

# The second parent: Ideologies of childhood in Russian pedagogy manuals

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**Abstract:** The collapse of the Soviet Union saw deep reforms in the educational system and, with the new market economy, in the presuppositions about training and employment that underpinned it. But this article argues that contemporary Russian teacher training materials nonetheless reproduce Soviet understandings about childhood, education, and the state. Comparing discourses about teaching in Russian, Soviet, and American resources for prospective teachers reveals that differences between Russian and American teaching practices stem not from economic differences, but different conceptions of the social purpose of education. Discourse analysis identified patterns in representations of children and teachers in widely-used Russian teacher training textbooks, mainstream American teacher training textbooks, and Soviet pedagogical writings. This analysis revealed that contemporary Russian textbooks, in contrast to their Soviet counterparts, represent the function of education as helping prepare a child to enter society qua capitalist workforce. But the materials differ from American textbooks in their depictions of the responsibilities of teachers, the role of the state, and the rights of children in primary schools. In these respects, Russian textbooks sound much like Soviet ones.

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## Introduction

A Russian saying goes, “The teacher is the second parent” (“*uchitel’* – *vtoroi roditel’*”). This view blurs the lines between government onus and family sovereignty, and echoes Soviet calls for the state to play a central role in moulding emergent citizens. The collapse of the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) saw deep reforms in the educational system and, with the new market economy, in the presuppositions about training and employment that underpinned that system. But this article argues that contemporary Russian teacher training materials nonetheless reproduce Soviet understandings about childhood, education, and the state. While American teacher-training manuals discuss curriculum planning and how to conduct lessons, Russian manuals, like their Soviet predecessors, characterize these tasks as only half of a teacher’s responsibility. Teachers must also guide *upbringing*—a word the Oxford English dictionary defines as, “The treatment and instruction received by a child *from its parents* throughout its childhood.” In Russia, upbringing remains a sphere where experts, licensed by the state, manage a child’s overall conduct, moral orientations, and worldview.

I used discourse analysis to identify patterns in representations of children and teachers in three popular Russian teacher training textbooks, mainstream American teacher training materials, and Soviet pedagogical writings. Contrasting Russian with American textbooks helps throw what is unique about the Russian approach into sharper relief; comparing Russian and Soviet textbooks reveals taken-for-granted assumptions that have remained constant. This analysis revealed that contemporary Russian textbooks, in contrast to their Soviet counterparts, represent the function of education as helping prepare a child to enter society qua capitalist workforce. But the materials differ from American textbooks in their depictions of the responsibilities of teachers, the role of the state, and the rights of children in primary schools. In these respects, Russian teacher training textbooks sound much like Soviet ones.

These findings indicate that the end of the Soviet regime did not signal the end of Soviet-era

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influence, at least not in all spheres. They also illustrate how perduring cultural commitments can remain, even in the face of changing economic incentive structures. As Alexei Yurchak observed, Soviet citizens did not experience life in the binary categories Western analysts often foist upon them—pro-state vs. anti-state, repression vs. freedom, propaganda vs. truth (Yurchak, 2005, p. 5). Instead, people found meaning in practices that held value for them and found ways to skirt or subvert activities they would not have chosen. So, they may have listened half-heartedly at Komsomol<sup>2</sup> meetings while still believing in Soviet ideas about right and wrong, proper and improper, civilized and savage (Yurchak, 2005, p. 24). Ending aspects of a political and economic system people did not like, then, did not mean individuals had to change their overall value systems (cf. Garey, 2020). In a world where Russian pedagogical theorists can choose not to hew to Soviet understandings about the function of education, they instead reinforce them. These ideas, then, must still hold importance, at least for textbook authors.

Russian education comes from a different place, historically, than that in much of the U.S. The Soviet state wanted literate, creative, educated builders of socialism. Whatever Soviet pedagogy was, it was not capitalist. Whatever Russian public education is, now, approaches training young minds with different objectives than American systems. Investigating these differences offers insight not only into representations in teacher training textbooks, but into the way state-run institutions reproduce discourses about morality—the rights and wrongs of educating children.

### Scope and Context

I discuss key ideological differences about childhood and education imparted to teachers training to become public school educators in Russia and the United States. I chose these two countries because I have worked as an educator of school-age children in both places. Thus, I could draw on contextual knowledge beyond the texts themselves in thinking about how pedagogy might be practiced in classrooms. I do not present any observational data here, but having this professional experience provided a check on left-field conclusions about the two educational systems.

I also chose Russia and the United States because pedagogical mismatches struck me as fiercely as January wind gusts when I was working in Moscow, for many of the same reasons that developmental psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner observed in the 1960s (Bronfenbrenner, 1970). Bronfenbrenner wanted to investigate how the two most powerful countries in the Cold War world trained subsequent generations, and discovered key differences in educational approach. I sensed alterity first, as an instructor working in Russia, and began this project to pinpoint where ideas diverged and why. My analysis shows that contemporary Russian and American textbooks present perpendicular, if not exactly opposed, presuppositions about the relationships between children, teachers, parents, and the state in these two countries. There is no guarantee, of course, that teachers in either the U.S. or Russia believe what they're told or incorporate state-mandated perspectives into their practice. However, standard curricula help set the bounds for a teacher's normative understanding of duty. These findings matter not only for those seeking to understand the contemporary Russian educational landscape, but also those interested in the political economy of ideological commitments; in this case, long-held beliefs about state responsibility for child development.

This approach draws on the observations of Silova et al., who argue that researchers on education in post-socialist countries often cast socialist educational methodology as part of a more primitive stage that will someday lead, as all things must, to Western-style neoliberal models. Silova et al. instead advocate viewing pedagogy in former socialist countries as tensions between value systems that became prominent, often through state intervention, at various points in time (Silova et al., 2017). Though Russia did undertake educational reforms designed to turn a Soviet cash sink into a market in the 1990s, attempts to “bring schools in line with European and American practices” saw little success (Eklof, 2005, p. 1). Elena Minina, further, has demonstrated that a historically-conditioned clash of values accompanied reform pressures on education. For many Russians, moving education from a public good to a for-profit commodity profaned

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<sup>2</sup> All-Union Leninist Young Communist League

the educational process (Minina, 2013, 2018). As Minina quoted one pedagogical theorist as saying on the talk radio program *Moscow's Echo* (*Ekho Moskvy*) in 2005, "...if education is to be a service market, as has been imposed on us recently, then [the model] is that of a grocery store...cash for product" (Minina, 2018, p. 442). Many Russian teachers and parents, instead, view moral upbringing, or *vospitanie* as the foundation of education in Russia. As a call-in parent on the same radio program put it, "...one cannot compare education with an assortment of sausage...we are talking about the human soul here, how can one not understand this?" (Minina, 2018, p. 442). In a cultural imagining that remains largely hegemonic in Russian society, money and the soul can't mix (cf. Pesmen, 2000)<sup>3</sup>.

While Minina (2018) and Alexander (2001) identify *vospitanie* (moral upbringing) as specifically Russian, a contrast between upbringing (*vzgoja*) and mere education (*izobraževanje*) also underpinned pedagogical theory in Slovenia from 1945 to 1990, when Slovenia was part of socialist Yugoslavia (Lesar and Ermenc, 2017). Lesar and Ermenc locate the shift from a politics-free, radically child-centered Slovenian theory of education to one that stressed the ability of a society to shape a child's moral and political outlook in Marxist thought and sociological research (Lesar and Ermenc, 2017). For as Marx said, "Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past" (Marx, 1978). Socialists wanted to dictate the circumstances that would create proletariat subjectivities-qua-subjects of the future (Etkind, 2005; Fitzpatrick, 1999; Lunacharsky, 1928).

Though socialist countries cannot all be lumped together like tokens of a type, Soviet pedagogy, also influenced by Marxist theories of socialization, began to pay systematic attention to methods of moral upbringing after the 1917 revolution (Dzhurinskii, 2011, Lunacharsky, 1928). Schools, in concert with Soviet youth organizations like the Oktobrists, Pioneers, and Komsomol, were meant to create an environment of *vospitanie* where the Soviet child would learn how to be a Soviet person (Gilev, 1973; Koldunov, 1969).

In his seminal research about the differences between education in the United States and the USSR during the Cold War, Urie Bronfenbrenner identified *vospitanie* as the most important difference between American and Soviet schools. In addition to teaching "subject matter," Soviet educators explicitly sought to provide "upbringing" or "character education" (*vospitanie*) (Bronfenbrenner, 1970, p. 26). "*Vospitanie* has as its stated aim the development of 'Communist morality,'" Bronfenbrenner wrote. When the need to train the New Soviet Man disappeared in the collapse of the Soviet Union, *vospitanie* lost some of the prominence it had previously held in Russian curricular models (Alexander, 2001, p. 77). But the concept still organizes pedagogical thinking in Russia. In an observational study of Russian schools in the the 1990s, for instance, Alexander found that teachers still thought of *vospitanie* as foundational to educational practice. He identified the following common educational goals across interviews with teachers and school directors: "education as the development as the person and the citizen; the school as a self-governing community in which both teachers and pupils have responsibilities as well as rights; the fundamentally moral purpose of both education in the classroom and the school beyond it" (Alexander, 2001, p. 217).

The Russian concept of *vospitanie* bears surface resemblance to the German educational idea of *Bildung*, translated into English as "education" or "formation." Like *vospitanie*, education as *Bildung* seeks to prepare students for life in society instead of merely imparting information. But *vospitanie* is development of the social self; *Bildung* is development according to a personal inner core (Horlacher, 2016, p. 3; Hotam, 2019) or, as Horlacher phrased it, "inward ennoblement of the soul" (2016, p. 5). The goal of *Bildung* is for individuals to understand commonly-accepted values, but then to transcend moral prescriptions laid down by others through self-knowledge (Anderson, 2021, p. 40; Hotam, 2019, p. 619). *Vospitanie* is socialization to adopt certain moral orientations; *Bildung* represents a questioning.

Leo Tolstoy, who pioneered his own schools in the mid-19th century, outlined a similar, though more negatively-valenced, understanding of *vospitanie*. He described *vospitanie* as a violent process to bend

<sup>3</sup> Russian people tend not to directly hand each other money. Instead, even in stores, shoppers place their money on a tray in front of the teller, who then picks it up, makes change, and returns money to the tray. Forgetting this habit momentarily, I once went to hand my landlady rent money. "No, no," she corrected me. "Put it on the table. Like we do" ("*Kak u nas*"). She would no sooner accept a wad of bills I'd handed her than a clod of dirt.

an individual to the moral codes of another and education (*obrazovanie*) as a free exchange of ideas. "Education," he wrote, "is a free relationship of people [who gather] to acquire information, while [*vospitanie*] is communicating what has already been acquired (Tolstoy, 1936, pp. 215-216).

Soviet pedagogical theorists latched on to *vospitanie's* shades of Marxist determinism: change the conditions, transform the person (Boldyrev et. al, 1968, p. 6, p. 24; Koldunov, 1969). As long as schools (and youth organizations, and clubs, and parents) created the correct upbringing environments, young people would develop appropriate moral dispositions. "Soviet pedagogy," wrote Boldyrev et al., "is the direct extension and development of Marxist-Leninist teachings about the communist upbringing (*vospitanie*) of the person" (Boldyrev et al., 1968, p. 18).

Russian pedagogy, to be sure, no longer aims to train young socialist selves (Alexander, 2001; Halstead, 1994). Contemporary legislation instead seeks to instill qualities that will make students successful in contemporary Russian society. But the Russian government's emphasis on moral training, not just teaching subject matter, remains significant. Current Russian educational standards list *vospitanie* and the development of students' social selves (*lichnost'*)<sup>4</sup> as explicit aims of the national curriculum (Ministry of Education 2020 [2009]).<sup>5</sup> And just like their Soviet counterparts, Russian textbooks distinguish between upbringing (*vospitanie*), education (*obrazovanie*), and instruction (*obuchenie*), with upbringing cast as the most important piece of the educational process (Boldyrev, 1968; Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006; Il'ina, 1968; Kraevskii, 2003; Krivshenko et al., 2010). The American textbooks analyzed here don't mention upbringing at all.

*Vospitanie's* content has changed in post-Soviet Russia, but its form has not. Russian pedagogy shows continuity with Soviet pedagogy because in both cases the state, not parents, bear responsibility for upbringing. A few fundamental oppositions between U.S. and contemporary Russian approaches have emerged so far: neoliberalism vs. the soul, commodity vs. nurturing, control vs. development. These representations come from researchers working with a variety of kinds of data, from mass media to government documents to classroom observations. But Russian and American textbooks, the core statements defining what teaching is and what teachers do for pre-service students, do not reproduce these dichotomies. Instead, tracing representations across these texts reveals different points of tension and contrast, ones framed not polemically but in taken-for-granted understandings about children and the state.

## Data and Methods

I tracked representations of teachers and teaching across three types of texts: (1) post-Soviet Russian pedagogical textbooks; (2) training materials in the contemporary United States (textbooks and the Praxis K-6 licensing exam); and (3) Soviet pedagogy textbooks. What follows is discourse analysis of depictions of obligation, authority, and rights in three educational contexts (Russian, American, and Soviet). Here, I take discourse analysis to be the systematic analysis of patterns that emerge across texts, time, and social contexts (Paltridge, 2008, p. 1). I used coding, or assigning categories to various chunks of discourse, as part of this interpretive process.<sup>6</sup> First I excerpted out passages in the textbooks that discussed childhood, the function of education, teachers, and parents, then overlaid secondary codes about morality, responsibility, and rights of various stakeholders onto these passages. The codes, rather than bounding pieces of text objectively, served as tools to help me analyze representations; that is, the labels I applied to the data allowed me to spot areas of overlap, variation, and contradiction. Coding can be done in a Word document, or index cards, or any number of software programs. I used the qualitative analysis software

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<sup>4</sup> *Lichnost'* is best translated as "personhood" or "social self" (cf. Bird, 2009). Personhood, as opposed to "personality," refers to a culturally-conditioned self (cf. Rosaldo 1980). Alexander (2001) rendered *lichnost'* as "personality culture."

<sup>5</sup> Russia's Federal Government Education Standards for General Primary Education, Order of the Ministry of Education No. 373 (2020 [2009]), describe the fundamental goal of the educational standards to be "... [The] upbringing and development of qualities of the social person (*lichnost'*) that meet the requirements of the information society, innovative economy, the the tasks of building a democratic civil society based on tolerance, dialogue of cultures and respect for the multinational, multicultural and multi-confessional composition of Russian society."

<sup>6</sup> Qualitative methods theorist Johnny Saldana defines codes as "a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data," further noting that codes operate as "invitations and openings" rather than definitive categorizations (Saldana, 2021, pp. 5-6).

Atlas.ti to organize my data.

The first editions of the Russian textbooks analyzed here were all published after 2000, and the first editions of the American textbooks were published in the 1990s. I tried to approximate the influence of given textbooks by choosing those that had gone through a number of reprints. The American textbooks are in their 8th and 11th editions, respectively, with first editions published in 1998 and 1992. Of the Russian textbooks, Kraevskii went through four editions between 2003 and 2008 (and is still in print); Bordovskaia and Rean went through at least four reprints between 2000 and 2015; and Krivshenko et al. has gone through two editions and eleven re-printings between 2004 and 2017. All of the Russian textbooks, then, circulated with minor changes for between (at least) five and fifteen years in the post-Soviet era. Though not an exact one-to-one match for publication dates, the Russian and American textbooks chosen have been circulating concurrently for the past ten years.

Since Soviet policies fluctuated depending on the leader in power, all the Soviet materials selected come from the Brezhnev era (1964-1982). This period also represents the time when the teachers of current teachers would have received their professional training (those who were university students under Brezhnev are nearing retirement age now). Many of those writing textbooks now could have also written textbooks or other pedagogical materials as Soviet educators.

The corpus for analysis, then, consisted of the following texts:

#### Russian textbooks

- V. Kraevskii. (2003). *Obshchie osnovy pedagogiki. Uchebnik dlia studentov vysshikh pedagogicheskikh uchebnykh zavedenii*. [General foundations of pedagogy. A textbook for students of pedagogical higher education institutes.] Akademika.
- N. Bordovskaia and A. Rean. (2006). *Pedagogika: Uchebnoe posobie* [Pedagogy: A textbook]. Piter.
- L. Krivshenko et al. (2010). *Pedagogika: uchebnik dlia studentov vysshikh uchebnykh zavedenii, obuchaiushchikhsia po pedagogicheskim spetsial'nostiam*. [Pedagogy: a textbook for students of higher education institutions studying in pedagogical specialties.] Prospekt.

#### American textbooks and materials

- S. Wynne. (2010). *Praxis principles of learning and teaching (K-6) 0522*. XAMonline Inc.
- P. Burden and D. Byrd. (2019). *Methods for effective teaching: meeting the needs of all students*. 8th Edition. Pearson.
- F. Parkay. (2020). *Becoming a teacher*. 11th edition. Pearson.
- Educational Testing Service. (2022). "Principles of Learning and Teaching: Grades K-6 Study Companion." <https://www.ets.org/s/praxis/pdf/5622.pdf>

#### Soviet textbooks

- N. Boldyrev et al. (1968). *Pedagogika: Uchebnoe posobie dlia studentov pedagogicheskikh institutov* [Pedagogy: a textbook for students of pedagogical institutes]. Prosveshchenie.
- L. Dodon. (1968). *Zadaniia po pedagogike. Posobie dlia uchashchikhsia pedagogicheskikh uchilishch i studentov pedagogicheskikh fakul'tetov* {Pedagogical exercises: a textbook for students in pedagogical schools and departments}. Prosveshchenie.
- T. Il'ina. (1968). *Pedagogika. Uchebnoe posobie dlia studentov pedagogicheskikh institutov*. [Pedagogy: a textbook for students of pedagogical institutes.] Prosveshchenie.

## Teacher Responsibilities

So give [the teacher] great resources, confess that with his hands you are growing that healthy branch for which we are fighting, for which we exist, without which it would not be worth living and fighting. This is the most important thing in our struggle. We do not yet have this consciousness. We must have this consciousness. Only then will it be possible to develop the new [Soviet] person. Anatoly Lunacharsky, "Upbringing of the new person," 1928

Contemporary Russian pedagogy textbooks describe two goals of education: instruction (*obuchenie*)

and upbringing (*vospitanie*). Sections on instruction address the content, methodology, and organization of courses (Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006; Kraevskii, 2003; Krivshenko et al., 2010). Near the end of their textbook, Krivshenko et al. define “teaching” as “a purposeful activity of a teacher to shape students’ desire to learn, to organize their perception, to [help them] comprehend the facts and phenomena presented, to give students the ability to use the knowledge they acquired, and to [help] students use that knowledge independently” (Krivshenko et al., 2010, p. 166). On the face of it, this description aligns with the responsibilities American educational theorists describe for teachers: “planning, implementing, and assessing” curriculum mastery (Burden and Byrd, 2019, p. 2). That is, both Russian and American understandings of teaching assume that a teacher should teach students skills and information. But “teaching” (*prepodavanie*), or instructional delivery, makes up only half of a teacher’s responsibilities in Russian manuals—and a lesser half at that. Rather than steering students to meet learning objectives, the Russian teacher must manage *vospitanie* (upbringing); they must train students’ social selves. Kraevskii defines *vospitanie* as, “...activities associated with the formation of value orientations of schoolchildren—their emotions, the world of feelings inherent in humans, attitudes towards life, people, nature, and the world as a whole” (2003, p. 20).

*Vospitanie*, as a concept, organizes the constituent categories of instruction (*obuchenie*) and schooling (*obrazovanie*) in Russian textbooks (Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006, p. 25; Kraevskii, 2003, p. 19; Krivshenko et al., 2010, p. 183). If teaching guides students to obtain and use information, *vospitanie* focuses on the overall socialization of the child. The teacher-instructor (*prepodavatel'*) tracks students’ cognitive development and helps them gain knowledge and skills (Krivshenko et al., 2010, p. 166). But as an upbringing (*vospitatel'*), the teacher must

- (1) transfer knowledge accumulated by [generations] of mankind
  - (2) introduce students to the world of culture
  - (3) encourage self-development
  - (4) help students understand difficult life situations and find a way out of those circumstances
- (Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006, p. 25)

The student, in turn, “(1) masters interpersonal relationships and the fundamentals of culture; (2) works on themselves; (3) learns ways of communicating and manners of behavior” (Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006, p. 25).<sup>7</sup>

The importance of culturedness, development, and “working on the self” show clear continuity with Soviet ideas of becoming a cultured person, or *kulturnost'*. Becoming cultured meant actively learning, developing the mind, and re-fashioning the self into a politically aware, bureaucratically capable Soviet political subject. As described by Sovietologists Vera Dunham and Sheila Fitzpatrick, *kulturnost'* began as a Stalinist emphasis on manners, to include basic hygiene and not spitting in public (Dunham, 1990; Fitzpatrick, 1999). Eventually, though, *kulturnost'* came to denote the educated individual, not just the “civilized” one (Fitzpatrick 1999, 82). Schools, then, played and play a vital role not only in *exposing* students to the “world of culture,” perhaps imparting information about art and literature (instruction), but in *socializing* students into a milieu that values continual personal development (*vospitanie*).

Vadim Volkov included the following competencies in his definition of *kulturnost'*:

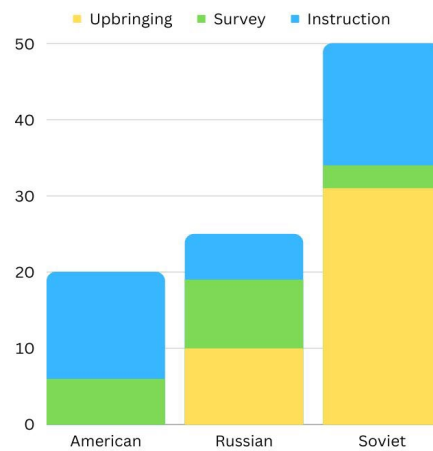
To become a cultured person one must read classical literature, contemporary Soviet fiction, poetry, newspapers, works by Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin, as well as attend the cinema and exhibitions with the purpose of self-education. A cultured person must have a broad cultural horizon (broad within the frame set up at a given historical moment) and a cultured inner world (Volkov, 2000, p. 225).

Periodicals even featured “Are you a cultured person?” quizzes (Volkov, 2000, p. 224). If questions on a quiz stumped a reader, the magazine *Ogonek* offered this advice: “Remember, if you are not able to answer any one of the ten suggested questions, you, apparently, know very little about a whole sphere of science or arts. Let this compel you to WORK ON YOURSELF (*porabotat' nad soboi*)” (caps in original; cited

<sup>7</sup> In his 1990s observational study, Russian teachers described being “cultured” (*kul'turniy*) as an educational goal (Alexander, 2001, p. 217).

in Volkov, 2000, p. 224). *Vospitanie*, unlike instruction, has this sense of training the entire person for life in society—not the student for academic achievement.

Like contemporary Russian texts, the Soviet teacher training textbooks analyzed here draw clear distinctions between upbringing (*vospitanie*) and instruction (*obuchenie*), with discussions of *vospitanie* making up half or more of chapters. Comparing the tables of contents of Russian, Soviet, and U.S. teacher training textbooks is one way of illustrating how Soviet/Russian and American systems treat instruction and upbringing differently. To compile Figure 1 below, I tallied the number of chapters devoted to instruction, surveys of educational theory, and upbringing in two Soviet, two Russian, and two American textbooks (Boldyrev, 1968; Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006; Burden and Byrd, 2019; Il'ina, 1968; Parkay, 2020; Krivshenko et. al, 2010). Books from all three countries describe instructional techniques and the history of pedagogical theories. But only Russian and Soviet textbooks include chapters about upbringing or moral training at all, and they devote more chapters to these, proportionally, than to instruction.



**Figure 1.** Comparison of tables of contents in Russian, Soviet, and American teacher training textbooks

What Soviet and Russian textbooks considered upbringing to consist of emerged as remarkably similar, as well. Krivshenko et al. listed the following five aspects of upbringing under the Russian teacher's purview: moral upbringing and worldview; civic upbringing; labor upbringing and professional competency; aesthetic upbringing; and fitness upbringing (Krivshenko et al., 2010, pp. 78-88). Il'ina's Soviet manual named four of these five categories exactly. Krivshenko deviated from the Soviet model in re-labeling "upbringing in Soviet patriotism and the international proletariat" as "civic upbringing," however. The Soviet manual also included "intellectual upbringing" and "scientific-atheist upbringing," both left out of Krivshenko's description (Il'ina, 1968, pp. 570-571).

Despite these rhetorical similarities, the Soviet and Russian texts orient towards different ultimate outcomes for upbringing. Il'ina, for instance, defines the goal of communist upbringing as "the preparation of fully developed citizens capable of building and protecting communist society" (1968, p. 54). The state wanted to create *Homo sovieticus*, the New Soviet Man (Etkind, 2005; Fitzpatrick, 1999). To do this, they needed to train not only laborers—as, in Il'ina's characterization, capitalist societies did—but a well-rounded and comprehensively-educated working class (1968, p. 47). Russian textbooks kept the Soviet emphasis on teaching the entire person instead of just relaying skills, but portray self-realization as the ultimate goal of *vospitanie*, not building socialism. In this model, students need *vospitanie* so that they can function as accepted and effective members of society (Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006, pp. 33, 171; Kraevskii, 2003, p. 47).

The Russian curriculum for *vospitanie* has now expanded beyond its borders. Residents in occupied Melitopol, Ukraine, for instance, were told they could be "stripped of parental rights" if they do not send their children to Russian-run schools (Devlin and Korenyuk, 2022). Contemporary Russian "civic

upbringing," then, has increasing relevance for both Russians and Ukrainians living in Russian-occupied territories. "The upbringing [*vospitanie*] of patriotism," write Krivshenko et al., "is a traditional task for Russian pedagogy and schools...content about patriotism in school includes study of history, the culture of their country, and activities to preserve the culture of their people" (Krivshenko et al., 2010, p. 82). Ukrainians would be taught Russian versions of history, Russian culture, and love for the Russian motherland. One young Ukrainian boy said before the start of the school year in 2022, "I'm more scared of the fact I'll have a new [Russian] teacher than of the war" (Waterhouse, 2022). Instead of moral education to build the Soviet state, *vospitanie* may well play a role in constructing the Soviet nation.

One of the American textbooks analyzed here does briefly discuss teachers' responsibilities to teach moral principles. Parkay writes that, "Although promoting students' academic progress has always been their primary responsibility, teachers are also expected to further students' social, emotional, and moral development and to safeguard students' safety, health, and well-being" (2020, p. 16). Parkay does not elaborate on these kinds of development beyond that sentence, but, in a later discussion of the "character development" movement in American education, cites teaching children empathy and the ability to control impulses as the keys to preventing violence, not least gun violence, in schools and in the wider society (2020, p. 299). This seems like moral upbringing of a very different kind than the Russian examples; it's geared not towards the development of the self, but towards preventing the most extreme forms of aggression towards others.

The more salient facet of moral training in American materials, and one not prominent in Russian textbooks, is social justice. According to the authors, teachers have a responsibility not only to adopt principles of social justice in their teaching practices, by, for instance, creating safe and equitable learning environments, but they have a duty to teach students tolerance for various categories of social diversity (Burden and Byrd, 2019, pp. 25-33; Parkay, 2020, pp. 17, 76). U.S. author Parkay even quoted a statement by the Southern Poverty Law Center that said, "If you aren't teaching social justice and tolerance, you aren't really teaching at all" (2020, p. 76). All three of the Russian textbooks mentioned tolerance, as well, but generally in the context of interpersonal differences rather than diversity of ethnic, national, religious, or sexual identity (Kraevskii, 2003, p. 36; Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006, p. 180). Krivshenko et al., for instance, address nonviolence in general terms:

The culture of peace should be understood as a global school in which everyone learns to live together in peace and harmony, to root in people's minds the idea of protecting peace, not to use violence, to assert justice and democracy. The upbringing of such qualities as tolerance, non-violence, conflict-free communication skills, the ability to listen and hear, to argue with an opponent without turning him into an enemy, should be brought up from early childhood (2010, p. 143). This position, unlike social justice approaches, glosses over historic, systematic, and structural disadvantages. The Russian and American texts come to the same conclusion: teach tolerance. But the U.S. textbooks also acknowledge societal conditions that undergird discrimination.

In addition to American textbooks, I examined the contents of a standardized teaching certification exam, the Praxis Principles of Learning and Teaching: Grades K-6<sup>8</sup> exam (PLAT K-6), which eighteen out of fifty states (plus the District of Columbia) require prospective teachers to pass. States outside of these eighteen either require subject-specific Praxis exams (e.g., language teaching, mathematics), their own, state-developed standardized tests, or choose to count only coursework and teaching practica towards certification. Together, the teachers required to take the PLAT K-6 teach over nine million American schoolchildren per year, or 18% of the public elementary school population (U.S. Department of Education, 2022). Since this exam assesses core pedagogical competencies, it offers a good representation of what, according to the U.S. government, teachers need to know and do.

Like the other American materials analyzed here, the PLAT K-6 only deals with knowledge about instruction and professionalism, not what Russian theorists would call upbringing or moral training. The

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<sup>8</sup> Kindergarten through the 6th grade, or students from around five to twelve years old



first section, “Students as learners,” tests overall knowledge of human development and educational theory, from Freud to John Dewey. The next two sections cover lesson and curriculum planning, classroom interactions, and assessment. The last section asks about professional development opportunities, school and community resources (speech therapists, social workers), and laws relevant to teachers (confidentiality, liability, child abuse reporting) (Educational Testing Service, 2022; Mometrix, 2021; Wynne, 2010). The exam, thus, assesses whether someone can effectively teach students content. This summative pedagogy exam focuses entirely on what Russian teacher training textbooks cast as the least important responsibility of a teacher. Rather than bringing up the child—morally, civically, professionally, aesthetically, and physically—an American teacher’s only responsibility is to help students achieve content objectives. This likely suits American parents well, as most would be loath to cede their child’s moral upbringing to the state.

### Role of the State

“A human stream flows, muddy and dirty, a fetid stream, but powerful at the same time. It flows in generations, and new generations perceive the experience of the old, they stand on the shoulders of the old, perceive everything valuable acquired by many thousands of generations, but at the same time they perceive prejudices, and diseases, and vices - all the dirt, all the filth and stench. Somewhere you need to put a filter, somewhere you need to put a net that would allow everything of value to pass through, all the mighty flow with all its skills and acquisitions, but would not let through turbidity, dirt and stench. This filter can only be a school.” Anatoly Lunacharsky, “Upbringing of the new person,” 1928

It’s often said that Russian has no word for “privacy.” It’s true. You can speak of “confidentiality” or “secretiveness,” or “isolation,” but these words imply either withholding information or acting antisocial, not simply freely minding your own business. In the same way, when upbringing becomes a social concern rather than a family one, parents do not get to cordon off home life as a sphere of private activity. One Russian textbook maintained, “The function of education, and in everyday life this is closer to upbringing, lies in every person, regardless of education or profession. Upbringing is a mission for parents and for everyone who has relations with the younger generation” (Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006, p. 17). If for American feminists “the personal is political,” these pedagogical theorists claim that “the personal is public.” As Gal and Kligman argued, the division between public and private, and negotiations over its boundaries, carries enormous social power. The public/private binary can “recurse” to larger or smaller scales of discourse—from the institutional to the interpersonal—as people assign obligations to themselves and others (Gal and Kligman, 2000, pp. 40-41)

Hewing to the notion of *vospitanie* changes understandings of the relationships between schools, parents, and the state—between personal and collective responsibility. One of the Russian textbooks analyzed here (Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006) and one of the American textbooks (Burden and Byrd, 2019) feature “what would you do?” sections that present pedagogical situations and ask readers to reflect on possible responses. The selection of problems in these texts, and their implied solutions, point to different degrees of state involvement in students’ lives outside of the classroom. Bordovskaia and Rean introduce their section on what teachers do (“Teaching in Practice”) with the following scenarios:

(A)

A child is rude and does not study well. How will the teacher change the student’s attitude towards learning and make sure that the child is not rude to the teacher, parents, and comrades (*tovarishcham*)? (Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006, p. 15)

(B)

A child has fallen under the influence of a bad crowd. Who will help them get away from this influence, and how? (Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006, p. 15)

(C)

The school learned that a group of young men and women often gathers at Tatiana R.’s apartment overnight: they drink, play cards, smoke, and stay over. Tatiana’s parents are on a long business trip, and her grandmother is sick and cannot come check on her granddaughter. What can teachers do in this situation? (Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006, p.16)

Bordovskaia and Rean present all of these situations as pedagogical problems that the teacher must solve (“What kinds of problems and tasks are called pedagogical?”) (2006, p. 15). They are pedagogical precisely because they involve upbringing, even if not instruction directly. The authors do not tell us what they see as possible solutions. But even framing these problems as the teacher’s responsibility crosses a line between state and family prerogative that is differently drawn in the United States. In the U.S. a teacher only seeks to regulate in-class behavior. So, an American teacher might address rudeness directed towards other students by deploying focused methods of behavior modification and error-correction, but they would not try to change the child *themselves*, such that they would also not be bratty to their parents. *Vospitanie* means bringing up the person (*lichnost’*), in all aspects of their social selves. The state, then, in the person of the teacher, gets to intervene when developmental processes go awry (wherever that may occur). In situations like B and C, above, American textbooks recommend getting in touch with the parents and contacting “community resources” like social workers or the police if a child is in danger. Ultimately, the American teacher has a duty to help students meet curricular objectives and a duty to report neglect and abuse. But they aren’t tasked with raising, transforming, or morally bringing up young people.

One of the reasons Russian teachers have authority to act as “second parents” is because, unlike parents, they’ve been trained in upbringing. “Of course, parents carry out upbringing, solve problems of upbringing,” write Krivshchenko et al., “but not as professionals (alas, even if they are teachers by profession)” (Krivshenko et al., 2010, 63). But a teacher’s dispassionate professional gaze can attenuate a non-optimal family pedagogical environment. In a section called “Interrelation between families and schools in the upbringing process,” Krivshenko et al. talk about the need for schools and parents to work together in educating children. Then, though, after pointing out that pedagogical attention can focus on the family as well as students, they write, “Assistance in learning is aimed at preventing problems that arise in the family and due to the formation of the parents’ pedagogical culture” (Krivshenko et al., 2010, 156). The parents’ “pedagogical culture,” or upbringing environment, might not serve the student’s best interests. Parents may, for instance, employ “incorrect” upbringing strategies, like overprotection, undue pressure to perform, or emotional coldness (as well as neglect and abuse) (Krivshenko et al., 2010, pp. 153-154). By law American parents can do anything they would like in the child’s pedagogical environment as long as a child isn’t verifiably harmed; overprotection does not meet that standard.

I cannot imagine a U.S. teacher stepping in and informing parents that they were raising their kids “incorrectly,” but that is what Krivshchenko et al. propose. They argue for a school-parent partnership, yes, but one in which the teacher knows best. They continue, “In the process of mutual communication, not only should teachers draw parents’ attention to shortcomings in the methods and content of family upbringing, but parents should also point out similar ‘failures’ in the work of the school” (2010, p. 156). This sentence assumes that teachers should correct parents. That parents should advise teachers represents a move towards cooperation, not deference to parents who, after all, are ill-equipped to identify ‘failures.’

A case study called “Challenges with Homework” in an American textbook provides an example that resonates with Russian moves to address issues in the home learning environment, but the authors ultimately locate both the problem and the solution in home life, not with the school.<sup>9</sup> Burden and Byrd describe a situation in which a student, DeShawn, finds himself living in cramped quarters with his brothers, sisters, and cousins, and his homework grades have begun suffering. Ms. Hutton did not initially reach out to DeShawn’s family when his grades dipped, but learned about his changed home situation from a casual conversation with DeShawn’s track coach. Then Ms. Hutton took the initiative, as Russian educational theorists would advocate, to get in touch with DeShawn’s mother and offer advice. However, Ms. Hutton did not call as someone authorized to correct a home pedagogical environment, but as a teacher

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<sup>9</sup> “When talking with DeShawn’s track coach, Ms. Hutton learned that DeShawn’s aunt and cousins recently moved in with his family, which includes his mother and four brothers and sisters. DeShawn now shares a bedroom with two of his cousins, and he has complained about how crowded his home is now. Ms. Hutton called DeShawn’s mother to confirm the home living conditions and to tell her that DeShawn is talented and bright but struggling with his homework reading assignments. DeShawn’s mother was concerned and asked how she could help her son. First, Ms. Hutton recommended that a consistent time each day be set aside for homework. Second, she suggested that DeShawn find a favorite spot in the house where he can comfortably complete his reading without distraction. Third, she recommended that DeShawn’s mother have a brief conversation with DeShawn once a week about the books he is reading. In fact, DeShawn’s mother asked for the reading list and said that she might read some of the books along with DeShawn” (Burden and Byrd, 2019, p. 178).

concerned about a student's grades. In this hypothetical scenario, the teacher also did not give recommendations until the mother asked for them (Burden and Byrd, 2019, p. 178). Both American and Russian textbooks discuss how home situations can affect students at school. But the American pedagogical concern stops with helping children reach curriculum objectives. American teachers—in the idealized discourses about teaching analyzed here—do not try to influence a child's upbringing, especially if the philosophy of the teacher conflicts with that of the parents. American teachers work to create classroom environments that help children develop academically; Russian teachers work to create environments that help children develop social selves.

### Pupil's Rights

"If you take a closer look at this old type of person that dominates the bourgeois world, you will see that he has an incredible narrowness. He is connected with big questions through the newspaper, which he receives daily, reads with indifference and then throws away. And in this short hour in which he reads a newspaper, the man comes into contact with the rest of the world, and then again goes into his shell—into his jacket, as obligatory for him as a house for a snail, and there he lives out his narrow daily interests." Anatoly Lunacharsky, "Upbringing of the new person," 1928

In the educational discourses examined here, Russian textbooks represent teaching as a process of training the entire child and American textbooks focus on helping students meet grade level objectives. The converse of these positions is the assumption that American students have the *right* to reach their academic potential and that Russian students have the *right* to develop their *lichnost'*, or their "social person." To ensure that those things can happen, teachers in both countries must take particular kinds of action that aren't directly tied to teaching course content. But the recommended actions look very different in the Russian and American cases because teachers pursue different ultimate objectives. American teachers are told to alter variables in the classroom environment to make sure students can learn, while textbooks instruct Russian teachers to influence a child's entire pedagogical environment—school life, home life, extracurricular life—to make sure students can develop (properly).

U.S. textbooks therefore discuss how to make opportunities to learn equal. Some children speak English as a foreign language. The ordinary subject teacher, therefore, must learn—and prepare to be assessed on—special methodologies for teaching this population, such as the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) or the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) models of lesson planning, delivery, and observation (Burden and Byrd, 2019, pp. 16-17). Students may also have any number of "special needs:" physical challenges such as paralysis or blindness; intellectual disabilities such as Down syndrome; speech impairments; or unusual talent in reading, analysis, and memory tasks (Burden and Byrd, 2019, pp. 30-33; Parkay, 2020, pp. 309-315). The teacher should integrate these students as fully into courses as possible and refer them to specialists within the school when they reach the limit of their expertise. If students live in poverty, the teacher must adjust classroom activities and assignments to make sure they have the resources to learn effectively (Burden and Byrd, 2019, p. 34). American students also have the right to study without discrimination due to a variety of social categories. Parkay writes that, "Providing an equal educational opportunity to all students means that teachers and schools promote the full development of students as individuals, without regard for race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, abilities, or disabilities" (Parkay, 2020, p. 270). To ensure this, teachers must (1) educate themselves about inequality and (2) constantly monitor their teaching process to make sure their actions don't contribute to discrimination (Burden and Byrd, 2019, p. 27; Parkay, 2020, p. 270). While many of the problems these authors describe are social, even structural, the American teacher faces these challenges by changing their instructional practices, not society or, more importantly, the socialized person of the child.

Instead of equality of opportunity to learn, Russian textbooks talk of equality of opportunity to develop—to be "brought up" as a social person. Children have a right to self-actualization, a right to fulfill their "cultural needs," a right to develop their creative potential, and a right to develop a spiritual world (Bordovskaya and Rean, 2006; Kraevskii, 2006; Krivshenko, 2010). They have, in other words, the right to develop a *lichnost'*, a social self, that will allow them to be successful in life, not just in school or employment

contexts (Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006, p. 171). Kraevskii, for instance, argues that education should mirror social experience in “structural completeness.” Since life requires people to employ creativity and build relationships, writes Kraevskii, classes should include training in these skills as well as “ready-made knowledge” (Kraevskii, 2003, pp. 43-44). This, he argues, “allows a person not only to function successfully in society, to be a good performer, but also to act independently—not only to ‘fit’ into the social system, but also to influence it” (Kraevskii, 2003, p. 44).

This is not to say, of course, that Russian teacher training programs as a whole do not attend to teaching students with special needs or issues of discrimination. But these topics do not factor into the textbooks analyzed here, core statements about what teaching is and what teachers do. Managing accommodations for academic success is a subset of effectively teaching content, after all, which these texts represent as a task secondary to upbringing.

The American pedagogical materials represent students as having rights to measurable kinds of resources with clear success-failure metrics. In practice, students who speak Spanish as a first language often get slotted into classes for those with intellectual disabilities, students face discrimination from teachers and other students, and gifted children get bored. But in the ideal classroom depicted by the textbook authors, every child has a right to fulfill their academic potential, and teachers have a responsibility to adjust their instruction to make sure this happens. Administrators or other observers can assess what students learned, what teachers did, and evaluate the performance of both teachers and learners. The Russian textbooks, in contrast, spend many hundreds of pages describing the importance of upbringing, possible approaches, and example cases, but there is no discussion of upbringing assessment. Activities and rubrics could easily be designed to test students’ growth in social-emotional development over the course of a year. I doubt this will happen. *Vospitanie*, as Minina pointed out, is linked to the soul in the Russian imagination (Minina, 2018, p. 442). *Vospitanie* cannot be bought and sold, like sausages, and teachers and parents may also object to reducing it to a score.

### Conclusions: Reproducing Ideology

The Russian focus on upbringing, like the Soviet one, gives public school teachers authority over more aspects of a child’s development than American textbooks recommend or, in most cases, than parents and local legislation would allow. It is not just that Russians and Americans organize educational experience differently; in these textbooks, education’s purpose is conceived differently. But if the Soviet state championed upbringing (i.e., developing the new Soviet person) so that students could go on to serve the communist project, Russian textbooks advocate upbringing for the good of students themselves—so that they can lead successful lives as competent members of society. Discourses about communism, the proletariat, and the importance of atheism no longer feature in teacher training manuals, either. But the fact that contemporary textbooks repeat so much of the rhetoric associated with *vospitanie*, even down to lifting most of the types of *vospitanie* word-for-word (moral upbringing, aesthetic upbringing, etc.), means that pedagogical institutions emulate Soviet-era discourses about the rights and wrongs of educating children even if they are not advancing Soviet political ideology.

Russian *vospitanie*, like Soviet *vospitanie*, aims to socialize the child into a worldview, not promote academic achievement. While the contents of political *vospitanie* has changed in the post-Soviet era, the responsibility of the teacher to provide moral upbringing remains constant from the Russian to the Soviet contexts.

This may represent an institutional carryover rather than a conscientious ideological or values-based choice, but that fact still matters: institutions’ taken-for-granted emphases socialize people into moral worldviews—or at least present them as normative. People could have decided that teachers no longer have the right to intervene in parenting, just as “comrade’s courts” no longer have the right to reprimand Party members about adultery (cf. Cohn, 2009). The public/private, child/state, parent/expert divisions could have been redrawn, but they were not. State *vospitanie* experts manage *vospitanie*. In instructing prospective teachers how to mould young moral selves, these textbooks, in turn, shape teachers’ outlooks

on children, childhood, and education.

Nearly twenty years ago Caroline Humphrey revised her classic Soviet-era ethnography, *Karl Marx Collective*, under a new title: *Marx Went Away—But Karl Stayed Behind* (1998). The book describes changes to collective farm life after socialism, but notes structural continuities, as well. At least in 1998, there were no good alternatives to collective farms in the rural areas Humphrey studied. Tradition persisted because it was economically easier. It is possible, too, that it is easier to make surface-level changes to educational doctrine created in the Soviet Union, perhaps by replacing “upbringing in Soviet patriotism” with “civic education,” but leaving much foundational theory intact. The writers of Russian textbooks were likely trained in the Soviet Union, so it makes sense that they would express ideas fairly close to what they themselves were taught. This means, though, that key ideas about what childhood is and what childhood is for in contemporary Russian education are rooted in Soviet conceptions about developing *lichnost'*, or the social self. A theory of *vospitanie* is, after all, a theory of socialization. Russian students may now be socialized to consider different kinds of moral calculations and to make different kinds of aesthetic judgments than they would have in the 1960s. But they are still taught about some spheres of things not considered the American teacher's responsibility. The socialization of children aside, the textbooks examined here reproduce the Soviet perception that upbringing is the teacher's duty and the state's domain.

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