



HAL
open science

Analysis method for studying national visions of Europe in school textbooks

Arnaud Brennetot, Didier Mendibil, Marie-Claire Robic, Muriel Rosemberg

► **To cite this version:**

Arnaud Brennetot, Didier Mendibil, Marie-Claire Robic, Muriel Rosemberg. Analysis method for studying national visions of Europe in school textbooks. 2009. halshs-00648771

HAL Id: halshs-00648771

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-00648771>

Submitted on 6 Dec 2011

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



Work Package 4: Politics and Ideology Textbooks analysis guideline

From deliverable 4.1

July 2009



Analysis method for studying national visions of Europe in school textbooks

Arnaud BRENNETOT, Didier MENDIBIL, Marie-Claire ROBIC, and
Muriel ROSEMBERG (CNRS, France)



Abstract: This methodological guideline was the tool used in the framework of the FP7 EuroBroadMap project in order to study Europe's representations in textbooks, inside and outside European Union. The first part presents the curriculum questionnaire, the second one the textbook analysis itself. This paper completes the textbook analysis (see EuroBroadMap working paper, textbook analysis).

Key-words: Methodology, questionnaire, curriculum, textbook, geography, Europe.

Résumé : Ce guide méthodologique a été l'outil utilisé dans le cadre du projet de recherche européen EuroBroadMap afin d'étudier les représentations de l'Europe dans les manuels scolaires, tant à l'extérieur qu'à l'intérieur de l'Union européenne. La première partie présente le questionnaire relatif au programme scolaire, la seconde le questionnaire relatif à l'étude des manuels scolaires. Ce papier complète l'analyse des manuels scolaires (voir Euro-broadmap working paper, textbook analysis).

Mots-clés : Méthodologie, questionnaire, programme scolaire, manuel scolaire, géographie, Europe.

Front page: *Let's explore Europe!*, booklet available for teachers and pupils on the Europa website.

The analysis method we have put in place for the study of the vision of Europe portrayed in the school textbooks of each of the surveyed countries endeavours to utilise simple means to gather the available data from several educational contexts.

This approach aims to provide comparability while also, as far as possible, guaranteeing results (for instance a comparison of textbooks on other topics). We would, nevertheless, point to the fact that it remains a problematical task to attempt to compare a single object (vision of Europe) by means of a sample of school books from several countries whose geographical and teaching ideas may be discrepant on the one hand, and obscure on the other. Several factors are likely to markedly influence the shape, style and content of school books, influencing the interpretation of their content. Thus, the first task is to set out an analysis of the teaching context in each of the surveyed countries: refer to the ‘curriculum questionnaire’ (Part 1).

The method described below seeks to highlight Europe’s identity, as it is seen both from within and abroad, through lessons focused on Europe. But it is also necessary to access the position or place of Europe in the world and thus, by extension, its relation to the other parts of the world. In order to know how the world is divided geographically in the context of the schoolbooks used by students in the surveyed countries, we have to look at the entire secondary school curriculum. For this purpose, we gathered together all of the curriculum information from each of the surveyed countries (‘curriculum questionnaire’: Part 2).

Analysis of teaching context

Part 1 - Role of the geography lessons in secondary school

1. Is access to secondary school open to all?
2. Are the pupils selected on the basis of age, gender, religion, academic ability or financial ability?
3. Are there geography lessons in the curriculum?
4. In which year?
5. Are these lessons compulsory or optional? If there are no specific geography lessons in the curriculum, are some geographical topics studied in the context of other subjects?
6. Are pupils examined on geographical questions? If so, what are the topics taught for this exam? Are these topics compulsory or optional (chosen by the teacher on his/her own)?
7. Are the geography school textbooks identified as specific course materials? Are they available to the pupils or only to teachers?

Part 2 - Analysis of the geography curriculum in secondary school

This part of the questionnaire concerns geography lessons or geography topics in secondary school curricula. It aims to discover the significance of each of the geographical topics studied at school, especially that of regional geographical topics. Thus, we hope to discover how scholarship, through the curriculum, divides the world and what place is given to Europe compared to the other parts of the world.

1. Is there an official curriculum in your country?
2. If so, is it imperative or indicative?
3. Is the curriculum national, regional or local?
4. Is the curriculum often updated?
5. When was the current curriculum set?
6. How old are the pupils when they study their own country?
7. If your country considers itself to be European, or is a neighbour of Europe, are specific lessons dedicated to other European countries and their interaction with your country? If so, which European countries are emphasized?
8. What are the countries or groups of countries which are studied in the context of a regional issue?
9. Are there specific lessons devoted to globalization and/or the most powerful countries in the world?
10. Are there specific lessons about geopolitical issues? If so, which countries are studied in relation to these issues?
11. Are there specific lessons about environmental issues? If so, which countries are studied in relation to these issues? Please fill in the following chart about the curriculum of geography
Secondary school year / Topics studied / Countries studied or mentioned / Specific comments mentioned in the curriculum
Please specify the amount of time devoted to each topic when it is studied or simply mentioned.
12. Is Europe mentioned in the official curriculum? (in Geography and in other subjects)
Subject / Year-age of pupil / Amount of time / Topics associated (economics, environment, demography, history) / Specific indications about the area or the limits of Europe

Key-words: Places mentioned in the context of Europe / Dates or events / Historical figures / European symbols / Values associated with Europe

Please fill in this chart each time Europe is mentioned or studied in a subject in the curriculum. You can translate the relevant parts of the curriculum in English. Are the relationships between Europe and the rest of the world studied? Are the relationships between Europe and your country studied?

Method of observing school textbooks

The questionnaire described below should be applied to school textbooks seen as representative, related to 5 dates seen as significant, concerning the pupils in each of the surveyed countries in the first year they study Europe (early secondary school if possible, that is pupils of about 12-14 years old). The questionnaire has 6 parts: Europe's position in the curriculum; Europe's position in the school textbook; Europe's characteristics as they emerge from the texts, from the maps, through pictures, and through statistical data.

0.1 About the choice of school books

The questionnaire should be applied to the first school textbook (geography teaching if possible) that provides lessons on Europe to the pupils (secondary school's pupils if possible) in each of the surveyed countries. This choice however entails a difficulty, namely, the inconvenience of analysing school textbooks of different levels, addressed to pupils who are not the same ages; thus textbooks with different visions of Europe in respect of complexity will undoubtedly be utilised across the survey as a whole.

Nevertheless, in respect of the comparison of the school textbooks' various visions of Europe, the first issue is to identify these visions, not to check their impact. Therefore, whatever the educational context (whether geography lessons are compulsory or optional, whether the secondary school surveyed includes pupils from across the whole spectrum of society or is selective in some way) and thus whatever the number and the age of school textbooks' readers, the main issue to take into account when analysing the visions of Europe is the question of Europe as a topic in the curriculum and in the school textbooks used.

Whatever the approach used and the scale of analysis chosen to describe Europe in school textbooks, even if they probably influence the vision of Europe (as an entirety, a coherent whole, when studying globalization, or, inversely, as a disparate collection of political units in a regional study, etc.), it is legitimate to undertake the comparison, as the purpose here is to spot the elements that contribute to Europe's identity and to understand whether,

and how, visions of Europe differ according to those who produce these visions.

The discrepancies in terms of the school textbooks used may then depend on the educational aims of the particular curriculum, on the particular level or age-group to which the school textbook is addressed (thus on the educational policies of each country), or it may depend on other factors likely to influence the books' pattern, style or content (for instance, school textbooks publishers' marketing strategy), this is not necessarily a problem but rather a factor that will be acknowledged in the context of the analysis.

The representativeness of the school textbooks chosen in each of the surveyed countries should also be considered. School textbooks should be seen as representative if they are relevant in respect of the curriculum and/or the teaching directions mandated by it. Educational directions and indeed the curriculum itself emanate from the political authority (central, regional or local), even if it may issue from agreement proceedings between different agents, and thus school curriculums reflect what a society thinks about the most important knowledge to be transmitted to its youth. Therefore they can be seen as shared representations. We would thus suspect that, where several school textbooks are published in the same country at around the same time, they would likely differ only in small details, as a school textbook is issued within the context of a set curriculum and thus must already fit agreed societal representations for it to have been approved, even when the choice of textbook used is that of the teacher. If however we find significant variation between school textbooks published in the same country at the same time then we would need more specific observatory procedures. To sort out the textbooks relevant to the curriculum refer to the 'relevancy method'.

About the choice of a diachronic study

To know whether and how visions of Europe have changed, a diachronic study must also be undertaken. Thus, in each of the surveyed countries, a diachronic analysis will have to be set up so that we can identify firstly what the core of the visions of Europe consists of (social visions change very slowly over time by combining new elements that do not overthrow the former core but build on it), secondly what elements have changed, disappeared or have been replaced. We should ask whether the vision of Europe has changed slightly over time or whether Europe's identity has evolved into a new vision (from the notion of Europe as a collective civilization towards that of Europe of space of flows, infrastructures and economic policies for example).

Moreover, the evolution of these visions of Europe is not independent of the evolution of geographical knowledge, nor of current pedagogic ideas, as they are applied in the school textbooks. For instance, increasing usage of statistical data maps could reflect ongoing trends in geography towards

spatial analysis and, in the context of this approach, Europe does not display the same reality to that emphasized by an approach based on topographical maps or by pictures of famous places or landscapes.

In relation to the various visions of Europe's evolution, it remains difficult to distinguish between the impact of the historical evolution of Europe and the evolution of Geography as a subject or the evolution of the social visions of Europe. We should however ask whether a firm body of visions of Europe remains and how it changes over time (characteristics of Europe's identity, Europe's boundaries and what kind of boundaries, emblematic elements); we should also ask whether Europe's identity is, at different phases of this period, more or less coherent, more or less legible, or more or less discrepant.

It would perhaps be worth (though it may not be either possible or necessary) examining school textbooks which are part of the same collection at several dates to plot the evolution of concepts. The examination of school textbooks could be applied in respect of five dates of significance to Europe (where applicable), with at least three of them being needed:

1. Before the World War II (during the thirties, if possible);
2. After the WWII and just before Rome Treaty (1957);
3. During the sixties (after the Rome Treaty);
4. During the early nineties (after the fall of communism);
5. Current.

The following questionnaire ('textbook questionnaire') will be applied to each of the five dates (where applicable).

1. Answer the curriculum questionnaire;
2. Choose the school textbooks according to the relevancy method;
3. Answer the textbook questionnaire.

Textbook questionnaire

PART 1: Position of the study of Europe in the curriculum

1.0 References in respect of the school textbook analysed (publication date, level, subject(s) such as geography, history, etc., title, author, publisher, etc.)

1.1 At what level (form, year at school, etc.) do pupils study Europe for the first time?

1.2 When Europe is studied for the first time? Which other countries related to Europe (by geographical proximity, culture, historical links, etc.) are also studied?

1.3 Are there any teaching or educational particularities that may have influenced the nature of lessons on Europe in the curriculum? (Examples: no geography lessons, no lessons on Europe, Europe studied only in the context of an economic geography lesson on the great powers, etc.)

1.4 If applicable, provide a photocopy of the schoolbook's contents.

PART 2: Europe in texts

Nota Bene: In order to answer the following questions refer to: 1) the titles and subtitles ; 2) introductions, summaries and/or conclusions in the chapter(s) concerning Europe as an entity. If you have a general textbook composed of several subjects (such as literature, sciences, geography), you should take into account the importance of Europe-centred lessons within the various subjects. Otherwise, please state what part of the text you refer to.

2.1 How many pages in the textbook concern Europe as an entity or as a group of different countries? What percentage of the whole textbook is this? *Give your answer according to this example: Europe as a whole 56 pages (19%), the countries of Europe 222 p. (75%), other topics or countries, 16 p. (6%).*

2.2 Is Europe's identity already a given or does it remain a contested question ? (Use quoted passages to illustrate your answer)

2.3 Which ontological attributes are assigned to the word 'Europe' such as, for instance, 'the world's crossroads', 'the most maritime of continents', 'a people mosaic', etc.? (Use quoted passages to illustrate your answer)

2.4 What words are used to portray Europe's action in the world such as, for instance, 'Europe ruled the world', etc.? (Use quoted passages to illustrate your answer)

2.5 In respect of the following items highlight the most important (in respect of the number of pages related to these topics) and use quoted passages to illustrate your answer:

Is Europe described...

- As a space, geographical space, land;

- As an historical space, heritage, civilization;
- As a collective project.

2.6 Which of these concepts are attributed to Europe ? (Use quoted passages to illustrate your answer in this table)

concepts	unity	diversity	specificity	any other ideas
quotations				

2.7 Are explanations given about Europe's importance (power and influence) in the world or about its specific features? (Use quoted passages to illustrate your answer in this table)

factors	physical	climatic	cultural	economic	others
specific features					
power and influence in the world					
others?					

2.8 If Europe is shown as being divided into several parts, what are these parts and how are they defined? (Example: Northern Europe, North-West Europe, Mediterranean Europe, Central Europe...)

PART 3: Europe in maps

3.0 How many maps of Europe (representing the whole of Europe) are there in the textbook ? How many maps are there in the whole textbook (maps of any country or any part of the world)?

Use this example: 1939 - Total 70 maps of which 11 maps (16%) represent the whole of Europe, and 59 maps (84%) represent only a part of Europe.

3.1 How many maps are there in the textbook or in the chapters dedicated to Europe as a whole?

Nota bene: the maps must represent Europe as a whole, not just a part thereof.

3.2 Provide a photocopy of the first map of Europe (as a whole).

3.3 What is the title of the first map of Europe?

3.4 What does the base map represent (countries, rivers, cities, etc.)?

Now, look at *all* of the maps of Europe in this textbook and answer the following questions:

3.5 Is European Russia represented in its entirety?

If so, is it normally mapped?

If not, what part of Russia is:

- Not represented?
- Blank or not drawn?
- Hidden under the key?

Answer using this form : 1952 - European Russia has been represented 4 times entirely, 3 times hidden, 3 times blank, once not represented (total 11 maps of the whole of Europe).

3.6 Is Turkey represented in its entirety?

If so, is it normally mapped?

If not, what part of Turkey is:

- Not represented?
- Blank or not drawn?
- Hidden under the key?

Answer using this form: 1939 Turkey has been represented 7 times entirely, 5 times hidden under the key and once not represented (total 11 maps of the whole of Europe).

3.7 What part of the north of Africa (countries of the southern Mediterranean coast) is represented?

Is this part:

- Normally mapped?
- Blank or not drawn?
- A part out of the frame?
- Hidden under the key?

Answer using this form: on 7 maps the coast is partly out of the frame (Libyan and Egyptian coasts).

3.8 How are Europe's borders with Asia generally mapped? (bold line, simple line, dotted line, blank countries, other...)

3.9 How many maps have a political base map (national borders drawn)?

Answer using this form: 1939 - total 70 on which 23 (33%) have a political base map.

3.10 How many maps are there on a local scale (a part of a country or a few neighbouring countries)

Answer using this form: 1939 - 42 (60%) local scale.

3.11 Note the titles of all the maps in the chapters or paragraphs dedicated to Europe as a whole.

3.12 If applicable, provide a photocopy of all the maps of Europe (as a whole).

Part 4: Pictures of Europe

4.0 How many photographs of European countries are there in the textbook? How many photographs are there in the textbook as a whole (photographs related to any country or any part of the world)?

Answer using this form: 1939 - Total 90 photographs of which 90 photographs (100%) represent a place in Europe.

4.1 How many photographs are there in the chapter (or the pages) dedicated to Europe as a whole?

Nota bene: answer the following questions about the first photograph of Europe.

4.2 Note the title and the caption of the first photo.

4.3 Does the caption give the photo an explicit and symbolic meaning? (For example: a photo of the forum in Rome with this caption 'Europe, one of the ancient sources of civilization')

4.4 Which particular place in Europe does it show?

4.5 List all of the places in Europe shown in the photographs in the chapter (or the pages) dedicated to Europe as a whole.

4.6 How many photographs have a symbolic meaning?

4.7 How many photographs represent (write the number)

- Natural or country landscapes ?
- Urban places?
- Buildings? (if they are in close shot)
- Industrial activities ?
- Persons ?
- Fauna and flora? (Examples: cows, trees, etc.) (if they are in close shot)
- Other things? (if they are in close shot)
- Symbols (of Europe only) (Example: flag, etc.)?
- European Union institutions' views? (a picture of meeting of the EU Parliament in Strasbourg for example)

4.8 Which countries do these photographs represent?

(Note the countries and the number of times they occur) for example: 1939 - United Kingdom (×2), Switzerland (×2), France, Denmark, Germany, Russia, Norway, Yugoslavia, Slovakia.

4.9 How many photographs' captions contain the word Europe (or EU, etc.)?

4.10 If applicable, provide a photocopy of all the photographs (captions included) of the chapter (or the pages) dedicated to Europe as a whole.

PART 5 : Europe in figures (tables or graphs)

Nota bene: statistical data may be represented as graphs. A figure may group together one or more tables or graphs.

5.0 How many statistical tables or graphs relating to the whole of Europe are there in the textbook? How many tables or graphs are there in the whole textbook (tables or graphs related to any country or any part of the world)?

5.1 How many tables or graphs are related to the following topics?

- Demography.
- Topography, climate, and/or geographical dimensions (Example: height of mountains, length of rivers, etc.);
- Economic issues;
- Social issues (Example: welfare data, way of life, etc.);
- Cultural, linguistic, religious issues;
- Political issues (Example: votes, political parties).

5.2 How many tables or figures relate to the economic relations between Europe and the rest of the world?