified theory of educational transition may not be attainable, there are many others who would not agree. Those who focus on what is held in common by most modern societies – namely institutions and the role of people in conceiving of and implementing reform – may be counted among the ranks of dissenters. Perhaps it is by turning more attention on the people who are engaged in educational transition, their attitudes and beliefs, and the ways in which those attitudes affect the creation and implementation of educational reform that we can come closer to a more broad-ranging theory of change in times of transition. In doing so, we may come to understand more profoundly the relationship between how ideals are articulated into action, how policy becomes practice, and how education can be changed for the better.

In order to delve more deeply into the abovementioned relationships, it would be useful to move from general principles to more specific situations. When communist rule came to an end in Poland in 1989, the set of philosophical principles around which Polish society, its

economy, its legal and educational systems were built became quite suddenly obsolete. Some school subjects – mainly the humanistic studies, including history – simply could no longer continue to be taught as they had been. Perhaps no other school subject required as profound a redefinition of content, organization, and purpose as did school history. It is for this reason that history education is an ideal lens through which to view the process of educational transitions and to get a clearer picture of the political, ideological, moral, and philosophical issues at stake.

II. History and History Education in Transition

“The end of ideology, it seems, has been overtaken by a new war of ideologies.”

(Graff 1999, 146)

In order to lay the foundations for an investigation into the path of history education reform in Poland, it is appropriate to begin with the field of history itself, and to what the teaching and learning of history are intended to accomplish. If asked to define what history is, many people would probably offer a simple statement such as: “history is the study of the past”. But ask a historian, a history educator, and a student of high school history the same question, and the responses are likely to be quite varied. History does not mean the same thing to everyone, which suggests that the study of the past is a bit more complex an undertaking than it may seem at first. Fundamental questions must be answered: Is history absolute or relative? Is there a “real” or “true” history out there somewhere that eludes us, or is historical truth in the eye of the beholder? Is the study of history valuable in and of itself, or does it only become valuable if it serves another purpose? Is history a science, or is it in the end primarily a moral enterprise? Do we teach it to perpetuate ideologies and beliefs, or to develop in the minds of students a set of skills and abilities? Are school history and academic history mutually exclusive? Is it possible that history is all of these things simultaneously?

Academic history – the purview of historians and professional scholars – is riven by several conflicts over method, purpose, and conceptual understanding. Traditional academic history, founded primarily on 19th century principles of Comte, Darwin, Marx, Hegel, and Ranke, is rooted in the assumption that historical study, if done properly, is an objective, scientific search for what really happened in the past. On the other hand, postmodern historical models of the 20th century assume that there is no one interpretation of the past that is more or less authoritative than any other, and that the past can never be known “as it really happened” because historical interpretation is unavoidably subjective. Reflecting this subjective/objective dichotomy at the academic level, school history taught in the traditional fashion in many Western countries tends to present a finished view of history which promotes the acceptance of established values and continuity of the status quo. Conversely, history education in the postmodern, multicultural mold values the search for multiple perspectives, inquiry into historical evidence and the constant, critical evaluation and revision of historical claims. With such divergent, seemingly mutually-exclusive methods and purposes for studying and teaching history, one wonders whether it is possible to define any aspects of history and history education that are universal. Indeed, it may be useful to define history and history education in order to truly begin to understand the difficult nature of the history reformers' work in Poland in the 1990s.

A. What is History?

Perhaps the best place to start defining “what history is” is by elucidating what it is *not*. Husbands (1996), for example, draws a clear distinction between *history* and *the past*. The past, he says, consists of events and experiences of people in the past, while history consists of the “meanings, shapes and understandings” that we have about the past and our own experiences (44-45). The past is something to which we apply our own “grand narratives” – history – in

order to serve some purpose in the present (45). Appleby, et al. (1994), agree, noting that “[b]ecause historical accounts always explain the meaning of events in terms relevant to the immediate audience, curiosity about the past is inextricably bound up in the preoccupations of the present. The past as an object will be read differently from one generation to another” (265). History, therefore, is something that connects people and events in order to create meaning, but is always more than simply an account of “what happened.” History is also something that doesn’t simply exist in isolation from people; history is written by people for an audience that will – one hopes – gain some sort of historical understanding.

In a similar vein, *Husbands* also draws a distinction between *history* and *story*. Traditionally, the former has been understood as representing truth, facts, and logic, while the latter exists in the realm of fiction, untruths, and emotion (46). More recently, however, postmodern historians have begun to acknowledge the value of “storied” history to encourage creative thinking and different ways of thinking about and organizing the past (47). History, like stories, is relayed for reasons, whether stated or unstated, and is told in particular ways depending on the audience for whom it is intended. Drawing connections between history and story also brings into relief the role of the narrative voice in history, the selectivity inherent in telling a story, the role of the listener, and the overall purpose of telling stories, i.e. the theme or message.

Unlike *Husbands*, Appleby et al. (1994) discuss perceptions of narratives, their role in the telling of history, and why stories are so appealing. Appleby et al. assert that while traditional-minded historians may defend narratives as a form of presentation specific to and appropriate for the field of history, those who champion alternative forms (social history, postmodern history, etc.) “tend to demean narrative as an unsophisticated form of writing about the past or as simply another version of fiction camouflaged as history” (231). Meta-narratives, also known as grand narratives, are “grand schema[s] for organizing the interpretation and

writing of history", and are also problematic (232). Though these grand stories can be useful in creating cohesion and meaning to events over time, postmodernists argue that meta-narratives, just like smaller narratives, are "inherently ideological" fictions that can be used to control and manipulate (ibid.). In such a negative view, narratives are equivalent to propaganda, and are especially insidious when unleashed on an unsuspecting public: "Narrative and critical thinking are incompatible" (233).

There are also those who feel that meta-narratives are a myth, narratives are propaganda, and stories are simply part of the myth that history is somehow necessary in order for one to be considered knowledgeable (ibid.). Appleby et al.'s view is more mediated. They feel that even if narratives do not describe reality with perfect accuracy, they are "essential both to individual and social identity," and there are some narratives that are better than others because they come closer to reality than others (235). We cannot in the end do without historical narratives and meta-narratives because they "are the kinds of stories that make action in the world possible. They make action possible because they make it meaningful" (236). This is what accounts for the enduring appeal of historical narratives, even in the face of criticism: "The human intellect demands accuracy while the soul craves meaning. History ministers to both with stories" (262).

Another distinction made is the difference between *history* and *memory*. Ziółkowski (2000) defines memory as "the uses that the contemporary generation makes of the memory," which is quite similar to how Husbands (1996) defined history. Collective memory – a set of beliefs about the past that are part of social consciousness – shares many characteristics with history, despite its less formal organization. Collective memory is a concept often discussed among Polish sociologists and historians because for large portions of Poland's past – especially when national sovereignty was curtailed under Soviet supremacy or even non-existent in the 19th century – collective memory of the past competed with formally sanctioned, official

versions of history and perpetuated understandings that otherwise could have been lost. Indeed, the communist governments of Eastern Europe took great pains to eradicate national memory (Wirth 2000, 35).

According to Ziółkowski (2000), historical memory – particularly the restored collective memory of much of Central and Eastern Europe – is used in several ways: to restore lost knowledge; to reflect on concept of normality as it is understood by different generations; as the basis for evaluating the present; and as a basis for present action (291). He notes that those who study collective memory sometimes make a distinction between what really happened in the past (history), and the way that a society uses ideas and beliefs about the past to serve present-day needs (memory). This collective memory, it is claimed, is not the same as history, but it is related to history education in that it influences the way that people perceive of and understand the past. Thus, memory is only partially determined by the past; it is “... to a large extent linked with current particular interests and conflicts of interest” (292). Jerzy Maternicki, in writing about the unique problems inherent in teaching contemporary history, describes aspects of contemporary history in much the same terms that Ziółkowski describes collective memory as a whole: as a non-scientific reconstruction of the past that exists in the social realm (Maternicki 1998, 292).

Szacka (1990) is more explicit than Ziółkowski in defining the relationship between history and memory. The contents of collective memory are socially determined, organized, and institutionalized; they are derived from social experience and passed on via interpersonal communication. “History,” she says, “is a *type* of collective memory of the past, which evolves in a specific type of society, with a specific culture, in an identifiable point in time” (120, emphasis mine). The difference between history and memory in Szacka’s interpretation is more a matter of formality than anything else. Academic history is a distinct entity because it has a system of norms and a specific methodology, but still may include elements of collective

memory (ibid.). Szacka denies that history and memory are the same, but also denies the other extreme, that history and memory are completely distinct. The reason why it is so hard to find the boundary between them is because they are interconnected; collective memory needs historical knowledge, while historians often draw on certain aspects of collective memory when writing history (122).

According to Szacka (1990), memory does more than just transmit norms and legitimize power relations; it also serves to create and define group identity:

"Awareness of the group's shared past means awareness of shared existence in time, shared fate and shared ancestors. ... This symbolic language is one of the group's markers and the ability to use this language renders the individual a fully legitimate group member. It is also a set of identification tags which help distinguish between 'us' and 'not us'.... All this explains why the shape which memory of the past should take is and must be disputed in every society, though with varying intensity and varying degrees of overtness. Both the *what* and the *how* to remember are the matter of dispute. Not even the most democratic state can bypass this dispute. ... Even liberal and democratic states control the past and impose their own interpretations on it" (124).

Wineburg's (2000) conclusions regarding how everyday people use historical memory to learn history complement Szacka's, as do those of Wirth (2000), who notes that historians themselves not only draw on memory as a resource for historical research, but that they also contribute to memory in their historical work (34). All of these scholars recognize the subjective nature of history and the difficulties inherent in attempts to separate history, memory, and the past among both practitioners of history and others who control its dissemination.

What is important for our understanding of memory and the use of the past is what social purpose the past serves in the present. The fact that collective memory within a society is not the same for everyone – that it can be a point of contention as well as a source of unity – is not acknowledged by either Ziółkowski or Szacka. Wirth (2000), on the other hand, does acknowledge this, stressing that “memory is plural – ethno-linguistic groups, socio-professional

groups, religious groups and the like all have memories” (36). So just as memory can serve as a unifying source of social cohesion, so too can it serve as a disjunctive force that brings views and beliefs into conflict.

Lastly, to return to the original question of “what is history?”, it is clear that this is indeed more complex a query than it first appears to be. This question becomes that much more involved once we pose it in the context of the school, a place where historical study and the methodologies that give history definition come into conflict with those who believe that history is valuable only insofar as it serves some purposes beyond those of history as a scholarly discipline. If we go one step further, and ask “What is history?” in the context of transition as this study does, we begin to see how complicated is the task of history education reform. In such a relatively unstable social and political environment, what principles do reformers appeal to in order to define a purpose for teaching and learning history? Any stability that the political status quo may once have offered is gone, and the future is even more uncertain than is usually the case. School history under communist rule was closely associated with the political system, and once that system fell, and before another took its place, many looked to other places, as well as to other types of history, for inspiration and guidance. Whether this is a positive development is not the issue here, but what is important is to investigate how school history is different from other kinds of history and what the ramifications of adopting other historical models in the educational context may be.

B. School history versus other kinds of history

If school history works to its ideal potential, it can “shape the consciousness which guides social change over the next generation” (Seixas 2000, 23). However, deciding on what that consciousness will consist of is both politically and ideologically contentious. According to Maternicki (1995), what primarily distinguishes school history in contemporary societies from

the other types of history education is its highly institutionalized form, a characteristic attributable to the relatively strong control the state has over its content. Maternicki (1995) also gives five kinds of goals of school history – *cognitive, instructive, moral, ideological, and political-propagandistic* – which serve to define the content, organization, and pedagogical approach to the teaching of history in schools. Though a single school history program may be able to fulfill several of these goals simultaneously, there is often one goal that is regarded as relatively more important than the others depending on what the desired outcomes are. For example, identifying the development of critical thinking skills above all necessitates placing cognitive goals ahead of, and often in direct opposition to, all others.

In the communist system of education which existed in Poland before 1989, moral, ideological, and political goals were the most important in the eyes of the state; cognitive goals primarily benefiting the individual were subordinated to those goals that benefited the state and the needs of society (as also defined by the state). The history taught in schools is meant to realize a defined vision of civic, social, and patriotic education in line with current political trends and propagandistic goals, and thus the state has a vested interest in maintaining some degree of control over it (ibid., 155). The moralistic qualities of school history partnered with the interests of the state in promoting ideals supportive of the state in schools emphasize the instrumental possibilities of school history to realize goals external to the teaching and learning process itself (i.e. beyond cognitive goals of learning).

When one prevailing set of interests is intended to be served above all other interests, the teaching of school history can sometimes cross the boundary into indoctrination. Haavelsrud (1979) offers a theoretical distinction between politicization in a school context and indoctrination. While the former is usually understood as a good thing associated with truth, reason, and dialogue, the latter is perceived as a bad thing associated with a lack of perspective and the illusion of unproblematic consensus (68). Indoctrination, he continues, happens when

subjective interpretation is presented as objective truth, with no room for alternative views or acknowledgement that consensus doesn't actually exist. Indoctrination, in other words, is what happens when dialogue stops (81). Nord (1995) agrees, defining indoctrination as occurring whenever students are "socialized to accept, uncritically, some ... way of understanding the world rather than another" (14). Thus indoctrination, so often assumed to be an innate characteristic of totalitarian educational systems, can by definition occur wherever – including in the United States and other liberal democracies – history is presented as finished product, a set of information to be believed and memorized rather than analyzed and critiqued, or a rigid political value system, regardless of what those values actually espouse.

C. Understanding versus belief in history education

Haavelsrud's distinction of politicization and indoctrination draws attention to how both the content and the methodology of teaching history depend heavily on assumptions about the purpose history is to serve in schools. There are a number of ways that one may define the conflicts that exist in regards to history education. One particularly controversial point of contention is whether history education should primarily be used to promote critical understanding, or should it instead be used to promote unquestioned belief. One way to conceptualizing this difference is by contrasting history with *heritage*. Heritage is "the use of the past to support or oppose interests in the present. It is not subject to critique but it held as 'a dogma of roots and origins that must be accepted on faith'" (quoted in Seixas 2000, 24, after Lowenthal 1997). According to this understanding, heritage is unapologetically *targeted*, i.e. it has a definite goal in mind, such as instilling pride about the past in a nation's young generation. History is often used instrumentally in this way in educational contexts to promote a particular national or other group identity, patriotism, or a sense of civic responsibility.

History as heritage can be problematic for several reasons. For example, what being patriotic means, or what the “nation” actually consists of, are problematic concepts. Nash, et al. (1997) note that there are, in America at least, two distinct interpretations of what being patriotic means vis-à-vis history education. There are those who believe that school history that focuses on the negative events in the nation’s past is unpatriotic (as are the historians who write such history), for they are encouraging students to hate their heritage, thus undermining national cohesion. Arthur Schlesinger’s *The Disuniting of America* (1992) is a classic example of this mindset. Those who feel this way prefer to see a more grandiose and positive version of history taught to children, the kind of history that instills pride and faith in the country and its leaders.

On the other hand there are those who believe that it is only by being truthful about the sins of the past can a nation’s youngest generation truly be considered informed citizens who can fulfill their civic duties. In his book *Lies My Teacher Told Me* (1995), James Loewen argues that if anything, lying to schoolchildren about their nation’s history is what is more likely to lead them to turn away from national pride and patriotism later in life. Their disillusionment upon discovering the “truth” about history in a college setting, where a more critical view of history is more commonly taught, often causes many to begin to doubt other things that they were taught, and to cultivate a cynical view towards the voices of authority. Loewen's more critical view of school history as it is traditionally taught tends to place more importance on the cognitive skills that students can acquire through historical study, abilities of critical thinking and analysis that will allow students to be more questioning of traditional ideological narratives, and thus by definition, better citizens.

Many historians feel, however, that history should not be used instrumentally this way, but rather should be objective, with no particular group benefiting more than others. History, an objectivist may say, is a formal area of study which has rules that define the way it is practiced, what kind of evidence is appropriate, and how that evidence can be interpreted. Using

Lowenthal's (1997) distinctions, it is clear that much school history falls closer to the "heritage" side than on the "history" side anytime students are force-fed facts to memorize rather than presented with evidence for analysis (Seixas 2000, 24). History as heritage becomes a matter of belief rather than an intellectual endeavor. Unlike collective memory, which as defined previously, may be used to inform the study of history, heritage in Seixas' framework is diametrically opposed to, and incompatible with, the serious study of history.

There are many who would not agree with Seixas' approach to school history, and who believe that the teaching of history in school is more than just cognitive skill building. In Poland, the teaching and learning of history in both formal and informal educational settings has played a crucial role in the perpetuation of Polish heritage, language, and traditions during times of war and occupation. There are many who are loath to dismiss the heritage model of history education, both because of its long tradition, but also because it is seen as a necessary component of national consciousness building in the present day. How else are the crucial seeds of national identity and pride to be planted? As modern Poland works to redefine itself as a nation in respect to present-day Europe and a global world, Polish cultural distinctiveness is still strongly associated with its history. This makes the struggle between understanding and belief in Polish history education that much more conflicted.

Another way to define the conflict over how and what kind of history should be taught in schools is by framing the discussion in terms of the often contentious relationship between school history and academic history. The two types of history possess very different means, goals, and methods. But there is another difference that is often overlooked. Husbands (1996) points out how there is much about academic historians and students of history that is not the same; while academic history is practiced by educated individuals with a broad range of knowledge and mature cognitive skills intending to create new knowledge, school history is none of these things. This distinction is important when considering the limitations of and

expectations for children learning history. Can children really be expected to manipulate historical evidence in the same way as an historian? Husbands notes that according to Piaget, adolescents and pre-adolescent children do not have the cognitive ability to analyze historical evidence and gain the kind of historical understanding that adults can (Husbands 1996, 15). Children can learn facts, but are not able to move beyond the facts into the realm of analysis. Thus, in terms of developmental psychology, programs that essentially expect children to learn the same way that adults do are inherently flawed.

On the other hand, there are those, including Husbands, who allow that children can indeed think about history and understand it beyond the level of simple facts, especially when aided by a skilled teacher who knows how to ask the right questions (25). Burton (2001) shows that even young children can successfully be taught to look at history in a more critical way if the curriculum and instruction are engineered properly. But even if young students of history do possess the cognitive ability to learn history by mimicking academic historical methods, there is still disagreement over whether they should.

School history also differs from academic history because of its unavoidable connection to “the social and moral purposes of education” (Husbands 1996, 65). Of course, this is not to say that academic history cannot also be targeted to support a particular set of moral views, or does not have social or moral purpose. The distinction is more one of how practitioners and learners of each type of history are assessed. Historians may be judged according to how well their work follows the agreed-upon methods of their field. In other words, it isn't on what a historian knows, but how he or she collected data and formulated an argument, that he or she is judged. Students of history are more often judged on what they know: facts, dates, accepted interpretations of historical events. Indeed, in some circles it is considered a teacher's obligation to assist in children's moral development by guiding them towards the “right” judgments, on which the children's knowledge is then judged (ibid.). This is just one example of how the

underlying assumptions of academic and school history may be incompatible, and why academic history is a problematic place to look for models for Poland's new history curriculum or expectations for a polity.

D. Understanding versus belief in history: the post-communist context

Poland's recent history complicates the conceptual frame discussed above and somewhat limits its usefulness in discussing history education reform during educational transition there. Though understanding and belief are opposed in some ways, there are other issues that blur this distinction. Maternicki (1995, 1998) asserts that one of the hallmarks of history education under communist rule is the co-existence of at least two types of history: official and unofficial. This duality complicates the opposition we have utilized up until now between understanding and belief. Wertsch (2001, 39) notes that in his study of post-socialist Estonia, he found that Estonians tended to know the official version of history (the one taught in schools) as well as, if not better than, the unofficial versions of history. Many are able to utilize facts from the older, official version of history in ways usually associated with higher-order thinking skills and complex, historical understanding (ibid.). This situation exists, despite the fact that the official version was widely regarded as false, and the unofficial versions as true. So *belief* in the veracity of historical claims and *knowledge* of those claims, at least in the case of Estonians, were not the same. Wertsch extends his concept beyond the Estonian case in order to address the problem of students elsewhere who struggle to learn a version of history in schools that they do not feel to be their own, history that is constituted of “someone else’s facts,” in order to understand better how the two concepts are related (40). In doing so, he focuses more on the cognitive aspects of learning history than on those aspects of learning history that relate to identity-building and socialization.

Wertsch makes an important distinction between *mastery* and *appropriation* of historical information. While the former denotes learning how to use something, the latter is the end result of “making something one’s own,” a process that involves an emotional element that mastery does not (42). The two concepts – mastery and appropriation – are not opposites. The opposite of appropriation is *resistance*, which occurs (as it did in the case of the Estonians and other citizens of communist nations) when one rejects emotional associations with something one is exposed to (ibid.). However, it is also important to note that Wertsch warns against reducing these processes to strictly individual experiences; there are group dynamics at work as well that necessitate additional consideration of the socio-cultural context for history learning (45). Wertsch’s study is valuable because he sheds light on an important, though often unacknowledged, fact: that learning is an emotional, as well as a cognitive, process, and that students are not blank, psychologically-passive recipients of the knowledge imparted in schools. Without better understanding of the role that emotional connections to school knowledge has in the teaching/learning process, no policy or program can accurately foresee the real results of its implementation.

Clearly there is rarely a consensus about how history should be taught, and to what purpose. There are number of reasons why this is so. First, as was demonstrated above, there are political and ideological differences among educators, historians, and other stakeholders in education which can greatly affect their opinions regarding what history education should do. Second, there are different understandings among historians of the methodological processes involved in studying history. These differences are reflected in school history as well as academic history. Third, whether the principles of academic history can appropriately be applied to school history is debatable. In the search for new models of history education in a context of educational transition, looking to other models is indeed problematic. Those other models, whether they be from academic history or from unofficial, informal forms of history,

cannot be adopted without significant adaptation to the school context, since they are not necessarily more stable or less conflicted.

Negotiating a new model for history education in Poland means coping with not only the abovementioned issues, but with others as well. If we look to issues internal to the teaching and learning process, we see that there are additional hurdles to be overcome for reformers. The lack of consensus at the political and policy-making level becomes further complicated in the classroom by the dynamic between teacher and student, as well as by the conflict between different educational goals. Though this aspect of educational reform is often overlooked by policymakers, what transpires in a classroom setting is important to a study of policy because eventually that policy must be implemented there. If the ultimate goals outlined in the policy are to be realized, the classroom context is where this occurs.

E. Conflict in the classroom

Seixas (2000) addresses what occurs in school history classrooms, and specifically what options exist for teachers faced with controversial issues and conflicting interpretations in history. He enumerates three different orientations to the teaching of history. First, there is “enhancing collective memory,” which means simply teaching “the best story as the way it happened” (20). This approach is ahistorical in that it does not follow methodological rules of historical inquiry as recognized by historians. Second, there is the “disciplinary” approach, which consists of presenting students with several versions or interpretations of historical events, and allowing them to decide which one is “better.” Seixas gives this approach this particular name because it utilizes criteria recognized in the field of history as appropriate for judging the historical soundness of an argument. Third, there is the “postmodern” approach, which allows students to not only ponder the various historical arguments already out there, but

then to also make connections between the differing versions and the purposes those versions can be put to in the present.

Third, there are also disparities in the way that students are viewed as participants in the learning process. As already noted by Maternicki (1995), students are not blank slates on which the history teacher writes the official story of national development or the accepted interpretation of world events. Students come into the classroom with some historical knowledge acquired from other sources, including the home and the media. Connected to this is the idea that students may take a more active role in accepting or rejecting what they are taught in history class, a fact which strikes at the heart of one of the most crucial assumptions in history education: that what is taught in history class is necessarily what is learned by students.

Jensen (2000) in his discussion of the findings of the *Youth and History* project⁵ makes note of this often unacknowledged problem: that teachers and students don't see eye-to-eye when it comes to why one studies history. For teachers interviewed as part of the project, the most frequently mentioned aim of history education was "to use history to explain the situation in the world today and to find out the tendencies of change" (86). On the other hand, students were most likely to define the aim of history education as gaining "knowledge about the main facts of history" (ibid.) Students also tended to rate learning about "traditions, characteristics, values and tasks of our nation and society" higher than did teachers. If the results of this project are a reliable indicator of what goes on in history classrooms, it is clear that what these teachers think they are teaching in history is not the same thing that students are taking away from the classroom. Jensen says that the fact that students do not view historical consciousness as the main goal of school history is not enough reason to completely abandon this particular goal.

⁵ Begun in 1991, the *Youth and History* project investigates the historical consciousness and political attitudes among teenagers in 27 European countries and territories. The findings of this large-scale, empirical study may be found at:
http://www.erzwiss.uni-hamburg.de/Projekte/Youth_and_History/HOMEPAGE.HTM

Instead, he simply maintains that the way that history is taught in schools needs to change. This change needs to occur in the classroom, but be supported by change at the policy level.

What Jensen and others draw our attention to are the institutional layers that all work together to connect teaching, learning, and policy. Teachers are the medium which link policy to practice, and ideals to reality. Policy creation is by its very nature a contingent enterprise. The most carefully-written, enlightened policy will not make a difference for learners if teachers do not or cannot implement it. And just as historians and policymakers have subjective beliefs about what history education is or should be, so too do teachers. In a transitional context, one must be cognizant of how the very context of transition can act on the subjective beliefs of reformers, educators, and historians. Such a profound reorientation of political, economic, and social principles cannot fail to also affect the way that history education is perceived by all involved.

F. History in transition: from authoritarianism to democracy

“Periods of transition, when the past is insistently questioned, are also times of change in value orientations and criteria of relevance which have permeated existing interpretations and historical reconstructions. The consequence is that, when professional historians, media operatives and public commentators come to revisit current reconstructions, they often find them wanting and obsolete with respect to the new issues on the agenda” (Vaudagna 2000, 9).

The end of communist rule brought about profound changes in the countries of the former Eastern bloc, and history education as it was previously taught became, almost overnight, obsolete. History education went from being completely subordinated to the ideology of Marxism-Leninism and communist international brotherhood, “...a blunt political instrument with which the enemies of the regime could be bludgeoned” (Davies 1982, 1: 15) to take on an unclear and unidentified role. The new model of history education could be used for any

number of purposes: to support the new status quo, to denounce the old status quo, to perpetuate long-forbidden national values, to propagate new values of democracy and the free market, or a combination of these ideas. What happens to history education in such a time of uncertainty and change is not always predictable, but can be better understood.

G. History as political discourse

For democratically-minded reformers, the instrumental role of history changed during the transitional period from an oppositional discourse under authoritarian rule to one of validation and acceptance of the new democratic political order. Leczyk (1998) makes the following observation:

“A consequence of social and political changes is criticism of the past and approbation, affirmation of the new reality, a process in which the field of history takes part, represented most actively by those who desire to correct or simply replace the interpretations that until recently were required with their own version that had been hidden or marginalized in the official version of history in the recent past, and that only now can manifest itself” (83).

What starts out as critical history (history that is critical of the status quo) eventually becomes approbative history once the status quo has been shattered and the former critics move into power. This “new” status quo disavows the previous regime, usually in a fairly absolutist way, i.e. the former socio-political order is repudiated completely.

Leczyk’s assertions regarding the repudiation of the recent past in Poland is supported by others. In writing about the fate of leftist history in post-socialist Poland, Lim (1997) notes that in the aftermath of communist rule, historians have tended to disregard all Marxist history, including that of native Polish leftists, as irrevocably tainted by the heavy-handed Marxist-Leninist doctrines of that period. Socialist history from native leftist sources has been bundled with the internationalist strains championed by the Soviets. As a result, much in the way of labor history and socialist movements are rejected as part of “Party history”, and not considered valid

by most (542). Grudzinska Gross (1992) also makes mention of how in the early post-socialist period, people were voting in many cases against the unknown, and for “the parties of continuity” (142). They want the restoration of some aspects of the past, those that she refers to as the “real past”. However, she states that “[t]he return to the real past appears possible only if the recent past is erased...” (ibid.). In other words, for many a return to the “real” past – the pre-communist past - means a necessary rejection of the recent, communist past.

Similarly, Birzea (1994) refers to the mindset of *the return of history*, according to which communism is seen as an aberration in the development of Eastern Europe, one that must be left behind in order to build a new future (20). Lastly, Wertsch (2001) asserts that, at least as far as Estonians are concerned,

“competing accounts stood in stark opposition as official and unofficial histories, an opposition characterized by strong resistance to the former and appropriation of the latter. We still do not fully understand the political and cultural forces that gave rise to this state of affairs, but my strong hunch is that the strict imposition of a single, tightly coherent historical narrative provided a good ‘target’ for opposition and a wellspring of alternatives. Determined, prolonged resistance to official accounts of the past... seems to have resulted in clear, if not stark, oppositions between it and unofficial histories” (47).

The danger inherent in such a situation is that the new order becomes just as absolutist as the former order that the new order replaced (Leczyk 1998, 85). Do both the nationalist historical discourse and the pro-democratic, pro-Europe historical discourse suffer from such one-sidedness? Certainly the nationalist version of history is more exclusive, more rigid, less allowing of alternative discourses to exist alongside it. The European version is, in its own way, also exclusive in that it disavows those discourses that are too limiting and do not support the pro-European point of view. Leczyk feels that critical history and approbative history are both necessary, and must exist in a balanced relationship. Too much emphasis on one or the other interferes with natural trends of change and progress, leading to stagnation (86).

H. History's "unique" place in Polish education

Though one would be hard pressed to find a nation where the purposes and content of school history are not contested in some way, the somewhat atypical historical development of the Polish nation resulted in a heavy emphasis on history education in the school curriculum at certain periods (see Chapter 4 for a more detailed summary of Polish history). Historiographers of Poland commonly note how history education has traditionally held a privileged place in Polish schooling, a fact that reflects history's importance to the larger society (Maternicki 1995; Wandycz 1992; Valkenier 1985).

When history was flourishing as a scholarly pursuit in the late 18th-early 19th century, Poland did not exist as an independent political entity. Partitioned into three areas by its expansionist neighbors beginning in 1795, Polish schools were inundated with German- and Russian-language textbooks that presented Poland as an historical failure, the proof of which could be found in its inability to exist independently. As a result, in Poland "the writing and teaching of history is not merely an academic discipline. In times of adversity, history has served as an affirmation of national values" (Valkenier 1985, 663). Wandycz (1992) shares this view: "The Polish historian had traditionally been not only a scholar but also a guide, for history as a discipline and history as national consciousness were often inseparable... [in Poland] myths accumulated and frequently established a stronger hold on people's *Weltanschauung* [philosophy of life] than the history *wie es eigentlich gewesen war* [as it truly was]" (1011). Wandycz focuses attention on the fact that there is not just one history, but rather that several different versions of history existed and still exist in Polish society. In the aftermath of communism, there are a number of alternative historical models that have manifested themselves and that fight for inclusion into the school curriculum.

Memory was used in post-communist Poland (as well as other post-communist nations) to bring what was hidden, denied, or distorted about the past back into present consciousness.

This return of collective memory after communism went through two phases. At the initial stage, the goal was to bring to light all that was forbidden, i.e. alternative views of the past that did not fit into the communist version of history, stories passed along by word of mouth, through families and communities. This initial reaction was defined in opposition to what had come before, i.e. it was strongly pro-Poland and anti-communist, in marked contrast to the previous official stance that repudiated parochial nationalism and championed communist ideals.

However, it gradually became clear that there was more to history than the black/white, thesis/antithesis interpretations could reveal. This realization ushered in the second stage of the restoration of memory, that of introducing new information and a more even-handed attempt to understand the past. This is not to say that earlier memories were erased; indeed, Ziółkowski asserts that all three perspectives – the communist, the nationalist, and the pluralist – co-exist in some form in the present (299). Though it does not specifically mention the role that memory plays in history education, Ziółkowski's (2000) thesis about the role of memory in the definition of normality can be logically extended to that realm. As school history – its content, goals and guiding principles – is redefined in the post-communist countries, collective memory competes with more scholarly versions of history for inclusion into the school curriculum, which itself serves a strong normative function. Memories of the past influence people's beliefs and attitudes about what is right and wrong, but more specifically for the purpose at hand, what school history should be, and for that reason alone ought to be considered in the study of educational change.

I. Political realities of history education

In this chapter, we have seen the numerous ways that people disagree over what history education in post-communist Poland should consist of. Some conflicts exist primarily between

educational practitioners, some between educators and non-educators, and some between educators and historians. These conflicts are distinct, yet not unrelated. Particular pedagogical models are favored by members of certain political factions, a fact which is relevant to the study of educational transition. History can be empowering. Aristotle claimed that the difference between history and poetry was that history is the story of what actually happened rather than what we wished would have happened, i.e. the realm of poetry (Southgate 1996, 14). In making this distinction, Aristotle cast light on the power that history has to define the realm of the real. Not only does it marginalize as “not real” those events that do not make it into the historical canon, but it leads us to believe that what is presented to us is necessarily “real.” Those who control the content of school history, therefore, control the official version of reality, which they may use to support particular political or ideological goals, an idea central to the writings of numerous educational commentators and postmodern scholars (Apple 1985, 1989, 1990; Anyon 1979; Stille 1998; and others.) This characteristic of school history makes the content selection process an extremely contentious one. In Poland the two primary contenders are those who desire a bare minimum of required content which allows teachers to have more control over what and how they teach, and those who desire a more expansive list of required content to ensure that the “most important” historical events and personages are not neglected by teachers.

No one type of history is necessarily more right or good than others simply by an appeal to the content, though this type of claim is often made. To insist that there is only one set of historical truths is to be naïve about the realities of historical study. Nash et al. (1997) acknowledge that interpretation is an inescapable part of writing and learning history, and that conservative calls for some sort of return to a more valid way of understanding and teaching the past is just as value-laden as any other expressed desire to see a certain kind of history taught in a certain way, be it liberal, multicultural, feminist, Afro-centric, or Marxist. Apple (2001) and Levine (1996) also stress how calls for a return to some “traditional” way of teaching history is

an ideological position that can simplify history to the point of distortion. Calls for objective approaches to history in the classroom are equally disingenuous, because such calls ignore the unavoidable subjective nature of historical study. Wrzosek (1994) notes that even the best-intentioned historian is not a *tabula rasa*, and thus historians cannot fail to ascribe to their subject matter a set of assumptions or ideas that they carry with them.

The amounts or kind of material to be mandated from the central administration is not the only point of debate. Erickson (2001) notes that the history educator must usually choose between two orientations towards the teaching of history in schools: to focus more on “the facts” or more on historical understanding. The fact-based approach to history is very much the traditional one that promotes an established way of thinking. Its proponents often argue that students need to master the facts of history before they can begin to analyze historical arguments in a meaningful way. The fact-based approach is more conservative in that facts can be limited or interpreted in limited ways by prescriptive force. In this model, school history is presented as a finished product whose contents are authoritatively defined by school textbooks. When intended for this purpose, the perceived veracity of the written word, the faux-objective tone typical of textbooks, and the institutional context of the school itself all combine to make the textbook view of history seem to the student to be the most trustworthy and the closest to the “truth” (Romanowski 1996; Wineburg 1991; Achmatowicz 1981; Luke, et al. 1983; Wade, et al. 1994).

“Historical thinking” on the other hand is a more vaguely defined goal of historical study, with the focus more on the sheer process of thinking than on any specific content to think about. Lowenthal (2000) lists five skills that are necessary to do history: *familiarity* with events and personages from the past; *comparative judgment*, i.e. the ability to use and evaluate evidence from a wide range of sources; *awareness of manifold truths*, i.e. ability to understand why there are differing interpretations of the past; *appreciation of authority*, i.e. reasoned

acknowledgement of the importance of the past; and *hindsight*, i.e. understanding that the past and the present are not the same, and that our perceptions of the past are never completely static or unchanging (64). The assumption here is that history, rather than being presented as a finished product ready for unquestioned consumption, is an ongoing investigation into multiple historical truths (Romanowski 1996). Because historical thinking is a less finite concept, it is more difficult (though not impossible) for forces external to the school to control or delimit its scope. Stressing historical and critical thinking allows the student to analyze information and make independent evaluations and conclusions, rather than reproducing a pre-existing interpretation. As Southgate (1996) phrases it, “An autonomous and critical history has always been a subject likely to challenge accepted views and to indicate alternative possibilities; it has thereby always been potentially subversive” (57). Critical historical thinking, therefore, is less typically conservative, and more likely to be championed as a goal of progressive history education.

The official goals of the reformed Polish schools echo this less conservative approach to school history. For example, according to the Ministry of Education’s 1997 pronouncement on the goals of history education for grades 7 and 8, the goal of the school is to make it possible for students:

- “to know and analyze the most important steps in the history of man, of culture, and of Poland;
- to learn the fundamentals of interpreting historical sources;
- to learn the possibility of different ways of interpreting historical sources, events and historical figures;
- to prepare for independent learning and interpretation of the past;
- to improve their abilities to answer questions orally and in written form;
- to broaden their abilities to search out, organize, utilize, and retain different kinds of information.” (MEN 1997, 12)

However, there inevitably is some discrepancy between the official definitions of educational goals, and the way in which those goals are translated into actual teaching and

learning in the classroom. Educators and other local administrators will interpret those goals according to their own beliefs, abilities, priorities, and financial capabilities. Also, even though they embody a certain democratic spirit, such pronouncements say nothing about how the content of school history will be created, or by whom. However, it is exactly this part of the reform that is of interest here.

History is many things simultaneously: “a tribunal, a healer, a legitimiser (*sic*), a source of oppositional commitment, a repository of ‘lessons’” (Vaudagna 2000, 5). As a school subject, history is at once particular and universal. It contains not only the specific values and experiences of individual nations, but it also embodies what is shared by nearly all societies: the desire to establish and perpetuate a set of values rooted in a common past that serves specific purposes in the present. Unlike other subjects such as mathematics or science, which have fairly obvious, concrete applications in the real world, school history is an important subject because of its instrumental and symbolic value. Both its contents and the way in which it is produced and taught reflect on the interests and needs of society, as well as on the way that political power is distributed among educators and other stakeholders in education. Those charged with rewriting the history curriculum in Poland in the 1990s were forced to contend with this fact, and to negotiate not only their own divergent opinions about history education, but also those from outside education. The story of the process of history education reform in Poland is above all that of the interplay between competing ideas both within and outside of the school regarding what history education is and what it can and should do.

Yet there is one more piece of the puzzle that is missing. History education requires more than just students, teachers, policies outlining goals, and curricula. It also requires materials such as textbooks whose contents are the result of the abovementioned debates. As Poland transitioned from a centralized planned economy to a capitalist one, textbooks no longer fell under the exclusive purview of the state, and became a commodity to be bought and sold as

well as the focus of more debates over history education. To consider textbooks is to consider the ways in which historical knowledge is actually produced and distributed, but such consideration introduces a new player: free market economics.

III. The textbook

"...[T]extbooks are a reflection, not a cause, of ... educational difficulties" (Flynn 1989, 74).

"What a textbook reflects is ... a compromise...." (FitzGerald 1979, 47)

"Textbooks are social products that can be examined in the context of their time, place, and function" (Anyon 1979, 361).

A. What it means to reform a textbook

As the primary vehicle for historical knowledge in schools, the history textbook is a necessary object of the attentions of history education reformers and policymakers. As Apple (1991) notes, the struggle over texts is linked to broader concerns over who should control the curriculum in schools (8). Textbooks are irrevocably tied to curricula, and thus cannot be ignored when discussing systemic reform, and the political and other interests that influence its progress.

A school textbook is many things simultaneously: a collection of knowledge, a source of authoritative information, a pedagogical tool, an economic commodity which is bought and sold. As a result, the textbook is often the center of political and ideological contestation over the answers to questions such as: What knowledge is the most important? Who gets to decide? What is the best way to teach that information? And how do we best balance quality with affordability? Many people may participate in the creation of history textbooks and textbook policy: teachers, historians, curriculum committees, special interest groups, students, parents, and politicians. Textbook publishing, the "unhappy marriage of commerce and curriculum"

(Thompson 1996, 10) allows yet another player – the free market – to influence school history, and thus by extension the content of school curriculum and the choices that teachers have when selecting materials.

Textbooks are an important object of study because of both their ubiquity and their perceived ability to provide objective facts about history that, for many people, may be the only information they learn in their lives about history (Loewen 1995, 288). The drafting of new textbook policy in the wake of significant social and political changes such as occurred in Poland demands consideration of new relationships between author, publisher, teacher, and student, and is motivated by a number of various *assumptions* regarding what textbooks are, what they should contain, and what role they play in the teaching and learning of history. To begin, let us outline the descriptive and rhetorical features of texts and textbooks, and then expand on analyses of textbooks and beliefs about textbooks from the point of view of pedagogy, politics, ideology, and economics, beliefs that all to some extent inform textbook revision and reform.

In discussing textbooks' role in educational transition, it is important to stress that a textbook is more than just what is printed within its pages; we must delve into issues of the meaning of textbooks, and how those meanings affect policy creation. Apple (1991) reminds us that we cannot assume that texts directly reflect a particular ideological position, or that they are directly linked to specific class interests. Apple states that the meaning of texts is not intrinsic to the text itself, because textbooks are what we make of them as we negotiate our way through the creation of policy and actually put them to use in the classroom. Additionally, we also cannot assume that what is in the texts is necessarily taught or learned (13). To understand textbook policy, we must understand the meaning that textbooks have (or are thought to have) for readers and the effects those meanings may have on the teaching and learning process (15).

B. Descriptive features of textbook types

Although textbooks do not look the same and are not used the same way in every school context, they all still play a major role in many history classrooms and are used fairly consistently across cultures (Luke et al. 1983, 112). In the United States, for example, textbooks also dominate the history classroom, particularly in those cases where the teacher is teaching out-of-field, and thus relies on the text as the authoritative source of historical information in much the same way that students do (Ravitch 2000; Siler 1986; Loewen 1995). In Poland, too, textbooks are still the dominant source of information in many history classrooms, and students can often receive passing grades simply through memorization and reproduction of textual materials (Suchoński 1994). The inadequate educational background of many Polish history teachers also contributes to their over-reliance on textbooks to guide teaching (ibid.). This state of affairs is an inheritance of the communist period, during which Polish educational officials preferred a centralized, standardized approach to the teaching of history to promote uniformity of instruction and belief.

Across cultures there are basically three types of school history textbooks. As enumerated by Suchoński (1994) after Maternicki (1984), *synthetic* textbook presents to the reader a finished version of knowledge intended only for acquisition. This acquisition involves not only the memorization of descriptions and "facts", but also the acceptance of generalizations, explanations, conceptualizations, and value judgments contained the text. Synthetic textbooks favor a passive attitude in the learner, who is often called upon to simply reproduce the information presented in the text without engaging his or her intellectual abilities on a deeper level. This type of textbook, however, does not and cannot fulfill the goals of the contemporary school, which requires a more critical approach to historical learning (Suchoński 1994).

A *compendium* textbook is a collection of various types of historical information, often including a mix of both primary and secondary source materials. This type of textbook is usually considered superior to synthetic texts, because “[t]he authors of such compendia do not generalize, explain, or evaluate the contents, leaving that to the teachers and students” (ibid., 342). Therefore, such books are perceived to be more objective and less likely to serve as a conduit for political and ideological interests. However, this definition neglects to acknowledge that the very selection of materials to be included in such a collection itself involves a valuation (Apple 1989, 1979). Thus, authors and others responsible for producing compendium textbooks still convey a type of valuation, albeit a more subtle valuation than the explicit claims of synthetic texts may make.

Lastly, there is the *analytic-synthetic* textbook, which combines both primary and secondary source material in the same volume. Though analytic-synthetic books are judged to be the most appropriate for the modern school, the main difficulty in creating such a book is “finding the proper balance between the primary and ‘finished’ information; what will be given the students, and what will be the object of their individual inquiries” (Suchoński 1994, 343). But regardless of the way that a history textbook is organized and compiled, the text contained within its pages bears certain rhetorical characteristics, both explicit and latent, that affect the way that it is perceived by the reader. And it is these same characteristics that lend textbooks their authority within the institution of the school as well as make them important instruments of teaching and learning.

This brief summary of basic textbook types already demonstrates how meanings are attached to textbooks. Certain types are understood to be more appropriate in a certain context, while others are not. These understandings come not from concerted study of how these books are actually used, but instead come from *the assumed belief that function follows form*. There is little notice given to how or even whether a synthetic text can be used to develop critical

thinking skills, or to how even the most “modern” of texts still may stifle student creativity and independence of thought.

C. The authority of texts

The physical concreteness of language embodied in textbooks is another characteristic of texts that affects the meanings textbooks have in many cultures. The written word has for a long time been venerated in Western cultures; books are considered special, sometimes even sacred, usually seen as having greater authority than the spoken word (Williams 1994). The text embodies the official version of the knowledge deemed to be valid in a society (Luke et al. 1983, 112). Though the textbook's form and the processes by which they are created change over time and space, the text as the core of instruction has not. Textbooks are authoritative for several reasons: they are permanent, they are written in explicit language, the ideas contained in them are validated by some form of authority, that they tend to have nonexistent authors who are above question (113). In general, texts' authority has two main sources: explicit linguistic structures and the separation of reader and author which puts the text above criticism. Textbooks are a particular type of text used within an institutionalized framework to reach certain pre-conceived goals as outlined by school authorities and other stakeholders in education. Textbooks differ from other texts in the way they are written, the purpose for which they are created, and how they are perceived of and utilized in the school setting.

According to Crismore (1984), textbooks are written in a style referred to as “textbookese”, defined as “an objective, unelaborated, straightforward style with an anonymous authoritative ‘author’ reporting a body of facts in one proposition after another” (279). The focus of Crismore’s study is not on the primary, discernable level of text, but on the “contentless level” known as “metadiscourse”, defined here as “the author’s intrusion into the discourse, wither explicitly or non-explicitly, to *direct* rather than inform the readers” (280,

emphasis in original). Metadiscourse concerns the relationship between writer and reader, and serves as a guide for the reader so that he or she can “understand what is said and meant in the primary discourse” (280). Crismore accepts that the telling of history is always somewhat biased, and admits that it is the author’s bias that can make history interesting to the reader (281). Social studies educators in the US and elsewhere

“assume, apparently, that the typical Social Studies textbook should be a body of facts ... to be memorized by the reader like multiplication tables. The role of the textbook writer, then is to report the facts, not to explain them or their significance for the reader and certainly not to explain the writer’s plan for reporting the facts or his point of view. The role of the student reader is to receive facts passively from the truth-giving authority who wrote the text...” (ibid.).

Romanowski (1996), writing more recently, asserts that

“To a significant extent, textbooks define and determine what is important in ... history. ... History textbooks incorporate attitudes and ways of looking at the world. In making judgments about what should be included and what should be excluded, and how particular episodes in history should be summarized, textbook authors assign positive or negative interpretations to particular events, thereby asserting a set of values. The fact that these values are often not declared explicitly, but remain implicit, does not make them less powerful“ (170).

Romanowski recognizes - as Peter McLaren, Jurgen Habermas, and a host of others have done elsewhere - that school knowledge is *subjective*; even though they may be factual, textbooks are never ideologically or morally neutral. Romanowski’s issue with textbooks, however, is not that they have a value-laden message, but “that they pretend rhetorically not to do this“ (ibid.). Romanowski faults the positivist mindset – that there is an objective truth out there to be discovered via the scientific method – for the lack of acknowledgement of textual subjectivity. He attributes the ability of texts to seem neutral while nevertheless perpetuating value-laden ideals to the quality of the text’s language and the authority of texts themselves (171). The impressions that texts create in the minds of students “have power and authority

because they are presented in the printed and bound textbook with its aura of an authority that is beyond question and criticism” (ibid.).

One of the possible weaknesses in Romanowski’s discussion is that he makes ungrounded assumptions about what students perceive and what they learn from reading textbooks. It is all too often stated that students only get out of textbooks what lies on the surface in the language and that they are passive recipients of the explicit and latent messages contained in texts. One must question whether students read history textbooks the way that we think they do.

D. Students and the history text

Wineburg (1991) moves beyond this assumption and actually investigates how students read history differently from adults. In doing so, he proposes at least one way of understanding why students do not necessarily learn what adults assume they do by looking at what makes for a “skilled reader” of history texts. Wineburg describes what the historian reads:

“It is not the literal text, or even the inferred text (as that word is commonly used), that this historian comprehends, but the subtext, a text of hidden and latent meaning. Subtexts of historical documents can be divided into two distinct but related spheres – the text as a rhetorical artifact and the text as human artifact. In the first sphere, the text as a rhetorical artifact, historians try to reconstruct authors’ purposes, intentions, and goals. But the subtext goes beyond a reconstruction of the intentions of the author, beyond the use of language as a linguistic technology for persuasion” (498-499).

Adults historians, even those with limited knowledge of the historical period represented in the texts shown to them, could perceive the subtexts present beneath the literal text. They generally rated textbook narratives to be the least trustworthy because they perceived the devices utilized by the texts’ authors to convey latent meanings. In contrast, student readers, even those who were generally considered exceptionally good students of history, failed to perceive the subtexts, and tended to rate the textbook narratives as the most objective and

trustworthy (501). They also “rarely compared one account to another, searching instead for the right answer and becoming flustered in the face of contradictions” (510). Wineburg notes that this result is not surprising, considering that “these aspects of text, while central to the skilled reading of history, are rarely addressed in school curricula” (502). Students are not taught that these subtexts exist, so are unlikely to be able to perceive them.

In the end, Wineburg characterizes the adult historians who participated in his study as “prosecuting attorneys” who took an active, critical role in the reading of history, while the students were “like jurors, patiently listening to testimony.... For students, the locus of authority was in the text; for historians, it was in the questions that they themselves formulated about the text” (511). Wineburg attributes this difference in critical abilities, not to some innate limitation in younger readers, but rather to the kinds of texts that students are face-to-face with everyday in the history classroom: textbooks which dominate the teaching-learning process, and which present information in a way intended to seem objective and factual (ibid.).

Lastly, Wineburg concludes that the institution of the school also has a particular effect on knowledge. Specifically, the school divorces knowledge from experience and uncertainty, places all knowledge in books and teachers, equates knowledge with information, and evaluates knowledge via test questions that always have a “right” answer (514). Students who are rarely asked to read history in a critical fashion are unlikely to have developed this skill. Thus, one should look at prescriptions and goals of teaching history with some skepticism. Without explicit acknowledgement of and accommodation to the discrepancy between what students are thought to learn from textbooks and what students *actually* learn, an educational plan is unlikely to reach its stated goals.

This is a point emphasized by Luke et al. (1983), who acknowledge that there is an important difference between the text itself and the text as it is used in the classroom:

"The student's apprehension of textual content and form is controlled by curricular, instructional, and administrative guidelines and objectives which have at least as much to do with institutional considerations as cultural and linguistic ones. How and what the student learns from the text is highly dependent on the specific manner in which the text is taught; instructional practices delimit the pragmatic context within which the text is read and interpreted" (117).

Luke et al. emphasize that there is a crucial difference between how the textbook is understood by its creators and how that same textbook may be used and interpreted in the classroom. This difference, however, is often not acknowledged or considered by those creating the texts. Textbook creators assume that the way that they intend the text to be used in the classroom is in fact the way it is used, but also that their intended use is even possible. These assumptions are crucial to understanding why textbooks look like they do, and underpin the decisions of textbook writers and reviewers.

Thus the meaning of textbooks comes not only from their organization and content, but also involves perceived notions of the power of the written word. It is not only the medium itself that carries authority, but also the unique qualities of textbook language as used in the particular context of the school that are believed to hold sway over the reader. But this power that textbooks have over their readers is not good or bad in and of itself. Such a judgment is highly subjective and context-dependent. What is an "appropriate" use of textual authority in one culture may be considered a "misuse" elsewhere, or even within the same culture.

E. Using/Exploiting textual authority

What voice the text speaks with, whether the text invites students to be active or passive learners, or whether texts are more trustworthy than other sources have repercussions beyond the cognitive abilities children develop through study with texts. These characteristics are also relevant to how the text functions as a medium for political and ideological messages.

Haavelsrud (1979) discusses indoctrination and politicization from the point of view of textbook content, specifically civics texts. Haavelsrud himself defines indoctrination as “disguising subjective viewpoints as objective truth” (80). Indoctrination is also characterized by avoiding descriptions of conflict, whether it be by glossing over the reasons for conflict, or by steering clear of contemporary conflicts through focusing on events in the historical past (ibid.). On the other hand, politicization is characterized by stress on the subjective nature of knowledge and on discussion rather than prescription (81).

Even though Haavelsrud specifically focuses his attentions on Norwegian civics textbooks for the middle grades, some of his observations find reflection in other textbooks studies. For instance, Haavelsrud notes that overall, the bulk of the texts’ content focusing on cause-and-effect relationships is devoted to the past rather than the present, and that when conflict is described, its content and source rarely are. Loewen (1995) finds similar characteristics shared by American history textbooks for the secondary grades.

Haavelsrud also notes that radical or reactionary content in texts does not necessarily lead to the learning of radical or reactionary views, respectively, noting explicitly that nothing can be known about how text content will be received by learners over the long term simply by analyzing that content (79). He equates radical content and method with politicization and reactionary content and method with indoctrination (80). His study does not include investigation into the actual teaching and learning in classrooms, and thus is limited to textbook content only.

Textbook content, then, can only allow us to make limited assumptions about what goes on in classrooms. Teachers are the final filter between curriculum, textbooks, and teaching, and thus they obviously make a difference in how and what students learn. But this does not mean that textbook policymakers, authors, and publishers do not make those assumptions about student learning and texts anyway. But Haavelsrud’s reminder that the way that textbooks

present information can be utilized toward political and ideological ends urges us to delve deeper into this relationship. To analyze the content of textbooks is not enough to fully understand their meaning. To do this we must go back further, to the process by which texts are created, to flesh out our understanding of textbooks.

F. The politics of textbooks

The textbook is “essentially the product of a political process of contestation over knowledge”
(Jules 1991, 259).

The fact that school textbooks, particularly in the areas of history and civics, undergo change and revision as a result of social and political transition is used to support the contention that history education is infinitely more than just facts. As values, ideas of normalcy, and preferred social orders are reformulated in a new socio-political environment, the content of history textbooks shifts in accordance with these new ideas. Jean Anyon (1979) writes that in the 1970s in the United States, scholars began to question the long-standing assumptions regarding the objectivity of textbooks, arguing that the content of textbooks in reality served the interests of the few, but without the explicit acknowledgement that that was indeed the goal. Citing Bourdieu, Durkheim, and other commentators of the left, Anyon asserts that “School knowledge is ... an ideology that misrepresents and conceals the unequal structure of relationships on which social and cultural power is based and disguises the contribution of schools to the reproduction of those relations and the power of dominant groups” (363). The school curriculum, in promoting the views of a society's most powerful members and subordinating those of the less powerful, “has contributed to the formation of attitudes that make it easier for powerful groups, those whose knowledge is legitimized by school studies, to manage and control society” (382).

Those who are purported to control society in this way exploit the rhetorical features of textual authority, providing a form of discourse that seems objective yet provides them with a medium to perpetuate beliefs and attitudes that help to maintain their privileged positions in the status quo. But questions remain about the connections between textual authority as a characteristic of educational discourse and political or ideological authority at the social level.

Lisovskaya (1995) suggests that, sociologically, textbooks are both *symbolic* formations used within the framework of relationships between the dominant (older) and the subordinate (younger) generations as well as *instruments of socialization* introducing new generations to the existing social order that includes relations of power and domination (84-85). In her conception, textbooks legitimize the status quo partly by relying on generational differences and deference to authority based on age, which is accompanied by experience and knowledge. Lisovskaya's definition reminds us that the teaching-learning relationship is essentially one between people, not just students with disembodied texts. It is not possible to separate the textual authority of school texts from the institutional context of the school, where the student is subordinate to teachers and other adults. Thus while textbooks alone may not be able to inculcate students with particular beliefs or values, the combination of "textbookese" and the authority structure of the school allows less room for students to articulate independent ideas that go beyond or against the text. It is this combination of textual authority and the highly-controlled school context that made history education so valuable to the state as an instrument for the dissemination of Communist ideological and political beliefs in Poland and the rest of the Soviet bloc.

G. Ideology: A definition

Before progressing further, it would be helpful to define more precisely some key terms. Ideology is a word that is used frequently in the field of education, but not always in the same way. For present purposes, Jean Anyon's (1979) understanding is quite fitting:

"Ideology is defined here as an explanation or interpretation of social reality which, although presented as objective, is demonstrably partial in that it expresses the social priorities of certain political, economic, or other groups. Ideologies ... justify and rationalize; they legitimate group power, activities and needs." (Anyon 1979, 363)

Ideology is rooted in beliefs, which Wade et al. (1994) define as what people consider to be "common sense", or the normal. The ideological system in which the beliefs exist is what forms the normative context for decisions about right and wrong, good and bad. Thus when one questions a belief – what is considered normal – one is threatening the entire ideology in which the belief is rooted (266). Through his analysis of dozens of high school textbooks, Loewen (1995) offers an illustrative example of how individual beliefs and group ideology are linked: "By taking the government's side, textbooks encourage students to conclude that criticism is incompatible with citizenship. ... Thus our American history textbooks minimize the potential power of the people and, despite their best patriotic efforts, take a stance that is overtly antidemocratic (231)." To question the actions of the American government, he implies, is to attack the entire democratic basis of our society. This connection between beliefs and ideology helps explain why history education can become such a hotbed of controversy; it isn't the historical programs and curricula themselves that are at issue, but rather an entire way of life and system of beliefs that form the core of those programs.

Belief systems' role in textbook creation and use varies. With authors, such systems help authors select and organize textual information. With students, these systems help students organize, interpret, and evaluate the information contained in texts. With teachers, belief

systems determine the direction and means of instruction, and help the teacher evaluate student performance. With policymakers, belief systems help to set goals and objectives to be reached through textbook design and distribution.

In the end, ideology provides a framework for understanding the meaning textbooks have for different people involved in their use and production. “Decisions about ... textbook content... frequently reflect deep-rooted political conflicts within a nation. In relatively open political systems, textbook content often represents delicate compromises among groups with different ideological positions ...beliefs ... or ...backgrounds“ (Farrell & Heyneman 1988, 39). However, it still remains to be seen exactly which group or groups are in a position to realize their ideological beliefs through textbook creation, how these groups come to hold such a position, and how meanings are translated into policy. Understanding the politics of textbooks requires a return to institutional models of knowledge production and distribution.

H. Textbooks and the politics of publishing

Wong & Loveless (1991) enumerate two kinds of politics which act upon textbook policy: institutionalized and de-institutionalized politics. The former is defined as “a stable network of key actors, consisting primarily of publishers, subject matter experts, and educational administrators, operates under a routinized set of procedures in designing, writing, revising, and adopting textbooks. Disagreements over content do occur, but they are not publicized and are readily resolved through compromise” (28). The institutional decision-making structure also may include governmental agencies which provide content guidelines and approve books for use in schools. De-institutionalized politics take place in the public sphere, and involve actors not normally a part of the decision-making process described above. Political, social, ideological, or other interest groups challenging what they see as

misrepresentation or under-representation of persons or issues important to them in the pages of textbooks are evidence of de-institutionalized politics.

Poland has moved from a strictly institutionalized textbook policy of the Communist era – closed to all but those given decision-making power by the government – to a more open process which (at least in theory) has the potential for voices outside the traditional institutionalized structure to participate in discussions. The largest-circulation newspapers and magazines – newspapers *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Rzeczpospolita*, and the newmagazine *Polityka* to name but a few – have been used by those outside the field of textbook publishing to criticize it, and those from the publishing business are making their opinions known to the public as well (Mosiek 2000). A question that remains to be answered in the course of this paper is whether a more open process has resulted in the creation of “better” school textbooks that reflect the needs and interests of those outside the traditional circle of influence in educational publishing as well as the needs of teachers and students.

However, even those who have been and still remain part of the institutional politics of textbook publishing in Poland now have a different agenda. The move from a state socialist economy to a free market economy means that publishers must contend with a new problem: profitability. In a capitalist economic system, the consumer becomes part of the decision-making process because the publisher must be able to entice the consumer to buy his product. To do so, the publisher must be aware of and attuned to consumer wants and needs. So producing a textbook in a democratic, free market system such as Poland requires attention be paid not only to the ideological climate which affects the suitability of particular content, but also to more pragmatic issues of distribution, accessibility, and affordability.

I. Texts as commodities

The school textbook's status as an economic commodity tends to come to the forefront of discussion when large-scale change occurs, i.e. times when the economic demands of textbook publishing become an important and unavoidable factor in the process of implementing educational reform (Redding 1964). The economics of textbook change are similar for many industrialized societies undertaking the enormous task of re-writing textbooks. In 1963, during the "revolution" in the textbook publishing industry in the post-Sputnik-era United States, many of the same issues that would face the Poles in the early 1990s faced American publishers: how to balance the material quality of texts with cost, the rapid pace of obsolescence, how to decide on which content and methodology to support in the face of multiple choices, being profitable, and foreseeing future needs and trends (ibid.).

Because textbooks are commodities which are bought and sold, undertaking the task of reforming them demands that one must be aware of the consumer's wants and needs, the perception of the consumer's wants and needs that motivates the publishers, and the factors which – and actors who – can influence both the real and perceived needs of consumers. Ignoring the economic aspects of textbook production and distribution in favor of focusing on only the political and ideological aspects of educational reform inevitably leads to only a partial understanding of how knowledge is distributed in a free market system (Apple 1991). The reverse also holds true: behind every commodity is a set of human relations, which implies that ignoring the political to focus only on the economic can also obscure important elements of change (ibid.).

Specifically, the human relations that Apple speaks of can be defined, in Poland's case, as those between authors, publishers, and ministry of education representatives charged with setting textbook policy and creating new texts. In the wake of regime change, each group had their own goal to be achieved, and their own understanding of the meaning of textbooks.

Authors sought to create texts that allowed them to convey their pedagogical and historical ideals, be they modern and Eurocentric, or traditional and nationalistic. For many, this was the opportunity to correct the errors of decades of faulty education at the hands of communist educational authorities. For authors, textbooks symbolize new-found intellectual freedom. Publishers fell into two main groups: those already-existing firms which had to make the transition from state-subsidized monoliths to profit-making ventures, and new firms that struggled to stake a claim in the textbook publishing industry dominated by huge state-owned firms who held the monopoly on distribution networks. For publishers, textbooks are a product to be sold and profited from. Lastly, in the new democratic political environment, the Polish Ministry of Education needed to put policies in place for the approval of texts that would allow for multiple perspectives on history while maintaining a certain level of professionalism and external accountability. For the Ministry, textbooks and textbook policy evidence that democratic ideals in governance and administration have taken hold.

Each group was positioned to fall at cross purposes with one another. Authors want expensive color photos licensed from the West, while publishers want to use black-and-white photos from state archives to keep costs down. Ministry officials want to vet textbooks through an objective review system, while authors and publishers want to guarantee positive reviews in order to have their books approved for use in public schools. The path of textbook policy and practice between 1989 and 1999 was determined by the interplay of these groups, and also heavily dependent on the constantly-changing political and economic climate. In short, textbook reform in Poland in the postcommunist period is a complicated and expensive undertaking involving many people who have their own goals to be reached. Textbook reform is not just about economics, nor is it just about politics or ideology: it involves all of these:

“The keys to effective textbook development are not massive fiscal expenditures of crash programmes, but rather careful coordination, attention to the articulation between the educational system and the publishing industry,

linking curricular development and the expansion of enrollments to textbook requirements, and the involvement of the necessary expertise in the development of relevant and high-quality textbooks” (P. Altbach, quoted by Farrell & Heyneman 1988, 27).

IV. CONCLUSION: TEXTBOOKS, MEANING, AND TRANSITION

As we have seen, textbooks are many things to many people: pedagogical tool, political symbol, ideological conveyance, economic commodity. A study of textbook reform must deal with all of these aspects in turn to adequately address why that reform develops as it does. Despite widespread discontent with the state of Polish history textbooks after (and even before) 1989, textbooks in this area of study did not undergo significant change for nearly ten years. To understand why long-sought-after changes did not occur earlier, we must investigate not only the outcomes of official policy, but also the assumptions, actions, and interactions of authors, educators, publishers, and the Ministry of Education that led to that policy’s creation. The process of reforming the history education curriculum for Polish schools must also be addressed, since textbooks and curriculum are so closely bound to each other at the policy level and in the classroom.

The transitional context of history textbook reform in Poland after 1989 complicates what is already a difficult task: to create a “better” text, however the meaning of “better” is defined. Bourdieu’s (1973) assertion that the school serves to perpetuate the status quo and maintain the position of the privileged in society cannot help us here. Jules (1991), in his study of Grenadian educational reform, notes that in transitional societies, the status quo is being *reconstructed* rather than *reproduced* (260). This distinction is important here. Poland after 1989 is not the same as Poland before 1989, but the recent past forms the basis for the building of the new social order. Jules, quoting Martin Carnoy, emphasizes that “the struggle over the meaning of knowledge in fact reflects the struggle over the political definition of transition society...” (ibid.). So much like beliefs reflect the ideological framework in which they exist,

the struggle over defining school knowledge reflects similar uncertainty regarding the structure of the political and social system. Defining the new status quo in Poland will be another task of this paper, as will be determining whether and how newly-dominant groups in Polish society have played a role in history textbook and curriculum reform.

One theme that emerges again and again in this chapter is the role of people – their attitudes, their beliefs, their subjectivities – in every aspect of educational transition, from planning and carrying out textbook and curriculum reform during that transition to ongoing and final evaluations of the efficacy of that transition. It is not enough to simply compare policy from the beginning and the end of educational transition. To truly begin to understand transition, one must illuminate the process of reform during educational transition, and delve more deeply into the reasons why reformers considered certain questions but not others, why they championed certain ideas and not others, and why the outcomes are still so uncertain. The transitional context of history education reform is itself influenced by history, and by what came before it.

CHAPTER 3:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The goals of this study are to determine (1) the sources of transitional curriculum policy in history education and the role of reform actors in Poland since 1989; (2) why the history education curriculum reforms changed as they did between the creation of proposals and the eventual codification of the reform into law; (3) the influences on the reform of history textbooks during the transitional period; (4) the differences between anticipated goals and actual outcomes of the curricular and textbook reforms, and (5) how to account for those changes in light of the greater scope of the historical development of democratic education in Poland.

The previous chapter presented a summary of the three theoretical foci of this study: educational transition, history education, and textbooks. From this summary emerged a common theme: that human subjectivity plays an important role in the way that these three areas of study are framed, understood, and evaluated. The final results of a policy change or reform measure cannot begin to reveal the complex interplay of beliefs or the negotiations that took place during the process of educational transition in Poland. The personal insights of those involved in creating new educational policy must also be considered before we can begin to understand the path of educational transition in Poland.

Research Methodology

The choice to pursue a research goal via qualitative methods is, according to Strauss and Corbin (1998), a reflection of several characteristics of mind on the part of the researcher: a skepticism in regards to established theories; a recognition of the tendency towards bias and subjective interpretation; an ability to be comfortable with uncertainty; a firm belief that meaning is defined through interaction; an awareness of the connections between process and outcomes; and a sense of absorption in the research topic at hand. I determined that the qualitative method of grounded theory was the most appropriate for this particular study, not only because the abovementioned qualities apply to me, but also because of the nature of the subject matter. The present study investigates a process rather than simply a static outcome. My decision to focus on the educational transformation occurring in Poland in the post-communist period was in fact made while that transformation was still underway, and the hoped-for outcome still uncertain.

As defined by Strauss and Corbin, grounded theory is theory that “is derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process” (12). This study of the transformation of history education in post-communist Poland was formed by my personal experiences during several research trips to Poland between 1998 and 2002. The study came to be in its present form after passing through a number of different versions and forms, and changed in form and focus along with the subject of study itself.

I have chosen grounded theory as described by Strauss and Corbin (1994) as the most appropriate methodology for several reasons. First, because of its flexibility, grounded theory enables me to build upon the grounded theoretical framework of my previous work in Poland. I did not come to Poland with a preconceived theory in mind that I would use to understand what I learned there. I wanted to allow the theory to emerge from the data so that the results of my study would bear as close a resemblance to what really transpired as possible. Second, this

investigation demands that I draw on a number of different fields of study and theoretical understandings – educational reform and transition, history education, the meaning of textbooks, and others – and grounded theory allows me to draw on each of these fields as needed. Thirdly, grounded theory was originally developed partly out of “a sensitivity to the evolving and unfolding nature of events,” i.e. process, and this study focuses particularly on the *process* of curricular change and implementation, as well as patterns of interaction between various actors involved in an on-going transition whose ultimate results cannot be known for some time.

Origins of the study

The original conception for my doctoral research emerged from coursework in comparative education at the Ohio State University, my background as a graduate student in history, Slavic languages and literatures, and the suggestion of my first advisor to look into post-communist Polish education and changes to that system that occurred as both a part and result of democratization. This idea for research formed the basis for my successful application for a Fulbright student grant during the 1998-1999 academic year. I felt strongly that the subject of a dissertation should emerge from the culture being studied, so that I would select a topic that was both topical and relevant.

During the 1998-1999 academic year, a noticeable number of newspaper and journal articles appeared devoted to the reform of the educational system that the Ministry of Education was slated to set in motion in the fall of 1999. In particular, the history curriculum (along with other humanities subjects) was undergoing a thorough re-evaluation, and not without controversy. The topic appealed to me. How does a nation go about re-writing its history, especially during a period of transition from one form of governance, and from one economic system, to another? What are the choices made, by whom, and why?

Reforming history education is not an easy process under nearly any conditions. Here in the United States, controversy has surrounded school history and history textbooks for decades, and the questions of whose version of history should appear in school textbooks, who decides, and what the goal of school history should be remain largely unchanged and undecided. In their book *History on Trial*, Gary Nash et al. (1997) describe the tempestuous process of creating the voluntary history standards for American schools in 1994 and what happens when people of contrasting political views and economic interests clash over what should be taught to children in school history classes. Each side had a profoundly different interpretation of what kind of history would best serve students in a democracy. How much more complicated must the process to create a standard mandatory curriculum for all public schools be for Poland, a nascent democracy with dozens of political parties that was still in the process of transforming itself? Thus intrigued by these questions I collected as much information about the reform of history education as possible: articles in newspapers, professional educational and historical journals, conference materials, personal stories from friends and colleagues.

As I continued to gather data, an article in Poland's largest-circulation daily newspaper appeared in March of 1999 and resulted in a re-focusing of my research. The article described the controversial history books of Andrzej Leszek Szczęśniak, a popular historian whose texts had been mandatory under Communist rule, and whose revised books still sold very well despite containing what some believed to be nationalistic, anti-Semitic views that ran contrary to the idea of what the "new" Poland. At a time when teachers now had the freedom to select what textbooks they used in class, why did these books maintain their popularity? This article spurred me to investigate what factors influenced teachers' choice of textbooks. Under the supervision of Dr. Kazimierz Bujak of the Institute of Sociology at Jagiellonian University in Krakow, I conducted an informal exploratory study into textbook selection among secondary school teachers of post-World War II history. Students of the Institute of Sociology took written

questionnaires that I created with the assistance of Dr. Bujak and traveled to small, medium, and large schools in Southeastern Poland to interview history teachers regarding their textbook selection criteria.

Though I had expected to find political, ideological, and pedagogical criteria to be the most important, the findings of this exploratory study instead showed that actual historical interpretation contained in the textbook was not the most important factor that teacher considered. The results of the questionnaire showed that the historical and ideological content was by far the least relevant criteria teachers used to evaluate textbooks. Cost, availability, and physical appearance of books were rated as the most important factors, and weighed more heavily on most teachers' decisions than did concerns over content.

This initial investigation into Poland's changing history program resulted in two major changes to my research plan. While historians, educators, and politicians debated the pedagogical and political goals of the history curriculum, the reform of history textbooks was taking place in a shifting economic landscape. The move from a centralized socialist system to a capitalist free market system led to the privatization of the Polish publishing industry, which was quickly forced to function according to completely new principles of profit and competition. The desire of educators to have new educational materials appropriate to the new social and political situation and the need of publishers to survive the transition to the free market were bound to come into conflict. This conflict between economic and educational goals in the publishing world and what resulted from this conflict became one of the foci of this study.

As I continued to delve more deeply into the reform of history textbooks, I conducted interviews with several textbook authors and Ministry-approved reviewers regarding their experiences with the textbook industry, Ministry officials, and the interplay of pedagogical and economic forces. A number of reviewers were also members of the group entrusted by the Ministry with the task of re-writing the Basic Curriculum for history. During our interviews, the

discussion veered unavoidably to the many revisions the Basic Curriculum had undergone before it was finally signed into law in early 1999. The connections between the continued changes to the draft curricula and the pace of textbook reform were strong enough to warrant further investigation into the curriculum reform. Textbook reform and curriculum reform are too closely related to allow focus on only one to the exclusion of the other. Explaining the course of textbook reform requires reference to the pace of curriculum reform and vice versa. However, each reform must be dealt with somewhat individually because different external forces act on each area. Therefore, I decided that a second focus of this study must be the course of the history curriculum reform.

Description of study

(1) *Study parameters* - The chronological parameters of this study – 1989 to 1999 – are somewhat arbitrary, and do not strictly limit the scope of the study. In other words, that this study focuses more closely on this particular timeframe does not mean that other periods of time do not figure into the study. The period before 1989 will be discussed so as to create a context for the more concerted study of the latter period. As it will be shown, the historical background of educational development in Poland plays a significant role in understanding the events of 1989-1999. The period after 1999 will also be alluded to in order to introduce descriptions and evaluations of the earlier reform efforts as well as a limited sense of the outcomes of the reform efforts. However, the main emphasis of this study is on the events that took place between 1989 and 1999.

(2) *Data* – The data consist of official reform documents from the Polish Ministry of Education; professional journals, most notably *Wiadomości Historyczne*, the history educators' monthly journal published in Warsaw; and personal interviews conducted with publishers, authors of history textbooks and curricula, ministry officials and history educators. Data such as

the official versions of regulations of textbook approval and selection between 1989 and 1999 demonstrate how changing political priorities affected the speed of reform; first-hand experiences of textbook authors, publishers, and curriculum writers shed light on the personal, professional, and political negotiations at the heart of the reform process; and the writings of historians and history educators which reveal the historiographical, philosophical, and political context in which the new materials were created. Journal articles are non-refereed, and contain in many cases quite subjective evaluations or commentaries on the course of the transformation, reform work, and efforts of colleagues and the Ministry. These articles provide insight into the subjective attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of leading figures in the field of history education, as well as on-going evaluations of the transition of education as that transition progressed. Such insights are necessary to the unearthing of events and negotiations preceding the codification of curriculum laws in 1999 if one is to discuss the influences on the reform.

(3) *Interviews* - Personal interviews were conducted during two short trips to Poland in 2000 and 2002, and during the author's 1998-1999 tenure as a Fulbright scholar under the supervision of the Department of Sociology at Jagiellonian University (UJ) in Krakow, Poland. Interviews during the 1998-1999 period were conducted as preliminary fieldwork according to the regulations of Jagiellonian University and the UJ Institute of Sociology under the supervision of Dr. Kazimierz Bujak.

All but a few interviews were conducted by me in Polish, either by myself alone or with the assistance of a translator. A small number of interviews were conducted in English with those subjects who felt comfortable enough to do so. All reproductions of Polish-language interview material were translated by myself alone, or with assistance from paid translators. Before I traveled to Poland, I invited interviewees in writing to participate in the interviews at their discretion. Letters of invitation, written in Polish and sent to each subject, introduced me, the purpose of my study, and contained a return envelope and a short list of possible interview

questions. Those who were willing to participate in the study contacted me via regular mail to express their interest. Once in Poland, I phoned interview subjects to organize meeting times and locations. The location of interviews was left to the discretion of the interviewee.

The names and contact information for interviewees were gleaned from several sources. The Polish Ministry of Education publishes the names, addresses, and phone numbers of experts (*rzeczoznawcy*) in the fields of history and history pedagogy who are approved by the Ministry to review curricula and textbooks. Individuals are nominated to be listed as expert reviewers by universities, higher educational schools (*wyższe szkoły pedagogiczne*), or professional organizations rather than simply appointed by the government. Many of those listed as approved experts are also authors of textbooks themselves, or were members of the group charged by the Ministry to create a new history curriculum for Polish schools. Interviewees were thus identified by Polish specialists as knowledgeable professionals in their field by their peers, and contacted via information accessible to the general public. Additional interviewees were contacted at the suggestion of and with the assistance of those interviewed previously, who were colleagues or friends of said interviewees.

All interviews were tape-recorded with the permission of the interviewee. Those who requested anonymity were granted it. Certain statements made during interviews that interviewees requested not be recorded were expunged from transcribed summaries. Each interviewee also signed a release that acknowledged their consent to be interviewed for the purposes of the authors' research. See Appendices for examples of contact letters and releases.

The interview questions used were open-ended and general. The purpose of the interviews was part informational, part interpretive. The goals of the interview were to learn about the interviewee's professional background; his or her role in the curriculum and/or textbook reforms; how s/he became involved in the reform; and his/her evaluations and interpretations of the reform process, and the interviewee's experiences working with others

involved in the reform. The results of the interviews helped identify further avenues of research, as well as to narrow the scope of the research project.

Data analysis

In writing primarily a historical work, I feel that it is important to explain how I see myself as an historian. I am in most ways a traditional historian in the respect that I rely on documentary evidence and believe that there are some things that can be objectively known, but at the same time I am a non-traditional historian who wants to tell a more nuanced story that exposes the human elements of the historical process. However, in researching and writing this study, I tried to always keep in mind how important it was to maintain a certain sense of distance from the subjects whom I interviewed, and to not take sides for personal reasons when presenting my findings. Even if I agreed with my interviewees or sympathized with their experiences, in analyzing the results of the interviews I needed to take a step back and place my subjects' comments and opinions into a wider framework. My goal was to understand what they felt, but also to understand why they felt the way they did and how those feelings affected the work they did. I was also quite conscious of my status as an American researcher, and had to make a conscious effort to try to maintain an air of impartiality while interviewing my subjects.

The analysis of the interview data in particular was an ongoing process. Many of the people that I interviewed were recommended to me by previous interviewees, with whom they shared a common experience or history. I often asked interviewees to comment on the opinions of other interviewees (no specific names mentioned) in order to get some insight into what aspects of the previous interview data were purely idiosyncratic, which were more commonly-held views, and to get a sense of the situatedness of the interviewees vis-à-vis the historical and political context. The purpose of interviewing those who took part in the reform process was not to find out "what really happened," but rather to find out how different people viewed that

process and judged its success. The differing views themselves became an object of analysis. Keeping in mind this distinction between corroborated information (through other interviews or other data sources) and idiosyncratic opinion, I try to present each kind of information differently, expressing the former as an indirect statement or paraphrase, and the latter as a direct quote. Interview data was also triangulated against print media and professional journals where possible, which further allowed me to distinguish between opinions and more objective descriptions of occurrences. Given time restrictions that limited my access to ministry of education officials, I was unable to further triangulate the opinions of curriculum reform writers against those of ministry officials.

When I began to collect data for this study, I had some expectations regarding what I would find. First, I assumed that political and ideological factors would play a dominant role in shaping the reform and be a primary motivator of the reformers' actions. Perhaps this was because in so much of my previous reading about Poland and the postcommunist transition was focused on just these elements of change. But as I continued to compile data, I found that much more practical factors were important. As I continued collecting data, the questions I asked changed, becoming more and more general, and less focused on the political. I wanted to allow the interviewees to define the scope of the study. Second, I assumed that the US and other European nations would play a larger role in the shaping the Polish reform than was actually the case. I did not have to look very far beyond the Poles themselves to find debates raging or opinions clashing. The reform of education in postcommunist Poland, despite foreign intervention and assistance, was very much an internal matter, a realization that once made affected the scope of my questioning. The framing questions of this study came out of the stories that teachers, historians, and the popular and professional presses were telling me. To go about answering them meant that I needed to arm myself with as much knowledge as possible

from as many sources as possible. The answers, I hoped, would reflect the reality of the reform while respecting the opinions and experiences of those I spoke to.

Study shortcomings/limitations

(1) *Language issues* – As a non-native speaker of the Polish language, I hired translators to assist with interviews whenever possible, but such assistance was often precluded by circumstance and finances. I possess a competent, yet not completely fluent, grasp of spoken Polish. While a list of pre-prepared questions was used for most interviews, there were frequently times when the conversations drifted away from pre-set topics. As a result, conducting interviews was sometimes hindered by my inability to express spontaneous questions in satisfactorily precise language as well as my difficulty understanding subjects' responses. Later transcription of the audio tapes of the interviews clarified many points, but there remained many points in the interviews themselves where important follow-up questions were never asked due to language difficulties.

(2) *Time constraints* – I conducted pre-dissertation exploratory interviews in Poland in early 1999, and more structured interviews during six weeks in the Autumn of 2000 and again during two weeks in February 2002. These trips were made possible through funds received from a Fulbright Student Research Grant, personal savings, and a FLAS Title VI Student Travel Grant, respectively. Because of the expense involved in traveling to and staying in Poland, particularly after 1999, my trips were necessarily brief. Due to such time restrictions, a more thorough set of interview data, though preferable, was not possible to obtain.

CHAPTER 4:
AN HISTORICAL SUMMARY OF EDUCATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT IN POLAND

When Communism in Eastern Europe crumbled in earnest in the late 1980s and early 1990s, political commentators in the West weighed in on the chances the soon-to-be-former Soviet-bloc nations had of moving successfully towards democracy. Ken Jowett, for example, writing in 1992 was pessimistic about the prospects for successful transition to democracy because the only institutional models these nations had to work from would be “shaped by the ‘inheritance’ and legacy of forty years of Leninist rule” (208). Jowett did not consider the Soviet-bloc nations to be completely blank slates which were “waiting ... to be written on ... in liberal capitalist script” (ibid.) as the discourse on the subject often implied; he felt that the most recent past would have the most powerful effect – in this case a negative one – on the future. Even Giuseppe Di Palma (1991), who generally felt optimistic about Eastern Europe’s future and acknowledged that a national culture can be disposed to democracy, believed that any previously-existing traditions of civil society had been wiped out by Communism (22). This belief in Communism as the only model available to reformers in the immediate postcommunist period denies one important point: that liberal democratic traditions already existed in some of these nations’ pre-communist pasts and continued to exist despite official policies decidedly not liberal democratic in nature.

Poland is an example of just such a nation, one too often described merely as a victim of history, or of being decimated by its warring neighbors, and less often as a nation whose educated classes were influenced by many of the same social, intellectual and philosophical trends that affected the rest of Europe in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries: secular humanism, political and economic liberalism, industrialization and its effects on the social structure, Enlightenment thought, and the idea that good leaders, loyal citizens, and a strong nation can be created through education.

The goal of this chapter is to situate the educational transition which began in Poland after 1989 within this broader historical context. Two themes will serve to frame the story of the historical development of Poland's educational system from the 16th century to the 1970s. First, I will show that Poland possesses a long-standing tradition of liberal democratic educational thought. Traditions of democratic education continued to survive, despite the fact that for political reasons, with only a few exceptions, such principles were not allowed to be realized in practice. This democratic tradition survived the loss of sovereignty, two world wars and Communism, and now continues to inspire current educational reform in Poland. Second, I will also demonstrate how the present-day points of contention in the realm of educational policy making find their roots in the conflicts of the past, and that answers to difficult questions continue to elude policy makers. Among the issues that educational leaders struggle with are how to mediate the heritage of long-standing class conflicts, how to maintain a distinctive Polishness in the educational system while striving for closer ties to Western Europe, and what role, if any, the Polish educational past is to play in the building of the new system. Lastly, by following the gradual development of history education in Poland, we can better understand the role that this subject has played in the growth of Polish national consciousness from the 18th through the 20th century.

I. EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN THE 18TH CENTURY: THE NATIONAL EDUCATION COMMISSION

The story of Poland's national educational development does not have a single starting point, but there is one event that often serves this narrative purpose. The *Komisja Edukacji Narodowej* (National Education Commission), or KEN, was established in the Polish *sejm* (legislature) in 1773 during the rule of King Stanisław Augustus Poniatowski, a ruler whose worldview was heavily influenced by the Enlightenment thinkers. Though the philosophical bases for the Commission were hardly unique to Polish society, Poland was the first nation to actually enact laws intended to bring about more universal access to education regardless of class, and to draw direct connections between a secular, civic education and the nation's political and economic strength. As the creators of one of the first centrally-organized national education systems in Europe, the KEN introduced profound changes in how schooling was structured as well as the school's philosophical foundations. anticipating similar modernizing changes that would occur all over Europe in the years to come. In particular, the KEN introduced the idea that education is not the exclusive privilege of a single class of citizens, but instead has the capacity to strengthen an entire nation if it draws on the talents and efforts of all its people.

A. The Noble Estate and Traditional Social Structure

The establishment of KEN was not the first time that Polish educators had proposed a more equitable system. Progressive educational thought had been present in Poland at least since 1554, when Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski published his treatise entitled *De Republica Emandanda (On the Reform of the State)*, in which he advocated secular, state control over a universal schooling system using Polish, and not the traditional Latin, as the main instructional medium. Though early intellectual thinkers in Poland were on par with their contemporaries in

other nations, by the 18th century, Poland had regressed economically from the heights it had attained in the 17th century (Davies 1984, 300). Long after it had become obsolete in other European nations, the feudal system continued to flourish in 18th century Poland, where the Polish noble estate – the *szlachta* – ruled the nation through its long-held monopoly control over the law courts, church offices, and the legislature. Like other estates of the time, the *szlachta* was not a socio-economic class; it was a hereditary class defined not in terms of its wealth, but rather in terms of its function in society “as expressed in exclusive rights and privileges” (Davies 1982, 1:201). Thus the *szlachta* included some of the most wealthy magnate families as well as poor, landless noble families whose quality of life differed very little from that of peasants. But regardless of wealth, even the poorest *szlachta* had the pride of a family crest, the right to own and carry a weapon (even if only made of wood), and legal protections denied other social estates. This “legal fiction of equality” acted as “an important social lubricant, ...[adding] greatly to the sense of solidarity within the broad mass of the nobility as a whole” (Davies 1984, 333).

The *szlachta* achieved its power gradually through the passing of laws and the signing of treaties which conferred upon them more and more political and economic autonomy. The first such statute to affirm noble privilege in Poland was the Statute of Kosice in 1374, passed by Louis of Anjou, the Hungarian-born ruler of Poland. This statute limited the nobility’s obligations to the Polish crown, and also allowed the provinces of the kingdom a high level of autonomy. Next came the *Neminem captivabimus* of 1425, which effectively gave the *szlachta* and their property immunity from arrest and confiscation unless they were convicted in a court of law. Finally, according to the decree of *Nihil novi* in 1505, no new laws could be passed without the unanimous consent of both chambers of the *sejm*, or legislature, which was totally controlled by the *szlachta* and which from 1572 had the power to elect the Polish king. This law

solidified the “Noble Democracy”, considered a golden age for the *szlachta* during which they effectively controlled the nation.

The “Noble Democracy” was ultimately quite damaging to the strength of the Polish Commonwealth. First, a nobleman’s land was divided among all of his heirs, which over the years led to greater and greater levels of economic fragmentation and thus a weakening of the nobles themselves (Davies 1982, 1:225). Second, the *szlachta*’s primary loyalties were to their own estate, and not to the Polish nation as a whole, which weakened Poland’s ability to fend off their expansionist neighbors (Topolski 1974, 110). By the mid-18th century, the *szlachta* had “reached ... the depths of its decline” (Kurdybacha 1973, 133), as had the nation. The end of the Noble Democracy is dated 1795, the year that Poland disappeared off of the map of Europe after the third and final partition at the hands of the Austrian, Prussian and Russian empires, which served as the final evidence of Poland’s political decline during this period.

B. Education Before KEN

Before the National Education Commission was established in 1773, education was generally restricted to the sons of nobility and was in the hands of the Roman Catholic Church, more specifically in the hands of the Jesuit order which had insinuated itself in the Polish lands during the Counter-Reformation in the second half of the 16th century. Even when expanded to include members of other classes, the old-style Polish education was still structured on the basis of the nobleman’s school, whose curriculum remained practically unchanged from the 16th century onwards and was much the same in Poland as in the rest of the Catholic world: Latin, rhetoric, grammar and a great deal of rote memorization dominated the curriculum. As a result, the traditional nobleman’s school offered no practical knowledge, and no urging toward the need for change:

“Young people were not at all prepared for life, to for the performance of public or private duties. With the help of carefully selected material the conviction was inculcated in them that Polish law and public life, and the social and economic structure, were so perfect that there was not need to introduce any changes” (Kurdybacha 1973, 134).

Some minor changes were introduced here and there into the curricula of the traditional schools, but it was obvious to the progressive-minded that in order to effect a radical transformation of Polish society towards a more democratic model, radical changes in the schools were needed, starting with a re-education of the nobility (Wolkowski 1979, 9). Rather than working primarily to maintain the existing political and economic structure where they served as passive feudal landlords, the noble classes were to be transformed into active participants in politics and entrepreneurship, particularly in the field of agriculture (ibid.). Civic unity did not exist on a widespread basis in Poland at this time, but was seen by many as necessary to the survival of the state; education was to become the medium through which the country’s transformation from a fractional, semi-feudal kingdom to modern nation-state would take place (Topolski 1974).

One of the earliest models for educational change in Poland arose in 1710, when elected King Stanisław Leszczyński, forced by the Russians to abdicate the Polish throne, moved to Paris (he was father-in-law to Louis XV). There he established a school for sons of noblemen which offered instruction in the latest scientific achievements and practical economics among other, more traditional, subjects. Graduates of the school quickly became known for their common sense and practicality in business matters (Kurdybacha 1973). Inspired by Leszczyński’s school and the philosophy and culture of the Enlightenment, in 1740 a Piarist⁶ educator named Stanisław Konarski (1700-1773) founded in Warsaw the *Collegium Nobilium*,

⁶ A teaching order of the Roman Catholic Church founded in Rome in 1617. Piarist educational institutions emphasized the teaching of both vernacular and foreign languages, the natural sciences, horticulture, mathematics, history, and practical subjects to prepare students for work in state offices, the courts, and elsewhere.

the first modern aristocratic secondary school in Poland, which was designed to create a new noble class, one whose loyalties would be to the nation as a whole rather than just their class (ibid.). The year 1765 saw the establishment of the *Szkoła Rycerska* (Knight's School) in Warsaw, the first totally secular educational institution in Poland, one that employed lay teachers, emphasized Polish rather than Latin, taught the natural sciences and foreign languages, and had as its primary goal the creation of "enlightened architects of a prospective democratic Poland" (Wolkowski 1979, 23).

However, there were significant barriers to be overcome before education could change in Poland. The *szlachta*, in order to maintain its privileged position within the political and economic status quo, was generally not open to progressive Western ideas (Kurdybacha 1973, 133). The nobility cherished the exclusivity of the traditional schools, the use of Latin which symbolized their class superiority, and the church-based curriculum which supported the maintenance of the current social system (Szreter 1974, 188). The schools that did exist were almost exclusively run by Jesuits, who were loathe to relinquish any control or break away from the time-tested methods of their order. But not all nobles were so conservative. Indeed, it was the educated classes who championed the cause of educational change. As Topolski (1974) reminds us, the

"emerging intelligentsia...was mainly the product of transformations within the gentry...it was only during the Enlightenment that the intelligentsia came to embrace sections differing in their way of life and opinions from both the gentry and the magnates, such as writers, journalists, artists, lawyers" (108).

Nor were all church educators so tradition-bound; progress towards a more modern school – as mentioned above – was being made by those already working within the church's system of schools.

C. Explanations for the rise of KEN

The establishment of the National Education Commission (KEN) in 1773 is understood as a continuation – even the pinnacle – of educational reform trends that had grown in strength throughout the 18th century. Scholars vary in their opinions as to which factors most precipitated the consolidation of the KEN in 1773. Wolkowski (1979) claims that it was the election of Stanisław August Poniatowski in 1764 “by Russian intrigue”⁷ and the First Partition of Poland in 1772 which led to KEN’s creation, a view which emphasizes Poland’s weakening political cohesion, its vulnerable military position vis-à-vis its expansionist neighbors, and the concomitant need to preserve Polish national culture under impending conditions of foreign domination. This traditional view attributing the establishment of KEN to a defensive political position is held by a number of scholars, including Bartnicka (1994). However, Wolkowski (1979) also stresses that the Commission was simply the continuation of progressive tendencies in Polish education to modernize the content of education and to expand educational opportunities to include children from outside the traditional privileged classes (9).

Gorecki (1980) challenges the traditional view that the KEN was founded entirely for reasons of state, claiming that it was also established to realize progressive civic reforms. In Gorecki’s opinion, the push for reform was not motivated as much by external military pressure as it was the result of contemporary trends in European scholarship and Enlightenment philosophy that were influential among educated Poles regardless of political circumstances. The fact that the Jesuit order was abolished in 1773 simply created an opportunity to more quickly move ahead with reforms which were certain to evoke opposition from the once all-powerful teaching order. Topolski (1974) also holds to the view that the main impetus for the

⁷ Stanisław-August Poniatowski became King of Poland in 1764 with the support of the Empress Catherine and factions in Poland loyal to the Russian Empire, which sought to expand its western borders further into Polish territory. However, once in power, he began instituting reforms that quickly alienated him from his former supporters in Russia (Davies 1982, 1:517).

Commission's foundation was Enlightenment thought, and that Poland became a target for military invasion precisely because it was becoming a center of progressive political reform and was growing stronger as a result. In other words, in Topolski's formulation, the creation of the KEN was necessary because Poland was considered a threat to its neighbors, a claim which contradicts more traditional views that Poland was seen as weak and ready to be taken advantage of by its neighbors.

Kurdybacha (1974), too, sees Enlightenment philosophy as the driving force behind the creation of the KEN. More particularly, he believes KEN was the result of one especially influential doctrine of the time, that of French Physiocracy. According to this doctrine, agriculture was the only truly productive activity, and the key to increasing the wealth of a nation. The peasantry was instrumental in strengthening agricultural production, but only if it was better educated and given more political freedoms. In contrast to the other scholars cited here, Kurdybacha makes no mention of impending military invasion as a reason for KEN's foundation, preferring to focus instead on internal Polish forces. Szreter (1974) cites a combination of three factors as precipitating KEN's creation: the French Enlightenment, Polish concerns over civic and cultural standards in their weakening country, and the abolishment of the Jesuit order in 1773. Szreter also notes that the KEN's establishment was only possible because King Stanisław August Poniatowski "secured the agreement of the mighty Russian ambassador," without whose support "the formation of the Commission could scarcely have taken place" (183). Davies (1997) also views the establishment of the Commission as largely made possible through political bargaining and fueled by the belief that the Polish nation would soon be fighting for its survival; king Stanisław Augustus Poniatowski, says Davies, presented the idea for the Commission to the Russians "as a condition for submitting to the [First] Partition [in 1772]", a depiction of Poland's political position which clearly emphasizes desperation rather than strength (Davies 1997, 609-610).

D. Historical Context of KEN

One of the main goals of the National Education Commission (KEN) was to create a system of secular, state-controlled schools that would contribute to the formation of a distinctly Polish social and cultural consciousness. It was also important that the new educational system be universal, including all children regardless of social or economic class. The creation of a Polish consciousness was necessary for the future of Poland regardless of exactly what that future would bring. In a free Poland moving towards modern nationhood, a national consciousness mostly free of class biases was needed to consolidate the country, support a new political structure and increase economic potential. In a Poland weakened or destroyed by partitioning, a distinct Polish consciousness centering on Polish language and culture was necessary for that culture's very survival. Topolski (1974) notes that in all of the official statements made by the KEN,

“the concept of education is linked with that of the nation. ...Whereas an ordinary nobleman restricted the concept of the nation to his own class, i.e. the gentry, the Commission used the word ‘nation’ in its modern sense, embracing all the social classes and strata, including serfs. What is more, the Commission took a dynamic approach: it wanted to create a nation through public education” (110).

History as a school subject was to play a particularly important role in the schools of KEN. The main goal of history education at this time was to familiarize the student with the past, enable him to understand the national traditions, to inspire in him a patriotic love for his country, to teach him proper moral conduct (Wolkowski 1979). History education at this time developed as a subcategory of moral education, and was more focused on the cultivation of good citizens than on intellectual development (Gorecki 1980). This conception of history education as a tool for nation-building was typical of the Enlightenment era, and would remain unchanged for some time.

The original eight members of the Commission were many things, but they were not teachers or specialists in pedagogical matters. Therefore, the Commission solicited proposals from intellectuals both in Poland and abroad regarding how to best organize the new system. The Commission received proposals, reports and comments from Polish reformers already active in the movement as well as from such illustrious figures as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who in 1773 proffered his *Considerations on the Government of Poland*, and Pierre Samuel Dupont de Nemours, who was at this time also active creating proposals for a national system of education in the United States at the invitation of Thomas Jefferson. Nearly all proposals received by the Commission had certain features in common: that the new schools should teach only that which is useful and practical, that teaching and learning must take place primarily through observation and engaging the senses, that the schools would teach morality (with emphasis on patriotism and social cohesion) rather than religion (where emphasis is on spirituality), that the new system would consist of three tiers (elementary, secondary, university), and that normal schools would be needed to train new teachers (Wolkowski 1979; Kurdybacha 1973). In addition to the traditional subject areas, students in the new schools would be instructed in new subjects: history, geography, political economy, domestic and foreign laws, natural science, algebra, trigonometry, geometry, agronomy, horticulture, zoology, anatomy and physics.

On the other hand, proposals presented to the Commission differed in terms of the extent to which the schools would be universal. Adolf Kaminski (1737-1784), author of *Edukacja Obywatelska (Civic Education)*, was an advocate for universal education, with advancement to higher levels of learning to be based on ability alone. Indeed, Kaminski felt that secondary school should be compulsory for those who qualified (Wolkowski 1979, 35). Kaminski adhered to the view that the overall wealth and strength of a nation comes from the combined labor and talent of all citizens regardless of class, and that without reforms to

modernize and provide more accessibility to education, the country would soon fall (36). Franciszek Bieliński (1740-1809), author of *Sposób edukacji w XV listach opisany (Method of Education Described in 15 Letters)*, advocated universal education divided by class. Bieliński's view was shared by many representatives of the *szlachta*, for the idea of the children of the nobility being schooled next to peasants was antithetical to the existing state of social interaction. Eventually suggestions from all of the proposals were incorporated into the new curriculum, which was completed in 1794. As for the issue of universal schooling, it was decreed that the new state elementary schools admit children from all classes. Though secondary schools were in theory open to all who qualified, it was generally understood that they would primarily serve the sons of the nobility (Wolkowski 1979, 139).

The Commission's plans for the new educational system proved more ambitious than existing conditions could support for several reasons. First, the reforms were impractical due to financial constraints; the original plan called for the opening of 2,500 new schools throughout the country and the creation of new textbooks for nearly every subject for every school, all of which required an extremely large initial investment. Second, both the *szlachta* and the Church were hostile to everything the new schools represented: secular learning, state control, universal access to a previously privileged institution. In addition, the peasants, with their strongly conservative, religious tendencies, also disliked the new schools; most viewed the new school requirement as just another impractical burden foisted upon them by their landowners (Wolkowski 1979, 75). Third, there was a severe shortage of qualified lay teachers, which meant that the schools were forced to hire former Jesuit teachers who often "sabotaged" the new system by openly teaching in the old ways, deliberately misrepresenting the new materials, and intimidating lay teachers through "boycott, ridicule and charges of blasphemy" (Szreter 1974, 188). Szreter even goes so far as to state that the Commission "was far too ahead of its time even in the context of the Enlightenment, let alone that of the semi-feudal Polish

society...”, a claim that seems to suggest that if the nation had not fallen to foreign aggression in 1795, the reforms set in motion by KEN would ultimately not have been successful (ibid.).

E. Pragmatic considerations: Textbooks and Teachers

As mentioned above, one major problem the Commission needed to overcome quickly in the initial period was a shortage of appropriate textbooks for the new schools. The old books were obsolete in terms of both their form (written in Latin) and their content (none existed that contained the newest scientific information). Despite great need for books, the Commission refused assistance from foreign nations that offered to provide materials outright; the Commission was adamant that the new books be written by Poles or at the very least by foreigners under Polish supervision and with the Polish cultural context in mind (Wolkowski 1979, 40). To this end, the Commission formed the *Towarzystwo do ksiąg elementarnych* (*The Society for Elementary Textbooks*) on February 10, 1775. The Society would be active for the next 19 years, establishing educational objectives, selecting subject matter, setting requirements for the writing of textbooks, and publishing the textbooks themselves, becoming in essence “the actual Ministry of Education, without whose opinion and advice the Commission would not proceed to make any decisions” (ibid., 42). Grzegorz Piramowicz, secretary of the Society, elaborated the standards for elementary textbooks which addressed two basic questions: what is the purpose of writing such books, and how should they be written to best ensure that the next generation would become good citizens? (Gorecki 1980, 147). Piramowicz required that: textbooks present theoretical information, but only if it has practical application to real life; that books be written in Polish using clear, understandable language appropriate to the cognitive abilities of children; and that the objective of writing a textbook be to teach children how to think (Wolkowski 1979, 50). Piramowicz also deemed that textbooks should not be accepted

simply on the basis of the identity of the author, but rather that every prospectus for a textbook should undergo a blind review process:

“...[Piramowicz] stressed that criticism was indispensable in producing a good textbook. The criticism ought not to be limited to the initial stage of creating the book; it should be inspired by the continuous process of scholarship and by the everyday experience of teaching during which the value of the book might be tested. ...The Society also set up a procedure for evaluating and accepting a textbook for publication” (Gorecki 1980, 149).

Twenty-seven textbooks were published in all by the Society during the 18 years of its existence. French scholars wrote the handbooks for logic, natural history, math and agricultural sciences, while Poles wrote the texts for subjects relating to domestic matters such as Polish language and history (Wolkowski 1979, 48-49). Despite the fact that the Society did not succeed in producing all of the books it had planned to, it had “succeeded in elaborating a modern method of writing textbooks and in producing material of high quality (Gorecki 1980, 161). The Society’s published textbooks included complete methodological instructions to assist the teacher, a feature that was a definite innovation at the time (Wolkowski 1979, 140).

Piramowicz also recognized that a new educational vision could not be implemented without a reformed teaching force. In 1787, Piramowicz published *Powinności Nauczyciela* (*A Teachers’ Obligations*), which outlined the necessary duties and personal traits he considered crucial for teachers: a knowledge of child psychology and development, high personal values, respect for students, a love of teaching, and the ability to model and transmit to their charges the necessary virtues such as hard work, thrift, initiative, loyalty to the country and its leaders, kindness, cooperation, respect for others (ibid., 69-72). The problem of training new teachers was tackled by Hugo Kołłątaj (b.1750), a member of the Society from 1776, who was instrumental in wresting the Krakow Academy (renamed *Szkoła Główna*, or the Main School, in 1780) out of medieval scholasticism and transforming it into a teacher training institute

disseminating the most up-to-date skills and knowledge (Szreter 1974, 185). Such active reform work certainly stood out in its day:

“The Commission was ahead of its time in its views of the importance and scope of teacher education, for generally it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that the very principle of training elementary school-teachers was accepted in the major western countries. The Commission, however, was even more ambitious and positive in its postulation of an ‘Academic Estate’. What was envisaged was nothing less than a largely autonomous teaching profession, with high entry standards, good pay, much internal democracy, and – eventually – high social status” (ibid., 187).

F. The Legacy of KEN

The National Education Commission and the Society for Elementary Textbooks are important in the history of education in Poland for both symbolic and concrete reasons. Symbolically, the Commission was and still is considered a monument to liberal progressive democratic educational theory in the 18th century, one of the first attempts to centralize and rationalize schools guided by both particular national patriotic needs as well as by the universal philosophical goals of the age. It was at the forefront of the process of change from feudalism to modernity in Poland, a grand idea which was never allowed to be fully realized. The symbolic importance of the Commission was called upon 200 years later, in 1973, when a struggling Communist government attempted to mollify a disgruntled populace with what was purported to be a radical and sorely-needed educational reform. The date of the Communists’ reform was deliberate; parallels between the attainments of the Commission and the anticipated achievements of the Communists’ new system were heavily emphasized in the propaganda announcing the 1973 reform, with the hope that the aura of progressiveness would lend validity to the new plan.

Among the more concrete achievements of the Commission was that Polish society began to view universal, classless education in a more positive light, and to more widely acknowledge the connection between education and national strength (Wolkowski 1979, 75).

Even more long-lasting were the structural, organizational and methodological models for schooling elaborated by the Commission, which laid the foundations for Poland's modern schools controlled by the secular state and based on a liberal educational ideal (Wroczyński 1996, 24). The official decree on the new education law, published in 1783, is considered the most important act of educational politics in Poland's history (ibid.). But perhaps even more important for Polish history were the gains made in civic and patriotic education. The curriculum created by the Commission and the Society greatly emphasized the Polish national cultural heritage and how important it was that loyalty towards the fatherland be passed on to the nation's youth. The love for the nation and its culture was to play an important motivational role in the coming years, as one partition after another weakened and finally obliterated the Polish polity. In the years immediately preceding the third and final partition of Poland in 1795, the fight to retain independence was led by people devoted to the idea of a free, democratic Poland, an idea transmitted to an entire generation by the work of the Commission and other social reforms. It is also believed that the Commission directly inspired the liberal Constitution of May 3, 1791, which ended many of the nobility's exclusive privileges, and was to serve as the foundation of a parliamentary democracy in Poland (Szreter 1974, 189).

The Commission also served as a model for reform. It addressed all of the problems inherent in setting up a new system of schooling: financing, oversight, administration, the training of teachers, the creation of curricula and textbooks through collaboration and critical discourse, pedagogy, methodology, the role of education in society. As it will be shown, the spirit of the Commission was to resurface over 200 years later, when the desire and opportunity for democratic reform came in the post-Communist era.

Another reason why the age of KEN is so important to the historical development of education in Poland is that it is during this period that we first see in sharp relief the competing models of education in Poland as their proponents wrestle over the idea of universal schooling.

Equality of opportunity in education is one such place where basic ideals clash. Here, on the one side stand those who truly seek universal schooling for every child, regardless of class or financial standing. On the other side stand those who desire a system of schooling that perpetuates long-standing class divisions within Polish society. The source of inspiration for educational philosophies also serves as a sticking point, pitting those who look to Europe for guidance against those who look inward to native Polish ideals. These different and largely incompatible models of schooling will continue to be at odds over the course of the next two centuries, and will be taken up by different competing factions: conservatives and liberal democrats, nationalists and pro-Europeanists, rural and urban educators. These are not the only points of contention among those concerned with education, but they continue to be among the most enduring.

History education and textbooks in their modern manifestations were also born in this era. History, like other school subjects, was put into the service of nation-building, and was intended to instill in Polish youth patriotic attitudes and awareness of their Polishness (Wolkowski 1979, 20). School history, as we will see, will continue to be used as one of the most important tools to promote national consciousness, even when official educational institutions stopped functioning. The era of KEN also ushered in the idea that even if Poles were lacking in experience in comparison to their European counterparts, they would control the content of school textbooks rather than borrow materials from abroad or allow foreigners to have too much influence. The model of the school inherited from the KEN era, in essence, suggested that Poles could find their own way if they adhered to their own sense of the Polish nation and to an historical path that they controlled. Unfortunately the Poles were not to be in control of their own fate for much longer.

II. EDUCATION IN POLAND UNDER PARTITION: 1795-1918

The year is 1795. Poland has finally fallen completely to its enemies, its territory divvied up among its three expansionist neighbors: Austria, Prussia and Russia. As a result, the former subjects of the Polish Commonwealth in each of the three areas of partition became subject to the educational policies of their respective controlling empires. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in his *Considerations on the Government of Poland*, wrote that “If you can bring it about that no Pole can ever become a Russian, then I can guarantee that Russia will never subjugate Poland” (Rousseau [1773] 1910, 139). In these words is embedded the goal of Polish education for the next century: to maintain Poland’s national language, its literature and traditions despite tripartite occupation and policies directly intended to destroy all vestiges of the distinctly Polish personality.

When it was finally abolished with the Third Partition of 1795 (which wiped Poland off of the map of Europe completely), a significant portion of the National Education Commission’s resources were re-incorporated in and around Vilnius (presently the capitol of Lithuania) and Lwów (presently the capitol of Ukraine), which were at the time a part of the Russian empire, and continued to thrive there for the first few decades of the 19th century. National heroes such as the poets Adam Mickiewicz and Juliusz Slowacki, for example, were educated in former institutions of KEN. Centers of Polish education continued to exist in pieces throughout the other partitioned areas: in Warsaw during 1818 thorough 1832, and again in 1861-1869 and 1916; in Kraków at Jagiellonian University in the early 1830s and again in 1870; in Galicia until the 1910s (Davies 1984, 263).



Figure 1:
The Partitions of Poland
 (Source: <http://www.bartleby.com/67/poland01.html>)

The educational ideology of KEN outlived the Committee's actual existence thanks to the informal and underground activities of the Polish intelligentsia, educational practitioners, teachers and theorists (Wroczyński 1996, 24). Devotion to the Polish nation and culture were perpetuated, generation after generation, despite the efforts of the partitioning powers to eliminate such attitudes and the instability and itinerancy of Polish educational institutions. As it will be shown, education for and among Poles in the partitioned territories varied greatly depending on the specific policies of the controlling governments and the degree to which the attainments of the KEN influenced those policies.

A. The Russian Partition

Of the three partitioning governments, the Russian authorities took the most hard-line approach towards Polish education, an attitude that is understandable in light of the past history of the two nations; years of territorial battles had created much enmity between them. As far as the Russian authorities were concerned, the partitions of Poland simply returned to Russia those territories which had belonged to it in the past. In keeping with this idea, the reclaimed territory and all of its inhabitants were forcibly integrated into the Russian empire. Politically, Russia was an autocracy in which the tsar held supreme power, the Church was comparatively weak, and feudalism had never really created an independent nobility. Integration of Polish lands and people into Russia resulted in abolishing all democratic institutions of the former Polish Republic, introducing a centralized administration and officials appointed (rather than elected) by the government, and introducing a strong military and police presence (Davies 1982, 1:82). Russification was the goal in the Polish lands, a goal that would be reached primarily through education. Polish history was obliterated and replaced with the Russian version of events. After 1864, Polish teachers were required to speak Russian at all times, even when teaching Polish children. (ibid., 99). Any manifestation of Polishness was considered a dangerous threat to the internal integrity of the Russian empire and was therefore suppressed.

In describing Polish education under the Russian partition, Wroczyński (1996) draws attention to the fact that educational policy towards the Poles was not uniform throughout Russia. The Polish lands gained in the First Partition in 1773 were not affected by the reforms of the Commission of National Education, hence the schools there remained in the hands of the monastic orders and continued to serve the nobility almost exclusively. In these areas, the Russian government allowed the Polish nobles to keep their traditional schools in order to gain the nobles' loyalty to the Russian crown (Wroczyński 1996, 25). In the territories gained by

Russia in the subsequent two partitions, schools reformed by the Commission were already up and running, and were not welcomed by the Russian authorities, who felt that such centers of Polish culture were dangerous. The nationalistic content of these schools was suppressed, and they were given over to the Jesuits to run, but other characteristics were retained, such as the more modern curriculum, a definite advancement in Russia's otherwise poor system of schools. Tsar Aleksander I, who came to power at the turn of the 19th century, had among his advisors Polish nobles who had been active in the Commission for National Education and the Society for Textbooks: Adam Czartoryski, Seweryn Potocki, Tadeusz Czacki and Hugo Kołłątaj. In particular, the latter two were responsible for introducing a new educational plan in the Vilnius area in the early 1800s which was based on the KEN model, which greatly expanded access to schooling in that area. In general, Wroczyński's depiction of Polish education in the Russian partition stresses the positive influences that Poles had over policy there, and the continuation of Polish educational tradition despite official hindrances.

B. The Prussian Partition

In the Prussian partition, Germanization through education was the primary policy in the newly-acquired territories of Poland. According to Davies (1982), though Germanization of the population was the general rule, the Prussian government was more tolerant of Polish cultural expression than was the Russian government, and as a result the Poles resisted assimilation less vehemently. In the first half of the 19th century, Polish elementary schools continued to exist wherever the population was predominantly Polish, and Polish literacy was perpetuated by groups such as the Society for Popular Education in Posen (Poznań) and the Society for Popular Reading-Rooms. Warsaw, which was also in the Prussian sector of influence, also was home to vibrant Polish cultural life. According to Wroczyński, the Prussians exterminated all Polish schools in the territories they gained, treating the schools reformed by

the Commission with open derision (39). Though this seems to contradict Davies' version of events, one must remember that the schools created by the Commission mostly served peasants and the middle class, two populations previously not part of the schooling system and also the same two groups that Germanization policies targeted above all. The upper classes, who were less likely to have sent their children to KEN schools, were treated differently by Prussian authorities, to which their freer participation in society attests. The different treatment given to members of different classes in the same area could very well account for the contradicting historical accounts of Davies and Wroczyński.

By 1848, the year that the liberal push for German unification reached a peak with the convening of the Frankfurt Assembly, those Poles who stubbornly continued to contest the incorporation of the Grand Duchy of Posen into Prussia became viewed as enemies of state consolidation. In the early 1870s under Bismark, the Poles in Prussia were subjected to a large-scale Germanization. Germanization campaigns had been initiated by Frederick William III at the turn of the century, but those policies were limited in their effectiveness due to a shortage of German-speaking teachers and Polish community organizations centered around parishes which perpetuated Polish literacy. Under Bismark, however, German language was made compulsory in 1872, and Polish was banned outright, even as a foreign language (Davies 1982, 2:127). Additionally, in 1886, the Prussian Colonization Commission began encouraging German settlers to move east into those areas heavily populated by Poles, intended to further break up Polish communities and cultural cohesiveness. Ironically, these two policies of Germanization and German resettlement, rather than producing the intended results, created a new sense of solidarity among Poles, and reinvigorated thoughts of independence:

“Paradoxically, ... the *Kulturkampf* and the Colonization Commission succeeded in stimulating the very feelings they were designed to suppress. From the Polish point of view, they were the best things that could have happened. Without them, there might have been no Polish movement in Prussia at all” (Davies 1982, 2:130).

C. The Austrian Partition

The Austrian partition encompassed some of Europe’s poorest and most backward regions (Davies 1982, 2:143). Comparatively little industry in this region meant an impoverished economy and a very small middle class, and thus little demand for schooling at the elementary and especially secondary levels. Enrollments were low except for those areas where the local nobility funded a school meant to serve their own children. The extreme heterogeneity of the Austrian population made a uniform language policy difficult to implement, hence native language schooling was permitted. A 1774 ordinance making primary schooling compulsory served little purpose considering the shortage of school facilities and German-speaking teachers. Existing Polish schools were generally allowed to remain functioning, though with some modifications to their curricula to bring them more into line with other schools in Austria. Polish higher education and literary culture flourished in and around Kraków in the second half of the 19th century, thanks to administrative autonomy granted the region in 1861. In 1869, Polish gained the status of an official language of state alongside German, allowing its open perpetuation in schools. Poles controlled nearly 3,000 primary schools and 70 secondary schools under Austrian rule, numbers which far outstrip those in the other two partitions (Davies 1982, 2:160). Towns were more Germanized than were the villages, and also had a larger percentage of the population receive education. In general, despite (or perhaps even because of) the Austrian empire’s economic weaknesses, Polish

language and culture did not undergo the same kind of systematic oppression in the Austrian sphere of influence as it experienced in the other two partitioned regions.

Because the living conditions for Poles varied considerably from partition to partition, the legacy of the partitions of Poland in the realm of education was mixed. The population had been dispersed among three nations and subjected to various degrees of assimilation to the respective governing powers' cultures. But despite over 100 years of partition and lack of national sovereignty, Polish culture and language survived through both formal (via schools and universities) and informal (via social and religious organizations) networks of knowledge transmission. When Poland regained its independence at the end of the First World War, it was faced with a daunting task: how to re-build a single, unified nation from the pieces inherited from a fragmented past.

III. THE SECOND REPUBLIC: 1918-1939

Even before Poland won its independence in 1918, work had begun on the re-consolidation of the nation. The task facing the Poles was a daunting one. Poland at the time of its reconsolidation was one of the poorest nations in Europe (Davies 1982). Political structures were unstable due to numerous changes of leadership, and there existed no consolidated plan for the economic renewal of the country. The First World War had caused much damage to the nation's infrastructure and an enormous loss of manpower. Structural reforms were hindered by severe economic conditions, wartime collateral damage, widespread unemployment in cities, and severe poverty in rural areas. In short, with so many other sectors of Polish society struggling to rebuild, money available for education reform was limited at best. However, this does not mean that educational issues were not discussed or were not considered extremely important among educators and politicians.

To a great extent, educational policies of the interwar period are closely tied to events in the political realm. In terms of political development, the years 1918-1926 demarcate an internally divisive period characterized by a vast profusion of political parties and belief systems. No single party was able to gain a majority in the Polish parliament during this period, and coalitions rose and fell with considerable frequency. In May 1926, Józef Piłsudski, who had been installed as Chief of State in 1919 but who had retired from his leadership role in 1922, led a coup d'état to regain control over the Polish government. The new regime, called the *Sanacja* regime (*sanacja* meaning "a return to good health") was not a formal dictatorship, since the parliament and opposition political parties continued to function (Davies 1984. 125.) The years 1926-1939 saw a more clearly defined educational policy emerge that supported the goals of the Piłsudski government: a stronger sense of Polish national consciousness and unity, devotion to the state, and a militaristic sense of social and moral order (Davies 1982).

Although official policies issued in the interwar period were closely associated with politics, educators were active throughout this time formulating their own alternative proposals and constructing new theoretical models for schools. Even if many of their fairly progressive, liberal ideas were not implemented at the time, interwar educational theorists would create a set of principles that would serve to inspire generations of educators in the future.

A. The *Sejm Nauczycielski* (Teachers' Parliament) of April 14-17, 1919

One of the most important events in interwar Polish education was the convening of the *Ogólnopolski Zjazd Nauczycielski*, which is better known as the *Sejm Nauczycielski*, or Teachers' Parliament, in April 1919. The goal of the meeting was to bring together educators from all over the country to discuss the Ministry's plan for rebuilding a unified public school system from the pieces left behind by the three partitions. The preliminary plan had been drawn up the previous year by Ksawery Prauss, the Minister of Education at that time, with the

assistance of various educational organizations. Prauss' plan – quite progressive for its time – proposed a 7-year universal compulsory elementary school for all children. Secondary school would consist of a 5-year *gimnazjum* linked programmatically to the public elementary schools, allowing greater access to higher levels of schooling for working class and peasant children.

While Prauss himself, due to change of leadership in the government, had already been replaced as Minister of Education by the time the Teachers' Sejm convened, his plan was at the center of the Sejm's deliberations (Mauersberg 1994, 241). In his opening remarks to the Sejm, the new Minister of Education, Jan Łukasiewicz, spoke of the importance of creating a uniquely Polish educational system devoted to the development of the individual and managed by professional educators rather than bureaucrats (ibid., 242). In short, the goal was to create a democratic educational system.

After four days of occasionally vociferous debate, the Teachers' Sejm passed a number of resolutions touching on educational structure, oversight, and teacher training. The Sejm voted by an overwhelming majority in favor of the 7-year, universal primary school; the elimination of 4- and 5-year schools which offered little chance of further education; the linking of universal primary schools with secondary schools; rapid reduction in the number of single-teacher schools; and professional educators rather than bureaucrats having control over school administration. However, these resolutions were not universally accepted by the Ministry of Education, which in the end had the final say over the reform of schooling. When the Ministry's new plan for schooling was announced on April 4, 1920, it bore little resemblance to the Sejm's vision.

The Ministry created a centralized bureaucracy which was appointed rather than elected, and over which the public had very little control. As a "temporary" measure, 4- and 5-year primary schools continued to operate alongside 7-year schools, and single-teacher schools continued to be the most common type of school in rural areas. Though ostensibly the path to

secondary schooling was open to public primary school students by examination, the number of slots available was very limited, with most spots reserved for students already in more prestigious schools or those already enrolled⁸. In addition, public secondary schooling was not free, but rather charged a fee that, while significantly lower than that which private secondary schools charged, was prohibitive to most working-class and peasant families. By the mid-1920s, only 5% of workers' children and 13% of peasant children attended such schools (Krasuski 1985, 182). In sum, secondary education continued to be an elite institution.

The Teacher's Sejm is an indelible part of Poland's educational history, despite the fact that the Ministry overrode many of its resolutions. As Mauersberg stresses, the point isn't that the Sejm's resolutions were or were not put into practice. Rather, what is important about the Sejm is that it served as a model of how discussions over education should be organized, that it demonstrated the commitment of Polish educators to a democratic model of educational opportunity for all children regardless of class, and that the meeting itself helped educational professionals create a sense of national commitment to school improvement (Mauersberg 1994, 255). Thus the symbolic importance of the Sejm ultimately outweighed its pragmatic, short-term effects.

B. Competing interwar educational ideologies

As political parties continued to fight for changes to the schooling system in the interwar period, their educational platforms often fell along class lines. Rightist parties in parliament desired a fairly elitist system with strong links to religion, where secondary school

⁸ At this time, secondary school consisted of an 8-year *gimnazjum*. Public primary school students who completed the 7-year primary school could apply for entrance into the *gimnazjum*, but they would be entering at the fourth-year level. However, those children who had entered *gimnazjum* as first year students and who already attended the school were given priority placement, thus limiting the number of slots for students seeking admission from public schools.

was intended mainly for children of privileged backgrounds. Lower class children would be served by universal primary schools and vocational schools, with only the most exceptional candidates moving on to the secondary level. On the other hand, leftist parties, which enjoyed the support of the major teachers' organizations of the time, demanded continued expansion of universal, secular education with equal access for all children regardless of class. Centrists tended to favor segregated schooling according to class, which tipped the scales in the legislature to the right. The move towards a truly universal school system would not be made without resistance, for even though the idea was an old one, educational and political culture in Poland had never given it a hospitable environment in which to grow.

Conservative elites and the leftist opposition fought continuously during the interwar period over what was the ideal school, how it was to be organized, and what its outcomes should be. Conservatives championed the idea of "*wychowanie narodowe*", or nationalist education, which emphasized Poland's separateness and superiority over other nations as well as the primacy of the Polish national identity. Nationalist education stressed idea that although a nation can exist without its own sovereign government (as the previous 123 years of partitioning had so amply demonstrated), a government cannot exist without its people united behind it. In this conception, the government is not an end unto itself, but rather it is a means by which the nation can develop itself (Suleja & Wrzesinski 1999, 170).

The nationalist ideology, though popular during partitions, was unpopular after regaining independence for several reasons. First, teachers were politically opposed to the right-wing Nationalist Democrats who advocated such views. Second, nationalist education centered on ideas of Polish cultural distinctiveness, the Polish language and historical perspective, and Polish ethnicity which was closely partnered with Catholicism. While these views found much support in Polish society, they also found many opponents. Nearly 30% of Poland's population at this time consisted of various ethnic and religious minorities; a national educational policy

that overtly discriminated against non-Poles met with much resistance, particularly in the western and eastern regions where minority populations were concentrated (Krasuski 1985). The nationalist educational model, despite much support at the local level and among rightist political parties in the years immediately following independence, could not gain a solid foothold in the interwar policy landscape. The teachers and the government of Józef Piłsudski, which took power in 1926, instead championed a more inclusive civic ideal of education that emphasized the state rather than the Polish ethnic identity as its central organizing principle (ibid.).

The differences in educational policies of the two main ideologies – the nationalist and the statist – are also reflected in the role of history education in each sides' vision of a reborn Poland. The nationalist ideology focused on the concept of nation (*naród*) as the driving force of history. Nationalist historiography tended to idealize the past, and look to it as a source of consolation during times of national crisis (Jakubowska 1999). History education had a functional role to play for the nationalists, who were faced with the task of creating a real national community out of the imagined community that had preceded it (Anderson 1991). Poland as a national entity was very much an imagined community that had only a few years previously not existed at all. The 1922 methodological directions which accompanied the history curriculum stressed the need for students to understand that they are Poles, that Poland was their homeland, that every Pole's duty was to know their country, to know that Poland was more than just their family or local community (Wasiak 1999, 191). The transmission of a common culture, common duties and responsibilities shared by all citizens, and a common heritage in the form of historical figures and heroes as presented in the schools provided something for Poles to gather around regardless of who its leaders were.

It was Józef Piłsudski's coup d'état of 12 May 1926 that drastically changed the context for debates over educational goals and led to a more stable educational policy. Piłsudski came

to power with backing from the military and the working classes, and it was in response to the expectations of the latter that a democratic educational system was nearly instituted (Wroczyński 1996). In February of 1926, the first Minister of Education in the Piłsudski government, Professor Kazimierz Bartel, announced an initiative for school reform and created a Commission on School Reform to draft the new education law. A year later, Bartel's successor to the post of education minister, Gustaw Dobrucki, officially presented the proposal for a uniform system of schooling consisting of a 7-year elementary school and a 5-year secondary school. The introduction to the proposal presents the goals of the law:

“The goal of the present law is the establishment of such principles of school organization, as will make it possible for the average citizen to reach a high level of education, the finest preparation for life and professional work, and to provide for brave and capable individuals from all walks of life an open door to the highest professional and academic attainment.” (Wroczyński 1996, 260)

Unfortunately for the more liberal reformers, the plan for Polish schools created by Bartel, Dobrucki, and the Commission on School Reform was never realized. Besides the aforementioned economic constraints which regardless would have restricted the reformers' work, the political climate was changing rapidly in a different direction. In order to consolidate power and to create a uniform set of social norms, Piłsudski's political camp became more authoritarian, placing great emphasis on the state as the center of Polish life and culture. According to the dominant statist ideology, the school was to serve the needs of the state above all else, needs that were to be defined by the state itself.

C. 1932 School Reform of Janusz Jędrzejewicz

In 1931 Janusz Jędrzejewicz, a strong advocate of the statist educational model, became Minister of Education after the death of his predecessor. His statist educational platform was passed into law on March 11, 1932, thanks to the support of the Independent Block for Government Cooperation, a political organization which held a majority in the *sejm* and which

also championed the statist ideology. The 1932 reform law, often referred to as the Jędrzejewicz Reform after its main author, established a uniform school system at the primary level which continued to exist until the Second Republic fell at the end of World War II. For all of its avowed progressiveness, however, the reform of 1932 was sharply criticized by teachers on the left, who claimed that the compulsory 7-year elementary school was not democratic either in organization or structure. There were actually 3 types of 7-year elementary schools created by the 1932 reform, each of which had a different academic structure (Krasuski 1985, 180). Rural children were disproportionately placed in Level I Schools (*szkoły I stopnia*), which offered the most pared-down curriculum and whose graduates were not allowed entrance into secondary schools. In the 1935-1936 school year, 75% of rural schools were of this type (*ibid.*, 181). In particular, the vast majority of working-class or peasant children ended their schooling with elementary school because they had little or no access to continued schooling, and sometimes lacked access to even the mandatory levels of schooling prescribed by the government. For example, according to statistical reports from 1937, 77% of village schools only went up to the fourth grade, a situation that did not provide any real chance for peasant children to move on to the secondary level, particularly in the east of Poland (Wroczyński 1996, 262-3).

History education played a crucial role in Piłsudski's Poland. In the statist ideology, nationalism was a weakness to be overcome rather than a source of power. The underlying assumption to the statist mentality was that the state always acted in the best interests of its citizens, and could bring a nation to greatness despite weak social bonds. The image of the *bojownik*, or fighter, was held up as a model of civic virtue. School history emphasized military history and centered around the formation of the Polish state as its main narrative frame. As Jakubowska (1999) demonstrates, the periodization of school history during the Second Republic reflects the state-centric mentality. Seven of the ten units of 5th and 6th grade history programs focused primarily on the concept of the Polish state and events affecting it in some

way: the building of the Polish state, the loss of unity, the re-birth and strengthening of the Polish state, the Golden Age of the Polish state, the fight to retain power, the fight for Polish independence, the attainments of independence and the re-birth of the Polish state in 1918 (Jakubowska 1999, 43).

Many educators on both the left and the right criticized the 1932 reform. Radical teachers in particular exposed the shortcomings of the new system in the pages of their own professional periodicals. One educator writes:

“The state of education in the Polish Republic is desperate. Six million illiterates out of 32 million people – this number is shocking, especially when one considers that the numbers of children not going to school at all grow every year, and that an alarming number of children who do go to school don’t even have the basic reading and writing skills to show for it” (ibid., 264).

Democratically-minded⁹ teachers who were dissatisfied with the 1932 reform - and the ZNP’s support of it - established their own organization, the *Towarzystwo Oswiaty Demokratycznej* (Society for Democratic Education), or TOD. On the pages of their own journal, *Teachers’ Monthly*, the TOD promoted their discontent with the new system:

“We demand that children be freed from the mandatory school requirement, that there be established a uniform and completely free system of universal education in children’s native language,... that social assistance and nutrition services be provided for poor children, that children should be schooling in the spirit of pacifism and international cooperation, that compulsory religious education be stopped, that class size be limited to 40 students, that the property-owning classes be taxed to support schools, that unemployed teachers be given work, and that the state and regional governments set aside a predetermined amount of funds to support education” (Wroczyński 1996, 264-5).

This declaration had no effect on government policy, but not necessarily because it found no sympathetic followers. In part the left suffered from the same problem as the right: neither side agreed with the reform, but neither had the power to do anything about it (Garbowska 1994, 269). But perhaps more to blame for the ineffectualness of the reform’s

⁹ While Wroczyński describes this section of the teacher’s union this way, others like Garbowska describe them as members of the radical left (1996). These differing interpretations of TOD evidence the political perceptions of educational historians studying this period.

opposition was the rapidly deteriorating international situation in the late 1930s; the imminent military threat from Germany in the west and the Soviet Union in the east precluded either side from pursuing their cause in the long run.

It should be recognized, however, that even if official educational institutions were imperfect and controversial and eventually abolished by occupying powers, the Jędrzejewicz reform of 1932 did have some positive results. It organized and unified the Polish educational system, and greatly improved the training of teachers, though at the expense of non-Polish minorities, who were not allowed to teach in Polish schools (Garbowska 1994, 267). The desire to create a universal educational system that served all regardless of class or ethnicity could not, under such a looming international threat, compete with the state's need to solidify the nation as a political and military entity.

D. Influential educational theories developed during the interwar period

Despite the fact that the 1932 educational system was the only one receiving official sanction, there were other major theories regarding education that continued to be influential at this time and in the future even though they went unrealized in practice. Among the most influential theorists of education during the Second Republic were Antoni Bolesław Dobrowolski, Władysław Spasowski, and Marian Falski.

Dobrowolski was a naturalist and humanist who believed that a universally high level of education among the entire young generation was imperative, and that the practice of “self-education” could lead to a higher intellectual and cultural level across the entire society (Krasuski 1985, 182). Dobrowolski held that the minimum universal education was insufficient to eliminate the cultural abyss that existed between the educated classes and the masses, and that the only way to bring the overall level of education to a higher level was to educate more people of all classes to higher levels (ibid.). Everyone needed to be exposed to “higher

intellectual culture” which would allow people to “understand contemporary life in all its complexities” (as quoted in Wróczyński 1996, 269).

Spasowski held some ideas in common with Dobrowolski, including the belief that increasing the overall level of education in society was necessary. Spasowski, though, was a Marxist who held that “liberation of man from capitalistic exploitation was a necessary condition for social justice” (Wróczyński 1996, 270). He stressed the connections between school and life by linking education with productive work, an idea he drew from Soviet pedagogy (ibid.). Though he lost his post in 1932 because of his Marxist views, Spasowski’s ideas would find more favor in the years to come.

Marian Falski’s writings from the time of the Second Republic are considered extraordinarily valuable; it is thanks to his meticulous statistical-based studies that the history of Polish education during the period 1918-1939 is so well-documented (Wróczyński 1996). He also stood out from the crowd of critics of the 1932 reform because he actually offered a well-reasoned, theoretically-grounded alternative, one which would provide educational access for all children, native language education for national minorities, and separation of the schools from the influence of the church. (Mięso 1980, 94). Falski’s theory of education called for uniform, universal schooling which also provided an extensive system of social assistance to help children attain the highest level of education possible. Teachers’ criticism of the 1932 reform was spearheaded by Marian Falski’s brochure *Walczymy o szkołę* (*We Fight for the School*), in which he exposed what he labeled the hollow phrases surrounding the new reform system, which claimed to usher in a new era of Polish education and to continue “the immortal work of the Commission of National Education” (Wróczyński 1996, 263). Falski (writing under the pseudonym Rafał Praski) argued that in reality, the 1932 law destroyed any achievements gained in the past, cutting off a large portion of the population from access to secondary and higher education, which was reserved for the elite. Using statistics, Falski demonstrated that the

three-tier¹⁰ schooling system perpetuated class differences in schooling, and that it left large numbers of children without any access to education at all. In another of his most famous works, *Srodowisko społeczne młodzieży a jej wykształcenia* (*The Social Environment of Youth and Its Development Through Education*) (1937), Falski again exposed the class-based function of schooling and called for the democratization and universalization of education to combat class differentiation (Wroczyński 1996; Mięso 1980).

More inspiration for the Polish ideal of education from the theoretical perspective came from figures such as Henryk Rowid and Jerzy Ostrowski, who in the 1920s advocated student-centered schooling, the active engagement of children in social learning, the tapping of children's creative abilities in the learning process, and only the highest qualifications for teachers. The work of these two scholars very much echoed progressive education movements across the globe. The 1930s saw a profusion of experimental schools and professional education periodicals and organizations (Krasuski 1985).

The importance of the flourishing of educational theory in the interwar era cannot be overemphasized. Poland, connected to the theoretical trends of the West and eager to rebuild its own national system of schooling after a century of partition, was actively engaged in the democratic educational process. Polish educational theorists' work was informed by both international educational trends as well as their own native traditions, ideas, and symbols. This work was cut short with the Nazi invasion and the coming of World War II. But even before 1939, Polish educational theorists had a greater inspirational impact than they had on actual policy creation at the time.

¹⁰ The reform law outlined three types of schools – Levels I, II, and III – that provided varying amounts of education. Level I schools offered the shortest program, and were the most common type of school in rural areas. Level III schools offered the most thorough, 7-year, educational program, and were most likely to be found in urban areas.

E. Interpreting the interwar period

The period between the end of World War I and the invasion of the Nazis in 1939 was an important one for the history of education in Poland, but also a controversial one among educational historians. The developments in education during the interwar years have been interpreted in extremely divergent ways, thanks to the clash of political ideologies on which those interpretations are based. Whether the major educational policy reforms of this period were triumphs or debacles or something in between remains a matter of debate, as do the motivations behind their formulation and how these reforms should be written into the continuing story of the historical development of education in Poland. The two major interpretations are in many ways as different as night and day; one side sees the interwar period as a re-emergence of native Polish educational traditions that pre-dated the Partitions, while the other views the same period as laying the groundwork for the coming triumph of socialism and a repudiation of the misguided bourgeois past. Though the pro-socialist view has fallen out of favor since 1989, this view dominated historical interpretation of interwar Polish education throughout the Communist era.

The reforms of education enacted during the Second Republic were motivated very much by politics and developments on the international military front. The view of the state as the primary institution defining the nation was foremost in the minds of policy makers, and schools were therefore structured to meet the needs of the state above other considerations. Despite almost two centuries of liberal educational thought and official rhetoric of equal opportunity for all, the educational system retained vestiges of socio-economic inequality which privileged the urban upper- and middle classes and intelligentsia while leaving the rural peasantry behind.

Reaction to independence took the form of radical policies and radical stances. In an effort to re-define the Republic, lines were drawn that were clear and unmistakable regarding

who is a Pole and who is not. A solid, uniform national ideal to be disseminated through official state organs was crucial given that the nation itself was constantly growing and changing. People in different areas had different histories, memories, experiences, educations, ways of life, so the new Republic sought to create a common culture for new citizens to rally around. The successors to Pilsudski were the ones who got to define this culture for everyone, much to the chagrin of non-Poles and many Poles who had desired a more democratic system. However, Poles were eventually faced with a much more dangerous threat to their hopes of building democratic educational system: World War II,

IV. OCCUPATION 1939-1945

Krasuski (1985, 1992) and Wroczyński (1996) describe the occupation of Poland by the Nazis and the Soviets during World War II as a period of great losses as well as great moral victories. Within a generation of independence, the Polish nation was again under attack from those who wished to destroy it. As the previous generations had done during the period of partitioning, the Polish people resisted these attacks through networks of informal education which perpetuated their culture, language, and history.

In September of 1939, the Soviet and Nazi powers drew the demarcation line across the heart of Poland, splitting it in half. Within the Nazi-held lands there were two distinct areas: the western Polish lands, which were absorbed into the Reich, and the south-central area, which became known as the *General Gouvernement*. The Nazi occupiers quickly identified the school system as the main source of Polish chauvinism, and dissolved it. The western provinces of Poland, containing over 10 million Polish citizens, officially became part of the Third Reich. In those areas all Polish schools were closed, and children were placed into German-language schools with German teachers. These schools only taught at the elementary level, and offered only the most basic education. The speaking of Polish in schools, churches, and public places in

general was forbidden and severely punished (Krasuski 1992, 130). The number of hours spent in school was sharply curtailed; many children spent more time in forced labor than in the classroom (ibid.). The general point of Nazi educational policies in the areas of occupation was the demoralization of Poles through the systematic destruction of their culture and the extermination of the educated classes. In the eastern provinces, Polish schools were taken over by Soviet authorities, who instituted pro-Soviet curricula and Russian-language instruction. However, in these areas, some Polish teachers were allowed to keep working where Soviet teachers could not be provided (ibid.).

Just as the interwar period's importance to the building of Polish educational theory cannot be overemphasized, neither can the degree of devastation caused by the Nazi occupation during World War II. The results were nothing short of catastrophic (Walczak 1987; Davies 1982): teachers and academics, including nearly the entire faculties of Poland's most important institutions of higher learning, were summarily rounded up and either executed or sent to concentration camps; and Polish textbooks and library holdings were systematically destroyed. The goal of education during the occupation was, according to German policy, "to convince the Poles about their hopeless national fate, to get them accustomed to submission and respect for the Germans, and to teach them how to work more effectively for the economy of the Third Reich" (Krasuski 1992, 131). In the words of Hans Frank, governor of the *General-Gouvernement*¹¹, "We must create for the Poles conditions which demonstrate to all the hopelessness of their situation" (Wroczyński 1996, 295).

In response to the Nazi and Soviet assaults on Polish education and culture, an underground teaching movement arose which took an active role in resisting the occupation. In October 1939, the Polish Teachers' Association ZNP established the *Tajna Organizacja*

¹¹ A region controlled by the Reich from 1939-1945 that encompassed the south-central part of Poland, and included Lublin, Warsaw, and Kraków.

Nauczycielska (Secret Teaching Organization), known as TON, to organize underground teaching. Clandestine classes were organized all over Poland and at all levels, from the elementary to university level, with the goal of preserving Polish culture, language, history, and traditions. In eastern provinces under Soviet control, many of those Polish teachers who were allowed to continue teaching used strategies (outlined in underground teaching manuals) to integrate information about Poland and its history into the mandated pro-Soviet curriculum (Krasuski 1980). However, such teaching, though possible, was particularly dangerous in this area because of the presence of Ukrainian, Byelorussian, and Lithuanian nationals who were often virulently opposed to Polish nationals (Krasuski 1992; Wroczyński 1996). In the part of Nazi-occupied Poland that was not officially integrated into the Third Reich proper (in the southern part of Poland including Kraków), one of every three children was receiving some sort of education through this underground movement in 1943-1944, and about 70% of secondary school-age children were educated this way (ibid.). In many rural areas, children had greater access to secondary schooling through clandestine teaching than they had before the occupation (ibid.).

The underground teaching movement was important to Poland's educational history for a number of reasons (Krasuski 1992, 137). First, it served as an additional source of resistance to the occupying forces. Second, it was successful in preserving Polish language and intellectual culture through a particularly destructive period of the nation's history as well as preventing the systematic demoralization that was the ultimate goal of Nazi policy. Third, it brought a higher level of educational opportunity to rural areas than had previously been possible. Lastly, at the end of the war, the Polish educational system was not as bereft of teachers as it otherwise would have been. But the human devastation to Poland – over 6 million dead, or 20% of the population (Mięso 1980, 280) – that was the legacy of the war would not be easily forgotten, and posed an enormous challenge to post-war educators.

V. POST WORLD WAR II: 1945-1948

In the immediate post-war period, the Poles again faced the monumental task of rebuilding their national school system. They were, in many ways, back to where they were after regaining their independence after World War I: they lacked 30,000 teachers, had lost 30% of their school buildings and 90% of their instructional materials and libraries, and money to start reparations was scarce (Krasuski 1985, 219). This short period of time, however, is controversial in the history of Polish education in that the way in which it is characterized in the historical literature varies substantially depending on one's political framework. By some it has been interpreted as an attempt to pick up the pieces left by Polish liberal democratic education, and to again try to build in the spirit of the interwar reformers. By others, it is considered the true beginning of the Marxist era in Poland, and a final break from the mistakes of the interwar period.

Politically and economically, the period from 1945 to 1948 was one of relative instability. The nation was coping with a 20% loss of population, a radical change in borders, and the wreckage to the country's infrastructure caused by the war. The political situation was in flux, with several changes in government over a period of just a few years. The educational establishment tried to regain a sense of order as quickly as possible, and to lay the groundwork for a national education system that never completely stopped functioning. Though many educators had their own cherished ideals of a national education system, one where all children regardless of class could have access to more education, the political tides were working against them. Already in 1945, teachers of the Marxist left - whose ideas of democratic education emphasized the leading role of the government, the political importance of schooling, and labor rather than the more humanistic, individualistic ideals of the ZNP - were making their presence in educational circles felt.

As had occurred after World War I, a national conference of over 550 teachers and educational leaders was convened in 1945 in the city of Łódź to address the problems of rebuilding after the war. The decrees issued by this and other meetings shared the same fate as had the earlier decrees of the *Sejm Nauczycielski* in 1919; though supported by the majority of teachers, they were not realized in practice. The decrees do, however, express the desires of educators at that time regarding their preferred vision of Polish education. The decrees also show a strong thread of continuity and shared vision with earlier reformers.

There were two conceptions for Polish education offered at the 1945 meetings. The first, put forth by the Ministry, was for an 11-year program split into three levels: grades 1-5 (elementary), grades 6-8 (lower secondary), and grades 9-11 (*liceum*). The first two were to be compulsory. Teachers were against this idea because it went against their cherished idea of universal compulsory schooling in that it required too little. The teachers' organizations instead wanted an 8-year elementary and 4-year secondary program, which was all compulsory. In the end, however, the Ministry's 8-year compulsory school was selected as the model for the new school. The 1944-1945 school system was organized according to the pre-war principles, with a few important changes: gone was the fee for public secondary schooling, as were two of the three types of schools that provided different schooling for children in different areas.

In educational politics of the time, there were two main groups: the leftist government, including the minister of education from the PPR (Polish Worker's Party, a socialist group) and the teachers, who were mostly members of the ZNP, the teachers' union. While the PPR stressed the relationship of man to labor and the importance of education for the benefit of the collective good, the teachers stressed their educational ideals from the Second Republic, which focused more on the development of the individual based on humanistic culture (Mazur 1999, 207). The teachers and the government continued to be at odds with one another; the teachers'

union was accused by the socialists as being too closely linked ideologically with the bourgeoisie and other reactionary elements (ibid., 208).

However, the ZNP, as their educational predecessors before them, were not able to bring their ideals into reality. The changing political situation precluded any further development of the democratic educational ideal. Beginning in 1945, the Soviet Union imported Communist officials into Poland to take command of key offices in the Polish government. The PPR Polish Workers' Party, which had been fairly obscure and unknown during the war, rose to power in 1948 when it combined with the Polish Socialist Party to form the PZPR, the Polish United Workers' Party. The Communists who controlled the PZPR allowed other socialist parties to exist, but only if they conceded to the PZPR the leading role in Polish politics, a policy known as "*partia hegemoniczna*" or party hegemony. From 1948 onwards, the educational philosophy of Marxism subjugated all other competing models.

The characterization of the 1945-1948 period in Communist era writings is illuminating when compared to more contemporary interpretations such as Krasuski's, and reflects how different the Communist and liberal Polish ideological views towards that time are. Suchodolski (1970) for example, speaks of how even as early as 1939, the foundations for the PRL were being laid down in Poland. It is also significant that in his periodization of Polish educational history, 1944-1968 are considered a single era, the "second" independence attained after the years of Nazi occupation. Suchodolski claims social opinion held that the Soviet Union was viewed as the "only guarantor of the new borders and of the new perspectives of Polish life within those borders" (ibid., 144). He also characterizes the new society being built by the peasants and the workers as the only true successors of Poland's glorious past. All in all, Suchodolski describes a seamless transition from occupation to Communism, with no mention of democratic movements or opposition to the Communists' takeover of Polish life in 1948.

Any semblance of fascination with the liberal bourgeois model of parliamentary democracy is to be dismissed as misguided (ibid., 147-8).

Krasuski's (1985) version demonstrates quite a different view. Polish education was rebuilding in the spirit of its liberal democratic traditions, but was once again thwarted by a foreign entity which prevented democratic reforms from coming to fruition. Even more recent accounts of Polish educational history stop completely at 1945, when the effects of the Sovietization of Poland under Stalin began to be felt on a structural basis (Możdżeń 2000).

VI. EDUCATION IN THE PRL (PEOPLES' REPUBLIC OF POLAND): 1948-1973

Strictly speaking, the era of the PRL did not officially begin until 1952, when the Polish constitution decreed it to be so (Hejnicka-Bezwińska 1996, 6). However, it is from 1948 that the Communist monopoly of the Polish government and its institutions was truly in place as Communist authorities took control over the largest youth organizations as well as the ZNP (Krasuski 1985, 221). The goals of schooling became overtly political and ideological, while the old system of education came under harsh criticism. The new system, built according to the principles of Marxism-Leninism, was created to instill in children the importance of class conflict to the development of society; the superiority of the socialist system of economics and social organization; the international brotherhood of socialist nations and a close relationship to the Soviet Union; and the importance of working towards the common good of socialist society. The socialist period lessened the educational establishment's control over the organization and content of schooling, and in Krasuski's view heralded a period of unprecedented interference from non-educational institutions (ibid., 222).

Under Communist party rule, the political aspect of education far outweighed the pedagogical aspects. Teachers were to be hired not on the basis of their professional competence, but rather according to class, ideological and political criteria (Hejnicka-

Bezwińska 1996, 101). The Marxist system of education, codified in the Constitution of 1952, proclaimed that

“Citizens of the People’s Republic of Poland have the right to education. The right to education includes:

- Free schooling
- Uniform, compulsory elementary school
- The universalization of secondary school
- The development of higher education
- Government assistance in raising the qualifications of working citizens in industrial enterprises and other places of employment in urban and rural areas
- A system of government stipends, boarding schools, dormitories, and academic housing as well as other material resources needed by children of workers, workers, and the intelligentsia” (Hejnicka-Bezwińska 1996, 113).

While these sentiments bear strong resemblance to the ideals of Polish teachers’ organizations before the Communist takeover, the means by which these rights were to be assured were anything but democratic in the sense the ZNP had previously used it.

In the name of socialism, the government took complete control over all educational institutions; all knowledge for consumption in schools was to be created and distributed via state-controlled entities, and no alternative or private schools were allowed. Local and regional educational institutions that had previously met the specific needs of their population were closed; particularist cultural practices were officially replaced by images and principles of mass culture as promoted by the state. Teaching methods stressed passivity in the face of officially-sanctioned authority and rote memorization of the “correct” interpretations of reality according to Marxist principles. Schools during this period were not the only institutions that were utilized to support and perpetuate Communist ideo-political ideals. In a wide-ranging effort to supplant the church and other local organizations that offered children ideological alternatives beyond the school, the Polish government during the PRL organized youth groups and summer camps

that preached the values of internationalism, patriotism, and friendship with the USSR (Jarosz 1999).

The attainments achieved by Polish education during the PRL should not be overlooked; the Communist system came closer than any previous system to bringing universal literacy to Poland, and secondary education became more accessible to poorer students than ever before. However, the spread of mass education also came at the cost of the lowering of overall quality of education (Hejnicka-Bezwińska 1996, 29), the general loss of independent scholarly freedom, and the lack of development of the kind of analytical, critical thinking skills that were so highly valued by educators (*ibid.*, 11). Additionally, educators lost any sort of meaningful control over education, school leadership, or content.

The story of educational reform in Communist Poland is less a story of competing ideologies or reactions to changing social conditions than it is a continuing attempt by the Communist authorities to maintain and strengthen their control over society in the face of broken promises and shattered expectations. Hejnicka-Bezwińska (1996) notes that the changes made to Poland's education system were never the product of free scholarly discourse, but rather were preordained by the dominant paradigm of real socialism and its predetermined destination. The pedagogical principles of the reformers were by necessity based on illusions and myths which ultimately served to strengthen the state and its ruling party. Unlike in earlier periods, when one may trace the influence of particular people on specific reforms, in the PRL it was unimportant exactly who the reformers were; they functioned as a group of people who simply followed the dictates of Communist ideology as required, and whose personal subjectivity had no role in their work (Kwieciński 1982).

As a result, the educational system of the PRL was not able to be reformed in the respect that its basic tenets had to remain unaltered. Any "reforms" that took place in the later decades served political and symbolic functions rather than the social or spiritual needs of the

populace. This inflexibility of the educational system to respond to society in the end was one of the main reasons for the downfall of the entire Communist project (ibid.). The unreformability of the educational system served as just one piece of evidence that the entire socialist system was impossible to reform, and that the only way to fix it was to destroy it utterly.

The educational system of the PRL, including its administrative structure and the goals of schooling, was codified in 1961. This was less a reform than a legal acknowledgement of the *de facto* existence of a socialist system wherein Marxist ideology reigned supreme and the primary goal of education was to create good citizens that served the state above all (ibid., 123). Gone was an emphasis on the individual, and in its place was a focus on the importance of labor and the ultimate attainment of the socialist ideal. The next major reform came a decade later in 1973, and was very much the reaction of the government to social and political unrest caused by dissatisfaction with the unfulfilled promises of socialism.

The 1973 reform of education was precipitated to a great extent by the fact that the government of the PRL and educators differed greatly when it came to evaluating the success or failure of the educational system. The differences are attributable to the different criteria used by the state and by educational circles to evaluate the educational system (ibid., 128). Hejnicka-Bezwińska explains that the government considered the goals of indoctrination the most important, hence they judged education a success because it was, in their opinion, fulfilling its political goal of indoctrination. On the other hand, she continues, those educators who were part of a critical movement judged education a failure based on data pertaining to low levels of learning, mastery of material and accessibility to higher levels of education, i.e. in terms of pedagogy. The difference between the views on education were significant, and evidence a fundamental difference of opinion over the general goals of education in the PRL.

The difference between the views on education were significant, prompting the government to initiate and carry out in the 1970s an unprecedented policy of aggressive, mass propaganda which proclaimed the Polish educational system to be a success (ibid.,129). The appearance of success was promoted, even though it was not reflected in reality. This promotion of success culminated in the reform project of 1973, officially released on a date that carried with it enormous symbolic value: October 13, 1973, 200 years to the day after the establishment of the National Education Commission of the First Polish republic. Ironically, the 1973 reform, ostensibly inspired by Polish educational history, in fact brought the model of Polish education closer to that of the Soviet Union (Szkudlarek 1993).

The groundwork for the 1973 reform had been laid down two years previously, when the Minister of Education, in response to widespread student protests, called together a Committee of Experts to study and report on the state of Polish education. Led by some of the most distinguished educational figures of the day, the Commission ordered dozens of studies, which were carried out by hundreds of researchers, who in turn collected 273 analyses and reports drawn up by various institutions (Hejnicka-Bezwińska 1996, 131). Though the Committee's report was published with much fanfare, the Ministry of Education ultimately proceeded to ignore much of the report's recommendations, and instead instituted changes based on its own studies, which resulted in a stronger emphasis on political indoctrination and the socialist ideal (ibid.; Mader 1988). Hejnicka-Bezwińska (1996) is not alone in arguing that the reform of 1973 was a myth, that positive change was heralded but never arrived, and that the propaganda of success was the government's main instrument in placating the public and attempting to maintain support for the socialist system. These sentiments would be more and more commonly voiced, both privately and publicly, as the 1980s approached. Problems with the educational system were symptomatic of more profound social and economic problems in Poland, and would serve as fuel for the fires of the opposition movements of the 1980s.

VII. CONCLUSION

The liberal democratic educational ideal has demonstrated remarkable persistence in the Polish psyche. Whether it is faced with the loss of Polish sovereignty, the ravages of two world wars, elitist nationalism or Marxist domination, the idea that all children regardless of class should have equal access to education, that the improvement of the individual can and does lead to a stronger nation, and that educators should play a leading role in creating and sustaining educational institutions has never died. The expansion of democracy – inspired and funded by the West and particularly by the United States – in Africa and Eastern Europe in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s has only further aided the continuation of the cause of democratic educational reform in Poland. However, as we shall see, the end of Communist party rule in Poland in 1989 did not guarantee the ascendance of the democratic educational ideal. Competing ideas of Poland's future place in a unified Europe and a global community are fueled by other ideologies that were also hibernating during the Communist period, and whose claims to Poland's cultural and spiritual inheritance are just as strong.

CHAPTER 5

HISTORY TEXTBOOK REFORM IN POLAND: EFFECTS OF THE FREE MARKET ON EDUCATIONAL TRANSITION

“Despite the beautifully-worded principles stating that it is the curriculum and not the textbook that is fundamental, and that the textbook is supposed to be simply a learning aide for the teacher and the student, ... we acknowledge that it is really the textbook that has a decided impact on the shape of school history” (Achmatowicz 1981, 35).

“Textbooks, for better or worse, dominate what students learn. They set the curriculum, and often the facts learned, in most subjects” (Graham Down, quoted in Apple & Christian-Smith 1991, 5).

The previous chapter outlined the development of the Polish educational system up until the late 1970s. At the end of that decade, Poland reached a turning point. Deep in debt, the government was unable to realize the material demands of the Polish citizenry, and faced greater and better organized opposition than perhaps at any time since the Second World War (Hejnicka-Bezwinska 1996, 133). The failure of the highly-touted educational reform of 1973 showed how the Communist system was incapable of fundamental change, a fact which necessitated its complete removal (ibid., 135; Kupisiewicz 1991, 107). The late 1970s and early 1980s saw the emergence of the Solidarity trade union, which partnered with the Catholic Church and Polish intellectuals – including educators – to stand as an alternative to Communist party hegemony in practically all aspects of life. The teacher's arm of Solidarity became a center of alternative educational discourse, and demanded an end to the government's monopoly over education, particularly over the content of history education (Mader 1988). It was the work of

the Solidarity teacher's union that formed the foundation of the reform work begun in earnest after the end of Communist rule in 1989.

Over the course of the next decade, the Ministry of Education drafted a series of proposals outlining the organizational structure, curricular program, and new methods for creating and disseminating educational knowledge (MEN 1994, 1998). After ten years of work, on 15 February 1999, the Polish Ministry of Education signed into law the new *Podstawa Programowa*, or Basic Curriculum, for all state-run public schools, to be introduced into certain grades beginning in the 1999-2000 school year (MEN 1999a). The Basic Curriculum in Poland is a set of national standards which outlines the universal canon of knowledge to be included in any history program, as well as the general abilities and skills that students should master at each grade level.

In the autumn of 1999, fourth-grade elementary students and first-year *gimnazjum* students became the first students subject to the new requirements based on the Basic Curriculum (ibid.). Along with the new program came new textbooks, which were quite unlike the vast majority of textbooks hitherto existing in the Polish schools. The appearance of new textbooks at this particular time is not all that surprising; new curricula demand new textbooks. But why had significant changes in history textbooks not occurred previous to the 1999 reform?

Despite the fact that historians and educators had been complaining for decades about the poor quality and dogmatic content of history textbooks, the Communist government had refused to relinquish its monopoly over the production and distribution of textbooks. Textbooks were a powerful tool used to indoctrinate the nation's youth to accept the Communist ideal, and their content was heavily controlled. However, at the end of the Communist period in 1989, it was expected that once government control was loosened, historians and history educators would oversee the creation of new history texts whose contents more closely reflected current historical scholarship and a more democratic pedagogy that promoted critical thinking skills

over rote memorization. But despite a new atmosphere of democracy and academic freedom, as late as 1998, history educators were still complaining about many of the same problems with textbooks that they had in the 1980s (Maternicki 1998). So why is it that in the post-socialist period, even though the government had relinquished its monopoly over the production and distribution of history textbooks, textbook reform was not realized until 1999? Why did it not happen sooner? The answer to this question is to be found by looking to economic factors connected to the privatization of the textbook publishing industry and Poland's transition to a free market economy. It will be argued here that it is these economic factors, rather than political or ideological influences, that contribute most to an explanation as to why textbook reform did not happen earlier than it has in Poland.

Textbook reform differs fundamentally from curriculum or pedagogical reform. Both the process of curriculum development and the implementation of those curricula in the classroom (i.e. teaching) take place mainly within educational institutions, and are in the hands of educators, educational administrators, and bureaucrats. Their goal was to create a system of schooling that while

“respecting the Christian system of values ... embraces universal ethical principles, ... serves to develop children's feelings of responsibility, love for the fatherland and respect for the Polish cultural heritage while simultaneously being open to values of European culture and the world.... Stress is put on developing abilities which prepare the students for a responsible life in a democratic society with a free-market economy” (MEN 1999c).

On the other hand, textbook publishing is influenced most strongly by actors and mechanisms functioning beyond the educational system itself who have a very different goal in mind: profit. The story of textbook reform in post-communist Poland is more than anything that of the challenges faced by two entities: publishers attempting to serve educational goals while competing successfully during the transition to the free market, and Ministry officials trying to negotiate the competing transitional dynamics of democratic decentralization and the need to

direct the reform process from the center. In other words, on the one hand, the Ministry was responsible for creating coherency, order, and a vision for the nation's educational system, but at the same time the Ministry was gradually devolving decision-making power and financial control to regional and local educational authorities, even to individual teachers. As the reform progressed, the Ministry was simultaneously criticized for not doing enough (Bikont & Kruczkowska 1999; Tomaszewski et al. 1997) and doing too much (PAP 2003) to dictate textbook policy.

The long road to textbook reform

The reform of textbooks actually began in earnest while the Communist regime still held power – albeit waning power – over the Polish nation. At least since the student protests of 1968, the heavily dogmatic content of history textbooks in use since the early 1960s had been part of, if not the center of, much debate, controversy, and social unrest in Poland (Achmatowicz 1981). Though one may point out that all school history is ideological to some degree, what made school history in Communist-era Poland problematic was that it was first and foremost a political tool dedicated to perpetuating the Marxist-Leninist ideology; intellectual, cognitive-developmental, social, and educational goals were always subordinated to Party interests (Maternicki 1995).

Academics, teachers, and historians judged the model of school history inherited from the Communist era to be profoundly flawed in a number of ways, and their opinions are well documented (Maternicki 1995; Wasiak 1999; Hellwig 1997; Kozłowska 1997; Kujawska 1997; Mazur 1997; Rulka 1999). First, the Marxist-Leninist interpretation of history was the only one deemed acceptable by the Communist authorities to be included in textbooks and learned by students for examination purposes, in effect banning any and all alternative research models, interpretations or teaching methodologies within the classroom (Wandycz 1992). Second,

students were evaluated almost exclusively on their ability to memorize prodigious amounts of encyclopedic knowledge, with little to no demand for individual interpretation or critical analysis of historical content. Though in theory teachers were not officially restricted from teaching against the textbook, there was little time to do so, given the overloaded content of the mandatory history curriculum.¹² Third, the actual history contained in textbooks was full of falsifications, simplifications and distortions of historical facts, the inevitable result of the government's subordination of history education to serve its own political goals, which were strongly influenced by Soviet ideology (Wirth 2000). Lastly, textbooks were also littered with so-called *białe plamy*, or "white spots", gaps in the historical record where the Communist authorities had deemed silence the best (the safest?) choice (Petrunko 1990). Examples of topics considered inappropriate to be discussed in textbooks include the 1920 Polish-Russian War, the massacre of Polish officers in Katyń, the Stalinist purges, and the forced collectivization of agriculture.

These conditions of strict control over the content of school history textbooks constituted the core of the Communist program of indoctrination, where students were "socialized to accept, uncritically, some ... way of understanding the world rather than another" (Nord 1995, 14). Textbooks produced and used in Poland during Communism bore all of the traits of indoctrination enumerated by Haavelsrud (1979): disguising subjective viewpoints as objective truth, the removal of conflict descriptions, the exclusion of future perspectives and the inclusion of past events that serve to legitimize the present. The contrast between history as

¹² The term "overloaded" (*przeładowany*) describes the state wherein the amount of mandatory content to be covered in history class and mastered by students is so large that teachers quite literally do not have time to go beyond the scope of the dictates of the curriculum. The textbooks accompanying history lessons were similarly overloaded with minute facts and details, often leaving little room for evaluation or discussion within the text. A typical elementary textbook of the old model, for example, offered on the topic of "defensive war" 20 pages of 8cm text containing 47 dates, 27 names, 144 geographical place names, 38 bits of data in the form of numbers, and 115 military terms (Kujawska 1997).

experienced by citizens and history as taught in school was great, as were the differences between pre-war Polish historiography and school history based on the Soviet model. For example, for decades the relationship between Poland and the Soviet Union was taught to students as one of mutual trust and friendship, while the memories of those who survived Stalinist purges, Siberian gulags, and the battles of World War II provided a more menacing view. Lessening this disparity between “private” and “official” versions of history was one of the motivations behind educational reform movements during the PRL (Maternicki 1995; Achmatowicz 1981).

In his book detailing the 1981-1982 reform of history education, Aleksander Achmatowicz documents how demands for changes in educational structure and content – linked to and supported by the political demands of Solidarity – were negotiated and finally achieved by the Communist opposition and the Polish teachers’ union (ZNP). According to Achmatowicz, by 1980 those opposed to Communism generally acknowledged education as an instrument by which the government controlled public life. Marxist textbooks were openly criticized, and the Polish Historical Association changed its bylaws in 1976 so that Marxism was no longer the only accepted method of scholarship (Wandycz 1992, 1023). As part of general unrest over the unfulfilled promises of the Communist regime, teachers, professors, and historians aligned themselves with the Solidarity trade union and the independent, underground press to demand specific changes to the content of history education and to the structure of education in general. By themselves, academics and teachers were not in a strong position politically to ask much of the government, but once backed by the masses of workers supporting Solidarity, educators were in a much stronger position to make their demands known. The Polish Historical Society (PTH) sent some of its members to serve on Solidarity’s Education committee which, along with other representatives from other disciplines and schoolteachers, drafted the *148 Demands (148 Postulatów)* of 17 November 1980. The *Demands* outlined the

changes desired by educators concerning the structure, administration and funding of schooling, the training of teachers, and allowing Solidarity and ZNP members to take part in educational decision making. The Fourth Demand specifically addresses the content of history education:

It is necessary to verify and supplement history and literature textbooks, particularly contemporary history, so that the pupil has the opportunity to learn about the history and culture of the fatherland to its fullest extent. It is necessary to change and make more flexible the teaching of social studies, so that the contents do not contradict reality (Achmatowicz 1981, 11).

The reply of the Ministry:

The Ministry of Education has completed a systematic analysis and revision of curricula and school textbooks in accordance with the contents of the postulate, utilizing to this end the results of pedagogical studies as well as the studies done within the different disciplines. In these projects, experienced teachers from “Solidarity” and other professional associations will take part. The proposed changes and the results of the discussions will be published in appropriate academic and educational journals (ibid.).

As a result of the negotiations between teachers and historians from Solidarity and the Ministry’s representatives, new instructional programs were implemented during the 1981-1982 school year and were codified in the curriculum law of 10 July 1981. The settlement allowed educators to modify existing curricula and textbooks to bring them more into line with current pedagogical theory and developmental psychology. Among the negotiated changes: more understandable, clearly-written textbooks, with more precise and exact language in contrast to the ambiguous, general statements that constituted the current norm; more focus on historical personages and the motivations for their actions; the inclusion of bibliographies in textbooks; the preparation of new, updated editions of the textbooks for grades 5, 6, and 7 as well as for the first three grades of secondary school (*liceum*), including both content and methodological changes; the addition of discussion questions and supplementary exercises to aid the student; and inclusion of primary source material to supplement the textbook narrative.

Though the negotiated changes were officially implemented, the process was greatly accelerated (less than two months passed between the signing of the law and the beginning of classes). Given the short time span, many of the problems simply could not be rectified, particularly those problems concerning the overload of information, the general chronological rather than thematic organization of the material, and the overall disparity between the level of presentation of the material and the cognitive abilities of the average student. As a result, the reform lacked uniformity, leaving many gaps in the content unfilled and methodological shortcomings untouched (Achmatowicz 1981). In other words, the limited timeframe led, in the short term, to piecemeal change rather than complete revision. So thanks to the loosening of political structures, the opportunity was there in theory for new books to be written, but because creating a new textbook is a long-term project, the most that could be accomplished in the short term was a limited revision of old texts or the publication of supplements to existing materials.

However, after several years of development, history textbooks did begin to reflect significant change. Beginning in 1984 with the publication of Andrzej Szczęśniak's *Polska i świat naszego wieku (Poland and the World in Our Century)*, and continuing into the late 1980s, textbooks began to offer versions of Polish history more reflective of Polish scholarly history and less subject to Soviet influence. These books were lauded for their inclusion of such previously taboo subjects as the massacre of Polish officers in the Katyń forest and the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact (Bikont & Kruczkowska 1999). Despite books' improved content in the 1980s, they still adhered to the traditional historical narrative style which presented a history as a finished product ordered chronologically and focusing mainly on political and military events (Maternicki 1995). The actual teaching of history in the classroom changed little (ibid.). Those who desired a more integrated approach to history teaching were left empty handed, and would have to wait until after 1989 to see any progress towards a new model of history education and a new conception of the history textbook.

The early post-socialist period

In the early post-socialist period, hopes were high that change in textbooks would progress quickly. No longer would the interpretation of history in school textbooks be bound by the tenets of Marxism-Leninism, and teachers would be allowed to select from among a number of textbooks containing various historical perspectives. With the end of the government's monopoly over textbook production and selection, privatization of the textbook industry was expected to open the door to innovation and improvement in textbook quality in terms of methodology, material quality, and content. However, there is ample evidence to suggest that contrary to expectations, the privatization of the textbook industry actually hindered the rapid development and modernization of history textbooks (Chrzanowski 1999, 2000). To understand how this could be the case, one must take into account both the history of and present situation in the textbook publishing industry in Poland and the effects of the economic transition to a free market economy.

Limitations on educational reform were understood during the Communist era mainly in political and ideological terms; economics of change were moot in a system where the state had ultimate control over every aspect of education. The question was not "Could the state afford it?", but rather "Will the state allow it?" Though it was certainly clear to most that the biggest hurdle to be overcome in educational reform in post-socialist Poland was financing it (Tomiak 2000, 180), educators' expectations regarding the reform of textbooks as evidenced in numerous articles written in the 1990s failed to acknowledge the financial costs of developing brand new texts (Mazur 1997; Maternicki 1995, 1998; Zielecki 1998). Perhaps this was because many in Poland expected the free market to bring Western levels of prosperity almost immediately (Schöpflin 1994), and the textbook publishing industry, which quickly began operating on the free market, was therefore not limited by the same legal and procedural

strictures that bound the state and its institutions. This view has since been tempered by the reality of economic and political transformation, but not to the extent that publishers and educational reformers necessarily meet eye to eye. The textbook industry has always controlled two different types of capital: financial and symbolic (Apple 1989, 283). In the case of Poland, educators focused more on the publishing industry's role in and responsibility for recreating a source for the nation's symbolic cultural capital, while the publishers themselves were more concerned with gaining and maintaining the financial capital necessary to survive on the market.

How the textbook publishing industry operates according to its own professional standards and how it interacts with educational institutions can have profound effects on reform implementation and its success or failure. The publishing industry is "a half-way house between curriculum and commerce", a place where educational goals and the race for profit – two concepts that are often at odds – meet (Redding 1963). The work of editors, in cooperation with textbook authors, is guided by professional and social norms governing textbooks' appearance, organization, structure and content, sometimes termed a society's "textbook culture" (Kumar 1988). With the end of the planned socialist economy in Poland, these norms in turn are now partially controlled by market forces, which operate according to their own principles. The nation's desire to educate its children in accordance with new goals and the need for publishers to survive on the free market have changed the way that education and publishing interact on many levels.

The early 1990s

In June 1990 the Main Office of Control of Publications and Presentations (GUKPiW) was closed, opening the doors to freedom of the press and the end of the government's monopoly over the publishing industry (Cybulski 1991). The early 1990s saw the privatization of many formerly state-owned publishing houses and printers, as well as the establishment of

new professional organizations. The transition of publishing from a mostly subsidized, government-controlled industry to a mostly privatized one was not easy for some. Former underground publishers of the Communist era began to surface with the lifting of restrictions and censorship, functioning out in the open but now under demand to operate according to market principles. The majority of these companies, however, made the transition successfully (Kordelasiński 1997). On the other hand, many struggled in the new economic context. Some state subsidy was made available to publishers that are not particularly profitable, such as those that produce scientific or scholarly works intended for smaller audiences, but the generally unstable economic situation during the transformation from a centrally-controlled to a free-market economy meant that government subsidies were by necessity quite limited. Booksellers, who were also fighting to be profitable, were often unwilling to buy books from new publishers whose books were perceived as less likely to sell as well as those of the established houses. But even large publishers could not rely solely on their dominance of the market to support them for long; they quickly realized that they, too, had to learn to compete on the open market.

Brand new publishers appeared almost immediately after the end of Communist control. Young companies tended to be very market-oriented and flexible to the changing social and economic environment, and therefore quite different both organizationally and philosophically from state-owned enterprises. Newer publishers focused their attentions on books with high commercial potential which they hoped would guarantee a profit. Unsurprisingly, almost 90% of such companies failed within the first two years of their founding (ibid.).

Distribution quickly became a problem in the post-socialist period. In less developed countries, distribution of educational materials is often hindered by the lack of reliable transportation and organizational networks coordinating all of the parties involved (Altbach & Kelly 1988). During the period of transition from Communism to free market democracy, the distribution of textbooks in Poland was hindered not by the lack of networks, but rather by the

centralized structure of the hitherto existing system. Under Communism, nearly all aspects of book distribution and sales were controlled by two government enterprises: *Składnica Księgarska*, which had the monopoly on wholesaling, and *Dom Książki*, which controlled the retail market. With the end of Communism in 1989, however, there was no viable system existing to replace the government's distribution network on a national scale. Private distribution companies, which were typically very small operations, staffed by only a few people in make-shift offices, did begin to appear in 1990. After an initial surge of upstart companies (approximately 300 in September of 1992), this number dropped significantly to only a few dozen viable entities (Kordelasiński 1997, 12). At first, these small private distributors struggled to compete with *Składnica Księgarska*, but over time, *Składnica Księgarska's* influence in book distribution declined significantly. *Składnica Księgarska* suffered from the same problem that plagued many other formerly state-owned enterprises: it was simply not used to competing for clients, often expecting publishers and customers to come to them, and as a result was described as being “on its deathbed” by 1992 (Rondestvedt 1993, 212).¹³ *Składnica Księgarska* faced competition not only from new, private distributors, but also from the publishers themselves, many of whom attempted to distribute their books themselves in order to increase their profits.

The effects of the transition in the textbook industry

Many of the problems that plague the general publishing industry also affect textbook publishers. Distribution of educational materials was made more difficult, particularly for new publishing houses without established relationships among distributors. WSiP (School & Pedagogical Publishers), which once had the state's monopoly on textbook publishing and until

¹³ *Składnica Księgarska* has not, however, died the death foretold in 1993.

very recently controlled more than half of that market, remains the country's biggest educational publisher (Lottman 1998; Mikołajewska 2000). WSiP held several advantages over its competitors. Not only did it enter into the free market with an already-existing monopoly on textbooks, it also had established relationships with distribution networks and the capability to produce enormous quantities of books. Newer, smaller publishers desiring to enter the educational text market in the early 1990s tended to have more limited facilities to print their own books (if they had any at all), to have less capital to invest in developing new materials, and to find it more difficult to distribute their books effectively.

The problems of effective distribution of texts in particular helps explain the continued dominance of established publishers in the school textbook market in Poland. In the United States, when a book is approved for use in public schools, it is almost guaranteed to sell very well, since it is both legitimized and required for use by educational institutions (Stille 1998, 15). Though the Ministry of Education now also recommends texts for use in public schools, the same could be expected occur, but did not. Because of the disparate abilities of various publishers to produce and distribute their product, not every textbook publisher was able to maximize the potential of the free market. Some publishers were simply not able to distribute their products on a nationwide scale (Pilikowski 2000). As a result, teachers were not always able to buy the textbooks they wanted to (ibid.). If a teacher could not obtain a particular book, he or she had to select one that was available, even if that book was methodologically or pedagogically inferior to another book. The problem of non-availability of desired textbooks varied considerably depending on demographics. Cities were not nearly as hurt by privatization and the loss of government support as were rural areas, which were less capable of supporting profitable bookstores. This is significant, though, if one considers that as of 1995, 60% of the total Polish population lived in rural areas, defined as villages and towns with less than 50,000 people (Nalaskowski 1998, 21).

Publishers' vs. reformers' goals

So to summarize, older publishers that made the successful transition to the free market in the early 1990s had a considerable edge over their newer competitors, and retained majority control over the textbook market. It would seem to follow that given their considerable financial advantages, the older publishers would be the ones best prepared to implement the expensive changes in textbooks desired by educators and reformers. However, established publishers, rather than develop new books, continued to produce the same textbooks as they had before, with only superficial changes to the content and graphic presentation. So how do we account for the preponderance of these reprints on the textbook market?

Even though several waves of reform have swept over the educational landscape in Poland, the relationship between reform initiatives and the textbook publishing industry could still only be described as ambiguous: in reality the market stimulated reform just as easily as it stymied it (Chrzanowski 1999). The textbook market is complicated and contradictory. On the one hand, publishers with enough resources have an opportunity to invent (or in some cases re-invent) themselves in a continuously-developing area and fill already-existing needs for new books. In cooperation with teachers other educators, publishers develop books that correspond with curriculum plans. The open-endedness of this market seems to give publishers the chance to grow unceasingly. On the other hand, the enormous financial burdens that producing textbooks entails can also drive publishers seeking financial solvency to cut costs, which can inhibit publishers from investing in developing new materials when older materials will still sell and are cheaper to produce.

Given these facts, it is really not surprising that the textbook market in Poland 10 years after the end of socialism is dominated by re-printed textbooks or those that have undergone only minimal changes, as least as far as books for unreformed grades are concerned (ibid.).

Completely new books for grades that have not yet undergone reform are more rare in the textbook market because of the conflict between the amount of time publishers require to develop a new book (as much as three years) and the speed in which reform has been enacted. Publishers are hard-pressed to create new books without assurances as to what the final version of the Basic Curriculum will look like. It is far less expensive in the short term for publishers to develop special materials to help teachers utilize old books to realize new curriculum goals than to develop completely new books. In 1993, for example, 192 supplementary guides to textbooks were published, reflecting a large increase from previous years. This increase is attributable to the existence of a wider selection of school curricula for teachers to choose from, and to the desire of publishers to create new materials to accompany them while avoiding the costly creation of completely new texts (Czarnowska 1995). With nearly 300 curriculum plans offered for Polish schools, which do not always offer the same number of hours of instruction of various subjects, publishers are hard pressed to develop new books that fulfill every need.

Another fact to consider is that publishers cannot invest all of their capital in textbook development. The move to the free market required publishers to invest money in marketing and advertising, expenses that simply did not exist under the Communist system. Publishers began to develop web sites, hire sales representatives to hawk their products in schools and various educational gatherings, offer free samples for teachers' review, provide incentives for groups purchases in the form of televisions, VCRs, and other supplementary materials, and hold special forums where teachers could meet the authors of the textbooks (Mikołajewska 2000; Bikont & Kruczkowska 1999; Szuchta 2000). Thus burdened with the added requirement to market their products on a very competitive market, publishers had at their disposal a smaller percentage of their overall capital to invest in the textbooks themselves.

Surveys have shown that educators desire colorful, attractive, yet inexpensive books with as many pedagogical support materials (exercises, charts, photos, questions, etc.) as

possible (Mazur 1997; Mizgalski 1997). Such additions, however, require greater expenditures in production, pushing up the prices of new books. The skyrocketing costs of new textbooks (which are no longer subsidized by the government) negatively affect both availability and marketability. Booksellers are loathe to stock more books than they think they can sell, thus limiting availability. Now that parents must purchase books for their children, teachers must carefully consider price as well as pedagogical criteria when selecting the textbook they will use (Dolata et al. 2003).¹⁴ A very expensive, new textbook will not necessarily sell well, especially in poorer schools where cost can be an important determinant of textbook choice. Publishers, on the other hand, try to keep costs down while marketing their product as successfully as possible (Chrzanowski 2000). Reprinting older textbooks with only minor cosmetic changes make the books seem new yet enables both production costs and the cost to the consumer to remain low (ibid.).

Additionally, reprinted books are more attractive to some older teachers for a different reason: many teachers are more comfortable using textbooks which adhere to the “proven” or traditional textbook model (Mikołajewski 2000). A new book with a radically different format may be ideal according to history methodologists and theorists, but may also be too strange and unfamiliar to a teacher trained under the Communist system who has not been re-trained to teach in the new democratic school (Mędrzecki 1992). Disparities between what the scholars of education and historians desire in a textbook and what teachers may desire reflects an incorrect assumption in the part of scholars, namely that teachers are chiefly motivated by the same

¹⁴ During the Communist period, textbooks were provided either free of charge for student use, or else provided at a greatly reduced, heavily-subsidized price. In the post-Communist period, parents are now responsible for purchasing their children’s school textbooks at prices dictated by the market. As this is a significant burden for many families, used textbooks are commonly bought and sold at flea markets and via classified advertisements in newspapers, which alleviates some of the expense. However, with the new curriculum come textbooks that are not available to be purchased used the first year they appear, necessitating the purchase of new copies. Therefore, teachers, schools and communities frequently band together to make group purchases for discounted prices.

principles that scholars are. Scholars do not necessarily know what teachers want or need because methodologists tend to be professors rather than practicing teachers, and there is little interaction between the two groups (Szuchta 2000). Based on data collected by the author during a pilot study among history teachers in southern Poland in 1999, teachers generally choose textbooks according to pedagogical criteria, but in many cases even more so based on availability and price.¹⁵ Scholars often do not consider the real-world circumstances teachers must face, assuming that pedagogical quality is the only true determinant of choice. Democracy may allow for the coexistence of different models, for authors to be innovative, and for teachers to exercise freedom of choice regarding educational materials, but in the end the customer selects from different competing models the product that offers the best balance of quality, availability, and affordability.

Thus reprinted books remain prevalent on the textbook market for a combination of reasons: they keep production costs low for the publisher, and they are attractive to many teachers because they are cheap and familiar (Maternicki 1998; Chrzanowski 2000; Mikołajewska 2000). However, such short-term coping strategies do not help content or pedagogical reform move forward. Significant reform of content and methodology in history textbooks, it will be shown, requires circumstances where the need to accept and implement change outweighs the need to cut costs, where indeed the realization of content change becomes a way to improve a publisher's position in the textbook market.

¹⁵ Data was collected via personally-administered, written questionnaires between April and June of 1999 with the assistance of students from the Institute of Sociology at Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland, under the guidance of dr. prof. Kazimierz Bujak. 46 out of 50 secondary school history teachers responded to the poll, which was intended to elicit information from history teachers from large cities, medium and small towns, and villages, about what criteria they used to select textbooks.

The 1999 reform and the new textbook model

As a result of the 15 February 1999 reform law on the Basic Curriculum and the concomitant re-structuring of the entire school system, new textbooks for primary school grade 4 and first-year *gimnazjum* were required. Here was the opportunity that many had desired for years: the freedom to create completely new textbooks according to the latest pedagogical and methodological theory, with the most modern printing technology available, partnered with the unavoidable necessity of doing so. Gone was even the possibility of re-working a pre-existing textbook in the case of first-year *gimnazjum*, as no such school had previously existed under the communist system. The Basic Curriculum had also changed significantly, demanding much more in regards to organization, content and structure from textbooks authors. New books must serve the new goals of history education. Take, for example, the goals of history education at the *gimnazjum* level:

- to know and analyze the most important steps in the history of man, of culture, and of Poland;
- to learn the fundamentals of interpreting historical sources;
- to learn the possibility of different ways of interpreting historical sources, events and historical figures;
- to prepare for independent learning and interpretation of the past;
- to improve/perfect ability to answer questions orally and in written form;
- to broaden their abilities of searching out, organizing, utilizing and maintaining different kinds of information (MEN 1999c).

It may be assumed that older textbooks that cannot support the new curriculum will simply no longer be approved for use in schools, and will eventually be phased out.¹⁶ However, it is questionable whether this assumption necessarily holds true. There is evidence that teachers

¹⁶ There is some question as to the truth of the claim that older books may no longer be used in the reformed school. There have been a number of teachers recently who have gone back to using history textbooks from the 1970s and 1980s. According to bookstore owner Ewa Grodzinska, "The only old books that have officially been removed from the Ministry of Education's list of approved textbooks are those in the areas of geography, civic education, and those intended for use in grades eliminated by the reforms. All of the rest continue to be acceptable and the teacher has a right to require that the students use them" (Mikołajewska 2000).

have, in some cases, gone back to using history textbooks from the 1970s and 1980s. According to bookstore owner Ewa Grodzinska, “The only old books that have officially been removed from the Ministry of Education’s list of approved textbooks are those in the areas of geography, civic education, and those intended for use in grades eliminated by the reforms. All of the rest continue to be acceptable and the teacher has a right to require that the students use them (Mikołajewska 2000).”

The new model of history education being developed and implemented now requires a new definition of the textbook in the dialectic process. The new curriculum program requires that the student to seek out information on his/her own, from sources other than the textbook, which will cease to be the compendium of information where all answers are to be found (Mędrzecki 1997, 121). Instead, the new textbooks should serve as a guide to help students solve intellectual problems that come out of the comparison and interpretation of primary sources (*ibid.*).

In terms of appearance, the new generation of textbooks are far superior to the old. Older textbooks, produced by publishers aiming to keep costs as low as possible, tended to be printed on poor quality paper, with few (if any) color figures, photos, or pictures. New texts have most of the features of a “good” textbook, as defined by history teachers in a 1993-1994 study:

- colorful presentation of material, including maps, color insets, photographs, illustrations, and definitions of important concepts;
- close correspondence between the textbooks’ content and the curriculum requirements;
- text written in clear, accessible language appropriate to the age of the intended students;
- the presence of exercise, questions, and other learning activities which help both the teacher and the student; and
- the presence of primary source material (Mazur 1997, 39).

One problem with older books that persisted throughout the 1990s was that the presentation of the historical narrative was dominated by the chronology of political history, the

traditional form of textbook narrative. In the 1980s, historians wrote history textbooks, for the most part subordinating pedagogical concerns to historical ones. In the early 1990s, most of the books on the market were re-worked and re-packaged versions of their 1980s predecessors, still written by historians. Among the five secondary-school history textbooks used in 1998, for example, between 60.7 and 80 percent of the texts were devoted to political and military history (Maternicki 1998, 296).¹⁷ When social, cultural or economic issues were mentioned at all in these books, it was often in the context of political problems. As previously discussed, in the 1990s only graphic presentation improved significantly, while fundamental matters of organization, periodization, and subject matter choice continued to show signs of weakness and lack of progress. But in the late 1990s, a major shift has occurred in terms of textbook authorship. Unlike earlier texts, many of the items appearing on the most recent list of approved history textbooks are the result of collaborations between historians and history education specialists, providing a better balance between factual content and pedagogical theory than was seen previously.¹⁸ In these newer texts, the textbook narrative is intended primarily to serve not the state or the Party, but the educational needs of the student, at least according to the introductory statements written by the authors.

The new conditions for producing textbooks have solved some lingering problems, but have also created some new ones. In his report on school textbooks approved for use in the

¹⁷ These books are all reprints of earlier editions, and therefore are examples of the older textbook model.

¹⁸ Among the collaboratively-written textbooks for *gimnazjum*: K. Zielińska and Z. Kozłowska, *U źródeł współczesności. Czasy nowożytne. Klasa II (From the sources of modernity. The modern age. Class 2)*. Warsaw: WSiP; K. Przybyś, W. Jakubowski, and M. Włodarczyk, *Historia dla gimnazjalistów. Klasa I (History for gymnasium students. Class 1)*. N. Pazdro Publishers; K. Polacka, M. Przybyliński, S. Roszak, and J. Wendt, *Historia. Podręcznik dla II klasy gimnazjum (History. Textbook for second-year gymnasium)*. Różak Publishers; D. Musiał, K. Polacka, and S. Roszak, *Historia. Podręcznik dla klasy I gimnazjum (History. Textbook for first-year gymnasium)*. Różak Publishers; T. Malkowski and J. Rzeźniowiecki, *Historia 1. Podręcznik dla klasy I (History 1. Textbook for class 1)*. Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Oświatowe; R. Kulesza and T. Jurek, *Dzieje najdawniejsze i dawne do schyłku XIV wieku (Ancient history to the turn of the 14th century)*. Juka Publishers.

2000-2001 academic year, Tadeusz Mosiek criticizes the new generation of history textbooks as suffering from a host of new shortcomings, including poor editing, incorrect grammar and spelling, and factual errors, alongside already-existing problems such as too high a level of presentation for the average student, and a general overload of information (Mosiek 2000). The poor editorial quality of new texts is partially attributable to the textbook assessment and approval process, which itself is subject to economic constraints.

Textbook approval processes

One of the stipulations to textbook approval is that every textbook be submitted to the Ministry of Education along with four reviews by approved specialists, one of whom must verify the appropriateness and correctness of the language (MEN 1999a). The problem is that while there were approximately 450 textbooks reviewed for the 1999-2000 school year, there are less than two dozen approved specialists in Polish language qualified to edit those texts. These specialists were completely overwhelmed by the task, and many admit that they did not have time to rigorously edit the texts sent to them (Mikołajewska 2000). Poor editorial quality has its roots in economics in that publishers and authors are loathe to send manuscripts to reviewers who are too critical and demand expensive, time-consuming changes which may delay a text's approval until the next school year (*ibid.*). Because those reviewers who make few changes or corrections are favored over those with a more critical eye, remediable errors persist.

The necessity of risk

Comprehensive change in textbooks could not have occurred much earlier than it did because it has taken time for the publishing industry to mature, to build capital, to learn to take risks, to adapt to the market mentality and learn to compete for customers. Publishers –

particularly smaller, private publishers – in the early 1990s learned from Western models how to market their product in modern ways, changing the face of textbook publishing significantly in terms of product quality and how the product is bought and sold (Lottman 1991, 1996, 1998). But publishers needed to do more than just learn about Western models; they needed to implement them effectively, which required the investment of capital and the assumption of risk.

In his report on the textbook industry in Poland, Andrzej Chrzanowski (2000) describes what happened at the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year, when the new Basic Curriculum was first implemented. That September, there were long lines at bookstores, evidence of a severe shortage of school textbooks for all grades which caused havoc for parents, students and teachers alike. Why were textbooks suddenly in such short supply? Chrzanowski offers several reasons. First, the new law on the reform of the educational system was signed and implemented fairly late – February 1999 – so there was a relatively short amount of time available to prepare textbooks. Second, many publishers were afraid to accept the financial risk necessary to produce the large print-runs of textbooks, so they produced smaller numbers of books than were needed. Not one publisher made use of marketing tools which would have allowed them to accurately assess the future demand for their books. The fear of producing too many books is understandable for smaller publishers; what was surprising was the fact that even the largest and most experienced publishers under-produced textbooks for September 1999. Third, bookstores were left in the lurch when some publishers sold what books they did have ready directly to schools rather than using distributors, leaving bookstores with unfilled orders. In other cases, bookstores under-ordered because they were afraid of being left with too many unsold books.

Chrzanowski considers the first data from the 1999 school year regarding profits to be notable for several reasons. For one, while the leading companies have not lost their relative

positions in the market, their percentage of the market has dropped significantly. For example, WSiP, the nation's largest educational publishing house, saw their percentage of the textbook market fall in 1999 from 52% to 35% (Gołębiowski 2000, 82). Several publishers saw their share of the market increase, and consequently their profits increased several times over. With this group of publishers, the main problem is keeping pace with the growing demand for their books and distributing them as thoroughly as possible. Those companies that saw the most dramatic successes were those that accepted the financial risks at the right time and that had good products to offer. There are even cases of firms that, with a single offering, managed to take 1-2% of the entire market (Chrzanowski 2000, 12-13).

The most successful publishers in the first year of the reform were those who could get a textbook ready and printed on time (i.e. sooner than the competition), and who could accurately anticipate the financial risk necessary for success. Unlike in the past, when certain publishers dominated the market year after year, no publisher found themselves in the position of being able to assure the continuity of sales of their product. Those that marketed their product successfully to schools and teachers did better than the competition, as did those publishers that continued to offer the next part of successful textbook series that had already become familiar and desirable to teachers. Also, those with solid relationships with reliable and experienced distributors of educational books both on the national and the regional level, as well as with printers who were willing to accept printing contracts under extraordinary conditions (i.e. very short turnaround times) got their product to the consumers more effectively. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, those with the financial potential necessary to invest in the production and marketing as well as the financing of reserves of books for the next year came out ahead of the pack. Even the largest publishers avoided this risk, which may be why they lost their overwhelming lead in the market.

Conclusion

In sum, large-scale change in Polish history textbooks in the late 1990s is the result of both economic and educational factors. Before the institution of the new curriculum, textbook reform consisted mainly of cosmetic changes and only partial re-tooling of the contents. The non-comprehensiveness of earlier reform efforts was in large part attributable to the textbook publishers who, in an effort to minimize costs, resisted investing substantial amounts of capital into the development of completely new materials. However, the introduction of the new Basic Curriculum in 1999 created the need for new textbooks, and the unavoidable necessity for publishers to create them. By the late 1990s, publishing houses that had survived the transition into the free market may have all had the willingness to implement change in the textbook model, but not all had both the ability and the willingness to risk considerable investment into developing new books.

CHAPTER 6:
THE CREATION OF THE BASIC CURRICULUM
IN HISTORY FOR POLISH SCHOOLS

The reform of history textbooks in Poland was not an isolated endeavor, but was just one part of the fundamental transformation of the relationship between the economic, political, and educational worlds in Poland. As we have seen in the previous chapter, school textbooks are an economic commodity that are subject to the influence of the market as well as changing ideological and educational trends. Textbooks, the primary medium for school curricula, are also heavily dependent on curriculum politics. In a system such as Poland's, where a central agency oversees textbooks, those textbooks approved for use in schools are required to reflect those facts and interpretations of history that have been deemed – through various means – to be the most suitable for the nation's youngest generations. Along with the nationwide examination system and textbooks, national curriculum standards define what Polish students are expected to know.

How curriculum decisions are made, as well as who makes them, has changed profoundly. Where before a relatively small group of bureaucrats, Communists, educational functionaries, and Marxist historians made unilateral decisions regarding the school curriculum that strictly adhered to the Marxist line, now there is a profusion of voices that fight to be heard. Not all of those voices, however, have the same amount of sway over the process of history curriculum reform. When the national Basic Curriculum was released in 1999, we can see the results of the reform work, but the documents published in 1999 did not offer much insight into

the path that took us there. This path may be unearthed, and may cast light on the way that political interests and educational goals interact to shape current history curriculum in Poland.

I. History curriculum reform in Poland

The first post-Communist government in Poland placed education reform high on its list of priorities, and moved quickly to set the most necessary changes in motion. In 1991 the Ministry of Education requested from the Polish Historical Association (*Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne*, or PTH) and university history departments a list of history specialists from which the Ministry would select the history curriculum reform group. The Ministry wanted people who had different points of view, different backgrounds, and who had held different roles in the educational system, and felt that PTH and the universities were much more informed about educators' and historians' qualifications and experience (Sobańska-Bondaruk, personal interview 2002).

There is another reason why the curriculum group was created in this way. Even during the Communist period, educators and scholars complained that the highly-centralized, top-down policy making of the Ministry of Education was not an effective way to organize or administer schools (Mędrzecki 1992). Curricula in the communist period had to adhere to strict political and ideological rules, and the needs of schools, teachers, students, and communities were not represented in the process. As a reaction against the previous status quo, in the post-Communist period it was important to the overall integrity of the democratic process that decision making power be decentralized, that educational policy making be once again controlled by those specializing in education, and that decisions be reached by consensus among stakeholders rather than dictated from above (ibid.). From the lists provided by PTH and the universities, the original

curriculum group was created, with Dr. Włodzimierz Medrzecki, a professor of history at the Polish Academy of Sciences, at its head. The rest of the group included a mix of teachers, methodologists, and historians.¹⁹

A. Guiding principles of the history curriculum reform group

Academics, teachers, and historians in Poland were nearly unanimous in judging school history to be profoundly flawed in a number of ways, and their opinions are well documented (Petrunko 1990; Maternicki 1995; Wasiak 1999; Hellwig 1997; Kozłowska 1997; Mazur 1997). First, the Marxist interpretation of history was the only one deemed acceptable by the Communist authorities, in effect banning most alternative research models, interpretations or teaching methodologies. Second, students were required to memorize prodigious amounts of encyclopedic knowledge, with no allowance for individual interpretation or evaluation of historical content by either the student or the teacher. Third, the actual history contained in textbooks was full of falsifications, simplifications and distortions of historical facts as well as the so-called *białe plamy*, or "white spots", gaps in the historical record where the Communist authorities had deemed silence the best choice.

Identifying and removing the faulty elements of Communist-era history was not the main problem. The task set before the curriculum group was much more difficult: to define the new canon of historical knowledge for Polish children. This Basic Curriculum (*Podstawa Programowa*) is a set of national standards which outlines the goals and guiding principles for a

¹⁹ The group consisted of: Dr. Melania Sobańska-Bondaruk, then at the Ministry of Education, Department of Minority Education, Warsaw; Wanda Fuchsa, liceum teacher, Wrocław; Zofia Kozłowska, methodology advisor and Secretary of PTH, Warsaw; Izabela Koziej, liceum teacher from Wrocław; Eliza Kunc, teacher at the Pedagogical School, Piask; Jerzy Lebieźiewicz, methodological advisor, Olsztyn; Dr. Czesław Nowarski, Higher Pedagogical School, Kraków; Dr. Julia Tazbirowa, teacher, Warsaw; Prof. Janusz Tazbir, Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw; Prof. Ewa Wipszycka, Department of History, University of Warsaw; Anna Wołosik, liceum teacher, Warsaw; Stanisław Zajac, liceum teacher, Otwock; Jan Żaryn, liceum teacher, Warsaw; Dr. Piotr Unger, Ministry of Education, Warsaw; Dr. Katarzyna Zielińska, Department of Didactics, University of Warsaw.

certain subject, enumerates the anticipated effects of education, and offers direction regarding the basic content of instruction at each level of school attainment. Since this document was to serve as the basis for history programs in all schools – whether religious, private, public, ethnic minority, or military – simultaneously, the Ministry and the curriculum committee agreed that the Basic Curriculum should include only "the most indispensable" elements of education to maximize the document's flexibility, and that the document leave as much room as possible for teachers and program designers to create lessons that suited the needs and interests of each school (Mędrzecki 2000a).

However, finding the most basic elements for a national system of education is hardly an easy task. In the United States, for example, attempts in the early 1990s to reach a national consensus over even non-mandatory standards ended badly. In their book, Gary Nash et al. (1997) describe the tempestuous process of creating purely voluntary history standards for American schools and what happened when people of contrasting political views and economic interests clashed over what was suggested be taught to children in history class. Even in as homogeneous a society as Japan, debates have raged for decades over how Japan's role in World War II should be taught in schools there (Cogan & Enloe 1987; Thakur 1995). How much more complicated must the process to create a basic *mandatory* curriculum for all public schools be for Poland, a burgeoning, pluralist democracy with dozens of disparate political parties? However, in the early stages of the curriculum reform, political intervention in the process was, in the words of at least one participant, relatively minimal (Medrzecki 1999a). By political intervention I believe Medrzecki means dictates from a political entity or its representatives. The reform work was, in Medrzecki's mind, shaped instead by concerns more central to meeting educational and historical goals (ibid.).

It is arguable that Dr. Medrzecki's opinion concerning the early work of the curriculum committee – that it was not political – reflects a lack of awareness of the inherent political

nature of creating a curriculum standard rather than an actual respite from political activity. The original reform group did not represent the full spectrum of political perspectives, and created a document that was more a manifesto issued from one side of what would become a larger controversy. In the absence of fundamentally opposing viewpoints, it is possible that the ideological underpinnings of the reform work were simply not as evident as they would eventually become. It is interesting that Nash et al. (1997) expressed surprise that the national standards that they oversaw the creation of became so controversial, since the standards emerged from a long process of collaboration and discussion among thousands of educators across the country. What they also did not acknowledge was the inherent political nature of the creation of the standards. Once shown to the full spectrum of political beliefs, the political assumptions of the writers were revealed.

B. Response to the initial attempts at defining the Basic Curriculum

The preliminary version of the basic curriculum created in 1992 was deemed too nationalistic and focused too much on Polish history, a fact attributable to a general desire in the early period of transformation from socialism to "do justice" to history (Mędrzecki 1992, 3). As a result, the initial post-socialist version of the curriculum was more a direct counter-reaction to the previous system than a free-standing creation, and necessitated a rethinking of the entire process in order to present a more balanced view (ibid.). This reaction and counter-reaction to the previously existing order in historical scholarship was mirrored in the collective memory of Polish society, as described by Ziółkowski (2000). In the immediate post-socialist period, Ziółkowski claims, Poles initially reacted to their new intellectual freedom by returning to patriotic, nationalistic historical narratives, the perceived antithesis of the official, socialist interpretations which had previously monopolized historical study. This initial reaction was followed eventually by the realization that there was more to history than just the official (state

sanctioned) and unofficial (oppositional and ahistorical, private) versions that co-existed uneasily under communism. The subsequent counter-reaction to this realization was the appearance of alternative historical narratives that reflected the multiple perspectives and varied beliefs present in Polish society. Mędrzecki's (1992) version of the curriculum group's work as described at the beginning of this paragraph echoes this pattern of reaction/counterreaction: initial response to what had come before, followed by a more mediated approach which broadened the scope of the project beyond just a repudiation of the preceding status quo.

C. Basic challenges

Among the most important questions to be pondered by the curriculum group was how to organize history study in the classroom. The old model was framed by a strict chronological ordering of events, with heavy emphasis on military and political history. Several members of the curriculum committee argued the merits of a thematically-based alternative, with a greater emphasis on elements of social history (Mędrzecki 1992, 3). In this model, the specific historical material used to present these general concepts would be chosen by the individual teacher. To curb the tendency towards martyrology and isolationism in some schools of Polish historiography, some members of the committee argued that greater stress on world and European history was needed to provide students with a broader context in which to understand Polish history. However, participants acknowledged that finding an acceptable balance between Polish and world history would be difficult since there were strongly divergent opinions on the matter among teachers and historians, and this particular point was not resolved at this time (ibid.).

The second version of the history curriculum succeeded in removing the inordinate stress on military and political history which dominated Communist history and instead brought into greater relief the social processes that determine the character of particular eras. Students

were to gain a better understanding historical thinking and learn how to interpret primary source material, rather than simply memorize prescribed information. This second version of the curriculum was published in 1994 in the so-called Green Book (MEN, 1994), and appeared along with the curricula of other groups writing in other subject areas. In this volume, for the first time, the work of not only the history group but of all groups working on curriculum reform appeared together as a whole. The effect was "a shock"; the combined essential materials that every Polish schoolchild should know was so large that to realize this initial version of the basic curriculum, students would have to be in school over 70 hours a week (Mędrzecki 1999a, 155). Obviously, more paring down of the "minimum" was necessary, but the history group was not given the chance to make the needed alterations. The 1995 presidential elections brought about changes in the Ministry of Education; as a result of shifting political and economic priorities, the curriculum reform was set aside indefinitely as Stanislaw Slawinski, head of the reform project, was removed from office (ibid.).

D. Second wave of reform

According to Dr. Ewa Wipszycka, professor of ancient history and member of the original curriculum group, the new Ministry staff appointed after the 1995 elections felt they had to "make changes", and the structure of the educational system – rather than the content of instruction – was the main focus of these changes (personal interview 2002). In the early 1990s, Polish educational planning was influenced very much by the liberal model of economist and shock-therapy advocate Leszek Balcerowicz, which stressed the importance of improving higher education to aid economic growth. In contrast to Balcerowicz's model of the early 1990s, the ascendant model in 1995 focused more attention on improving elementary education. The Ministry determined that not only did the elementary level need the most improvement, but it was also the level of education that reached the most people (ibid.).

Alojzy Zielecki (1997) offers additional explanation for the change in the direction of the reform project in 1995. At the request of Polish officials, a group of international experts in education conducted a study of the state of Polish education, the results of which were presented in Poland in April of 1995. The experts concluded that Polish elementary education was of a generally high quality, but suffered from underinvestment. This underinvestment was inherited from the Communist period, where education was valued as an ideological tool but not as highly valued as other, more productive institutions such as industry (Mader 1988). Secondary education was well-developed but needed to be brought more in line with European schools. Essentially, it was time for the Ministry to start planning for concrete change in the near future.

As he describes it in his 1999 article, Dr. Mędrzecki had already had several discussions with some of those who had participated in creating the original draft of the curriculum. The majority of them advised Dr. Mędrzecki to accept the invitation and defend the 1994 results of their work. The first meeting at the Ministry

"saw some lively discussions; veterans of the project reproached the Ministry's representatives for the fact that the new Minister, Jerzy Wiatr, wanted to take credit for the achievements of his predecessors. The veterans also demanded that the 1994 version of the basic curriculum be implemented, and that any further reform work would consist of improving on that project. The new reform coordinator did everything he could to keep the participants from leaving the meeting, slamming doors behind them. Some people did in fact leave, but others stayed on to continue the project" (Mędrzecki 1999a, 155).

As work began to progress on this newest version of the basic curriculum in history, it became clear that the problem was not as much a clash over political or historical ideas as much as it was the need for everyone to accept the realities of the situation. Regardless of how methodologically and pedagogically sound its creators felt it was, the 1994 version of the curriculum was impossible to implement in its existing form, and required substantial paring down to fit it into the average school day. Sławomir Ziemiński, vice director of the Department of Teaching at the Ministry and new head of the reform project, proposed that the point of

departure be understood in a new way. Because the student is a person of limited capabilities and perceptions, the reformers had to move away from ideas about what the school *must* teach, and concentrate instead on what the school *can* teach given the amount of time the students are there and the differing ability levels that students possess (ibid., 156). It was therefore necessary to change the underlying philosophy of the reform project. No longer could curriculum writers focus on what was ideally possible in the de-centralized system; they were forced into acknowledging more pragmatic limitations. The question of how much the teacher can actually teach in the short amount of time devoted to history study in school did not have any easy answers, and continued to be a point of contention.

The results of this latest round of work on the curriculum reform was published in the spring of 1997. This version of the history reform project was also criticized, this time for what opponents perceived as a lack of structure due to the abandonment of a strictly prescribed, chronological listing of important events, and for the fact that students covered much of the same content at both the elementary and *gimnazjum* level (ibid., 157). But more profound changes were imminent that essentially made these criticisms moot; another round of parliamentary elections in September 1997 brought the conservative AWS-Solidarity coalition into control of the Polish *sejm* (parliament), which meant a change of leadership at the Ministry of Education. Jerzy Wiatr was removed from office, and the new Minister, Miroslaw Handke was installed.

The new Ministry leadership introduced a plan for the total restructuring of the Polish schools that had been in the works since the previous year. The old system, consisting of an 8-year elementary school and either 2-year vocational or 4-year secondary schooling, was to be replaced by a three-tier, compulsory 9-year elementary school – grades one through three, four through six, and *gimnazjum* consisting of grades seven through nine – followed by 3 years of either vocational school or secondary school study leading to university (*liceum*). This change

was officially motivated by a number of factors: the need to bring Poland's school structure more into line with the rest of Europe's, the necessity to cope with the change of state structure, the impending demographic lows in the population of 6- and 7-year olds that will reach its peak in 2006-2008, and the desire to create a system that was more compatible with current pedagogical theory regarding children's cognitive development, which was largely neglected under the Communist system (Unger 2000; Ministry of Education 2002a). Unofficially, a number of people interviewed cited an additional reason for the structural reorganization: the intractability and laziness of teachers to change their teaching to meet the demands of the reform.

The newly-proposed plan would eliminate the problem of repeating the same material at the elementary and *gimnazjum* levels by creating different tasks for each stage of learning. In grades four through six, history was to be integrated with citizenship education. At this level, children are to learn about the connections between people and the world around them; be introduced to basic moral, cultural, and social concepts; and begin to formulate interest in the past. In grades seven through nine, students study history as an independent subject for the first time, and are introduced to history through a fairly systematic presentation of chronological events and important historical figures. In secondary school, students are to study history in a more sophisticated way, learning the methods of historical research, the interpretation of various historical sources, and to formulate their own opinions about history. This version of the curriculum plan – the so-called Orange Book – was published in June of 1998, and faced little criticism (Mędrzecki 1999a, 58). But work was not yet finished on the final version that would be set down into law; the Orange Book was just the latest step in the process of reform.

As Mędrzecki recalls, in early September 1998 he received an invitation to take part in a meeting of a group acting as consultants in the matter of the new Basic Curriculum endorsed by the new coordinator for work on the reform project. Mędrzecki went to the meeting certain

that he would be asked to analyze the reviewers' comments and make some corrections to the curriculum. But what happened was very different. Among the 30 or so people present at the meeting, more than half of them were completely new people who had not worked on the project before. The new reform project director made it clear that the task at hand was to rewrite the basic curriculum in the course of the next three weeks, using the current version as a starting point. At the end of the meeting, the director requested that everyone supply the project coordinators with their final version of the basic curriculum. Two days before the due date for the final version, the department in charge of the reform at the Ministry of Education informed Mędrzecki by phone that the director had rescinded Mędrzecki's invitation to take part in further meetings (Mędrzecki 1999a, 158). Most likely it was Dr. Medrzecki's opposition to the new approach to reform and continued defense of the previous curriculum that resulted in his dismissal.

When the final version of the Basic Curriculum was signed into law in the Spring of 1999, it looked very different from the last version created by the curriculum reform group under Medrzecki's leadership. A glance at the various versions reproduced in Figure 2 shows quite clearly the significant new additions to the mandatory content in 1999.

| "Orange Book" Project, May 1997 | Official MEN version, February 1999 |
|---|---|
| <p>Conditions of life in pre-historic times Ancient civilization – cultural attainments and their longevity</p> | <p>Periodization of history and the concept of time in history</p> <p>Conditions of life in pre-historic times Ancient civilization – cultural attainments and their longevity (Egypt, Israel, Greece, Rome)</p> |
| <p>Europe and the Mediterranean World in the Middle Ages, nations, religions, societies and cultures</p> | <p>The rise of Christianity and the first centuries of its development</p> <p>Europe and the Mediterranean World in the Middle Ages, nations, religions, and cultures (Byzantium, the Arabs, the Carolingians, the Ottomans and papal universalism, the Crusades, economics of the Middle Ages, difference in medieval culture)</p> |
| <p>Poland of the Piast dynasty and the first Jagiellonian dynasty</p> | <p>Poland of the first Piasts, the statute of Boleslaw Krzywousty and the period of fragmentation of Poland, the unification of the Polish state, the reign of Kazimierz the Great</p> <p>The first Jagiellonian dynasty on the throne of Poland, economy and culture of Poland in the Middle Ages – phenomena and processes, specifics of Polish Middle Ages culture</p> |
| <p>The great geographical discoveries. Europeans and the New World 16th through 18th centuries</p> | <p>The great geographical discoveries. Europeans and the New World 16th through 18th centuries</p> |
| <p>Reformation and Catholic Counter-reformation</p> | |
| <p>The Nobles' Republic (<i>Rzeczpospolita szlachecka</i>) of the 16th and 17th centuries – a nation of many cultures and religions</p> | <p>Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries, Reformation and Catholic Counter-reformation, the Baroque era, the establishment of absolutist systems (France and Russia), the Nobles' Republic (<i>Rzeczpospolita szlachecka</i>) of the 16th and 17th centuries – a nation of many cultures and religions</p> |
| <p>The Enlightenment era in Europe and in Poland – structural, economic and cultural transformations.</p> | <p>The Enlightenment era in Europe and in Poland – structural, economic and cultural transformations; the American Revolution; the French Revolution – its historical meaning; Poland in decline in the 18th century (cultural rebirth, attempts to save the Republic, partitions, the Kosciuszko uprising)</p> |
| <p>Partitions of Poland</p> | <p>(continued)</p> |

**Figure 2: Comparison of contents
Basic Curricula for *gimnazjum*, 1997-1999**

Figure 2 (continued)

| “Orange Book” Project, May 1997 | Official MEN version, February 1999 |
|---|--|
| Social and civilizational transformations of the 19 th century. The creation of the foundations of democracy in Europe and North America. Changes on the political map of Europe and the world. Colonialism. | Social and civilizational transformations of the 19 th century, the Age of Napoleon, creation of the foundations of democracy in Europe and North America, changes on the political map of Europe and the world, colonialism, economic and social developments of the 19 th century |
| The fate of Poles during the period of lack of sovereignty. | The fate and attitudes of Poles during the period of lack of sovereignty, national uprisings, the conception of organized work, the fate of Poles in emigration |
| World War I, the Russian Revolution | World War I, the Russian Revolution |
| The world during the interwar period. Totalitarianism. | The world during the interwar period, the crisis of democracy (totalitarian, Nazi, and communist systems), the most essential economic, social and political world problems |
| The rebirth of the Polish state | The rebirth of the Polish state; the building of the state; battles over borders; structural evolution; the major economic and social problems; international politics and the place/position of Poland in Interwar Europe. |
| World War II, the Holocaust | World War II; the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact and its realization, turning points of the war; the building of the anti-Hitler coalition; extermination of people in occupied lands; concentration camps; the Holocaust |
| Poland in 1939-1945 | Poland 1939-1945; dual occupation; Katyn; forms and locations of fights for independence; the Polish underground government; the Warsaw uprising; the fate of Poles in the country and abroad |
| The Postwar world. Development of civilization, political and cultural transformation. Challenges for the 21 st century. | The Postwar world; the development of civilization; political and cultural transformations; East-West conflict; new socio-political phenomena and the acceleration of civilization; de-colonization; new concepts in mass culture |
| Poland after 1945 | Poland after 1945; fight for the shape of the state; Polish Stalinism; socio-economic transformations in the People's Poland (PRL); political crises of 1956, 1968, 1970; the election of a Pole as pope; 1980 and the rise of Solidarity; martial law and the 1980s; the events of 1989; the process of building the Third Republic |

In response to my inquiry regarding the differences between the last curriculum project he participated in creating and the Ministry's, Medrzecki describes his reaction to the final version of the Basic Curriculum:

"The difference between the version of the core curriculum in history found in the Orange Book and the latest version approved by the Ministry is that the first version was very general in character, allowing one to create teaching programs with different content. It was intended that all children understand the mechanisms of political life, but some could learn this through Roman history, others through the events of 1926, and still others through Russian history. The second, ministerial version was much more specific in its definition of what content must be present in every history program. In addition, the defined content clearly leans toward a nationalistic-Catholic perspective of Polish history. The new version is therefore, in my opinion, more conservative, and favors the use of history to encourage the formation of nationalistic attitudes rather than the intellectual development of the student" (Mędrzecki 2000b).

The opinions of the three members of the curriculum group whom I spoke to reflect very different views of the history reform process. For Dr. Mędrzecki, the reform was "ruined" because the integrity of the process of was compromised by the top-down, anonymous interference of the Ministry and the last-minute addition of content that favored the Catholic church and more conservative interpretations of history. The curriculum group had originally been created in a way intended to maximize professional expertise and minimize political interference through the Ministry, whose leadership changes with every parliamentary election. The final version of the curriculum, Medrzecki felt, took some of that decision-making power away from teachers by mandating more content.

Dr. Sobańska-Bondaruk also expressed dismay that the process of curriculum reform had slipped back into older, more bureaucratic, top-down modes of operation where no one is to blame if something goes wrong. "The attribution of responsibility is important. In the end, many members of the reform group weren't really at all sure whose work the curriculum project was; nowhere in the final document did it say who took part or who played what role in the creation

of the new document" (Sobańska-Bondaruk, personal interview 2002). Thus, she says, no one specifically can be blamed for any faults in the document, which became very much a "typical Ministry creation" (ibid.). It is, like all documents of its kind, a validation that certain ideas and types of knowledge are generally held to be the most highly valued in this society. The problem was that in the case of the Basic Curriculum for history in *gimnazjum*, the views of a select few are perceived as representing the views of the majority, which was not the case (ibid.). The end result was not negotiated by educators, but was instead mandated by a group of like-minded individuals who disregarded the problematic views of the older reformers.

Dr. Wipszycka was perhaps the most pragmatic of those I spoke to. She rejected the idea that the reform of history education could be ruined by the last-minute changes to the curriculum. She feels that the success or failure of the new curriculum will be judged by the results of the first of the new proficiency tests, by the ability and willingness of teachers and schools to implement the new curriculum, by the capabilities of the first generation of students who are educated solely under the new rubrics, and by those students' actions as citizens and in the world of work (Wipszycka, personal interview 2002). Dr. Wipszycka's reply indicates that in her view, the "reform of education" is more than just the process of policy creation, but is a more wholistic concept which also includes the implementation of those policies and the measurable results that will follow at some point in the future.

E. Reflections on the work of the history curriculum group

History education did not cease to exist during the transition from communist to democratic government in Poland. The strict separations imposed by Communist officials between official and unofficial versions of history fell away, leaving room for alternative historical views to compete with those formerly holding a monopoly over academic discourse. History, according to some of its practitioners, teaches us who we are (however that is defined)

or, more precisely, who we should think ourselves to be. History is a subject that is valued by those both inside and outside the school, and will always be of interest to those who seek to gain something from their control over it. History education reform is a complex undertaking, involving activity at every level, from the macro to the micro, from the top to the bottom, from the definition of guiding principles to the creation of policy to its implementation and beyond. It is more than just blueprints and outcomes – it is a complex process involving people, who inevitably carry into the endeavor all of their human subjectivity.

The quest to reform Poland's history education curriculum after communism began in an almost ideal fashion. Curriculum writers were allowed to create a program of study for a national system of education with almost no interference whatsoever from the state. As time passed, however, the state began to reclaim the process of creating the minimum curriculum, gradually re-establishing centralized control. The idea that history education could be left to the devices of history educators, historians, and academic professionals rather than state bureaucrats did not survive long.

There may be several reasons for why the Ministry retook control. First, more conservative appointees may have wanted to bring the curriculum more closely into the service of the state to promote a more patriotic, pro-Church vision more in line with their ideology. Second, Ministry officials may have been more pragmatic about what it would require to actually implement the curriculum groups' plan.

For those reform actors like Dr. Medrzecki who hold tightly to the idea that a democratic educational system should be created in a democratic fashion, this move back toward more centralized control over curriculum and a more ideologized version of school history evidences the failure of the educational reform process in Poland. Other reformers such as Dr. Wipszycka believe that the ultimate success or failure of the reform process is more appropriately measured in terms of student achievement rather than fidelity to procedural rules.

The inability for even a small group of fairly like-minded people with the same ultimate goals in mind to agree on whether their work has been successful illustrates one of the many reasons why educational reform in a democracy is such a complex and ultimately human endeavor.

It is clear that those who participated in the history curriculum reform in Poland did not share the same understandings about the goals and means of the reform process, particularly after the process had been underway for several years. The original reformers were forced to adapt their goals to the context of transition, and give in to political forces that re-entered the reform process after an initial period of relative disassociation. The desire among reformers to create something different from what had existed previously caused the initial version of the curriculum to be more a reaction against the past than a free-standing entity. Subsequent versions attained more of a balance between centralized and decentralized control over curriculum content, ideal and realistic goals to be achieved through the teaching of history, and liberal and conservative conceptions of the appropriate roles of teachers and the definition of "core" knowledge.

In an article addressing educational politics in Poland, Former Minister of Education Jerzy Wiatr (1999) writes that the way that educational leadership changes with every election is detrimental to the process of long-term, systemic change. What is required, he says, is stability, a solid vision of what should be accomplished, and continuous progress towards the intended goal. What Poland has instead is educational leadership appointed for political rather than professional reasons, and policies that are often propagandistic in nature rather than methodologically justified (Wiatr 1999, 16). Decisions are made arbitrarily, without adequately evaluating the possible ramifications for teaching and learning, which is already beginning to cause problems at the classroom level, where many teachers report being overwhelmed with new programs due to lack of support and preparation time (Modzelewska-Rysak 2001; Wipszycka, personal interview 2002).

As for whether the reform of the history curriculum was successful or not, it is clear that consensus has not been reached, even if the scope of the evaluation is limited to just the creation of the Basic Curriculum in history. For some educators such as Mędrzecki, the evaluation hinges on the integrity of the process, which they feel should be left mostly to educators. If the building of democratic educational institutions in Poland is in fact to be done democratically, how is "democratic" to be defined? The question eventually boils down to the degree of involvement that political interests should have in the creation of national curriculum policy, and how to balance the desires of all stakeholders in educational reform. This question, however, may never be answered to the satisfaction of all participants, which may be the strongest proof that political pluralism is alive and well in Poland. To further support this assertion, let us look at another example of curriculum politics that brings the issue of educational reform before a wider audience.

II. The issue of Holocaust education

As we have seen, the national history standards for Polish schools are the concern of more than just educators and historians, but are also the subject of political discussions at both the national and international level. One issue that continues to be the center of controversy in post-communist Poland is the historical representation of Poland's Jewish population in history textbooks. The numerical presence of Jews on Polish soil is undeniably significant: before World War II, Poland contained Europe's largest concentration of Jews, and 10% of the population of Poland was Jewish (Polish-Israeli Textbook Commission 1995, 5). But the historical relationship between Poles and Jews is complex and contradictory, and loaded with moral and psychological traumas (Steinlauf 1997). To read many of the history textbooks in Poland in the mid-1990s, one would never know that the Jewish presence there had been so significant a part of the nation's development (Tomaszewski 1995b).

As part of Poland's efforts to re-join the European community and to come to terms with the past, Polish scholars in the early 1990s worked with international organizations in the US and England, and also founded their own institutes devoted to the study of Poland's Jews and particularly the Holocaust.²⁰ In 1991, Poland and Israel signed an agreement intended to bring about greater cooperation in the spheres of culture and education (Eden 1997). As a result of that agreement, the bilateral Polish-Israeli Textbook Commission was established in 1994 to evaluate the treatment of Polish-Jewish relations and history in each countries' school textbooks. The result of the Commission's work was a report published in 1995 in both Poland and Israel which outlined the shortcomings of existing textbooks and recommendations for future publications.

A. The Polish-Israeli Textbook Commission's recommendations for textbooks

The Commission determined that any program of study in history in Poland and Israel should contain the following themes:

From the beginning of Jewish settlement in Poland to the 17th century

- First Jewish settlement in Poland in the 10th century
- Jewish settlement in Poland in the 12th –17th centuries as a result of common Polish-Jewish interest. Legislation of Kazimierz the Great and its importance for Jewish society
- Legal status and socio-economic activity of the Jews. Their relations with the throne and nobility
- The growth of anti-Semitic attitudes in the religious and economic context of 15th century Poland
- Jewish community life in Poland

²⁰ Other committees were established around the same time to address Polish-German, Polish-Lithuanian, and Polish-Ukrainian relations and the representation of each nation in each other's textbooks (Szuchta 2000).

From 17th to the end of the 18th century

- Jewish community life in autonomous settlements.
- Economic activity of Jews and their role in the economic structure of Poland
- Role of religion in Jewish life. Polish Jews as the center of European Judaism in the Middle Ages
- Ethnic and religious diversity in 15th century Poland. Economic and religious tensions and their effects of Jews. The spread of prejudice against Jews and accusations of murder rituals.
- The role of Jews as intermediaries between peasants and landowners. The Cossack Uprisings and massacre of Jews by Cossacks (1648-49)
- 17th century crisis in governance and its effects on Jewish relations in Poland. The 1648 Uprising as a transformative point in Jewish history in Poland
- New religious and educational trends among Jews. Hassidism. ... Enlightenment.
- Discussion about the status of Jews during the Four-Year *Sejm*.

19th century

- Situation of Jews as a minority during the Polish partitions. The participation of Jews in Polish national uprisings
- The role of Jews in the urbanization process and the economic development of Poland
- Polish positivism and trends in solving the Jewish question after Partitions. The issue of Jewish assimilation
- Creation of Polish national-ethnic consciousness during Partition. The creation of negative stereotypes of Jews. The spread of anti-Semitism.
- Vilnius and Warsaw – world centers of Jewish culture.
- The growth of the Jewish population in Poland and its consequences. Immigration of Jews to Eastern Poland.

20th century interwar period

- Demographic data. Population patterns in Poland. Jewish population patterns in relation to other ethnic minorities.
- Jews as a minority group. Minority treaties. The fight for equal rights. Jewish attitudes toward Polish independence. Lack of territorial aspirations – irredentism of the Jewish minority.
- Relations among the Polish state and different levels of Polish society toward the Jews. The growth of anti-Semitism in the 1930s in the difficult economic and social conditions of interwar Poland. Influence of the European situation. Proposals to remove the Jews from Poland.
- Poland as a center of Jewish life. Main political trends toward Jews, policies, and attempts to implement them.
- Jewish communal life. The economic hardships of Jews in relation to national economy. Cultural and social organizations. Flourishing of Jewish culture and education. Jewish contributions to Polish culture.

World War II

- Occupying forces' policies toward Jews until the extermination phase (early 1942). Difference between treatment of Jewish and Polish populations. Economic disenfranchisement, delegalization, and forced displacement of Jews to ghettos.
- Realization of the plan to totally exterminate the Jews
- Attitudes of Poles towards Jews: the indifference of the majority, the enmity of a minority, acts of salvation undertaken by a few, despite the danger to themselves. Reaction of the Nazis to helping Jews in Poland and Western European nations
- The choice of Poland as the location of the extermination of Europe's Jews
- Relations between Polish and Jewish underground movements. Activities of Jewish resistance. The Warsaw Uprising. Uprisings in the ghettos and camps. Partisan activities.
- Occupants' policies towards Jews in Poland and other European nations (comparative analysis)

Post World War II to 1968

- Demographic distribution of Jewish population in Poland. Repatriation from the Soviet Union. Returning from the camps. Those saved in Poland. Concentrations of Jews in Lower Silesia.
- Jewish emigration from Poland. Reasons for emigration and different waves of pogroms. The Kielce pogrom.
- Creation of new Jewish centers in Poland. Their economic structure. Possibilities of cultural and social development. Emigrations to Israel.
- Relations of Communist authorities toward Jews and the state of Israel. Waves of anti-Semitism in 1967-1969. The fight of the Opposition and the Church against anti-Semitism.

Israeli-Polish relations

- Establishment of Israel as a fruition of the Zionist ideal (from late 19th century to 1948)
- Polish Jews and their role in the political, social, and economic life of Israel. Problems faced by Poles and Jews in attempting to work together and creating a dialogue.
- Severing of relations between Poland and Israel as a result of Communist policies.
- Reestablishment of relations after 1989
- Cultural relations between Poles and Jews and between the Polish and Israeli governments. Publications about Jewish culture in Poland. Examples of Jewish literature in Hebrew.
- Economic relations.
- The Jewish diaspora today (Polish-Israeli Textbook Commission 1995, 13-15).

The Polish Ministry of Education sanctioned the recommendations of the Commission by requiring that all textbooks must include these elements in order to be approved for use in

public schools (MENiS 2002b).²¹ However, the establishment of this rule did not guarantee the desired result: textbooks that would consider the role of Jews in Polish history in the manner recommended by the Commission.

B. Recommendations go unheeded

A few years after the Recommendations were published, scholars and commentators complained that the textbooks, even those which had obtained approval and ostensibly had fulfilled the requirements of the Recommendations, had not done so in fact. The failure of history textbooks to meet the Commission's requirements did not go unnoticed; an entire issue of the Jewish Historical Institute's (ŻIH) journal *Biuletyn ŻIH* (1997) was devoted to the problem of the portrayal of Jews in Polish textbooks, and a number of articles appeared in both the popular and professional press. The conclusions of the ŻIH contributors were very similar; Jews continued to be underrepresented in textbooks, and when they were mentioned, their treatment was superficial, misleading, and sometimes even incorrect. The problems were manifold: a disproportionately small amount of information was devoted the Jewish population considering the previous size of their population; Jews were represented as a separate group of foreign guests who were never really a part of Polish society; textbooks denied that Jews were treated any differently than Poles during the Nazi occupation, or that Jews faced particular hardships during the Nazi occupation due to their ethnicity and religion; the Jewish contribution to the growth of commerce in Poland over centuries is ignored or underemphasized; Jews are portrayed as either passive victims who allowed themselves to be victimized and killed or as abettors of the German occupation who deserved their fate; and the Poles are portrayed as being

²¹ All textbooks must be adhere to principles contained in the Polish Constitution, the Ministry of National Education's pronouncements, and international conventions ratified by Poland, including conventions on human rights, children's rights, women's rights and, in the case of history textbooks, with the recommendations of bilateral textbook commissions.

more supportive and tolerant of Jews than was actually the case (Tomaszewski et al. 1997; Szuchta 1997). Various analyses of specific textbooks elsewhere revealed similar problems (Węgrzynek 1997; Tomaszewski 1994a,b,c, 1995a,b,c, 1996a,b,c).

The shortcomings in history textbooks in regards to the Jewish role in Polish and world history were partially attributable to the fact that, given the amount of time elapsed between when the Recommendations were published and when the textbooks were written, it was not reasonable for authors to adapt the books in time (Tomaszewski et al. 1997). Others point to manifest anti-Semitic attitudes among certain scholars who simply do not share the Commission's interpretations of the Jewish role in history (Bikont & Kruczkowska 1999; Tomaszewski 1997). One historian and school textbook author in particular, Andrzej Leszek Szcześniak, has been consistently accused of imbuing his texts with such anti-Semitic views (Suchoński 1992; Paczkowski 1992; Tomaszewski 1995c; Bikont & Kruczkowska 1999; Paciorek 2001). Despite academic and public condemnation, Szcześniak's books continue to receive approval from the Ministry for use in schools.

However, the former excuse – that there wasn't enough time to implement the changes in textbooks – is only a temporary one, and does not explain why such problems continued to persist. Rules existed, but were not acknowledged, a fact that evidenced more profound problems with the textbook approval process. Teachers who were interested in including more information about Jews in Poland in their history lessons had little access to such information (Pytlakowski 2001). Two *liceum* teachers from Warsaw, Robert Szuchta and Piotr Trojanski, decided to do something about this lack of information after meeting at a presentation on the Holocaust by the Spiro Institute of London. Both men found it odd that Polish teachers had to learn about historical events that transpired in their own country from visiting British scholars. On their own, the two teachers decided to combine resources and write a handbook for history teachers on the Holocaust and the history of the Jews in Poland. Though it filled an obvious gap

in the school curriculum, and received good reviews while still in manuscript form, its authors were unable to secure enough funding to publish it (Pytlakowski 2001; Szuchta 1999).

C. The interpellation in the matter of Holocaust education

The lack of substantive improvements in the portrayal of Jews in history textbooks and the seemingly fruitless efforts of a few to remedy the situation were not isolated events of interest only to educators and scholars of Jewish history. Others, including politicians, also were distressed at what was seen as inaction by the Ministry over a problem that had clearly persisted for years. To express their frustration, a group of legislators presented an *interpelacja*, or interpellation²², in the matter of Holocaust education to the Marshal of the *sejm* (parliament) in March of 2000. The leader of this group, Andrzej Folwarczny, the youngest delegate of the Unia Wolności (Freedom Union) party and the leader of the bilateral Polish-Israeli Parliamentary Group, presented the *interpelacja* on behalf of the group. The group was concerned not only about the continued problems of government-approved history textbooks that failed to fulfill the government's own requirements, but also to other problems relating to the presence of issues related to Jews in the Basic Curricula for different grades, the lack of subsidies for development of better materials, and also a lack of concerted support from the Ministry for teacher training. The interpellation requested that the government reply to the following list of questions regarding Holocaust education:

1. "Why is the subject of the Holocaust not part of the humanistic studies at the elementary level for grades 4-6? Is it not anticipated that it will be taught at that level?"
2. Will Holocaust education be included in the Basic Curriculum for secondary school?
3. Among available program guides for middle school there are those that do not consider the problem of the Holocaust, and others that consider

²² An official demand that a governmental body explain or justify a policy.

it but not in the manner recommended by the Polish-Israeli Textbook Commission and accepted in 1995. Does the Ministry intend in some way to influence the authors of textbooks to consider the recommendations of the Commission?

4. What financial resources is the Ministry willing to devote to publishing methodological and program guides and textbooks about the Holocaust?
5. What steps is the Ministry taking to provide teacher preparation in the area of Holocaust education?
6. What actions is the government taking to support research and study of the Holocaust?
7. In keeping with the resolutions of the Stockholm Declaration²³, what does the government intend to do about establishing a national day of remembrance for the Holocaust?" (Folwarczny 2000)

The effects of the interpellation were varied. The first and most clearly-discernable result was that the interpellation brought to light the fact that the single existing handbook by Szuchta and Trojanski on teaching about the Holocaust at the *gimnazjum* level was approved by the Ministry but still unpublished due to lack of funds. In direct consequence of the interpellation, the Ministry agreed to subsidize the publication of the book (Folwarczny 2002), and to provide copies of the book to at no cost to approximately 4,000 *gimnazja* across the country (Pytlakowski 2001).

According to parliamentary procedure, the Ministry had 21 days to issue an official reply to the interpellation. On April 25, 2000, the Ministry of National Education's representative to the *sejm*, Irena Dzierzgowska, presented the reply (Dzierzgowska 2000). In it, she addressed each question from the original interpellation in turn. First, she stated that the Ministry feels that the teaching of the Holocaust is better left to children in grades 6 and above, so calls for requiring it earlier are not advisable. Also, Dzierzgowska noted that the Holocaust, though not part of the mandatory Basic Curriculum, can be included as part of more broadly-conceived lessons, and is mandated for inclusion into approved textbooks. Second, she

²³ Held January 26-28, 2000, the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust was convened to promote international cooperation to improve education and research about the Holocaust. 48 nations, including Poland, sent delegations to the Forum and signed a multilateral declaration to promote Holocaust remembrance.

acknowledged that the term Holocaust was included in the Basic Curriculum for elementary school and *gimnazjum*, but not for secondary school. This is not problematic because, she reiterated, teachers can choose to add information about the Holocaust as they choose. Dzierzgowska skirted the third question regarding what steps the Ministry was willing to take to assure that textbook authors and reviewers heed the recommendations of the Polish-Israeli Textbook Commission, and chose only to reiterate that the requirement was in place. Fourth, she explained that the Ministry does not subsidize any textbooks on principle, preferring to leave those choices to educators. Fifth, in regards to teacher training, Dzierzgowska stated that the responsibility lies with universities, NGOs, and teacher training institutes. The Ministry helps to finance the activities of these organizations, but does not oversee them in any other way. Sixth, Dzierzgowska emphasized that all of the abovementioned actions on the part of the Ministry served as proof that the government has indeed responded to the need for Holocaust education. Lastly, she mentions that a holiday commemorating the Holocaust is under discussion.

The response of the Ministry as presented by Dzierzgowska was perceived by some experts as insufficient proof that the government had done enough to promote Holocaust education and the representation of Jewish history in textbooks and curricula. An undated, unsigned letter to the Minister of Education, written with the cooperation of scholars from the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, called for the Ministry to take greater steps to assure that issues concerning the Holocaust and Jewish history are not neglected in the classroom (cite). The letter called for a more explicit listing of the issues important to Holocaust education and Jewish history in the Basic Curriculum for *gimnazjum*; more must be covered than just the fact of the extermination of the Jews, especially considering that it is unlikely that children will have been introduced to the subject in elementary school. The letter also expressed significant doubts about the decision to omit mention of the Holocaust from the Basic Curriculum for secondary

schools, since it would be all too likely that some teachers would choose not to cover the subject at all.

In regards to textbooks, the letter requested that information about the recommendations of the Textbook Commission be more effectively disseminated among authors and reviewers, and that the Ministry actually hold authors responsible for fulfilling the content requirements of the Commission. Lastly, the letter took issue with the Ministry's argument that providing financial support to various organizations for educational programs about the Holocaust for teachers was sufficient. While it is true that some courses are available for teachers who want to learn about the Holocaust, the letter pointed out that the courses are held in limited venues and are inaccessible to many teachers. Also, considering how important the issue of Holocaust education is for Polish education – a point that the Ministry concedes – it is not appropriate that dissemination of this valuable information be so haphazard. Teacher education about Jewish history must be undertaken in a more systematic manner if it is to reach everyone.

The controversy over the representation of Jews in Polish history textbooks took place before the Basic Curriculum for the reformed secondary schools was finalized by the Ministry of Education in 2001. Figure 3 shows how the Basic Curriculum's contents changed as a result of the interpellation. In the Ministry's project for *liceum* from April 2000, the term Holocaust is missing, a fact that the interpellation noted. The final version of May 2001 shows how the term Holocaust was indeed reinserted as called for in the interpellation. However, it is not the only addition to the list. It is interesting to note that two other themes – the role of Christianity in the creation of European identity and specific reference to the Catholic Church in the discussion of

| Ministry project for liceum April 2000 | Pronouncement 123 – Appendix 4 2001 |
|---|---|
| Universal themes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diversity in world cultures and civilizations in the past and present. - Progress and crises in civilization. - Changes in forms of administration from earliest historical times to the present state of technological advancement; historical development of material culture. - The state as the fundamental form of social organization; evolution of state organizations. | World <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diversity of world civilizations in the past and present - Progress and crises in civilization. Social conflict. <i>War, genocide, Holocaust.</i> - Changes in forms of administration from earliest historical times to the present state of technological advancement; historical development of material culture. - The state as the fundamental form of social organization; changes in government. |
| European themes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Foundations of Europe; unity and diversity; philosophical changes. - The formation of European nations; their contributions to history; co-existence and conflict between states. - Changes in structure, consciousness/identity and customs of European societies. | Europe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Foundations of Europe; unity and diversity; philosophical changes. <i>The role of Christianity in the creation of European identity.</i> - The formation of European nations; their contributions to history; co-existence and conflict between states. - Changes in structure, consciousness/identity and customs of European societies. |
| Polish themes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Polish state and different forms of its existence - Conditions and evolution of Polish political and national identity/consciousness. - Poland in the economic and social history of Europe - Attitudes of individuals and social groups through the ages - The multicultural history of Poland; the importance of Christianity; co-existence of religions. | Poland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Polish state and different forms of its existence - Conditions and transformation of Polish political and national identity/consciousness - Poland in the economic and social history of Europe - Attitudes of individuals and social groups through the ages - The multicultural history of Poland; co-existence of religions and beliefs; the importance of Christianity, <i>and within it the Catholic Church.</i> |
| Regional themes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Little Fatherland and territory of Poland - The uniqueness and contribution of regions to Poland's common history - Historical contexts of specific regional cultures - Regional historical monuments. | Region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Little Fatherland and territory of Poland - The uniqueness and contribution of regions to Poland's common history - Historical contexts of specific regional cultures - Regional historical monuments. |
| Individual themes History of the individual and the family against the backdrop of history, culture and everyday life of Poles and other peoples. | The individual History of the individual and the family against the backdrop of history, culture and everyday life of Poles and other peoples. |

Figure 3: Comparison of contents
Basic Curricula for *liceum* (secondary school), before and after the interpellation

the importance of Christianity to the history of Poland – were made at the same time. One has to wonder whether in assuaging the Polish-Israeli coalition, the Ministry of Education faced opposition from more conservative, pro-Church groups or individuals, or whether the extra themes on Christianity and Catholicism were added to create a more balanced representation of the important religions in Polish history.

If there is something positive to note about the interpellation and its ramifications for curriculum reform in Poland, it is that there is discernible evidence of the Ministry considering and acting on behalf of public sentiment toward its policies. In comparison to the public-government relationship typical of the Communist period (according to which the public had no real effect on state policies), this responsiveness on the part of the government is a sea-change in the way that educational policy is created and negotiated in Poland. One of the main complaints lodged against the Communist system was its inability to respond to the changing needs of society and the local communities served by the school. During the transition from Communism to democracy, the central educational establishment in Poland was forced to relate to and work with local educational organizations and the public in a fundamentally different way. Rather than dictating policy, the Ministry now fulfills the role of negotiator, balancing the needs of the state and the demands of society.

D. Beyond the interpellation: the debate over educational oversight

The controversy surrounding the treatment of Jewish history and the Holocaust in textbooks and curricula reflects a more fundamental uncertainty in Poland regarding the role of a centralized governmental organ such as the Ministry of Education in determining the contents of educational programs. On the one hand, in a democratic educational system, teachers should be free to make their own professional decisions about what and how they teach (Przyszczykowski 1993; Wirth 2000). The government is needed to provide support and some

regulation and oversight of schooling, but the real decisions are to be made at the level of communities and classrooms. To adhere to this statement requires one to trust that teachers will make good decisions for rational reasons that always serve to benefit their students and fall in line with the outcomes imagined by policymakers. In the field of history education, such a statement also assumes that teachers will make programming decisions that complement a preferred interpretation of history, as if that interpretation were the natural or inevitably correct conclusion to be reached when one is free of hindrances. In theory, however, a teacher who chooses not to teach about the Holocaust or Jewish history is exercising his or her rights according to the same principles of freedom. To ultimately leave the decision on what to teach up to individuals is to give up the ability to assure desired outcomes.

On the other hand, the interpellation demonstrated that there are those who believe that it is the government's responsibility to re-assert control over the system in order to make more likely that desired outcomes will be reached. Because the educational system is ostensibly created to support national goals as well as pedagogical and intellectual ones, only the Ministry is in a position to oversee and regulate education, and that it is indeed the Ministry's responsibility to step in when it is obvious that its own regulations are not being followed. If one assumes that it is understandable or even expected that people will try to subvert procedures for their own reasons, then the Ministry should act accordingly and prevent such action (or inaction) on the part of teachers, textbook authors, etc. After all, what is the purpose of having rules when everyone knows that one may break them with impunity?

Balancing the tradeoff between centralized control and democratic freedom for educators and communities is the ultimate challenge faced by policymakers not just in Poland but also in any democratic society. Democracy, as Szkudlarek (1994) asserts,

"is a very fragile project, demanding constant, active, and critical support. It is very easy to slip into the need for ideological certainty, where the power to define, to name, would be entrusted to someone playing the role of the mythical

father. Democracy is a project that survives on the verge of totalitarianism. What keeps it from slipping into the certainty of totalitarianism is constant dissatisfaction with institutionalized power, the constant impotence, proven again and again, of succeeding authorities” (115).

What Szkudlarek seems to suggest is that it is governments' inability to provide a flawless educational system and the subsequent dissatisfaction with the government that keeps democracy thriving in the first place. It is those parties involved in education that seek safety in simply following the letter of policy, and in essence refusing to take any responsibility for their role in the educational process – precisely the mindset inherited from the Communist era – that pose the most danger for reformers.

CHAPTER 7:

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

I. SUMMARY OF STUDY CONTENTS

In the preceding chapters, I have presented the reader with a story of how the nation of Poland came to a moment in history, looked back on what had come before, gazed forward to where it wanted to go, and set about creating a new path to that future. In order to examine the process of educational reform in a transitional context, I investigated the reform of history education in Poland since the end of Communist rule in 1989 using grounded theory and drawing data from multiple sources including documentary evidence, scholarly works, and personal interviews. Since 1989 educators in Poland needed to re-imagine the role that education would play in the new social and political order, as well as what that order would be. History education in particular, with its ties to moral and civic development, was chosen to be the focal point of this study precisely because its mutable content is so contested both politically and pedagogically. Those interested in the reform of history education disagree not just over which events and persons should be included in the mandatory curriculum, but also over how those events and people should be understood and interpreted. Disagreements over historical content in school curricula and textbooks are not unique to the 1990s, but rather are just the latest in a series of battles over school history. The teaching of the past serves specific purposes in the present; by looking more closely at those purposes, one may more clearly discern the formative influences and ideas competing for a place in the new society, exposing them to further inquiry. The second chapter presents an overview of three areas of scholarly literature –

school textbooks, history education, and educational transition – that serve to inform the theoretical understanding of what occurred in Poland during the period from 1989 to 1999 as that nation transitioned from a highly-centralized Communist state and planned economy to a more decentralized, democratic, free-market society. Each body of literature helps us begin to understand the complex nature of education reform under these particular circumstances.

School textbooks are a central element to educational transition. Textbooks are objects of interest to publishers, educators, and politicians because of textbooks' role as the main disseminator and authoritative source of official knowledge in the school setting (Apple & Christian-Smith 1991; Wade et al. 1994). Textbooks are also economic entities that are bought and sold, and whose popularity in the marketplace results from a combination of effective marketing, distribution, pedagogical quality and alignment with national curriculum standards (Apple 1985b, 1989; Chrzanowski 1999; Mosiek 2000). Those national standards, known as the *Podstawa Programowa* or Basic Curriculum, for history education have gone through multiple versions and drafts over the course of the ten years between the end of Communism and the introduction of a new, restructured system of education in Poland in 1999. Along the way, educators and policy-makers have struggled to reconcile conflicting historical interpretations, financial limitations, and the changing needs of Polish society in order to create a set of standards that adequately serves both the state, the school, the community, and the individual learner while not repudiating the principles of historical study. The transitional context for the reform of history education and history textbooks affects that reform in important ways, necessitating that reform while simultaneously making it more problematic. The instability of institutions and uncertainty about the future common to societies transitioning to democracy can open the door for new ideas, but can also make reform work more difficult due to frequent changes of political and educational leadership at the national level.

The fourth chapter provides the reader with a brief history of Polish education from the 16th to 20th centuries. This section is meant to introduce the reader to Poland and its educational traditions as well as provide a broader historical perspective from which to view the events of the 1990s. As is shown, Poland's effort to create a democratic educational system in the 1990s was only the latest attempt in its history to realize such a system. Poland created the first national system of education in Europe in 1773, and was inspired by the same Enlightenment-era beliefs about the role of education in the building of democracy that fueled both American independence and the growth of national education systems throughout Europe. The Commission on National Education, which oversaw Polish schools at this time, was devoted to the idea that all citizens should have access to education in order to create a stronger nation. The existence of the Commission was short, but its legacy continued to influence educational institutions for years to come. Over the next 200 years, despite devastating wars and occupation by foreign powers, the idea that democratic education could and should exist in Poland was suppressed but never completely destroyed. The democratic reforms of the 1990s were a return to, rather than a completely novel creation of, a system of education meant to develop the individual as well as the citizen of the new, democratic society.

The fifth chapter concerns the reform of history textbooks, and provides an explanation as to why the reform of textbooks progressed as it did. Despite the fact that educational publishers were free to create new, modern textbooks after 1989, the majority did not do so right away, and chose to re-print existing books instead. Truly new books began to emerge slowly, offering better quality paper, print, and graphics; less emphasis on political and military history told in a traditional chronological manner; and more pedagogical tools to aid the teacher and student. The pace at which reformed textbooks appeared was affected by a number of factors: the stress on the educational publishing industry to function profitably in the new capitalist economy; the time and money needed to invest in developing, marketing, and

distributing new books; the uncertainty of the final curriculum requirements; and the willingness of publishers to take the risks necessary to create new books under such conditions.

The reform of textbooks is more than an economic enterprise; it is also a *political* one. In order to oversee the quality of textbooks while simultaneously decentralizing decision-making power in education, the Polish Ministry of Education instituted a textbook approval process which became a source of controversy and continues to be problematic. Books that have been approved for use in schools have been shown not to conform to the Ministry's requirements, a problem which is attributable to several sources: (1) the length of time needed to create textbooks which was longer than the time permitted to prepare the new texts, (2) the review process which allows authors to select the reviewers and influence the outcomes of the process, (3) publishers who have a great deal of financial motivation to see that their textbooks are reviewed positively, and (4) the Ministry's lack of attention to making sure their prescriptions were actually being followed. Due to the intervention of interested parties outside the realm of education proper (such as the parliamentary group that brought the interpellation to the *sejm*, and the commentators that have criticized the textbook approval process in the press), the Ministry took back some control over the review process, much to the chagrin of publishers. The relationship between the free market and the Ministry, and between decentralized and centralized control over textbook content, continues to be a source of some conflict, which is played out in the news media (PAP 2003).

The sixth chapter follows the development of the national curriculum standards – the so-called *Podstawa Programowa*, or Basic Curriculum – for history education from the initial attempts at reform in 1992 to the final versions signed into law by the Polish Ministry of National Education in 1999. The curriculum reform group – which consisted of historians, teachers, and university professors nominated by professional and educational organizations – wanted to create a curriculum that allowed for maximum flexibility for teachers to organize and

instruct their students, while at the same time assuring that certain necessary elements would be present in all programs of study. The determination of which elements were "necessary" to the task of the school became the most problematic issue, and one eventually taken up by the Polish parliament and other non-educators as well as by the Ministry of Education and the original reform group. Successive changes in leadership at the executive and legislative levels after periodic elections resulted in concomitant changes in educational leadership, and a re-tooling of the means and ends of the reform process. In the end, the reform of the national curriculum standards became a struggle over educational oversight, accountability, and control between the centralized bureaucracy of the Ministry and the other stakeholders in education, including politicians, teachers, historians, and publishers.

II. REVISITING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

As indicated by my research questions, the original goal was to describe and better understand the reform of history education in post-communist Poland. In order to begin drawing conclusions, it is important to define what is meant by the term reform; for purposes of this study, we must distinguish between the reform of the policy-making process, and the reform of the teaching and learning process. This study concerns the former only. The reform of the teaching and learning process, measured by student achievement and educational outcomes, is relevant here, but only insofar as it forms the basis of assumptions that policy makers act on. This distinction between these two conceptions of reform developed more clearly as the research into the reforms progressed, and helped to define the scope of the study.

At this point let us return to the specific questions presented in the Introduction that guided this study from the beginning. The goal of this project was to determine the following four elements of the reform of history education as they relate to the Polish context since 1989:

- 1) The sources of transitional curriculum policy for history education and the role of reform actors
- 2) What happened to the history education curriculum reforms between the creation of proposals and the eventual codification of the reform into law
- 3) The influences on the reform of history textbooks during the transitional period
- 4) The differences between anticipated goals and actual outcomes of the curricular and textbook reforms and how to account for them

The task at hand now is to address each of these questions in turn, analyzing each in light of the theoretical literature and this study's findings.

Question #1a: Identify and describe the sources of transitional curriculum policy for history education.

The guiding principles of the reform of history education in Poland since 1989 were inspired by a combination of the inheritance of the past, the anticipated needs of the future, and the pragmatic realities of the present. The system of education inherited from the Communist period became obsolete in both its methods and content when the Communist monopoly over the political structure of Poland ended in 1989. The Communist system was disliked for many reasons. The rigid, dogmatic decision-making structure which subordinated children's cognitive-developmental needs to ideological legitimization of the Party meant that education could not by design be responsive to the educational needs of individual students. Neither teachers nor the public could influence the decisions and policies of the Ministry. The Communist system of education was dysfunctional in that it was not capable of realizing its own goals or the needs of society (Lewowicki 1997).

Initial attempts at curriculum reform immediately following the end of Communism were more a reaction against what had come before than a fully articulated, independent creation, as was observed in other post-communist societies in Eastern and Central Europe (Anweiler 1992). The dogmatic, Marxist-Leninist interpretation of history of the recent past was

initially replaced by an overly nationalistic, and perhaps equally dogmatic, draft vision of history with Poland at the center (Medrzecki 1992). This initial attempt, which the writers admitted tried too hard to right the wrongs of the past, was recognized by the writers as flawed, and was restructured to provide a less one-sided, more flexible framework. Guiding the curriculum writers' work were assumptions based on a democratic model of education, in which the teacher is the final arbiter of classroom content, and the curriculum writers' as well as the Ministry's role was mainly to advise, not dictate. These assumptions require trust in the ability of teachers to do their jobs and to make informed, independent, educated decisions in the classroom, but also require trust in the principles of democracy.

Faith in educational democracy comes, in the case of Poland, not from years experiencing democracy, but instead from both its fleeting presence in Poland's history and the continuing belief that to return to democracy is to return to the way things should be. It would be easy to assume that, with the end of Communist party rule in Poland, the overtly ideological foundations of that system were swept away and replaced by a system that is intended to be non-ideological. But if we understand that all schooling is inherently ideological (Anyon 1979, Apple 1985b), then what really occurred was more an exchange of ideologies than a renunciation of them.

There are several ways of understanding the difference between the two periods, ideologically speaking. First, and perhaps most obvious, is that while the Communist system was overtly, self-consciously ideological, the post-communist system is ideological in a slightly different way. Under the previous system, the Communist ideology was unabashedly the linchpin that kept the entire educational, social, and political structure together. Perpetuating the Communist ideology, rather than the development of individual student, was also the primary goal of the educational process. The fact that ideology superseded pedagogical, cognitive-developmental, or social goals was the source of much of the dislike of the Communist

educational system. What has replaced the Communist system is, in essence, just as ideologically rooted as what preceded it, though perhaps not as obviously so. The current goals of education may be centered around the ideals of individual intellectual and moral development, the needs of the student, and the support of democratic citizenship, but they are not less ideological. It simply means that the current democratic ideology is more compatible with preferred relationships between the school, the community, and the student. If we recall Wade et al.'s (1994) definition of ideology as "what seems normal", then democracy is indeed the most recent ideology to hold sway in Polish society. Democratic ideology may not be as noticeable as Communist ideology – whose dominance in Polish life was an historical aberration according to some understandings (Birzea 1994) – because it seems more natural or correct. This is true especially if one holds to the belief that a return to democracy – the dream deferred for so many years – is a return to the way things always should have been.

The sources of transitional curriculum reform policy, in sum, are very much rooted in the past. The recent experience of Communism defined in a negative sense what was not wanted in the new schools, while the long-deferred dream of building a democratic educational system inspired the creative work of reformers. At the same time, the desired form and content of the reformed system was tempered by the limitations imposed by the transitional context, which brought economic hardships and a profusion of interest groups all fighting for a voice in the process of school reform. With the opening up of the dialogue pertaining to school reform to include non-state entities, reformers came to interact with one another in new ways.

Question #1b: Describe the role of reform actors

The role of reform actors, both within the state apparatus and outside of it, shifted over the course of the reform, as did the locus of decision-making power in education. The reaction to the immediate communist past was led to a radical devolution of power from the Ministry to

non-governmental figures appointed by professional organizations on their merits as scholars, historians, and educators. Over the course of the next few years, the government (through the Ministry of Education) began to re-assert gradual bureaucratic control over the creative process of curriculum policy. A parallel phenomenon may be discerned in regards to textbook policy: an initial devolution, followed by gradual re-centralization.

This opening up and subsequent constriction of the system of control over the educational reform can be understood as the Ministry and other reformers adapting to the reality of reform work. What began as a liberation of professional educators from the bureaucratic limitations of a central agency became problematic, and the Ministry was faulted for not following through on its policies. Despite devolution of power to non-state bodies and individual teachers, when something went wrong with how policies were being carried out, such as in the cases of the textbook approval process or Holocaust education, responsibility ultimately returned to the Ministry as the primary institution in charge of education. Certainly it is easier to hold the Ministry accountable for problems with the reform than, say, "the public", which is one reason why complaints were lodged against it. The Ministry cannot relinquish responsibility for education, it was argued, if it is evident that rules are not being followed. Reform cannot occur without the Ministry playing a role, and certainly democratic reform cannot occur without discussion among all interested parties. Striving for a balance between the center (represented by the Ministry of Education) and the periphery (represented by educators, scholars, publishers, and local educational authorities) is the new challenge for educational institutions.

Changes in political leadership in the legislature and Ministry of National Education affected the curriculum reform process in an ambiguous way. It can be argued, as Wiatr (1999) did, that these changes are negative because they prevent the continuous, long-term support of a single vision of reform. However I believe that some positives can be identified as well.

Changes in governmental leadership forced the adaptation and re-tooling of the original reform project which could never have been realistically implemented anyway. These changes in leadership assured that these necessary adaptations were made, and prevented the initial, eventually unworkable model from being pushed through despite its flaws. The "new" leadership ensconced at the Ministry after each election did not begin from scratch in 1995 or at other times since 1989, but instead used previous versions of the reform in an attempt to improve earlier project models and create a better, more workable model.

For the curriculum writers, the changes in political leadership resulted in a shift in the perception of their work and their role in the reform. For some of the writers, their adherence to the original vision for the reform became problematic. They may have begun the process as valued and necessary contributors to the reform process, but as the political context shifted and efforts were re-directed towards a different goal, some of the reformers came to be seen instead as liabilities hindering reform work. As some curriculum reformers' comments suggest, there was the sense that as contributors they became less important as the reform progressed, and the Ministry took over as the final arbiters of the reform. However, the perception of lost responsibility and control may be just that: a perception. It is doubtful that the Ministry of Education ever intended to allow the curriculum writers' work to stand on its own, with little or no input or mediation by the Ministry. The reformers' roles may have changed during the course of the transition, but the degree to which those roles changed is difficult to determine precisely because of the subjectivity of those interviewed.

Question #2: Why did the curriculum reforms in history education change as they did between the creation of proposals and the eventual codification of the reform into law?

The next question posed concerned the differences between the anticipated goals of the reform of history curricula and textbooks and actual outcomes of those reforms. It is not

possible to know the outcome of the reforms themselves if one is referring to the student outcomes; whether the goals have been achieved will have to wait until the first generation of students passes through the new system in its entirety. However, it is possible to speak more specifically about the differences between how the reform process itself was envisioned, and how the process changed over time. As we have seen there is a pattern emerging: early on there were high hopes that the process would be free from political intervention and organized according to democratic principles of discussion and collaboration, and that decision-making power would be placed in the hands of professional educators rather than made by political appointees with their own agenda. Gradually the relationship between the Ministry and other reform actors outside of the Ministry changed, and decision-making power began to move back to the Ministry. This shift back to centralized control can be understood in a number of ways.

One explanation places the blame firmly on politics. Some members of the group charged with re-writing the Basic Curriculum in history blamed conservative appointees in the Ministry that came to dominate there after the parliamentary elections in the mid-1990s for the move backward to a more prescriptive, pro-Catholic delineation of the "necessary elements" of history. The Ministry's intervention, therefore, was the result of the particular combination of personnel who were acting for political and ideological reasons in a bid to assure a tighter hold on an important state institution. This explanation works well if one accepts that educational transition is primarily the result of conflict between opposing entities (Collins 1971; Weber 1968; Ball 1990). The re-centralization of decision-making power in the hands of the Ministry is simply a continuation of this on-going conflict, and a state that may change at any time.

The second explanation places the blame less on a conspiracy of politicians than on the gradual realization that what the curriculum reform group had created was not possible to implement given the difficult financial circumstances of the transition and the capabilities of educators who would be charged with implementing it. The conflict is at heart one between

what ideally should be taught and realistically what can be taught and learned within the confines of the school day, the limited number of hours devoted to history, and the capabilities of the average student. The original curriculum model was extremely ambitious, and set the bar high for both teachers and students. The challenges of implementation in terms of teacher preparedness and material support coupled with student capabilities proved too daunting for reformers, and led to a paring-down of the curriculum. In broader perspective, the transitional context on the one hand presented opportunity for innovation and more open negotiation of educational content, while at the same time demanded that principles be upheld and limitations be placed on content writers who did not have to worry about such mundane things as how their ideas would actually be implemented, and at what cost to the educational system. The reform of history textbooks during the transitional period followed a similar pattern: transition to the free market economy brought freedom to grow, but also limitations due to inherent financial risks required to operate within the system.

A third explanation calls out the institutional nature of educational work, and suggests that schools as institutions do not welcome radical change. For the Ministry of Education to relinquish so much decision-making power to smaller educational institutions and to be accountable to the public was a radical change in how policy was created. After an initial attempt at decentralization, the Ministry took back some of that power, returning to a more "normal" state vis-a vis recent educational history. We can look at this recentralization both positively and negatively. In the positive sense, it can be argued that although the Ministry re-established control and issued what some consider to be a conservative interpretation of history, what actually occurs in the teaching and learning process is independent of what the prescription says. In other words, teachers who do not hold to conservative views are free to teach according to their own views. So for those who are concerned that recentralization will interfere with teachers' freedom to teach as they see fit, such a concern is, in the end,

unwarranted. The Ministry's actions can also be viewed positively if we interpret its intervention as an attempt to better manage the inevitable conflict that results from the transitional context and provide stability in an uncertain time. Reclaiming control of an unstable system is a natural and expected thing for an institution ultimately responsible for the nation's public schools to do under such unstable circumstances.

The recentralization has its dangers as well. In the negative sense, by returning to a more traditional, prescriptive approach to dictating policy, the Ministry is perpetuating older models of leadership and can be seen as hindering real change. If viewed in this way, charges that the institution of the school only seems to be reforming, but in fact is not, carry more weight. In the end, to evaluate the re-centering of educational policymaking power, we must investigate further into the intentions of the Ministry, as well as track the results of this decision, a task that by necessity must be tabled.

There came to light during interviews with reformers a sense of disappointment with the way in which the reform was progressing, that official pronouncements of new policies and principles of education were not upheld by the Ministry of Education. The interpellation on Holocaust education is one example of such a scenario where rules and actual practice did not match. Levin's (2001) cynical claim that the appearance of change is enough to gain society's trust can be interpreted in different ways. On the one hand, the pessimistic view may suggest that it may have been the intent of educational officials to offer an empty image of reform, with no real desire to change the way that policy is made. There would have to be something to be gained by doing so, since otherwise there is little point in simply going through the motions of reform. On the other hand, a less skeptical view suggests that it is the nature of the reform enterprise that inevitably begins with pronouncements that will take some time to come to fruition. In essence, this view understands reform as ultimately a human undertaking that involves changing the way that educators and others involved in education do their jobs. It is

one thing to re-write policy, but quite another to change how people think and feel and act about education. It seems natural that during a transitional period there would be a lag between the issuance of a new education law, and that law being implemented in concrete, discernable ways. This lag is actually expected if one relies on institutional frameworks to understand educational reform (Marsh & Olsen 2000).

In my own perspective, I find that it is difficult to be certain what accounted for the changes in the history education reform as it progressed and developed without more data. Much depends on knowing the real intentions of officials in the Ministry of Education, intentions that cannot simply be assumed. For this reason, I find the conspiracy theory to be the least attractive, and certainly the least supportable. As an organization, the Ministry is committed to improving education in Poland to the best of its ability. From this perspective, the second explanation offered above seems the most likely, since it assumes the basic motivation behind the Ministry's actions was in keeping with its primary task. The Ministry chose the path which was determined to be the most likely to reach desired goals. Similarly, the third explanation, which points to the innate difficulty of change within institutions as playing an important role in determining the speed of the reform, has much explanatory power, and does not necessitate excessive conjecture as to the motivations of individuals.

Question #3: What were the influences on the reform of history textbooks during the transitional period?

The speed of history textbook reform in Poland since 1989 was primarily determined by economic concerns of the publishers and their willingness and ability to accept the risks involved with developing new books. At the same time, publishers are somewhat limited by their dependency on the Ministry of Education to determine the criteria for acceptable texts. Publishers, who seek to maximize profit, are confined by the structure of the textbook approval

and curriculum-creation process. Publishers want to sell as many books as possible, but to do so they must heed the requirements set by the Ministry, and are thus dependent on the Ministry's decision-making structure and schedule. The relatively short period of time between the official announcement of the Basic Curriculum and the beginning of the school year and textbook purchasing season in 1999 meant that publishers that waited too long to have books ready could not get them through the approval process and thus to market fast enough, and that publishers who took a chance on getting a textbook ready earlier, using a best guess to determine if their book was suitable and had books ready for the new school year were more likely to sell well, at least if their books were indeed approved for use. To not make the list means a certain death to the textbook, and an enormous amount of wasted financial resources on the part of the publishers. Smaller publishers with less capital to invest in preparing a new textbook were at somewhat of a disadvantage, but that disadvantage was often countered by the smaller publishers' willingness to risk the market and move ahead quickly with innovative materials.

In making decisions about what books were worth risking investment, publishers were working from two sets of assumptions. One was that the new model of history education would require a "new" type of book that promoted independent analysis and critical thinking through the copious use of primary source materials. On the other hand, there was the assumption that teachers would, if given the option, continue to use the same books if possible because of the older books' familiarity and the time the teachers had already invested in preparing a history program around older materials. This assumption is supported by institutional frameworks for understanding reform which maintain that institutions resist change. Older texts of the synthetic type may also have been attractive to teachers because of the less ambiguous nature of the information contained in them: finished knowledge that made it easier to determine what the "right" answer is, as opposed to the newer, analytic texts that allow for and encourage multiple views. Offering lightly altered, revised editions of older books that basically hid old material in

new packaging allowed publishers to work and benefit from both sets of assumptions. It is little wonder, then, that this kind of book that bridged the gap between the past and the future was so popular during the transitional period.

The fact that the Ministry created a textbook approval process at the national level at all suggests the importance that it attached to the textbook itself, an importance which is rooted in the assumption that what is taught and learned in the classroom is heavily dependent on the texts' contents. The approval process also reflects some distrust in the decentralized, free market system of textbook publishing. The approval process exists both to aid the teacher in selecting quality materials for their students, but also to help the educational establishment maintain some sort of control over the quality of textbook contents, to be sure that inappropriate materials are not used simply because they may be more affordable or well-marketed. The Ministry is balancing on the fine line between setting standards through some sort of centralized control, and maintaining enough flexibility and openness to alternative materials to assure quality and choice as demanded in a democratic system.

Only time will tell if the decisions made by the Ministry regarding textbooks makes any kind of difference in what students learn, and whether students gain the skills and beliefs that the learning of school history intends to develop and impart. One of things that may well affect the educational outcomes for history students is the fact that textbook policy can only extend as far the text itself, and does not go further into the actual use of the text in the classroom. While new teachers trained in the transitional period may have had some opportunity to learn how to use texts in the classroom in a manner that supports the pedagogical goals of history education, older teachers are in many ways left to their own devices when it comes to revamping their teaching methods. As was mentioned during the discussion of the controversy over Holocaust education, not all teachers have access to educational centers and organizations that can assist teachers in developing new teaching skills and historical knowledge. If teachers continue to

teach using obsolete methods and imparting older interpretations of history despite the presence of new materials, it is less likely that the results in terms of student skills and abilities will develop as intended by the Ministry.

Question #4: What are the differences between anticipated goals and actual outcomes of the curricular and textbook reforms and how do we account for them?

Transitions have both positive and negative characteristics, a fact that perhaps is not easily acknowledged before the transition actually begins. Opposition forces in Poland focused heavily on the shortcomings of the Communist system to bolster their platform, as befit the needs of an opposition movement. One cannot put forth a strong argument for change and motivate people to demand that change if one focuses on the down sides of the new desired way of life. Democracy, which is a problematic and conflict-ridden state of existence with its own shortcomings, may have served as a motivational force for change, but once the reality of building democracy sets in, expectations inevitably suffer a letdown. The fact that the expectations for democracy were so unrealistic (Schöpflin 1994) in the early stages can be explained opposition movements' championing of democracy and the underacknowledgement of its problems. If considered in this light, the transition to democracy is inherently contradictory due to the inevitable coming together of the dream and the reality, of the anticipated benefits and the concomitant challenges that follow.

There is ample evidence of the clash of idealism and pragmatism in the case of post-communist Poland. Economic transition, for example, necessitated contradictory responses from the Ministry. On the one hand, decentralization of the funding structure meant that the Ministry had to relinquish control to local governments, which in many ways was beneficial since the government had limited funds to devote to the improvement of education. Local governments now have fiscal control over schools, but with that control comes responsibility for education in

terms of both financial support and student outcomes. However, this state of affairs does not release the Ministry from its duties as the leading institution that guides educational practice, as it is the only such body with the power and reach to support a national system. This results in contradictory dynamics; forces push economic decisions to local authorities while at the same time requiring a central, guiding force to maintain stability and leadership.

The down side to the economic decentralization is that local education can be impoverished by the harsh burdens of free market, leading to less rather than more educational opportunity. Certain regions in Poland – particularly rural areas and the far Eastern provinces bordering Ukraine, Lithuania, and Belorussia – are faced with high unemployment and little investment in profit-making business. This fairly serious downside to decentralization was foreseen by Bray & Borevskaya (2001), though it certainly is not a universal result of transition.²⁴ So here, too, we see a clash between the anticipated results of decentralization and its actual ramifications.

In the textbook industry, too, one can see reflected the contradictory nature of transition. The free market offers the dream of potential growth and profit, but that freedom is somewhat constrained by the assumption of financial risk and accountability to the public. There is a chance that one's business will prosper, but also a chance for failure and closure. There is the opportunity to innovate coupled with the risk of moving too fast, or in a direction away from policy trends. Capitalism, much like democracy, offers freedoms as well as constraints.

Contradictions are to be found in the political realm as well. Political transition opens up the forum on education to a wider audience, a change which can stymie reform as well as

²⁴ While participating in discussion following a panel presentation on educational transition at the 2002 Comparative and International Education Society's national meeting, I spoke briefly about the school closures that occurred in Poland as a result of decentralization. Most of the distinguished scholars at the panel expressed surprise at this, perhaps because their experiences with developing nations are not analogous to my experiences in Eastern Europe.

spur it along. The interpellation on the Holocaust demonstrated how the public, through the rules of procedure established by the state, can positively influence transitional reforms by demanding accountability. Similar to what occurred as a result of economic transformation, there are competing dynamics of political centralization and decentralization occurring simultaneously: the Ministry guides the national vision of education, but is informed and influenced by those in society now empowered to do so. Under the old system, to demand that the government account for itself and its policies was an act of aggression, an attack on the omnipotence of the Party's leadership and a blow to the entire system centered on the Party's unquestioned authority. On the other hand, partisan groups that each demand that their interpretation of history be represented lead require the Ministry to either ignore them all (no mention of specific religions in earlier curriculum drafts), or cede to all demands (specific mention of both Judaism and Catholicism), in order to not show favoritism and leave as much freedom to the teachers as possible.

Even in the realm of pedagogy we see trends moving at cross purposes. Pedagogically, educators were positioned to go in nearly any direction for inspiration and guidance: towards Europe, towards the US, towards the future, towards the past. The challenge is to reconcile tradition and innovation, and time-honored principles with the constantly-changing needs of the moment. There is also the need for some degree of consensus over guiding principles, goals, and means of education in order for education to function at all. But with that consensus must co-exist the need to constantly assess, discuss, and question educational structures and practices in the never-ending quest for improvement. Lastly there is the need for practitioners to inform policy through cooperation and expertise, partnered with the need for educational authorities to be the final arbiters in the creation of new policy.

All of these interrelated spheres of activity – the economic, the political, the educational – share certain characteristics common to all institutions. At the institutional level there is

always a pull towards the familiar and stagnation, as well as a push towards the unknown and dynamic change (Marsh & Olsen 2000, 166). Poland has demonstrated in many ways a remarkable openness to transformation (rather than perpetuation) and change. I use the word "remarkable" for a reason. It is difficult to imagine under what circumstances such a profound reconstruction of education could happen here in the US. Even within the Polish context, the acceptance and concerted progress of this reform has few precedents. Indeed, the last transformation of education that occurred in Poland that matches the postcommunist transition in terms of scale and degree of change was introduced as a result of military and political takeover of the country by Communist forces after World War II. The postcommunist transition, on the other hand, was undertaken in the absence of force of arms, or the threat of violence. The postcommunist transition has moved ahead as a result not of duress, but because its underlying principles enjoy widespread support in Polish society.

The task that was set before Polish educators and reformers was indeed a daunting one, but one that had to be faced. The transformation of Polish society since 1989 placed burdens on every institution to adapt to the rapidly-changing environment, which in turn affected the reform of education to a greater or lesser extent. After reviewing competing explanatory models for understanding educational reform in post-communist Poland and describing what transpired during this period, we should now return to those models and decide which one, if any, goes furthest in explaining the Polish case.

III. CONCEPTUALIZING EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN POST-COMMUNIST POLAND

The reform of history curricula and textbooks in Poland may be analyzed many different ways. In terms of foci, one may look at the reform as a pedagogical process and compare various views on teaching models and organizational principles. One may also look at

the reform as a political process which pits competing ideologies against one another over which ideology will be represented as the dominant one in the school. Or, if we return to the theories of transition summarized in Chapter 2, we recall that there are four general conceptual frameworks that can be used: transition as conflict, planned institutional change, a state of dysfunction, or adaptation to planned structural change. Each of these four contributes in some way to understanding the reform process itself.

The conflict model (Ball 1990; Fullan 2000; Tyack & Cuban 1995), as we have seen, has much to offer the present discussion. There existed in the transition period a strong push-pull dynamic between opportunity for change and restrictions imposed by habit, between ideal visions of what the school should do and real limitations of what it can do, and between openness to new ideas and adherence to tradition and the past. What eventually resulted from the work of the curriculum writers and the Ministry of Education officials was very much a compromise between these groups, as well as a compromise between what is desired and what is possible. For example, when the desire to avoid religious partisanship the representation of history pertaining to the Jews in the Basic Curriculum came into conflict with the desire to emphasize the importance of Catholicism to Polish history, the result was mention of both Catholicism and the Holocaust in the final curriculum document.

The conflict model also suggested that clashes take place not just among various interest groups, but also among those within the institution charged with overseeing education. Certainly there was ample evidence presented that with the Ministry of Education different visions of the ideal school came in and out of favor depending on the ministry leadership in power at any given time. There was also evidence that the central educational authorities and the local authorities had different priorities, resources, and needs, which meant that what was envisioned by the Ministry was not necessarily what was implemented on the ground. Lastly, the conflict model also anticipated that demographics (McLaren & Giroux 1990) would play a

role in defining the lines along which educational clashes would take place. There was little evidence gathered in interviews that supported this idea, but this fact does not preclude the possibility that class differences played some role in shaping the discourse over educational reform.

The dysfunction model of transition also sheds some light on the Polish situation. According to Karns' (2001) definition, dysfunctional systems are those not able to reach desired goals due to behavior that is self-limiting or closed off to real change. Certainly one can posit that the results of the curriculum disputes came from the balancing out of old familiar patterns of behavior that look to the center for guidance, and new goals which placed more responsibility on the peripheral agents of change. But much of this argument would require more attitudinal data than was available here. In order to truly test out Karns' theories in the Polish context, it would be necessary to conduct much more thorough interviews of people at every level of the educational system, from the Ministry down to individual schools, in order to determine to what extent the reform principles had been internalized by various participants in the reform. Lewowicki's (1997) model of dysfunction, which set opposing tendencies of centralization/decentralization and ideals/realities against one another actually falls much closer to the conflict model of transition than to Karns' model of dysfunction.

Lastly, the model of transition that views educational transition as being dependent on external structural change elsewhere in society was strongly supported by the data found here. Changes in economic, political, and social life were intimately entwined with and helped to shape the path of reform because they formed the context in which the most basic principles of education were created. In the postcommunist transition, a communist model of education was no longer a valid or acceptable alternative, and could not be considered. The move towards a free market economy and democratic governance meant different possibilities, different goals, and different ways to conduct the business of education. In the new context, certain questions

had to be answered (such as how will the school help educate a democratic citizenry) while others, it seems, were precluded from consideration (such as whether the free market does more harm than good to the educational system). However, the data also show that educational transition had some limited impact on other areas of the economic structure as well. Textbook publishers could not simply act on their own, but were required to wait until the educational establishment more clearly defined the path ahead before the publishers could introduce new materials. On the other hand, educators were required to wait for a number of years for the textbook industry to stabilize enough to be able to invest in creating completely new materials. But in the end, the path of educational reform was delimited by the changes occurring throughout society, and in a way that made certain aspects of that reform somewhat inevitable, such as the participation of the public in educational debates as a result of democratization, the financial stresses on underdeveloped capitalist markets, and the scrambling among political interests over the ideological possibilities afforded by the institution of the school.

As we can see, the educational reform movement in Poland was multi-faceted and complex, and is really a combination of multiple factors: political, economic, social, and pedagogical needs and assumptions delimited by social and institutional structures. But in the end, I believe that the reform of history education in Poland during the transition from Communism to democracy is best described as an *institutional challenge* set against the backdrop of competing political, ideological, economic, and even religious worldviews. Institutional frameworks predicted much of the path that reform, as well as the challenges faced by reformers. Indeed, institutional theory combines conflict, adaptation, and dysfunction within the sphere of education; the other general theories of transition can be subsumed under the umbrella of institutional theory, and in this way still contribute to our understanding of Poland's transition.

According to institutional frameworks, during transformative periods institutions are expected to:

- Maintain the status quo whenever possible (Levin 2001)
- Stick to what they know and avoid expensive experimentation with new ideas (ibid.)
- Manage uncertainty by creating standard ways of talking about and acting on issues and problems (ibid.)
- Find success by managing chaos, using conflict to its advantage, and creating conditions for all reformers to work together through collaboration, discussion, and compromise (Fullan 1999)
- Not necessarily be able to foresee the ultimate outcomes of reforms (ibid.)

The first two predictions listed here anticipated the reaction of the textbook publishing industry to the transition from the planned economy to the free market. Publishing is a very expensive business, and an investment of tens of thousands of dollars or more in an untested, changeable market is not to be undertaken lightly. Already-established publishers were less prepared initially to step out into the for-profit world, and sought to maintain control over the market in familiar ways by utilizing established networks and relationships within the industry, as well as exploiting teachers' similar reticence to embrace the unfamiliar. The Ministry of Education, too, avoided expensive experimentation with new ideas by taking its time in developing a new system of education and new curricula. The various drafts of the Basic Curriculum did cost something in terms of labor and time, but were certainly far less expensive than a whole-hearted foray into implementation in classrooms across the nation with the first version developed. As the Poles learned more about the post-communist circumstances they lived in, they were in a better position to understand both the advantages and drawbacks to the new social order which informed their work on the reform.

In contrast to how the textbook publishing industry and the Ministry of Education reacted to the transition, however, the curriculum writers neither supported the status quo nor shied away from experimenting with something completely new. In fact, this study shows how,

quite on the contrary, the curriculum writers sought to reject much that had been inherited from the communist period, both in terms of educational content and educational practice. This makes sense since the curriculum writers are individuals, not institutions. The inevitable clash occurred when the desires of individuals to institute change came into conflict with the institutional resistance to unproven change. The value of telling the story of individuals as they came into contact with institutional rules and practices lies in our being able to see how the institutions deal with change internally as well as externally.

The Ministry also *managed the uncertainty* of the transition by establishing early on rules of conduct and principles to be upheld, even though they did not know in those early days exactly what was going to happen in the future or how, exactly, they were going to follow through on the rules they set. The basic mission of the reformers stayed the same from the very beginning: since 1991, the goal was to create a system of education that makes possible:

- learning about and understanding of the world and its culture;
- the revealing of interests and abilities;
- the search for spiritual values of life and the formation and evaluation of one's own values, the development of the desire for self-improvement;
- preparation for responsible co-creation of the world and the finding of one's own place in the world, national and cultural self-identification;
- forming of patriotic attitudes, feelings of belonging to the local community, ethnic group, nation, international community; and
- achieving an education (MEN 1991, 1997).

The Ministry of Education also established in 1991 national and regional educational councils that would provide advice and guidance to the Ministry in the rebuilding of the educational system (MEN 1991). Exactly how these groups would work together, or what would be done if conflict arose, was not a part of these laws, but the fact that the Ministry laid out these principles in a legally-binding document demonstrated its commitment to creating a structural foundation on which to build a lasting system.

Lastly, despite giving up control of aspects of the reform project and opening up the dialogue over educational reform to a wider audience of both educators and non-educators, the Ministry has ultimately maintained control over the conflict that has ensued. The Ministry has placed itself in a position to benefit from the inherent uncertainty of the transition; as political leadership and political priorities changed, the Ministry was able to more easily reject earlier ideas about the reform – in essence reforming the reform – before it was put into practice. Alternative proposals for the Basic Curriculum were created, evaluated, scaled back, re-worked and re-submitted during the 10 years following the end of Communism, all of which served to inform the final version of the curriculum. It is unlikely that the Ministry set out at the beginning of the reform process to wait a decade to start implementing a new educational system, or that the changes in educational leadership would send the reform project in the direction that it did. As the policy landscape shifted over time, the Ministry of Education adapted to those shifts while simultaneously following its own internal rules, offering stability in spite of uncertainty, and order in spite of the chaos. Szkudlarek (1994) claims that this balancing act is at the heart of the democratic way of life. If so, it bodes well for the Polish reformers.

IV. GENERALIZABILITY OF FINDINGS

Although this study purports only to reach certain conclusions regarding the reform of education during the transition from Communism in Poland since 1989, it is arguable that there are some generalizations about transitions that can be made concerning most if not all of the postcommunist countries of Eastern and Central Europe. First, in all countries formerly contained within the Soviet Union and its satellite states there was a repudiation of the Marxist–Leninist ideology soon after the fall of Communist rule. Second, there was a general increase in levels of pluralism in educational content and leadership, though this varied in

degree from country to country depending on the ethnic makeup of the population and historical inheritance. Third, most postcommunist countries were faced with severe financial difficulties as they entered the free market system, as well as with the need to find balance between centralized control and decentralizing tendencies. Lastly, as Schöpflin (1994) observed, postcommunist expectations for future prosperity were overblown. Similarly, Lawson (1988) claims that in a different transitional context, that of post-WWII Berlin, in the early stages of change there were unreasonable expectations regarding what the school could do.

But beyond these fairly obvious generalizations, there are other things that can be learned from the Polish case. For one, modern educational reform in today's global cannot be imagined without the concomitant support of other social, economic, and political structures. The needs and limitations of each sphere must be balanced with those of the others, and share a common set of complimentary – though not necessarily identical – principles. Similarly, the needs and beliefs of individuals must be negotiated within a responsive framework that is seen as legitimate by all involved. Dr. Medrzecki, forexample, wasn't disenchanted just because the curriculum group's version of the Basic Curriculum was set aside, but also because the rules of conduct were not being followed. The decision to rework the Basic Curriculum came not as a result of reasoned discourse, but as a unilateral decision made by a politically-empowered bureaucracy. The illegitimacy of the Communist system in some views partly stemmed from the lack of responsibility or accountability for actions or decisions undertaken that effected all citizens. What the Polish case shows is that there are those who want to play a formative role, who do want to take on the onus of responsibility for instituting change, and for whom the rules of conduct are at the very heart of what reform is trying to achieve.

V. UNDERSTANDING FAILURE VS. SUCCESS OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM

It is inevitable that the reforms of Polish education are and will be evaluated in terms of their success or failure. Such an evaluation will not be made here outright, but what is necessary is a brief discussion of what success and failure mean in this context, if for no other reason than the reformers themselves so judge the work that has been undertaken thus far. Tyack & Cuban (1995) mention three oft-cited criteria used to measure success or failure of school reforms: fidelity to the original design, effectiveness in meeting preset outcomes, and longevity (61). The first two criteria – fidelity to original designs and ability to meet preset outcomes – can be problematic. In the quest to implement a reform plan that follows the original design to the letter, new unforeseen problems may arise that the reform plan is not structured to acknowledge or fix. Longevity has its definitional and validity problems as well. Is it correct to say that a certain reform has “longevity” if the content of the reform has changed so much over time that it bears little or no resemblance to its original form? Longevity alone doesn’t mean that students are helped or educational outcomes more likely. It also does not address the issue of changing social and political context of education.

Tyack & Cuban stress that reforms also interact with each other in ways that cannot always be foreseen. “For the most part, reforms tend to accumulate, one on top of another, adding to rather than simply replacing what went before. ...[R]eformers [can] not start with a clean political and institutional slate. Each governance reform built on layers of previous changes....” (63) The three evaluative criteria mentioned above not adequately measure the success of reform because as top-down measures, they often don’t take into consideration the pre-existing layers of reform, and nor do they consider the many ways in which schools, teachers, and communities change reforms to suit their specific needs and limitations. Tyack & Cuban continue: “For the most part, reforms have become assimilated to previous patterns of

schooling, even though they may... [insert] alternative practices into the work of schools. Reforms have rarely replaced what is there: more commonly, they have added complexity” (83).

Cuban (1998) expands the definition of successful reform even further, arguing that the traditional ways that people talk about the success or failure of school reforms are undermined by the reality of reform work, and are to a certain extent invalid. Cuban suggests alternative ways of thinking about the success or failure of reforms, stating that it is necessary to identify “what criteria are used to make judgments, whose criteria they are, and how school change reforms as they are implemented” (454). Public officials, he says, tend to utilize three main criteria to evaluate the success of reforms: whether the original goals of the project were achieved, the popularity of the reform, and how closely the outcome of the reform matches the intentions of its creators. But while policymakers tend to rely on the aforementioned criteria to judge success, practitioners often look elsewhere to judge the efficacy of reforms. Teachers especially look to see whether the reform can be adapted to the benefit of their students. This adaptation of reform proposals to the specific contexts of schools, while highly valued by teachers, strikes policymakers as failure according to the policymakers’ criteria of fidelity to the original plan. Thus a reform can be viewed as both a success and a failure simultaneously.

A precise determination of the criteria used to measure success or failure of a reform is important. It is too early to truly be able to judge whether Poland's educational transition from Communism to democracy has been successful in terms of student achievement and peripheral outcomes such as economic growth which are not easily met or measured in the short term. Polish officials, as well as individuals interviewed here, admit that the success of the reforms both curricula and textbooks in this sense can only be known in time (Wipszycka, personal interview 2002; Witkowski 1999). Student outcomes, however, aren't really the issue here. What is important is the way that policy is created in the new Poland, and if the discussion is limited to this topic, it is possible to look more closely at the reform of education in terms of

bureaucracy and institutional change and make some assessments regarding the success that has been met according to the criteria generally accepted as indicating democratic systems at work.

According to March & Olsen (2003), those who view democratic reform from an institutional perspective maintain that democracy has three tasks to be accomplished: creating political identities, molding a comprehensible and accountable political system, and making a political system adaptive (158). We may use these three tasks as criteria to judge educational reform if we understand, as Marsh & Olsen do, that by "political" we mean actions which involve the making of "collective decisions among self-interested actors through negotiation, bargaining, and voluntary exchange" (150).

The creation of political identities involves a realization of one's role in the political process, but also an acknowledgement that there are particular rules that are to be followed. In Poland, we see reform actors assuming their roles as members of a democracy exercising their rights to participate in the negotiations over education. We also see reform actors assuming what others' roles should be, and speaking out when the expected role is not being carried out properly. Historians should have a role in writing the history curricula. Publishers should have a voice in textbook policy. Those involved in the reform of Polish education have already taken on the personae of democratic citizens, which indicates that to some extent, the democratic identity has taken hold.

The Ministry has had less success early on in creating an accountability system, but improvements are noticeable through the course of the reform. The fact that the Ministry was faulted for not including the names of the people who were responsible for the 1999 Basic Curriculum evidences a lack of accountability, but this problem was remedied when subsequent curricula were published. This kind of responsiveness speaks well for the system. The case of the interpellation is another example of where the governmental body in charge of the reform was questioned, and rules were in place that necessitated a timely, public response. The

Ministry's recent decision to conduct their own reviews of already-approved textbooks also serves as a way to hold textbook authors and publishers accountable for the content of the books they create and sell. Because the textbook approval procedure leaves too much room for books to be approved without actually fulfilling the necessary curricular requirements, the Ministry needed to introduce some sort of mechanism that would allow it to follow through on the rules that it laid down. The new review process allows it to do this.

Lastly, there is evidence of the ability of the educational establishment to adapt to the changing environment of the transition period. The very fact that the reform has developed through several stages and different versions of policy documents shows that the Ministry is considering the various alternatives available to them and the different possible outcomes of each choice. Overall, if we use Marsh & Olsen's criteria for democratic institutions, the Polish educational system does show positive signs of development in establishing procedures that follow commonly-accepted democratic practice. Of course, more subjective evaluations by individuals may tell a different story as to how successful the Poles have been in transforming their schools. Democracy is often judged to be failing when people don't get what they want (Marsh & Olsen 2000, 154). But such judgments can nevertheless be illuminating, particularly of the different understandings people may have of what democracy really entails.

VI. FURTHER AVENUES OF RESEARCH

This study looked only at the process of policy creation, which is only one part of the ongoing reform process. One subject that would be interesting to track over time is the success of the reform as measured by student achievement and other measurable outcomes pertaining to students. The new examination system, which was alluded to here but not in any great detail, was to be the last piece of the reform to fall into place, and it will be interesting to see whether the skills and abilities policy-makers think are being instilled in Polish students are actually being

developed. Will students be involved, informed, productive citizens, able to utilize knowledge gained in school to benefit both the economy and society? It will also be interesting to see if the fears held by many that the reform of education will increase the inequalities of educational opportunity for Polish children as a result of market reforms and changes in the way that education is funded.

Another avenue of research is to investigate what the reforms have meant for teachers, and how the policies haggled over at the national level are playing themselves out on the ground in schools around the country. Certainly there will be a wide array of responses depending on location, but also depending on the age, experience and attitudes of individual teachers. From an institutional perspective, it would also be wise to interview teachers in order to better understand how the policies have been implemented within schools, and what, if any, changes have been made to adapt the reforms to the school environment.

Lastly, the findings of this study would be made stronger by the insights of individuals from the Ministry of Education who would be able to shed some light on the Ministry's decisions of the past twelve years. There is certainly another side to the story related here, and one that deserves to be told.

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APPENDIX A:
RESPONSE FORM FOR POTENTIAL INTERVIEW SUBJECTS EXPRESSING
WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE

ODPOWIEDZ

(response)

Proszę zaznaczyć znakiem "x" wybrana przez Pan odpowiedź:
(Please mark appropriate reply with an "x")

Czy Pan ma ochotę uczestniczyć w moich badaniach?

(Would you like to participate in my study?)

Tak, mam ochotę uczestniczyć w Pani badaniach, i zgadzam się na wywiad osobisty.

(Yes, I would like to participate, and I agree to a personal interview.)

Tak, mam ochotę uczestniczyć w Pani badaniach, ale wolę wypełnić ankietę pisemnie

(Yes, I would like to participate, but I prefer to fill out a written questionnaire).

Nie, nie mam ochoty uczestniczyć w Pani badaniach.

(No, I would prefer not to participate).

Jesli Pan zgadza się na wywiad, czy zna Pan angielski na tyle, bym mogła prowadzić wywiad w tym języku?

(If you agree to participate in a personal interview, would you be prepared for me to conduct the interview in that language?)

- *Tak (Yes)*

- *Nie (No)*

Proszę wysłać tę kartkę na następujący adres (Please send this form to the following address):

Christine Parker c/o Anna Orla-Bukowska
ul. Salwatorska 23/25
30-117 KRAKÓW

lub wysłać Pana odpowiedź przez email na adres (or respond via email):

parker.107@osu.edu

Uprzejmie dziękuję za Pana uwagę (Thank you very much for your attention)

APPENDIX B:
SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING PERSONAL INTERVIEW WITH SPECIALIST IN
HISTORY EDUCATION

Szanowny Panie,

Zwracam się do Pana z prośbą o zgodę na udział w badaniach. Jestem aspirantką w dziedzinie edukacji porównawczej na Państwowym Uniwersytecie w stanie Ohio (Ohio State University). W roku akademickim 1998-1999, otrzymałam stypendium z Fundacji Fulbrighta umożliwiające mi studia w Krakowie na Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim pod opieką profesora Kazimierza Bujaka. Obecnie piszę pracę doktorską na temat reform edukacji historycznej w Polsce w okresie postkomunistycznym. Gromadzę informację o procesie reform, interesuje

zwłaszcza problem jak przemiany społeczne, polityczne (narodowe oraz międzynarodowe) i ekonomiczne wpływają na oświatę. W związku z moim problemem badawczym chciałabym przeprowadzić z Panem wywiad. Ponieważ jest Pan specjalistą z zakresu edukacji historycznej pragnę poznać Pana poglądy dotyczące następujących ogólnych kwestii:

- stan reformy edukacji historycznej w Polsce i jej uczestnicy
- cele edukacji historycznej, stałe problemy i wyzwania dla przyszłości
- co to znaczy "dobry podręcznik do historii"
- wpływ wolnego rynku na reform podręczników i programów nauczania
- wpływ europejskich oraz amerykańskich specjalistów i wzorów na reformę edukacyjną - czy jest jeden wzór, który dominuje?
- rola społeczeństwa polskiego w reformie edukacji

Jesli miałby Pan ochotę brać udział i pomoc w moich badaniach, proszę o kontakt i informację o najdogodniejszy dla Pana sposób uczestnictwa. Zamierzam przyjechać do Polski w sierpniu b.r. żeby prowadzić wywiady, pozostanę w kraju do samego końca września. Mam nadzieję, że Pan życzliwie ustosunkuje się do mojej prośby.

Z szacunkiem,

Christine Parker
Doctoral Candidate, Comparative Educational Studies
Dept. of Educational Policy & Leadership
The Ohio State University

Dear Sir

I am writing to you to invite you to participate in a research study. I am a graduate student in comparative education at the Ohio State University. During the 1998-1999 academic year I received a grant to study at the Institute of Sociology at Jagiellonian University in Krakow under the guidance of Dr. Kazimierz Bujak. Presently I am writing my doctoral dissertation on the topic of educational reform in Poland in the post-communist period. I am collecting information about the process of reform, but I am particularly interested in how social, political (national and international) and economic changes impact education. In regards to these questions I would like to ask if you would be willing to be interviewed. Because you are a specialist in the field of history education I would like to find out your views on the following general questions:

- the status of the reform of educational reform in Poland and its facilitators
- the goals of history education, continuing problems and future challenges
- what makes for a "good textbook"
- the influence of the free market on textbook and curriculum reform
- the influence of European and American specialists and models on the educational reform – is there one model that dominates?
- the role of Polish society in the educational reform

If you would consent to participate in and assist with my study, please contact me and let me know what would be the best way to facilitate your participation. I will be traveling to Poland this coming August to conduct the interviews, and I will be there until the end of September. I sincerely hope that you will accept my invitation.

Respectfully yours,

Christine Parker
Doctoral Candidate, Comparative Educational Studies
Dept. of Educational Policy & Leadership
The Ohio State University

APPENDIX C:
WRITTEN CONFIRMATION OF WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE
IN EXPLORATORY STUDY

Szanowna Pani/ Szanowny Panie,

Nazywam się Christine Parker, jestem doktorantką na Ohio State University, Prowadzę w Polsce badania na temat reform edukacji historycznej od 1989. Wszystkie zebrane przeze mnie informacje traktuję jako poufne i używać ich będę wyłącznie do celów naukowych.

Zwracam się z prośbą do Pana(i) o zgodę na udział w wywiadzie na temat Pana(i) doświadczenia w procesie reformy. Z góry serdecznie dziękuję za współpracę.

Z szacunkiem,

Christine Parker

Niniejszym stwierdzam, że ja, _____,
Imię i nazwisko (drukiem)

zgadzam się na uczestnictwo w badaniach prowadzonych przez Panią Parker. Rozumiem, że wszystkie zebrane przez nią informacje to poufne i zostają używane wyłącznie do celów naukowych.

podpis

data

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Christine Parker and I am a doctoral student at the Ohio State University. I am conducting a study on the reform of education in Poland since 1989. All of the data that I am collecting will be treated as confidential and will be used only for academic purposes.

This is my request for your willing participation in a personal interview on the topic of your experience in the process of reform. I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Best regards,

Christine Parker

With this I affirm that I, _____,
Name – please print

agree to participate in the study being conducted by Ms. Parker, I understand that all of the information will be treated as confidential and will be used only for academic purposes.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX D:
EXPLORATORY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL HISTORY
TEACHERS REGARDING TEXTBOOK CHOICE

I. Rok szkolny 1998-99
(school year 1998-99)

1. W których klasach w bieżącym roku szkolnym uczy Pan(i) historii? (*At what level do you teach history?*)
2. Jakiego podręcznika używa Pan(i) w klasie czwartej? (autor, tytuł, rok wydawania, wydawnictwo) (*What textbook do you use for fourth-year history? Please give author, title, year of publication, publisher*)
3. Jakich podręczników Pan(i) używa w innych klasach? (autor, tytuł, rok wydawania, wydawnictwo) (*What textbooks do you use for other classes? Please give author, title, year of publication, publisher*)
4. Dlaczego Pan(i) wybrał(a) właśnie ten podręcznik dla klasy czwartej? Proszę podać najważniejsze przyczyny, które o tym zadecydowały. (*Why did you choose this particular textbook for fourth year? Please give the most important reasons for your decision.*)
- 5a. Jakie właściwości tego podręcznika i w jakim stopniu miały wpływ na Pana(i) wybór? Proszę zaznaczyć znakiem "x" odpowiedź we właściwej rubryce. (*What characteristics of this book influenced your decision, and to what degree? Please mark your answer with an "x"*).

| Elementy podręcznika (<i>textbook characteristics</i>) | JAKI MIAŁ WPŁYW? (HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS?) | | | | |
|--|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | bardzo duży (<i>very</i>) | dość duży (<i>somewhat</i>) | niewielki (<i>not very</i>) | żaden (<i>none</i>) | nie wiem (<i>don't know</i>) |
| Autor (<i>author</i>) | | | | | |
| szata graficzna (<i>graphics</i>) | | | | | |
| obecność pytań, ćwiczeń, skazówek dla uczniów (<i>presence of questions, exercises, drills for students</i>) | | | | | |
| Objętość (<i>size</i>) | | | | | |
| zawartość treściowa (<i>content quality</i>) | | | | | |
| Cena (<i>price</i>) | | | | | |
| inna ewentualność (Proszę określić tu jaką) (<i>other – please specify</i>) | | | | | |

5b. Jakie inne okoliczności i w jakim stopniu miały wpływ na Pana(i) wybór? (*Are there any other factors which affected your decision?*)

| Inne okoliczności (<i>other factors</i>) | JAKI MIAŁ WPŁYW?(HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS?) | | | | |
|--|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | bardzo duży (<i>very</i>) | dość duży (<i>somewhat</i>) | niewielki (<i>not very</i>) | żaden (<i>none</i>) | nie wiem (<i>don't know</i>) |
| to, że koledzy też go stosują (<i>my colleagues use it</i>) | | | | | |
| jest polecony przez MEN (<i>it is recommended by MEN</i>) | | | | | |
| ma dobre recenzje w wydawnictwach fachowych (<i>good reviews in professional journals</i>) | | | | | |
| ktoś mi go polecił (<i>someone recommended it to me</i>) | | | | | |
| inna ewentualność (Proszę określić tu jaką) (<i>other – please specify</i>) | | | | | |

6a. Czy Pan(i) jest zadowolony/-a czy też niezadowolony(a) ze swojego wyboru? (*are you satisfied with your choice?*)

- a. bardzo zadowolony (*very satisfied*)
- b. raczej zadowolony (*fairly satisfied*)
- c. ani zadowolony ani niezadowolony (*neither satisfied nor dissatisfied*)
- d. raczej nie zadowolony (*fairly dissatisfied*)
- e. bardzo niezadowolony (*very dissatisfied*)

6b. Proszę uzasadnić swoje stanowisko (*please justify your answer*)

7. Jakie są zalety tego podręcznika? (Proszę o konkretne przykłady) (*what are the positive features of this text? Please provide concrete examples*)

8. Jakie są jego wady? (*What are the negatives?*)

9a. Czy zawartość treściowa wybranych przez Pana(ia) podręcznika w pełni odpowiadała treściom programowym i wynikającym stąd wymaganiom? (*Do the contents of the text you use fulfil the requirements of your academic program?*)

- a. treść podręcznika jest obszerniejsza niż program (*the text is more comprehensive than the curriculum*)
- b. podręcznik w pełni odpowiada programowi (*the text adequately fulfils the requirements*)
- c. niektórych treści w podręczniku brakuje lub są zbyt wąsko omówione (*some topics are lacking or are not adequately elaborated*)
- d. wielu z potrzebnych treści brakuje w podręczniku (*many topics are missing*)

9b. Jeżeli na poprzednie pytanie odpowiedział(a) Pan/Pani wybierając c. lub d., to proszę powiedzieć, czy używa Pan/Pani materiałów pomocniczych uzupełniających te braki podręczników? (*If you answered c or d to the previous question, do you use supplementary materials?*)

- a. Tak (yes) b. Nie (no)

9c. Jeżeli tak, to jakich materiałów i do jakich tematów? (*If yes, what kind of materials and on what topics?*)

10a. Czy używa Pan/Pani materiałów pomocniczych na lekcji historii nie związanych z uzupełnianiem braków podręcznika? (*Do you use any additional materials that aren't related to the shortcomings of the text?*)

- a. Tak (yes) b. Nie (no)

10b. Jeżeli tak, to jakich materiałów i do jakich tematów? (*If yes, what kind of materials and on what topics?*)

11. Czy Pan/Pani używa tego samego podręcznika jak w ubiegłym roku szkolnym? (*is this the same text you used last year*)

- a. tak (yes) (pytanie nr. 12)
b. nie (no) (pytanie nr. 13)
c. nie uczyłem/uczyłam w ubiegłym roku (*I didn't teach last year*)

12a. Czy zmieniło się coś w sposobie użytkowania przez Pana/Panią tego podręcznika? (*have you changed the way you use your textbook?*)

- ☐ Tak (yes)
☐ Nie (no)

12b. Jeżeli tak, to na czym te zmiany polegają? (*If yes, describe this difference*)

13a. Dlaczego Pan/i zmienił(a) podręcznik? (*Why did you change textbooks?*)

13b. Jakiego podręcznika Pan/Pani używał(a) w ubiegłym roku? (autor, tytuł, rok wydawania, wydawnictwo) (*What textbook did you use last year? Please include author, title, year of publication, publisher*)

13c. Czym przede wszystkim różni się obecnie przez Pana/Panią używany podręcznik od używanego poprzednio? (*How primarily do the books differ?*)

14. Jak często Pan(i): (*How often do you*):

...bierze udział w konferencjach zawodowych? (*...take part in professional conferences?*)

...czyta czasopisma zawodowe? (*... read professional journals?*)

...korzysta ze centrów doskonalenia nauczycieli? (*... use teacher education centers?*)

15. Proszę napisać poniżej jakiegokolwiek dodatkowe uwagi, propozycji, lub poglądy osobiste na temat użytkowania podręczników w nauczaniu historii. (*Please use the space below to expand on any comments, suggestions, or personal opinions about the use of history textbooks.*)

| |
|--|
| II. Informacja osobowa (personal information) |
|--|

1. Płeć (*Gender*)

2. Wiek (*Age*)

3. Miejsce zamieszkania
(*Place of residence*)

_____ duże miasto (takie jak Kraków)

(*large city like Krakow*)

_____ średnie miasto (do 100,000 mieszkańców)

(*medium city up to 100,000*)

_____ małe miasto (do 20,000 mieszkańców)

(*small city up to 20,000*)

_____ wieś (*village*)

4. Wykształcenie
(*education*)

a. Rodzaj ukończonej szkoły
(*type of school finished*)

b. Kierunek studiów
(*major*)

c. Rodzaj uzyskanego dyplomu i data
(*highest grade completed and date*)

**APPENDIX E:
LIST OF POLISH INTERVIEWEES**

Melania Sobańska-Bondaruk - professor of history at Warsaw University, member of Polish Historical Association, member of history curriculum reform group, formerly of the Office of Minority Education at the Polish Ministry of Education, Ministry-approved reviewer of history textbooks (didactics).

Ewa Wipszycka-Bravo - professor of history at Warsaw University, member of Polish Historical Association, member of history curriculum reform group, Ministry-approved reviewer of history textbooks (content), and author (with Janina Tazbirowa) of *Historia. Starożytność. Podręcznik dla szkół średnich klasy I liceum ogólnokształcącego, technikum i liceum zawodowego* (Ancient history. Textbook for first-year secondary students in liceum, technical school, and vocational school) (WSiP 1994) and *U źródeł współczesności. Starożytność. Historia dla klasy I gimnazjum* (From the sources of contemporaneity. Ancient history for first-year gimnazjum) (WSiP 1999).

Zofia Kozłowska - secretary of the Polish Historical Association; history educator; editor of *Wiadomości Historyczne* (Historical Knowledge, a journal for history educators); author (with Katarzyna Zielińska) of *Dzieje nowożytne 1492-1815* (WSiP 1994) and *U źródeł współczesności. Czasy nowożytne. Klasa II* (From the sources of contemporaneity. The modern period. Second year) (WSiP 2000) ; and Ministry-approved reviewer of history textbooks (didactics).

Włodzimierz Mędrzecki – historian, the Polish Academy of Sciences; member of history curriculum reform group. Author (with Robert Szuchta) of *U źródeł współczesności. Dzieje nowożytne i najnowsze. Podręcznik 3 (From the sources of contemporaneity. Modern and recent history)*; author (with Ewa Wipszcka, A. Manikowski, and H. Manikowska) of *Historia dla każdego. Tom I - do Rewolucji Francuskiej. Tom II - Do współczesności Podręcznik dla szkół ponadgimnazjalnych. Klasa I i II (History for everyone. Volume I – Up to the French Revolution. Volume II – To the present. Textbook for post-gimnazjum. First and second years.)* (WSiP 2002); and Ministry-approved reviewer of history textbooks (content).

Piotr Unger - historian, employee of the Ministry of Education, author (with Z. Kozłowska, I. Unger, and S. Zając) *Historia i wiedza o społeczeństwie (History and civic education)* (SOP 2002); and Ministry-approved reviewer of history textbooks (didactics).

Ewa Domańska - assistant professor of history at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań.

Jerzy Pilikowski - history teacher in Wieliczka; author of secondary school history textbooks *Historia 1789-1918*, *Historia 1918-1939*, and *Historia 1939-1990*; *Filosofia w Gimnazjum*, a philosophy textbook for grades 6-9; *Pamiętać i rozumieć. Podręcznik do historii dla klasy pierwszej gimnazjum (Remember and understand. Textbook for first year gimnazjum)*.

Robert Szuchta - teacher of history at the Stanisław Ignacz Witkiewicz Liceum #64 in Warsaw, member of the Didactic Commission of the Polish Historical Association, author of *Holocaust. Program nauczania o historii i zagładzie Żydów (The Holocaust. A teaching program about the history and extermination of the Jews)* and (with Włodzimierz Mędrzecki) *U źródeł współczesności. Dzieje nowożytne i najnowsze. Podręcznik 3 (From the sources of contemporaneity. Modern and recent history)*, WSiP ; and Ministry-approved reviewer of history textbooks (didactics).

Henryk Palkij - member of the history division of the Okręgowa Komisja Egzaminacyjna w Krakowie (the Regional Examination Commission in Krakow), professor of history at Jagiellonian University in Krakow, member of the history curriculum reform group.

Andrzej Pankowicz - author of *Historia 3. Polska i Świat 1815-1939 (History 3. Poland and the World 1815-1939)*. WSiP 1996; *Historia, Polska i świat współczesny. Podręcznik dla szkół średnich dla klasy IV liceum ogólnokształcącego oraz dla klasz III technikum i liceum zawodowego (History. Poland and the modern world. Textbook for fourth-year secondary school and third-year technical and vocational school students)* . WSiP 1996.

Antoni and Anna Mączak – historians, Ministry-approved reviewers of history textbooks (content and didactics, respectively).

Barbara Szacka – sociologist and historian, Warsaw University; author (with Anna Sawisz) of *Czas przeszły i pamięć społeczna (The Past and Social Memory)* (Warsaw University Institute of Sociology 1990).

Grzegorz Myśliwski – historian, Warsaw University; Ministry-approved reviewer of history textbooks (content).

Lesław Morawiecki – professor of ancient history, Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna w Rzeszowie (Higher Pedagogical School in Rzeszów); Ministry-approved reviewer of history textbooks (content).

Adam Suchoński – professor of history, Institute of History, the University of Opole; Ministry-approved reviewer of history textbooks (didactics).

Janina Mazur – professor of history, Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna w Krakowie (Higher Pedagogical School in Kraków); Ministry-approved reviewer of history textbooks (didactics).

Elżbieta Kowalczyk – historian and professor, Institute of Archeology, Warsaw University;
Ministry-approved reviewer of history textbooks (content).

Maria Kruczkowska – reporter, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Poland’s largest-circulation daily newspaper.

Ms. Kruczkowska writes on many issues, including education, and is the author (with Anna Bikont) of the article “Nadal reprezentuję opcję Polską (I continue to represent the Polish option)” about the history textbooks of Andrzej Leszek Szczęśniak.

Czesław Majorek – professor of the history of education, Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna w Krakowie (Higher Pedagogical School in Kraków).

Andrzej Syta – editor-in-chief, Muza Szkolna Publishers, Warsaw; formerly of WSiP Publishers, Warsaw; member, editorial board of *Wiadomości Historyczne*; author (with Lech Chmiel) of *Historia. Podręcznik. Klasa II gimnazjum* (*History. A textbook for second-year gimnazjum*). Muza Szkolna, 2001; author (with Ewa Marciniak and Maria Gensler) of *Historia i społeczeństwo. Podręcznik dla klasy 4* (*History and society. Textbook for fourth grade*) and (with Ewa Marciniak, Maria Gensler, and Bohdan Gołębiowski) *Historia i społeczeństwo. Podręcznik dla klasy 5* (*History and society. Textbook for fifth grade*). WSiP 1999.

Maria Klawe-Mazurowa – history educator and Ministry-approved reviewer of history textbooks (didactics).