

Chapter 8

Education for Citizenship and Social Studies in Japan: Historical Evolution and Challenges for a Cosmopolitan Identity

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ABSTRACT

History has shown the influence that the West had on the legislative bases of Japanese education. In the Meiji Era (1868-1912), based on the French model, Japan's first formal educational system was established. There are discrepancies among researchers to locate the beginning of civic studies; however, after the Allied occupation, with the promulgation of the Basic Act on Education of 1947, social studies was introduced into the curriculum. Revisions of the social studies guidance from 1947 to the present have maintained as a constant element the development of civic qualities, as well as references to competences and awareness for civil life from society, history, and geography. Regarding the teaching of history and memories, after an original sources review, it can be established three stages of internationalization of the controversy from internal disputes in the 50s – 60s to the authorization of revisionist textbooks from 2001 to the present. However, despite this, several researches conclude that, nowadays, asepsis predominates in history textbooks of majority use.

INTRODUCTION

The construction of citizen identity has become a complex process. That issue is rooted in important changes that have taken place over several decades, including the recognition of regional and ethnic minorities and the challenges that countries face in a globalized world. Immigration, by contact with people from the host countries, is leading to the construction of hybrid identities that have generated “true cultural wars” (Carretero, 2007). On the other hand, as indicated by López Facal (2006), citizens tend to reconcile different identities that range from the local to the transnational and that, at times, are conflicting with each other:

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- Identities generated in the following areas of socialization: families, professional groups, etc.
- Identities that derive from ideological options: political or religious identities.
- Linguistic identities.
- Ethnic and cultural identities.

Numerous international researchers highlight the importance of citizen education to solve identity conflicts. Other authors indicate the relevance of the development of plurilingual and pluricultural competences in plural educational environments. In addition, both the evolution of the concept of citizenship and the evolution of social studies, citizen education or the teaching of history are different in Japan and the West. In Japan, there are various theories regarding periodization, varying between Okinawa, Hokkaido, and Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu. In this chapter, we will use the periodization model of Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu (Toshiya, 1991) as a reference in convergence with the classification elaborated within the project “*Asia in the Core Curriculum*” (Vladeck Heinrich, 2009):

- **Classic Japan:** From the introduction of Buddhism in 552 AD to the establishment of bakufu in 1185. It covers Asuka Period (551-710); Nara Period (710-794) and Heian Period (794-1185) [late Heian (Fujiwara)].
- **Feudal Japan:** From 1185 until the unification of Japan and the beginning of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1603. It covers Kamakura Period (1185-1333); Kemmu Restoration (1333-1336); Ashikaga (Muromachi) Period (1336 - 1573), where Nanbokucho Era (1336-1392) and Sengoku Era (Around 1490-1573) is located; and the Azuchi Momoyama Period (1573-1603).
- **Modern Early Japan:** From 1603 to the Meiji Restoration of 1868. It corresponds to the Edo Period.
- **Modern Japan:** From 1868 to the Allied occupation in 1945. It covers Meiji Period (1868-1912); Taisho Period (1912-1926) and, Showa Period, until the end of World War II (1926-1945).
- **Contemporary Japan:** From 1945 to the present. It covers Showa Period, during the time of Allied occupation (1945-1952) and post-occupation (1952-1989); and Heisei Period (1989-2019).

In general, some historical milestones have influenced the construction of Japanese identity. Some of the events occurred during Modern and Contemporary Japan have been particularly relevant to citizenship education, social studies and the teaching of history. On the other hand, educational research has shown that the critical analysis of memory in social studies and history teaching positively influences citizenship education (Delgado-Algarra and Estepa, 2017, 2018). Regarding to the expansion of imperial Japan by East Asia and the role of Japan in World War II, conflicting memories arise. Memories that, from a selective dimension and according to the political influence of authorization of history textbooks, lead to editorial decisions.

From a qualitative approach and in relation to memory, the revision of history textbooks, original sources and researches, it is reviewed the relationship between political action, memory and history textbooks. Regarding These blocks, from the triangulation of sources, a classification based on the scales of internationalization of controversies in the teaching of history in Japan is established:

- A first stage (50's - 60's) of internal disputes.
- A second stage questioned by other East Asian countries (80's - 90's) where important revisionist groups are created.

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