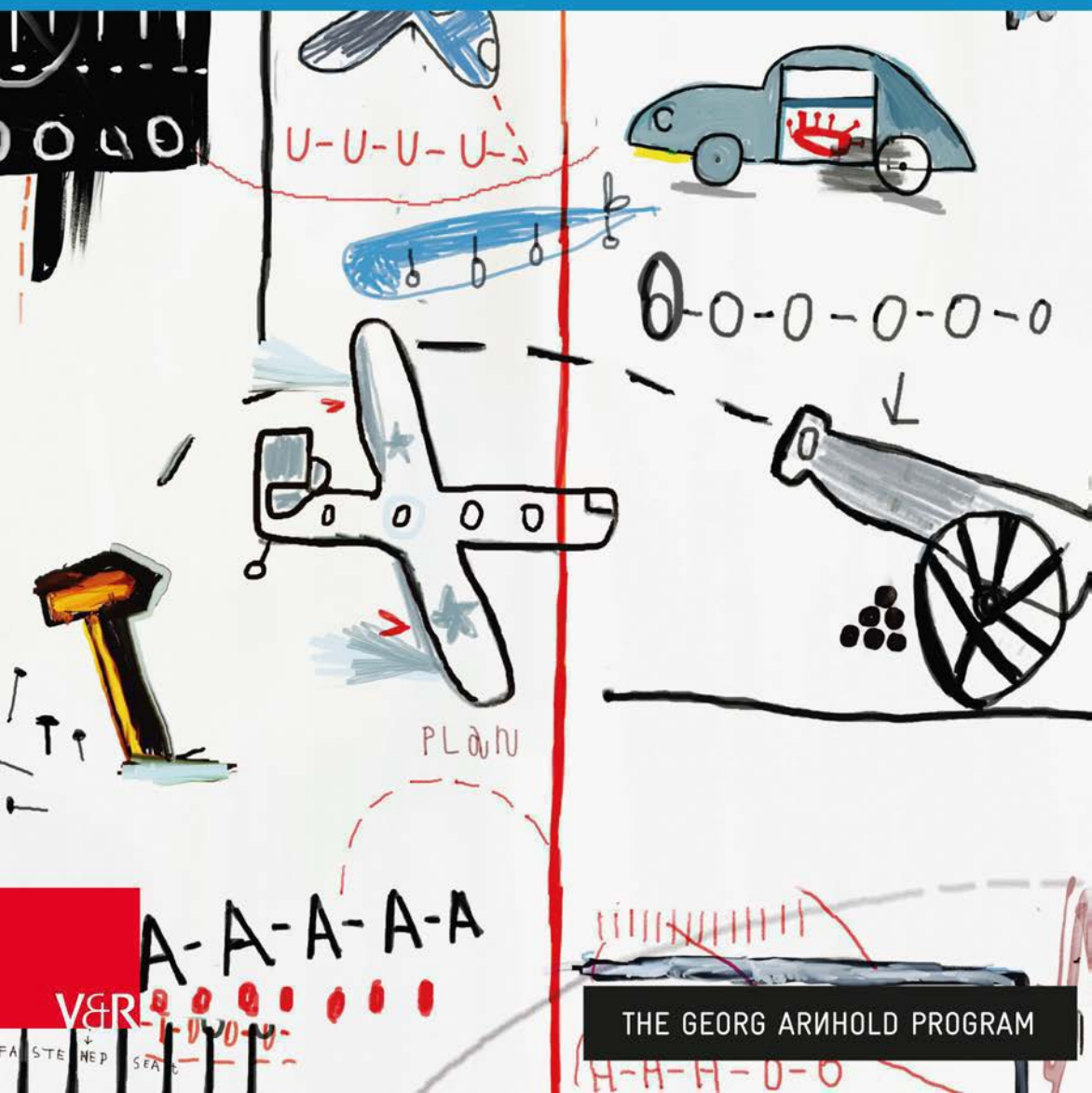


History Can Bite

History Education in Divided and Postwar Societies



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To Henry H. Arnhold and his grandfather,
passionate bridge builders

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Simone Lässig

Foreword

This first volume from the Georg Arnhold Program on Education for Sustainable Peace presents research by the early-career and distinguished scholars from all around the globe who took part in our inaugural Georg Arnhold International Summer School in July of 2014. The summer school focused on “Teaching and Learning the Past in the Aftermath of (Civil) War and Mass Violence: The Challenges and Promises of History Education in Divided and Post-conflict Societies.” The participants, ranging from early-career scholars to senior researchers and practitioners in the field of education and peace, explored history education and its reform in the aftermath of civil war and mass violence. They also examined representations of war and peace in curricula, textbooks, and other educational materials, as well as in the classroom. The summer school, organized by the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in Braunschweig, Germany, provided an interdisciplinary and international forum that allowed participants to debate and critically reflect upon key research questions, methods, findings, and their implications.

All in all, the one-week summer school covered an incredibly broad variety of case studies organized into five regional panels, from more than 20 countries including Armenia, Burundi, Cambodia, Croatia, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Kenya, Macedonia, Pakistan, Portugal, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Spain, Turkey, and the United States. The following noted academics and practitioners shared their expertise: Meenakshi Chhabra, associate professor in interdisciplinary studies at Lesley University in Boston; Elizabeth Cole, senior program officer at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP); Khamboly Dy, a doctoral candidate in the Division of Global Affairs at Rutgers University in New Jersey and coordinator of the Genocide Education Project at the Documentation Center of Cambodia; Alan McCully, senior lecturer in the School of Education at the University of Ulster in Northern Ireland; Karen Murphy, director of international programs at the NGO Facing History and Ourselves in the United States; M. Ayaz Naseem, associate professor in the Department of Education at Concordia University in Montreal; Elizabeth Oglesby, associate professor in the

Department of Latin American Studies at the University of Arizona; Elie Podeh, professor in the Department of Islam and Middle Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; and Gail Weldon, an independent education consultant from South Africa.

The summer school is part of the Georg Arnhold Program, which aims to promote research on education for sustainable peace and to form an international network in the field of peacebuilding. At the Georg Eckert Institute we believe that education is the cornerstone of the future of the societies we live in. We are dedicated to ensuring that future generations are brought up with open minds, able to reflect on their attitudes and beliefs and embrace responsibility and democracy. Acting on this vision, the American banker, patron of the arts, and strong supporter of the sciences, Henry H. Arnhold, instituted the guest professorship, summer school, and symposium that make up the program at our institute to honor the legacy of his grandfather Georg Arnhold, a committed pacifist. Henry H. Arnhold's intention in instituting the Georg Arnhold Program has been to promote international dialogue and an exchange of ideas and to strengthen links between academia and civil society, thus contributing to strong and peaceable societies. The program's focus lies particularly on educational media and curricula in post-conflict or transitional societies. Western democracies, of course, are also called upon to develop new concepts to maintain and stabilize peace within society. As UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed on the occasion of the International Day of Peace in 2013: "It is not enough to teach children how to read, write and count. Education has to cultivate mutual respect for others and the world in which we live, and help people forge more just, inclusive and peaceful societies."¹

1 Ban Ki-moon, "Secretary-General's 100-day Countdown Message," New York, June 13, 2013. http://www.un.org/en/events/peaceday/2013/sgmessage_countdown.shtml.

Introduction

Teaching about a Violent Past: Revisiting the Role of History Education in Conflict and Peace

In 1994, the historian Eric Hobsbawm described the twentieth century as being “without doubt the most murderous century of which we have record, . . . by the scale, frequency and length of the warfare which filled it.”¹ Wars, violent uprisings, ethnic cleansing, and genocides have been among the dominant features of this particularly deadly age, the brutality of which appears ever-present at the time of writing this volume in 2014 and 2015. The year 2014 marked the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of World War I and the 20th anniversary of the genocide in Rwanda. The year 2015 witnessed the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide; the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the end of World War II, and the liberation of Auschwitz; the 40th anniversary of the beginning of the Khmer Rouge’s “killing fields” in Cambodia; and the 20th anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre during the Bosnian War. In the twenty-first century, experiences of mass violence have remained an ongoing reality for many. Around the world, countless lives continue to be shattered as a result of enduring violent conflicts.

The tragic legacy left by the violence experienced in the last decades has resulted in oft-voiced calls to remember and understand traumatic historical events, their causes and dynamics, and the circumstances that led to, or conversely hindered, their resolution. Education has been a main channel through which both local and external stakeholders have sought to promote understandings of and lessons from the past, with a view to preventing future wars and advancing peace and reconciliation. Today, addressing the topics of war and peace in the classroom is recognized as being critical to sensitizing young generations to the motto, “Never again.”

Across the globe, the pursuit of this goal has required nations to deal with the memory of their own violent past. Teaching and learning about this past, which may have directly or indirectly affected younger generations, has been an im-

1 Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, 13.

perative but complex matter.² In the aftermath of violence, confronting history has been considered one of the keys and yet the greatest challenge to surmounting divisions and promoting mutual understanding and peaceful co-existence. History curriculum and textbook revision processes in postwar Europe, especially in Germany, have been hailed as success stories of inter-state reconciliation through education. Here, various bilateral and multilateral initiatives were launched to jointly analyze and revise textbooks in order to remove objectionable material and include “a more or less harmonious version of the shared history” for the sake of a peaceful future.³

Such processes have generally been more challenging in societies recently emerging from intrastate conflict and mass violence. As Elizabeth Cole and Karen Murphy observe: “In countries where the wounds of identity-based conflict are fresh, there are questions about whether, how and at what age children should learn about parts of the nation’s past – usually the recent past – that are difficult and expose deeply opposing views.”⁴ Evidence from around the world suggests that, in such contexts, the imperative to integrate the topics of war and peace into curricula and educational media has often not been matched by adequate efforts to reform history education to include critical discussions on the nation’s past. In the wake of internecine violence, history curricula have in many cases been left unaddressed because of the divisive and challenging nature of the revision process. Against the backdrop of unresolved historical controversies and bitter disputes surrounding the appropriate representation of the past, divided and transitional societies have frequently opted to exclude the study of their recent violent history from the curriculum altogether. In other cases, an official narrative has been enforced in defiance of calls for a critical and democratic approach to history teaching. Education systems have thereby failed to respond to the urgent need to help younger generations make sense of the past and thus of the present, potentially entrenching dangerous misunderstandings and misperceptions.

The first Georg Arnhold International Summer School on Education for Sustainable Peace, on which this volume is based, addressed such important themes. The event was dedicated to examining how schools and education systems around the world have dealt with the topics of war and peace and to exploring experiences of war and transition as they are remembered, negotiated, and articulated by policymakers, teachers, and pupils in conflict-ridden and postwar societies. Participants presented a great variety of case studies, covering

2 Cole and Barsalou, “Unite or Divide?”; Cole and Murphy, “History Education Reform”; Murphy and Gallagher, “Reconstruction after Violence.”

3 Pingel, “Can Truth Be Negotiated?” 182. See also Korostelina and Lässig, *History Education and Post-Conflict Reconciliation*.

4 Cole and Murphy, “History Education Reform,” 1.

experiences from Africa (Burundi, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Uganda), the Americas (El Salvador, Guatemala, United States), Europe (Croatia, Macedonia, Northern Ireland, Portugal, Spain) and the Middle East and Asia (Armenia, Cambodia, India, Israel, Pakistan, Syria, Turkey). They provided crucial insights and lessons on the challenges and opportunities presented by teaching and learning history in the wake of war and mass violence, and on the distinct role of history education and its reform in conflict resolution and postwar transitional justice and peacebuilding processes.

Elizabeth Cole, senior program officer at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) in Washington DC and editor of the groundbreaking volume *Teaching the Violent Past*, set the tone for the summer school in her introductory keynote address, “History Has Teeth: Challenges to History Education for Tolerance and Reconciliation.” She argued:

The liberal world order in which our common ideas about tolerance, contact, civil society, shared narratives and the possibility of acknowledging some common historical truths were based . . . [relied] on the importance of respect by states for state boundaries as well as the nonviolent decline of state sovereignty and the rise of other important institutions, including civil society and transnational ones. Not only does this seem to be under threat, as we have seen in the post-Soviet space, but there are new, very violent and regionally disruptive conflicts (Syria, Iraq), and old ones that have deteriorated or won't go away (Israel–Palestine, South Sudan), even celebrated peace agreements that seem to be under threat (Northern Ireland). Scandinavian researchers as recently as two years ago had empirical evidence of dropping numbers of wars and battle deaths, but what does the trend look like now? In fact, our common goal in a way is to tame history, but it turns out that history has teeth and can bite.

This volume begins with the premise that “history can bite” and that its teaching can play both a negative role in society by exacerbating division and conflict and a positive role by helping divided societies to heal wounds and mend the torn social fabric. The book presents the research and expertise brought to the first Georg Arnhold International Summer School on Education for Sustainable Peace by its diverse group of participants. It includes 15 original contributions that draw on different contexts, theories, and methods to shed light on questions relevant to the central theme of the book. Together, the contributions provide critical insights into approaches adopted by curricula, textbooks, and teachers around the world to teach about the past in the wake of civil war and mass violence, to discern some of the challenges and opportunities involved in such endeavors, and to reflect upon their implications.

This volume analyzes history teaching as an integral part of identity and memory politics and as a tool for nation-building and citizenship formation.⁵

5 See also: Carretero, Ascensio, and Rodríguez-Moneo, *History Education*.

First and foremost, it proposes an examination of the content of curricula and textbooks in various postwar societies. Curricula and textbooks are analyzed here as cultural artifacts embedded in their specific historical and political contexts and as conveyors of “legitimate” knowledge and values, which younger generations are expected to internalize in order to conform to dominant norms.⁶ As such, they are also analyzed as sites of contention in attempts to mold the nation according to the views and visions of political entrepreneurs. Second, beyond a situated analysis of the content of history curricula and textbooks, this volume explores teachers’ and students’ voices and experiences in order to understand how history is taught and learned in the classroom. In particular, it reflects on teaching history in divided societies by examining classroom practices and the key role of teachers, as “curricular-instructional gatekeepers,”⁷ in enacting curricula and textbooks by negotiating and mediating officially sanctioned narratives in the classroom, thus influencing young people’s knowledge and beliefs.

Throughout this volume, the school subject of history is shown as a highly contested and emotive matter, frequently manipulated to serve vested interests and political agendas. On countless occasions, history has been taught expressly to further nationalist causes, nurturing parochial identities and sentiments by emphasizing the uniqueness of the in-group and its fundamental difference from significant Others, while at the same time suppressing internal diversity by masking the existence and experiences of national subgroups.⁸ Within this context of politicizing education for the purpose of identity-building, this volume discusses ways in which history teaching has acted as a political tool, at times contributing to the exacerbation of intergroup conflict, feeding intercommunal division and tension. It highlights ways in which schools have transmitted monolithic “truths,” showing convenient selection, emphases, silences, and denials to preserve a positive image of the self while demonizing and delegitimizing designated Others. The contributions discuss the communication of politically biased, moralizing, and antagonistic interpretations of the past, which have nurtured stereotypes and prejudice and reinforced ethnocentric views and myths of collective victimhood, struggle, and heroism. As the authors show, narratives of conflict and violence, in particular, have commonly neglected shared experiences of suffering and reiterated insensibility toward the victims on the other side. They have resorted to generalizing the guilt of the out-group, cast as collective wrongdoers and aggressors, while justifying and relativizing violence by the in-group, portrayed as victims absolved of all crimes. In such contexts, ex-

6 See also: Apple and Christian-Smith, *The Politics of the Textbook*; Apple, *Official Knowledge*.

7 Thornton, “Teacher as Curricular-Instructional Gatekeeper.”

8 Gallagher, *Education In Divided Societies*; Bush and Saltarelli, *Two Faces of Education*.

explored in these case studies, little tolerance has surfaced for alternative views, with strong pressure exercised against textbook authors and teachers who have dared to challenge the dominant narrative by discussing the responsibility of the in-group and the experience and suffering of the Other.

In this volume, history teaching is shown not only as a (potential) source of conflict but also as an important component of attempts to reconcile divided societies. Its contributions point to the often recognized necessity of curricular reform and textbook revision after conflict, as well as the contestations and difficulties surrounding such processes and their practical implementation. This volume presents cases from around the world where peace processes and transitional justice mechanisms have stressed the need to clarify and teach the population about recent violent history and to concomitantly reform education to promote peace and democracy. It draws attention to the complexities involved in swiftly translating such stated principles and aims into policy and practice due to the markedly political nature of such processes. Case studies in this book show curricular reform to be a typically lengthy endeavor, marred by competing political agendas and challenges posed by the inevitable existence of conflicting versions of the past and rival narratives of victimhood.

As recorded by some of the authors in this volume, the end of conflict has frequently given rise to debates, controversies, and conflicting expectations concerning the appropriate approach to the past, and more specifically, the appropriate content and purpose of history education to be promoted in schools. Such debates are tied to discussions on societal needs and demands after war, along with the advantages and disadvantages of digging up a conflictual past. This book illustrates a tension observed in such contexts between a need to look back and a need to look forward. The tension manifests itself in contradictory warnings against being fixated on the past in ways that hinder society from distancing itself from traumatic experiences, and, conversely, being oblivious to the past in ways that preclude moving on with an informed understanding of the causes and legacies of violence and injustice.

Different approaches have been observed in different contexts. Several post-war countries included in this volume have opted to teach a positive and patriotic history, conveniently simplistic and selective, aimed at rebuilding and reuniting the torn nation around a common narrative. These approaches are either imposed unilaterally by a victor or negotiated by formerly warring parties in the form of a compromise narrative. Other countries have opted for a temporary moratorium on teaching recent history in schools. They argue that it is premature to address such sensitive periods in the classroom given the lack of general consensus on what to teach and the potentially divisive and traumatic nature of such discussions, which could be too distressing and destabilizing for societies in fragile transitions to peace. While the passage of time may be a reasonable factor

in facilitating discussions on a nation's sensitive and controversial history, the case of Spain addressed in this volume by Clare Magill, for instance, illustrates how "something that happened 75 years ago is [still] considered to be too recent to be studied as history," continuing to cause contention in schools. In some cases, especially in the early post-conflict phase, worries about the destabilizing effects of dealing with the dark past have been coupled with a sense that revising curricula is not a priority. A multitude of other needs and challenges are considered more pressing within the overall framework of rehabilitating and reconstructing countries left in ruin by war and often characterized by enduring violence, impunity, and economic crisis. In numerous cases, a forward-looking approach has led to a pervasive culture of silence around the violent past. Schools promote this silence, for instance by divorcing discussions on human rights, multiculturalism, and diversity – global concepts increasingly integrated into postwar curricula and textbooks to promote a much-celebrated "culture of peace"⁹ – from necessary discussions on the history of violence and injustice experienced in the country, the legacy of which is often still visible and prevalent.

Overall, the contributions in this volume bring to light a frequent failure of schools in divided and post-conflict societies to deal with the violent past, and they raise concerns around the implications of such failures for the future of these societies. In particular, this book draws attention to the limited role of schools as safe spaces for open dialogue and critical inquiry and reflection. Curricula and textbooks in various countries across the globe demonstrate a reticence toward addressing sensitive histories of recent conflict, showing a tendency to either promote forgetfulness of these events through neglect or avoidance or to present them in a selective and simplistic manner, omitting and minimizing uncomfortable truths and leaving little space for complexity, critical thinking, and multiple perspectives. The contributors here report on cases of self-censorship and the silencing of deviant voices that might threaten a predefined and allegedly unifying narrative – a narrative which, while ostensibly needed in fragile contexts, might collide with students' personal experiences or with the stories young people have learned from their families and in their communities. More generally, the case studies call attention to frequent practices in history teaching that reduce pupils' learning experience to a passive consumption of "legitimate knowledge," thus limiting opportunities for young people to critically engage with the past and process past experiences and hindering their ability to understand and respond to present-day realities.

Beyond the curriculum and the textbook, the role of teachers is also shown to be of crucial significance. Case studies in this volume illustrate a variety of

9 Meyer, Bromley, and Ramirez, "Human Rights in Social Science Textbooks"; Terra and Bromley, "Globalization of Multicultural Education."

approaches and attitudes adopted by history teachers in the classroom, including the varying extents to which they avoid or address contentious issues and explore different perspectives. The authors point to the significance of factors such as the teacher's identity, biography, and political views, as well as the context of teaching and learning, in determining whether and how educators address the difficult past and its controversies with their pupils. While a variety of approaches has been identified, many teachers in post-conflict societies have been found to either contribute to historical amnesia by avoiding sensitive questions or to consolidate a single "truth" by propagating one particular interpretation of historical events that is in line with a hegemonic discourse or their own personal beliefs, provided the latter are allowed to openly circulate in the public domain. Overall, the studies presented in this volume expose common feelings among many teachers of caution and discomfort in dealing with controversy, multivocality, and complexity, and a tendency to evade contentious and potentially divisive issues in history classes. Educators have been found to be inhibited by a wariness of offending the sensitivities of students and their families and of creating conflict and tension in the classroom and community. These worries are usually compounded by a lack of resources, training, and general guidance and support regarding how to confidently respond to the pedagogical challenges of discussing contentious issues with both accuracy and sensitivity.

Having exposed general trends in the way history is broached in schools in post-conflict societies, the analyses presented in this volume encourage a reflection on the implications of current practices for the future, warning against threats to social cohesion and stability posed by a common avoidance and deferment of the need to face the past. As suggested across the various contributions in this volume, such practices run the risk of perpetuating drivers of conflict, including myths and stereotypes, thus countering efforts to reconstruct society on solid foundations.

In light of the danger associated with failures to confront history, this volume stresses the civic value of teaching postwar generations about the violent past for the purpose of averting future violence. It argues that such omissions and erasures, often justified as a way to ensure social harmony and spare young people from traumatization, may be harmful in the longer term. This volume thus gives voice to calls for reform in the way that schools in post-conflict societies deal with the violent past, and includes discussions on the kind of history education needed in the aftermath of violence to serve a culture of peace. Together, the contributions raise awareness of an urgent need not only to teach about the past but also to promote active, critical, inclusive, multiperspective, and democratic approaches that encourage young people's historical understanding and critical thinking, helping them to deconstruct single truths and negative images of the Other and to critically confront and navigate divergent narratives of conflict.

Specifically, the authors advocate a critical methodology that draws on a variety of primary sources and a multitude of experiences and interpretations, which strives to empower pupils to participate in society as informed and active citizens possessing the necessary skills and competencies to make sense of, and responsibly meet the challenges of, the present day. As Alan McCully emphasized at the summer school:

For history teaching to contribute fully to the reconciliatory process it must explicitly make connections with contemporary cultural and political issues. Practitioners should familiarize themselves with the concepts of historical consciousness and collective memory and be prepared to work with young people to better understand why the past is remembered and commemorated (differently) in the present. Further, it is important to deal critically with the legacies of the more recent conflicted past.

This volume maintains that, for change to be institutionalized in effective and sustainable ways, political will is indispensable. With or without political commitment, however, opportunities should also be created to support bottom-up initiatives and civil society actors, notably school teachers and textbook authors, to play an active role in helping society, particularly younger generations, confront and come to terms with a dark past. The experience of Croatia presented in this volume is a case in point, illustrating the prominent role of textbook authors in promoting content and methodological innovation in the face of outdated curricula. They did so in a context where political conditions allowed for textbook pluralism and the unrestrained circulation of different approaches to sensitive and controversial issues; this might not be the case in other contexts. In advocating for change and innovation, the various studies in this volume in fact prove the importance of local circumstances, particularly political conditions, in determining both challenges and opportunities.

To conclude, this volume has been written with the conviction that, regardless of the circumstances, teaching history in the aftermath of violence holds significant promise to help divided societies in transition construct solid foundations on which to build their shared future, even if it cannot be a panacea. The authors echo the words of the Council of Europe, that “reconciliation through education – including history education – is the basis of a vision for a common future.”¹⁰ Ultimately, this book aims to spark a wider awareness of the need to acknowledge and capitalize on this promise, which remains largely unfulfilled.

10 Council of Europe, *Shared Histories*, 7.

Contributions to this Volume

The 15 contributions included in this volume are organized around three overarching themes, namely: textbooks and curricula as tools for nation-building, inclusion, and exclusion; cultures of silence that forgo important lessons from a violent past; and teachers' and students' experiences with and perspectives on the sensitive and controversial past in the classroom.

Please note that all foreign-language titles and quotations have been translated into English by the author of the respective chapter.

Textbooks and Curricula as Tools for Nation-Building: Between Inclusion and Exclusion

The first section in this volume addresses the theme of education as a tool for nation-building. Julia Lerch opens this section by taking a comprehensive look at textbooks in post-conflict and divided societies in her chapter, "Embracing Diversity? Textbook Narratives in Countries with a Legacy of Internal Armed Conflict, 1950 to 2011." Lerch's longitudinal analysis of narratives on nationhood and diversity found in textbooks from 80 countries brings to light a common tension faced by education systems in post-conflict countries: between a desire to promote national unity and the global move toward recognizing and valuing diversity. Highlighting this tension, Lerch's findings demonstrate the prominence of nation-based discourses at the expense of recognizing the experiences and rights of different population groups, including ethnic, racial, and religious minorities.

Following Lerch's transnational analysis, the next two chapters in this section delve into textbooks' national narratives of conflict by investigating two African cases in the area of social studies. In her chapter, "The Somali Question: Protracted Conflict, National Narratives, and Curricular Politics in Kenya," Kim Foulds examines textbook representations of regional and national conflict in Kenya and their depictions of Somalis. Her analysis is set against the backdrop of Kenya's enduringly tense bilateral relations with war-torn, neighboring Somalia and hostility toward people of Somali origin in Kenya. Foulds argues that, in line with discriminatory state policies toward Somali refugees, education in Kenya has been excluding and alienating this group not only by limiting access to schooling but also through a curriculum that either writes them out of textbooks or positions them "as a danger to national security and a burden to the state." Upper-level curricula thereby contradict teachings found in materials for younger pupils, which champion tolerance and diversity.

Clement Sefa-Nyarko subsequently introduces the case of Ghana in a chapter on “Competing Narratives of Post-independence Violence in Ghanaian Social Studies Textbooks, 1987 to 2010.” Sefa-Nyarko traces the politicization of Ghana’s education reforms since independence, examining the revision of textbook narratives by successive governments while also exploring the viewpoints of teachers and students. The analysis illustrates how violence has been either justified or condemned by opposing political actors. It explores the more recent preference for policies of “neutralization” to try to mitigate division and tension manifested in and provoked by conflicting narratives, for the sake of national unity and stability.

The following two chapters focus on cases in the Balkans. The first, by Dea Marić, examines recent history education policies in Croatia and their implementation. In her chapter, “The Homeland War in Croatian History Education: Between ‘Real Truth’ and Innovative History Teaching,” Marić points to the selective use of multiperspectivity and critical thinking, suggesting that for “issues of national importance” such as the Homeland War, there is considerable pressure to impart a ready-made, canonical, uncontested “truth” that is rather ethnically biased, nationalist, and patriotic. This discourages open dialogue, most notably on the experience and suffering of the Other. She further argues that despite such pressures, textbook authors have been at the forefront of content and methodological innovation, embracing multiperspective and source-based approaches in dealing with sensitive and controversial issues.

The case of Croatia leads into a chapter by Petar Todorov on “Teaching History in Macedonia after 2001: Representations of Armed Conflict between Ethnic Macedonians and Ethnic Albanians.” Todorov examines changes in the depictions of intercommunal conflict and the Other in Macedonian history textbooks, assessing the extent to which postwar curricular reforms have promoted social cohesion and mutual understanding in the country. He argues that, despite principled aims formulated in policy documents, current textbooks continue to promote ethnocentric understandings of the past, perpetuating history teaching as a factor of societal division.

The final contribution to this section explores the cases of neighboring India and Pakistan. In his chapter on “Sustainable Peace between India and Pakistan: A Case for Restructuring the School Education System,” Dhananjay Tripathi sheds light on the predominantly nationalist discourse and the images of “enemy nations” propagated by school textbooks, which have long nurtured hostile feelings toward the Other among this region’s younger generations. Tripathi advocates the reform of school curricula and textbook revision as part of efforts to promote regional peace and reconciliation, arguing for the potential value of establishing a joint textbook commission.

Cultures of Silence: Forgoing Invaluable Lessons from a Violent Past

The second section of this volume addresses cultures of silence in school contexts around the world. The first two chapters explore the cases of postwar Sierra Leone and Uganda. In her chapter, “Only Looking Forward: The Absence of War History in Sierra Leone,” Mneesha Gellman investigates the current challenges in educating younger generations about the past following the devastating war that raged in the country between 1991 and 2002. Drawing on an examination of school materials and interviews with local stakeholders, Gellman argues that, despite the establishment of a criminal tribunal and truth commission, a pervasive culture of silence around the war has been institutionalized through formal education that serves an exclusively forward-looking agenda. The current system thus prevents Sierra Leoneans from moving into the future having learned from past violence.

Along the same line of argumentation, Michelle Savard examines Uganda’s approach to dealing with the past in the wake of its 20-year civil war from 1986 to 2006. Drawing on document analysis, interviews, and participatory observation, her chapter on “Using Education as a Political Tool to Advance Marginalization in Northern Uganda” examines the master narrative manifested in both formal and informal education, including history curricula and textbooks, and its role in promoting the marginalization of youth in the northern region by silencing their voices and experiences of suffering. In particular, Savard argues that a culture of silence is depriving young Ugandans of a chance to make sense of, and work through, the country’s history of violence. This is in line with a forward-looking approach that encourages people to leave the past behind, denying war-affected children the chance to process their traumas and forcing them to suffer in silence.

The analyses of Sierra Leone and Uganda are followed by Michelle Bellino’s exploration of the case of Guatemala, a country that experienced a 36-year civil war as well as a genocide of the indigenous population. Drawing on ethnographic data, her chapter on “Learning through Silence in ‘Postwar’ Guatemala” investigates the nature and implementation of curricular reforms called for in the peace accords that ended the armed conflict in 1996, finding a distinct level of historical silence being promoted through schools. Bellino’s analysis of curricular representations of the conflict and their mediation by teachers in the classroom points to practices that largely discourage critical discussions of the conflict and violence, notably through “selective erasure of agency, power, and accountability.”

Maintaining a focus on the Americas and histories of mass violence toward indigenous populations, the next contribution, by Kirsten Dyck, analyzes recent American history textbooks and their portrayal of colonial violence against indigenous groups in the United States. Her chapter on “Confronting Genocide

Denial in US History Textbooks” deconstructs what she claims to be an often “racist, nationalist, and genocide-denying rhetoric” found in textbooks, through which historical injustices have been obscured in order not to undermine a positive and proud image of the American nation. Dyck suggests that in doing so, US textbooks have perpetuated the marginalization of indigenous groups by silencing their voices, history, and experiences and have thereby prevented many young Americans from understanding these groups’ present-day challenges and struggles.

Continuing the theme of silence surrounding histories of genocide, the last contribution to this section traces, in historical perspective, the processes and difficulties of breaking a long silence surrounding the national trauma of genocide and introducing its teaching in the Armenian education system. Drawing on ethnographic research, Julieta Ktshanyan’s chapter on “Problems around Teaching the History of the Armenian Genocide in Armenian Schools” points to the longstanding avoidance of this sensitive topic in schools, especially among the first generation of genocide survivors, who opted to forget the past. The approach has gradually been abandoned by later generations, who have struggled for their suffering to be recognized. Ktshanyan further draws attention to a continued cautious and evasive approach adopted by both textbook authors and teachers of the older generation, which triggers dissatisfaction among students with their constrained opportunities to learn about the past.

Integrating the Topics of War and Peace into the Classroom: Teacher and Student Voices and Experiences

The third and last section of this volume investigates experiences of integrating the topics of war and peace into the classroom in post-conflict societies through the voices of teachers and students. Denise Bentreovato introduces the section with her chapter, “Whose Past, What Future? Teaching Contested Histories in Contemporary Rwanda and Burundi.” Her study draws on a diachronic and comparative analysis of curricula and textbooks as well as on extensive fieldwork conducted in schools in Rwanda and Burundi to examine these countries’ varying official policies on dealing with the controversial national past. She focuses on their translation into every-day classroom practices by teachers and pupils in the aftermath of war and genocide. In her contribution, Bentreovato calls attention to the pervasive silence, discomfort, and caution found in classrooms as a manifestation of the persistent politicization of education, used to consolidate a victor’s history in Rwanda and amnesia in Burundi. She concludes by suggesting that, in both cases, the situation has left younger generations struggling to make sense of both their past and present in the face of political constraints.

Meenakshi Chhabra's chapter, "A Social-Psychological Perspective on Teaching a Historical Event of Collective Violence: The Case of the 1947 British India Partition," follows Bentrovato's contribution. Partition is a founding event in this region's history and resulted in the emergence of India and Pakistan as "enemy nations." Chhabra's study explores teachers' responses to recent curriculum reform and revised history textbooks in India, which have added complexity and multiperspectivity to the existing discourse on the partition and taken distance from a nationalist narrative that defined Pakistan as the significant Other. Drawing on interviews with history teachers, Chhabra identifies a gap between policy and classroom practice, pointing to the significant role played by teachers' beliefs in determining the degree of implementation or rejection of curricular reform. In her contribution, she maintains that understanding the societal fears, needs, and beliefs that teachers connect to a historical conflict or violent event can help capitalize on opportunities and openings toward sustainable peace.

Along a similar line of argumentation, the last chapter in this section, authored by Clare Magill, draws on the perspectives of history teachers to explore "Approaches to Teaching the Civil War and Franco Dictatorship in Contemporary Spain." Relying on interviews, the author identifies a number of distinct attitudes toward teaching these still highly contentious and divisive issues in Spanish history. She then categorizes teachers as avoiders, containers, risk-takers, and activists, shedding light on the factors that affect the way history educators broach these subjects in their classrooms.

The volume ends with a contribution by Karina V. Korostelina. Her concluding chapter, "History Education in the Midst of Post-conflict Recovery: Lessons Learned," builds on the analyses presented in this volume to draw lessons on common dilemmas faced by history education in post-conflict settings, on key factors and conditions influencing choices in resolving these dilemmas, and on the implications of different approaches and strategies for the success of peacebuilding and reconciliation processes. Korostelina warns against the risks posed by the often monumental or selective histories taught in schools or by their promotion of a culture of silence. She instead underscores the value of a critical approach to history, which, by advocating a nuanced understanding of a conflict's roots, can help "prevent new cycles of violence and increase social responsibility among the younger generation."

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I. Textbooks and Curricula as Tools for Nation-Building: Between Inclusion and Exclusion

Embracing Diversity? Textbook Narratives in Countries with a Legacy of Internal Armed Conflict, 1950 to 2011

Introduction¹

Education has long played multiple roles in molding national societies: as an agency of socialization for the young, a mechanism of stratification, and a tool for turning masses into citizens.² In recent decades, however, scholars of globalization have documented the profound ways in which economic, political, and cultural globalization has impacted national education systems.³ An important facet of this globalization is the rise of global discourses on multiculturalism, human rights, and global citizenship that emphasize subnational diversity and a multicultural and cosmopolitan global society beyond the nation-state.⁴ As articulations of what elites deem legitimate knowledge for children to learn, textbooks in many countries reflect this shift toward globalized models by increasingly incorporating material on the presence, rights, and marginalization of diverse population groups.⁵ An important question, however, concerns the extent to which nation-states embrace such global models of diversity and multiculturalism when their national legitimacy has been severely contested – such as in the aftermath of violent intrastate conflict (wars within countries rather than between them), which has been the dominant form of organized violence since the mid-twentieth century.⁶ Given that such conflict presents a substantial internal challenge to nation-states, it seems reasonable to expect that countries

1 This chapter benefited from related research by participants in Stanford's Comparative Sociology Workshop. In particular, it builds on a collaboration between the author, Susan Garnett Russell, and Francisco O. Ramirez. The collection of the data used in this chapter was funded by a Spencer Foundation Grant.

2 Dreeben, *On What Is Learned in School*; Bowles and Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America*; Ramirez and Boli, "Political Construction of Mass Schooling."

3 Meyer et al., "World Society and the Nation-State"; Dale, "Specifying Globalization Effects."

4 Meyer, Bromley, and Ramirez, "Human Rights in Social Science Textbooks"; Ramirez, "Beyond Achievement."

5 Terra and Bromley, "Globalization of Multicultural Education."

6 Gleditsch et al., "Armed Conflict 1946–2001."

with a history of internal armed conflict might find it more difficult to engage in a curricular reframing toward multiculturalism and diversity.

The present chapter examines this possibility through longitudinal analysis of a unique cross-national dataset coded from 573 secondary school social sciences and humanities textbooks from 80 countries, published between 1950 and 2011. I argue that education systems in countries with a past of internal conflict face a tension between the valorization of multiple ethnic, racial, and religious minority groups contained within the nation on the one hand and the construction of a cohesive and unified nation on the other. The first part of my analysis examines the degree to which discussions of different population groups, their rights, and their marginalization permeate textbooks from countries with a legacy of intrastate war compared to countries without such a legacy. I find that the recent rise of textbook narratives around diversity is rather less pronounced in post-conflict countries. Given this finding, the second part of the analysis reveals that instead of incorporating recent multicultural narratives, textbooks in post-conflict countries appear to place significantly stronger emphasis on celebrating a distinctive and unified nationality. These findings carry important implications for understanding the legacy of violent nation-state contestation in curricular materials in an era of pervasive educational globalization.

The Rise of Multiculturalism and Cosmopolitanism

My inquiry in this chapter is informed by neo-institutional literature on the influence of globalization on national education systems.⁷ From this perspective, globalization shapes national education sectors via powerful global myths and models of what educational content and structure ought to look like, leading to significant similarities in national education systems across the world. Core propositions of the neo-institutional approach include the rise of global educational models celebrating cosmopolitan and multiculturalist perspectives in recent decades.⁸ As far as curricular materials are concerned, neo-institutional scholars have documented the tremendous rise of narratives around globalization and diversity in textbooks from all over the world in the latter part of the twentieth century. Textbooks in many countries increasingly discuss not only topics like globalization and global citizenship but also subnational groups of individuals – women, children, immigrants,

7 Meyer et al., “World Society and the Nation-State”; Meyer and Ramirez, “World Institutionalization of Education.”

8 Ramirez, “Beyond Achievement.”

refugees, indigenous people, and other minorities – and, in many cases, their rights and marginalization in society.⁹

The rise of these narratives amounts to a substantial curricular reframing of the nation-state. On the one hand, the locus shifts from the national to the global, as citizenship and other content becomes globalized. On the other hand, the locus also shifts from the national to the subnational, as society becomes pictured as being made up of people who have experienced discrimination and have rights. By these measures, globalization has involved a renegotiation of the national in curricular materials, as textbooks in many nation-states have come to espouse narratives of multiculturalism and globalization. The present chapter seeks to provide a more nuanced account of this curricular reframing by examining the extent to which textbooks from nation-states with a history of internal conflict are able to embrace the turn toward multiculturalism and diversity in comparison to textbooks from countries without such a violent past.

Violent Conflict, Subnational Diversity, and the Education System

A growing literature on the negative role of education in conflict highlights that despite the notable spread of multiculturalist education around the world, education systems in conflict-affected nations often devalue diversity within the nation, instead promoting nationalist ideologies.¹⁰ At the system level, such devaluation might consist in marginalized groups' unequal access to and exclusion from educational institutions. At the level of content, it might consist in the omission of minorities' experiences or the perpetuation of negative stereotypes about them in curricular materials and classroom teaching. Russell, for instance, finds that educational reforms and materials in post-Genocide Rwanda are utilized to downplay and devalue subnational ethnic and racial diversity in order to build the new and united Rwandan nation.¹¹ The literature on education and conflict therefore implies that textbooks from nations with a legacy of violent conflict might be more prone to silencing the existence and experiences of diverse people in society in favor of a strong focus on the nation.

Indeed, the education system in post-conflict countries presents an obvious avenue for elites seeking to overcome divisions and construct a cohesive national identity. Despite the recent rise of globalized models as discussed above, mass

9 Ramirez, Bromley, and Russell, "Valorization of Humanity"; Terra and Bromley, "Globalization of Multicultural Education."

10 Davies, *Education and Conflict*; King, *From Classrooms to Conflict*; Lange, *Educations in Ethnic Violence*; Bush and Saltarelli, *Two Faces of Education*.

11 Russell, "Role of Education."

education has long been a tool for nation-building and forming national citizens.¹² Constructivist accounts of nationhood and nationalism illustrate the nation as an imagined community,¹³ meaning that it does not exist as a primordial entity but instead is continuously constructed through national myths, symbols, and histories.¹⁴ As a form of contestation to national unity, intrastate war presents a substantial challenge to the imagined national community. Consequently, it is reasonable to posit that the (re)imagination of the nation becomes a particularly pressing task in post-conflict countries, where nationhood is often fragile and elites attempt to integrate disparate and (formerly) hostile groups through forging a strong national identity.¹⁵ Based on the existing literature, we should thus expect that textbooks in countries with a past of internal conflict place less emphasis on discussing the experiences of diverse population groups and more emphasis on articulating a shared nationality among their citizens. The objective of this chapter is to examine descriptive empirical evidence for this hypothesis by comparing textbook content in post-conflict countries with textbook content in countries without a recent history of conflict.

Methods

Description of the Data

The data for this chapter consists in a unique dataset coded from 573 textbooks from 80 countries, published between 1950 and 2011. The textbooks in the sample are in history, social studies, geography, and civics, covering middle and high school (roughly grades 5 through 13). The dataset was compiled as part of a multiyear textbook study at Stanford University, and most of the books were coded from the vast collection of the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, with the extremely helpful support of the Institute and its librarians. Additional textbooks were obtained from various collections at Stanford libraries, private collections, and local bookstores and publishers worldwide.

Textbooks represent excellent opportunities to study the construction of social categories such as diversity and nationhood through educational narratives and schooling. They are analyzed here as social, political, and cultural artifacts rather than assessed in terms of their curricular content per se. From this angle,

12 Ramirez and Boli, "Political Construction of Mass Schooling."

13 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

14 Calhoun, "Nationalism and Ethnicity."

15 See Russell, "Role of Education"; Gallagher, *Education in Divided Societies*; Bush and Saltarelli, *Two Faces of Education*.

textbooks are seen as reflections of what elites consider legitimate narratives and dominant societal values that children should learn. They are a central part of the intended curriculum; in many countries, they might be the only teaching resource available to a teacher. I do not make claims about the extent to which textbook content is taught by teachers or internalized by students. Rather, the aim is to examine textbook content as officially sanctioned discourse about diversity and nationhood.

The textbooks were coded using a standardized protocol developed by the research group at Stanford. The protocol is relatively straightforward and calls for little interpretation. Consequently, reliability was not a major issue, but we closely monitored inter-coder reliability throughout the development of the protocol. Members of the Stanford research team coded as many books as possible, with the rest coded by foreign language speakers who were carefully trained and supervised.

While the dataset is the most extensive available cross-national data on textbooks, a few caveats are worth mentioning. The number of textbooks from each country or each year in the sample differs, and not all countries are represented in the textbooks. The findings in this chapter therefore cannot be generalized beyond the textbooks and countries included here. However, every effort has been made to achieve a balanced sample across decades and world regions. Furthermore, while it is impossible to ascertain whether each book was heavily used in a given country, 73 percent of the coded textbooks were developed to meet official curriculum requirements (as indicated by a stamp or note of official approval).

Indicators of Diversity and Nationhood

To measure the extent to which discussions around diversity are present in the textbooks, each book has been coded on nine dichotomous indicators capturing the coverage, discussion of rights, and discussion of marginalization of a number of population groups. The first three indicators measure whether the following groups are discussed in at least a paragraph or section: 1) immigrants and/or refugees, 2) indigenous peoples, and 3) other racial, religious, or ethnic minorities. The next three indicators measure whether each of these groups is discussed as having rights. The last three indicators measure whether each of these groups is discussed as experiencing, or being victim to, any oppression, marginalization, or discrimination by others in society. With all nine indicators, a value of 0 indicates “no” and a value of 1 indicates “yes.” All of the indicators have been constructed to call for as little interpretation as possible on behalf of the coders. For instance, the textbook had to explicitly use the language of “rights” for

indicators four through six, and for indicators seven through nine had to explicitly frame descriptions as discriminatory (coders were instructed not to code things they found to be oppressive if these were not discussed as such by the textbook itself).

Evidently, the first three indicators are more limited measures of diversity narratives than the remaining six. For example, a Kenyan social studies textbook from 2008 discusses refugees and their reasons for fleeing their home countries, but discusses neither their rights nor their discriminatory treatment.¹⁶ Therefore, this textbook is coded as 1 for discussion of refugees/immigrants, but 0 for discussion of their rights and 0 for discussion of their marginalization. In contrast, a German social studies textbook from 2005 contains detailed discussions of various types of immigrants (including refugees), their rights as enshrined in international law, as well as potential marginalization in German society.¹⁷ Consequently, this textbook is coded as 1 for all three indicators relating to refugees/immigrants.

To measure the extent to which textbooks emphasize “the nation,” each textbook has been coded on one dichotomous indicator measuring whether the book celebrates a distinctive national state or national society and culture, with a value of 0 indicating “no” and a value of 1 indicating “yes.” The purpose of the indicator is to assess whether textbooks depict a unique and countrywide nationality. A US history textbook from 2000, titled *The American Nation*, nicely illustrates the sort of textbook characteristics that would be coded as 1 for this indicator.¹⁸ The book title already suggests imagery of a bounded and distinctive national entity; furthermore the book cover features an eagle and American flag, with an imprint of the US constitution in the background. The unit headings consist of phrases like: “Reviewing Our Early Heritage,” “The Constitution of the United States,” “The Nation Takes Shape,” “The Nation Expands,” “Division and Reunion,” “Transforming the Nation,” and “A New Role for the Nation.” The celebration of a distinctive nation – the United States – is abundantly clear. An important conceptual distinction in the literature concerns nationalism based on citizenship versus nationalism based on ethnicity, but these ideal forms rarely exist as such in reality; most instances of nationalism include claims to both shared citizenship and shared ethnicity.¹⁹ Consequently, my indicator does not capture the distinctions between civic and ethnic nationalism but rather identifies a general emphasis on national unity.

16 Ondieki, Mbugu, and Muraya, *Comprehensive Social Studies*.

17 Mattes, *Team 2*.

18 Davidson, Castillo, and Stoff, *American Nation*.

19 Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*; Kohn, *Idea of Nationalism*.

Methods of Analysis

The analysis in this chapter seeks to ascertain whether textbooks in countries that have undergone internal violent conflict in the recent past differ from textbooks in countries that have not recently experienced such conflict, in the extent to which they contain discussions of diversity and nationhood. The measure for whether a country has recently experienced internal conflict (i. e., is considered a “post-conflict” country) is a dichotomous variable coded as 1 if the country of a given textbook experienced intrastate armed conflict in any of the 25 years prior to the textbook publication year (but not during the publication year). This variable has been coded from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program Armed Conflict Dataset Version Four²⁰ and the Correlates of War Intrastate-War-Data Version Four.²¹ An intrastate armed conflict is defined as a contested incompatibility concerning government or territory (or both), where the use of armed force between a government and at least one internal opposition group results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a year.²² Consequently, this post-conflict variable is coded as 0 if the country of a given textbook did not experience intrastate armed conflict in any of the 25 years prior to the textbook publication year or in the year of publication itself. Countries that were experiencing intrastate armed conflict *during* the textbook publication year are not included here, as the analysis seeks to establish a clear contrast between countries that have a past of violent conflict and those that do not.

The method of data analysis is descriptive and longitudinal. I divide the books by publication date into two time periods: pre-1990 (1950 to 1989) and post-1990 (1990 to 2011). This periodization is based on prior cross-national textbook studies that found textbooks published after 1990 to be significantly more likely to incorporate globalist models.²³ In each time period, I then consider whether the percentage of textbooks mentioning the various indicators of diversity and nationhood is statistically significantly different in post-conflict countries than in countries without a recent legacy of conflict, using one-tailed t-tests.

20 Themnér and Wallensteen, “Armed Conflicts”; Gleditsch et al., *Armed Conflict*.

21 Sarkees and Wayman, *Resort to War*.

22 Themnér and Wallensteen, “Armed Conflicts.”

23 Buckner and Russell, “Portraying the Global.”

Results

Table 1 reports the percentages of textbooks mentioning the various indicators of diversity and the indicator for nationhood, contrasting countries with a past of violent intrastate conflict to countries without such a past for each of the two time periods. I first examine longitudinal patterns of diversity narratives in textbooks. In the pre-1990 period, there are no significant differences between post-conflict countries and those not affected by conflict, apart from one major exception: in this early period, a significantly higher percentage of textbooks from post-conflict countries discusses indigenous people and their marginalization. This difference is statistically significant and ranges from 13 percentage points in the case of marginalization to 21 percentage points in the case of simple coverage of indigenous people. Quite remarkably, this translates into 58 percent of textbooks from post-conflict countries discussing indigenous people and 25 percent discussing their marginalization in the pre-1990s period. With respect to the other indicators, the differences are negligible and none are statistically significant, with textbooks from post-conflict countries containing slightly more discussion for all indicators other than indigenous rights and the rights of other minorities.

As we shift to the post-1990s period, the pattern changes. Here, the percentages of textbooks discussing immigrants/refugees, indigenous peoples, and minorities, as well as immigrant/refugee rights and indigenous rights, are significantly lower in post-conflict countries than in non-conflict countries. All of these differences are statistically significant. They stem from the fact that all but one of these indicators (indigenous rights) increase tremendously from the earlier period to the recent period in non-conflict countries, but not in post-conflict countries. Here, coverage of immigrants/refugees and other minorities remains stagnant, while the indicators even decrease for discussions of indigenous people and discussions of the rights of immigrants/refugees. Practically speaking, the differences between post-conflict and non-conflict countries range from 11 percentage points in the case of covering other minorities to 15 percentage points in the case of covering indigenous peoples and immigrants/refugees. While the jump in discussions of indigenous rights in textbooks is almost as big in post-conflict countries as in non-conflict countries (in each case, the percentage doubles), textbooks from non-conflict countries are still significantly more likely to discuss indigenous rights in the recent period. There are no statistically significant differences in the indicators for discussions of other minorities' rights or discussions of any group's marginalization.

The analysis thus far indicates that post-conflict countries do not seem to have incorporated recent multicultural narratives of diverse population groups and their rights to the same extent as textbooks in non-conflict countries. Instead, when looking at narratives of nationhood, as reported in the last row of Table 1,

we find a higher emphasis in both time periods on celebrating the nation in textbooks from post-conflict nations. In the pre-1990s period, around 65 percent of textbooks from post-conflict countries celebrate a distinctive nation-state versus 53 percent of textbooks from countries without a recent history of internal conflict: a difference of 12 percentage points. In the post-1990s period, the difference is very similar at 13 percentage points, with 47 percent of textbooks from countries without recent conflict celebrating the nation compared to 61 percent of textbooks from post-conflict countries. While the celebration of the nation in textbooks has slightly fallen in both “types” of countries as we move to the more recent time period, the stronger emphasis on the nation in post-conflict countries persists. In both time periods, this difference is statistically significant.

Table 1: Discussion of Diversity and Nationhood in Textbooks (1950–2011)

	Pre-1990		Post-1990	
	No Past of Conflict (n=247)	Past of Conflict (n=48)	No Past of Conflict (n=185)	Past of Conflict (n=94)
<i>Percentage of Textbooks with:</i>				
<i>Diversity Coverage</i>				
Discussion of Immigrants and/or Refugees	36.44	43.75	61.20	46.24***
Discussion of Indigenous Peoples	37.25	58.33***	46.45	31.18***
Discussion of Other Minorities	41.70	47.92	61.20	50.54**
<i>Diversity Rights</i>				
Immigrants and/or Refugees have Rights	4.86	6.25	17.49	4.30***
Indigenous Peoples have Rights	4.45	2.08	8.74	4.30*
Other Minorities have Rights	8.10	6.25	19.67	18.28
<i>Diversity Marginalization</i>				
Immigrants and/ or Refugees are Marginalized	8.10	12.50	30.60	27.96
Indigenous Peoples are Marginalized	11.74	25.00***	21.86	18.28
Other Minorities are Marginalized	14.17	18.75	28.96	34.41
<i>Nationhood</i>				
Celebration of the Nation	52.85	65.22*	46.70	61.29**

*** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$, one-tailed tests

Notes: Significance indicates t-test comparing difference between means of textbooks from post-conflict and non-conflict countries. I code a country as having a past of conflict if it experienced intrastate armed conflict in any of the 25 years prior to textbook publication, but not in the year of publication.

Discussion

The main results of the analysis suggest a number of patterns. First, in the early time period there are no substantial differences between post-conflict and non-conflict countries as far as diversity narratives are concerned, with the exception that textbooks from post-conflict countries are significantly more likely to discuss indigenous people and their marginalization. Second, substantial differences in diversity narratives emerge between post-conflict and non-conflict countries in the later time period, with post-conflict countries falling behind non-conflict countries in their discussion of all minority population groups, immigrant/refugee rights, and indigenous rights. Instead, textbooks from post-conflict countries throughout both time periods place a stronger emphasis on celebrating a unique and countrywide nationality.

These findings indicate that textbooks in countries with a legacy of intrastate war incorporate discussions of subnational diversity differently than in other countries, but that these patterns are time-sensitive. The rise of diversity narratives in textbooks during the recent globalized period, as documented by prior analyses, appears to be less dramatic in post-conflict countries, particularly concerning discussions of immigrants/refugees and their rights, indigenous peoples and their rights, and other ethnic/racial minorities. The finding of more constrained discussions around diversity in textbooks from post-conflict countries echoes Bromley's finding that textbooks from countries that are less legitimate in terms of political, cultural, and security dimensions tend to incorporate less discussion of diversity rights.²⁴ It is thus possible that the heightened emphasis on a society made up of subnational groups, propagated by recent global discourses on multiculturalism, is more difficult to incorporate for post-conflict nations that may be wary of potential demands resulting from an extensive acknowledgment of diversity. The acknowledgment of refugee rights might be particularly difficult to embrace in the aftermath of war, a time when urgent questions emerge concerning nation-state responsibility for war-related refugees. As evidenced in Table 1, talking about groups' marginalization in textbooks appears to be less difficult for post-conflict nations than talking about the other topics, possibly because these discourses do not necessarily have to be tied to rights. This is an interesting finding that warrants further analysis, as it suggests room for selective incorporation of global multiculturalist discourses, depending on national histories and legacies. The finding that textbooks from post-conflict countries during the early time period display a greater emphasis on indigenous groups might reflect the fact that a number of post-conflict countries looked back at that time on a relatively recent history of colonial

24 Bromley, "Legitimacy."

subjugation. To test this explanation, multivariate analyses are needed in order to better isolate any separate association with conflict.

Instead of valorizing multiple diverse experiences and identities through curricular materials, the books sampled here point to the use of textbooks to inculcate the sense of a unified and unique nation in the aftermath of internal conflict. It thus appears that the education system in post-conflict countries represents an especially suitable arena for the (re)construction of national myths, narratives, and histories, potentially at the cost of devaluing subnational diversity, as illustrated in this chapter. This association between a legacy of internal conflict and narratives of nationhood in textbooks is addressed in more detail in a related paper, which isolates this association by controlling for a myriad of textbook-level and country-level variables.²⁵ However, as suggested in the literature on different types of nationalism, there are many different ways in which textbook authors might depict a unique and distinctive nation in seeking to minimize difference among the people of a nation-state that has recently experienced contestation. For example, a South African history textbook from 1980 celebrates a distinctive South African nation (it spends several pages introducing the student to the South African national anthem, its writer, and its importance) and does so from a distinctly white South African perspective: the celebrated nation is imagined as being based on ethnicity.²⁶ In contrast, a South African social studies textbook from 2008 emphasizes *Ubuntu* (a philosophy that roughly translates to personhood) as the binding force in South African society, likening it to global human rights ideology.²⁷ Evidently, these are both celebrations of a distinctive nation, but they are rather different in tone. A fruitful area of future research thus concerns potential qualitative differences in how nationality and nationhood are narrated in the curricular materials of conflict-affected societies, particularly during the latter part of the twentieth century.

The analysis in this chapter suggests that there are important differences in narratives of subnational diversity and nationhood between textbooks in countries with a legacy of civil war and those in countries without such a legacy. Textbooks in post-conflict countries do not seem to have incorporated recent multicultural narratives of diverse population groups and their rights to the same extent as textbooks in non-conflict countries. Instead, post-conflict countries appear to demonstrate a pervasive drive to build the nation through textbooks. Further empirical research is needed, however, to tease apart the underlying factors and causal pathways through which a legacy of violent intrastate conflict impacts the discussion of these important topics in textbooks – both in the past and in the present.

25 Lerch, Russell, and Ramirez, “Depictions of the Nation.”

26 Stander and Olivier, *Junior History*.

27 Gillmer et al., *Life Orientation for the New Nation*.

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Kim Foulds

The Somali Question: Protracted Conflict, National Narratives, and Curricular Politics in Kenya

Lauded as the silver bullet to nearly all challenges in developing countries, education sits at a precarious intersection of policy promise and the anxiety of practice in conflict and post-conflict states. The process of textbook revision to address a changing environment and curriculum is given little attention. When national narratives are revised, they are positioned as a clean slate to unite warring sides under one unified national identity. What, then, comes of education systems in states with protracted transboundary conflicts or states that also provide social services to the opposition's nationals? Kenya offers an almost overwhelmingly complicated model for the challenges of curriculum and conflict. With an on-again, off-again conflict with Somalia since the 1960s, as well as sizeable Somali refugee and Kenyan Somali populations, the ways in which Kenya represents Somalia, its transboundary conflict with Somalia, and Somalia's ongoing civil wars, matter. As the cliché goes, "When Kenya sneezes, East Africa catches a cold."

This chapter provides a brief background on relations between Somalia and Kenya, as well as the historical and current status of Somalis in Kenya (refugees and Kenyan nationals) to determine how Kenya's curriculum positions the conflict within the classroom. When viewed through the framework of education, these conflicts play out in very specific ways, particularly with regard to access and representation. This project looks at the ways in which regional and national conflict are filtered through national institutions and represented in the curriculum. Through an analysis of recently revised social studies textbooks that have been conceptualized, written, edited, and produced on a national level, the project explores textbook portrayals of Somalis specifically, and refugees broadly, in order to analyze the intersections of curricular and state policy in Kenya. Using primary-level social studies textbooks, this study demonstrates that national textbooks thoroughly reflect government policy toward Somali refugees, complemented by a revisionist history that positions Kenya as a victim of regional instability rather than a contributor to that insecurity.

Background on Somalis in Kenya¹

Somali-dominated regions of Kenya tend to be less developed economically and in terms of social services than the rest of the country. Moreover, increasing tensions between Kenya and Somalia, as well as resentment toward Somalis in Kenya and Kenyan Somalis, have highlighted the Kenyan state's inability to address the "Somali question." Tensions between Somalis and the state, however, are not a recent phenomenon. Along with a significant Somali population in the Nairobi neighborhood of Eastleigh, Somali pastoralists make up the majority in Kenya's North Eastern Province (NEP, formerly the Northern Frontier District or NFD), an area of the country historically marginalized and neglected. In addition to frequent droughts and famine in a place where people rely on livestock production, NEP has suffered and continues to suffer from political, social, and economic marginalization. All social indicators show clearly that development in NEP has lagged behind that in other provinces in Kenya.²

There was, in fact, a total absence of educational facilities for the Somali community in Kenya up to World War II, when slight progress began to rectify what had become a glaring deficiency. Until 1943, not a single primary, intermediate, or secondary school existed throughout the Northern Frontier District, the largest province in Kenya, where the bulk of the Somali pastoralists lived.³

As independence approached, tensions increased. When, in 1962, the British appointed the NFD Commission to gather public views on the issue of secession, more than 80 percent of the population was in favor. This finding made little difference, as the British granted Kenyan nationalists control of areas in the NFD that overwhelmingly supported secession, and the region became the North Eastern Province of Kenya in 1963.⁴ As Lochery explains, "British priorities lay more with a safe exit strategy from a crumbling empire than previously implied principles of self-determination."⁵ Violent protests spread in response to the implementation of the British administration's security measures, eventually evolving to include attacks on Kenyan military personnel. As a result, following independence on December 12, 1963, one of Jomo Kenyatta's first actions as

1 This brief historical overview is not intended as an exhaustive analysis of historical tensions and conflict in Kenya, the NEP, or Somalia. For more in-depth analysis, please refer to the sources cited.

2 See Abdulsamed, "Somali Investment in Kenya"; Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, "An Identity Crisis?."

3 See Turton, "Introduction and Development"; Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, "An Identity Crisis?."

4 See Castagno, "The Somali-Kenyan Controversy"; Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, "An Identity Crisis?"; Lochery, "Rendering Difference Visible"; Mahmoud, "Seeking Citizenship on the Border."

5 Lochery, "Rendering Difference Visible," 620.

President was to declare a state of emergency in the province, beginning the Shifta War.⁶ Approximately 2,000 Somalis, supported by the Somali government, were killed by Kenyan security forces between 1964 and 1967.⁷

Militarization of the North Eastern Province carried from Kenyatta's presidency through to his vice president and eventual successor, Daniel arap Moi. In 1977, Vice President Moi announced a screening of all Somalis after receiving reports that the Somali government was issuing passports to Kenyan Somalis to go to Somalia for military training.⁸ Human rights abuses were rampant, including massacres and the forced settlement of nomadic peoples. Two episodes in the early 1980s, the Garissa (1980) and Wagalla (1984) massacres, are particularly well documented. In the Garissa massacre, it is estimated that hundreds were killed and thousands interrogated and beaten by security personnel. During the Wagalla massacre, an estimated 5,000 men were taken to the Wagalla airstrip, beaten and starved before being shot by army personnel.⁹ In 2011, the former commissioner of the Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission, Ron Slye, called the Wagalla massacre, "the worst human rights violation in Kenya's history."¹⁰

Identity checks and state surveillance also increased in urban areas dominated by Somalis. In one raid in May 1989, police in Nairobi raided homes, businesses, hotels, restaurants, and *matatus* (minibuses), checking for identity papers. Police surrounded a mosque in Eastleigh, arrested worshippers, and confiscated identity cards. Somali women married to Kenyan men were detained until they could produce a valid marriage certificate, a document that many had never obtained. About 800 people subsequently appeared in court charged with holding forged or defaced identity cards, being in the country illegally, or disturbing the peace.¹¹

Events in Somalia and global politics have exacerbated these problems. The increasing number of Somali refugees in Kenya and the overcrowding of the available refugee camps have placed huge burdens on the state institutions working to distinguish citizens from noncitizens. With the rise of al-Shabaab and Kenya's invasion of Somalia, Somalis in Kenya have experienced an increasingly militarized environment. Raids in Eastleigh and other Somali neighborhoods in Nairobi and Mombasa have become more regular, with Kenyan police even timing their raids around Friday prayers.¹² Adding to tensions between Somali and other Kenyan communities in Nairobi has been the rapid population growth in Eastleigh, which has led to a significant reduction in affordable housing. As a result, many long-term

6 See Lochery, "Rendering Difference Visible."

7 Otunnu, "Factors Affecting the Treatment of Kenyan-Somalis."

8 Lochery, "Rendering Difference Visible."

9 Kenya Human Rights Commission, "Foreigners at Home."

10 *BBC News*, "Wagalla Massacre."

11 Lochery, "Rendering Difference Visible."

12 *Ibid*; Warner, "Somalis in Kenya Are Used to Raids."

residents have left Eastleigh for neighboring slums.¹³ Linked to the rise of this militarized environment is the so-called Global War on Terror, the international military campaign created with the goal of eliminating al-Qaeda, its splinter cells, and other militant organizations after the attacks of September 11, 2001. Kenya, having suffered through the 1998 bombing of the American embassy in Nairobi, sits at a particularly precarious intersection of the Global War on Terror and the rise and expansion of al-Shabaab.

In 2008, al-Shabaab was designated a terrorist organization by the US government. It is alleged to have links to al-Qaeda, although its focus is regional rather than global. Roque explains that there is little agreement on when or how al-Shabaab emerged. Moreover, details about its command and operational frameworks are difficult to obtain, given that the group is fluid, with internal variations in leadership, tactics, and ideology.¹⁴ This growth of al-Shabaab, as well as Kenya's position as an ally in the Global War on Terror, has exacerbated tensions between Kenya and Somalis in Kenya, including Kenyan Somalis. As Otunnu explains, the Kenyan government has never really differentiated between Somalis in Kenya and Kenyan-born Somalis: "The image of Somalis seen in the larger historical context of conflicts between the two states and between the central government and the North-Eastern Province have blurred the distinction between Somali refugees and Kenyan-Somalis. As a matter of fact, the distinction is often arbitrary."¹⁵

A significant source of tension between Kenyans and Somalis is the status of Somali refugees living in Kenya, particularly because al-Shabaab has used refugee camps for recruitment, which has intensified the threat of refugees to Kenya's national security.¹⁶ Registered Somali refugees represent approximately 61 percent of the 534,000 refugees in Kenya,¹⁷ the majority of which live in the overcrowded refugee camps of Dadaab, a town located in NEP. Dadaab, the largest refugee center in the world, has remained almost completely ethnically homogeneous, and its current population far exceeds its original combined capacity of 90,000 persons.¹⁸ Refugees living in Dadaab are mostly unemployed, and two-thirds of the population is younger than 35. Apart from general insecurity related to crime, rampant sexual violence and political insecurity, including ethnic tension and religious extremism, afflict the camp.¹⁹

13 Abdulsamed, "Somali Investment in Kenya."

14 Roque, "Somalia: Understanding Al-Shabaab."

15 Otunnu, "Factors Affecting the Treatment of Kenyan-Somalis," 25.

16 Burns, "Feeling the Pinch."

17 UNHCR, "Refugees in the Horn of Africa."

18 Burns, "Feeling the Pinch."

19 Ibid.

Many Somali refugees also live in urban areas in Kenya, but the size of these populations is largely unknown. Official figures suggest there are around 46,000 refugees in Nairobi, but unofficial estimates suggest the number is closer 100,000.²⁰ Despite the high numbers of these populations, information available on them is scarce. Somali groups are often very mobile and reluctant to come forward for support due to fears that they could be deported or sent to refugee camps. For refugees living in Nairobi, exposure to police abuses and extortion, a lack of access to employment and basic services, discrimination, and xenophobic attitudes are commonplace.²¹

The government of Kenya has increasingly carried out illegal raids in Somali communities across urban areas in Kenya. Kenyan Vice President of Home Affairs Moody Awori made a statement in 2004 pleading for all refugees in Nairobi to return to the camps:

I am asking all refugees to report to the camps and those that will be found to be in the city and other urban places without authorization will be treated like any other illegal aliens. . . . The government will soon mount a crackdown on these illegal aliens with a view to flushing them out.²²

Consequently, the frequency and severity of roundups of Somali refugees has increased. In 2012, Human Rights Watch reported that the Kenyan police tortured and abused more than 1,000 refugees, asylum seekers, and Somali Kenyans in Nairobi as part of police responses to terrorist attacks.²³ In March 2014, the government of Kenya indicated a commitment to forcibly moving all Somali refugees from urban areas in Kenya to refugee centers. The acting commissioner for the Department of Refugee Affairs (DRA), Harun Komen, indicated that any refugees found in urban areas who were unwilling to move to the camps would be arrested. The DRA asked any Kenyans with knowledge of refugees ignoring the directive to report them immediately.²⁴ As Amnesty International reported, Operation Usalama Watch followed, during which more than 1,000 Somalis were forcibly relocated to refugee camps and hundreds of others were deported to Somalia.²⁵ By April 9, 2014, Interior Minister Joseph Ole Lenku declared that nearly 4,000 people had been arrested. Those detained were kept in police stations without charge, in unsanitary conditions, crowded cells, and without food.²⁶

20 Pavanello, Elhawary, and Pantuliano, "Hidden and Exposed"; Wagacha and Guiney, "Plight of Urban Refugees."

21 Pavanello, Elhawary, and Pantuliano, "Hidden and Exposed."

22 Quoted in Burns, "Feeling the Pinch," 10.

23 Migiro, "Kenya Police Raped, Tortured Refugees."

24 Mohamed, "Refugees to be Moved."

25 Amnesty International, "Somalis Scapegoats in Counter-Terror Crackdown."

26 Human Rights Watch, "Kenya: End Abusive Round-Ups."

In November 2013, Kenya agreed to a framework for the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees after the signing of the “Tripartite Agreement Between the Governments of Kenya and Somalia and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.” Included in the agreement were the following:

- f) **Underscoring** the obligation of the Government of the Federal Republic of Somalia, while respecting the right of all persons to return to their country, to create conditions for voluntary, safe and organized return of refugees to Somalia;
- g) **Recognizing** the hospitality of Kenya to one of the highest number of Somali refugees in the world;
- h) **Acknowledging** that regional security is a concern for all parties, and that Kenya has borne a huge economic, environmental and social burden, arising from hosting large numbers of refugees and asylum seekers from Somalia . . .²⁷

In December 2014, the International Organization of Migration (IOM), in collaboration with UNHCR, began voluntary repatriation of the first 94 Somali refugees under the provisions of the agreement, with the ultimate goal to repatriate 10,000 Somalis.²⁸

Educational Opportunities for Somali Refugees

Kenya implemented universal primary education (UPE) in 2004, a provision the Government of Kenya extends to both refugees and nationals. The reality of this policy for urban refugees, however, is that families are limited in their ability to access UPE. Many refugees lack awareness of their rights and are unable to exercise them. According to Wagacha and Guiney, the right to free primary education in Nairobi is dependent on where one resides, as some schools are more welcoming to refugees than others.²⁹ To register a child refugee for primary school a form of official documentation is required, such as parent or guardian identification and the child’s birth certificate – documentation that many urban Somali refugees do not have.³⁰ Registration then forces families into refugee camps. According to the Kenya Citizenship and Immigration Act of 2011, Part VI: Immigration Controls, Section 46 (Learning Institutions):

27 UNHCR, “Tripartite Agreement,” 2, emphasis in the original.

28 Jubat, “First Batch of Refugees Return Home.”

29 Wagacha and Guiney, “Plight of Urban Refugees.”

30 Pavanello, Elhawary, and Pantuliano, “Hidden and Exposed”; Wagacha and Guiney, “Plight of Urban Refugees.”

46. (1) A learning institution and a person in charge of a learning institution providing training or instruction shall before admitting a person for purposes of training or instruction ensure that a person is not—
- a) A foreign national who is in the country illegally;
 - b) A foreign national whose status does not authorize him or her to receive such training or instruction by such person; or
 - c) A foreign national on terms or conditions in a capacity different from those authorized in such foreign national status.
- (2) Any person, being in charge of learning institution, who allows a student who is required under this Act to obtain a student's pass to attend such institution before such pupil is in possession of a pupil's pass, commits an offence.³¹

Additionally, it is not uncommon for headmasters to charge “admissions fees” to refugee children, adding to the challenging costs of transportation, books, uniforms, and desks.³²

Even for Somali refugees going to school inside the refugee camps, the Kenyan government insists that all students in Kenya learn from the Kenyan national curriculum. Thus, while UNHCR's policy is that the curriculum for UNHCR-funded primary and secondary schools follow the curriculum of the “country or area of origin,”³³ schools in Dadaab use the Kenyan curriculum.³⁴

Methodology

Because all students attend public schools in Kenya, including in Kenya's refugee camps, this study seeks to examine how the conflict between Somalia and Kenya is mitigated through the national curriculum. When viewed through the framework of education, these conflicts play out in very specific ways, particularly with regard to access and representation.

While Kenya has a vibrant national publishing industry, this study privileged primary-level social studies textbooks (Standards 1–8) published from 2004 to 2006 by the Kenya Literature Bureau, since this is the only publishing house to receive the Ministry's stamp of approval for adequately addressing the issues described above.³⁵ To define representation, I use McCarthy's definition:

31 Government of Kenya. “Kenya Citizenship and Immigration Act.”

32 Pavanello, Elhawary, and Pantuliano, “Hidden and Exposed.”

33 UNHCR, “Education Field Guidelines.”

34 Spindler, “Back to School.”

35 For more information on this process, please see Foulds, “The Continua of Identities.” The textbooks considered in this study are: Omwoyo, *Primary Social Studies* (Standards 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8); Omwoyo and Oyaya, *Primary Social Studies* (Standards 1 and 5).

By “representation,” I am not simply referring to the presence or absence of pictures of minorities in textbooks. By representation I mean the whole process of who gets to define whom, when, and how. Who has control over the production of pictures and images in this society?³⁶

Kellner’s understanding of textual analysis directed my study of the above-mentioned books. As he explains:

Texts, in the post-structuralist view, should be read as the expression of a multiplicity of voices rather than as the enunciation of one single ideological voice which is then to be specified and attacked. Texts thus require multivalent readings, and a set of critical or textual strategies that will unfold their contradictions, contestatory marginal elements, and structured silences. These strategies include analyzing how, for example, the margins of texts might be as significant as the center in conveying ideological positions, or how the margins of a text might deconstruct ideological positions affirmed in the text by contradicting or undercutting them, or how what is left unsaid is as important as what is actually said.³⁷

During my readings of the textbooks, I made notes of patterns and surprises, addressing questions including (but not limited to): Who is shown and discussed? Who is not shown and/or discussed? For those shown, where are they situated?

Approaching the textbooks in this way encouraged the analysis to be as “interested in how ideology fails as in how it succeeds, in how ideological texts are sites of tension and dissonance even when they seem most harmonious and successful.”³⁸

Findings and Discussion

Kenya’s equivalent of a zero-tolerance policy for Somali refugees, whether they live in cities or in camps, is clearly articulated in the national curriculum. While tolerance and appreciation of national diversity resonate in the earlier primary school grades, specifically Standards 1–3, the tone dramatically changes in Standard 4, advancing to a discourse around the dangers of allowing refugees into “your” country and the measures citizens should take to protect the country from such unproductive entities. Additionally, while the negative impact of conflict is clear (i.e., refugees), the language around different countries’ contributions to regional instability in East Africa entirely removes Kenya from the historical conflict continuum, thereby suggesting that the state and its citizens have no responsibility for national or regional insecurity.

³⁶ McCarthy, *Uses of Culture*, 114.

³⁷ Kellner, *Media Culture*, 112.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 114.

Overall, the xenophobic ideology of the state is well represented in the national curriculum, though it comes through more commonly in textbooks for older students. In earlier grades, Standards 1–4, there is a strong sense of national unity and tolerance. For example, from Standard 2, “Our School Neighbourhood”:

People are social. They live together in a community. People living together form a society. They do many things together. The things we do together are known as **social activities**. We carry out social activities to enjoy ourselves. Social activities help us make friends.³⁹

Other passages focus on the diversity of Kenya’s people. For example, a section in the Standard 1 textbook discussing the many different types of home found in the country states, “This is a Somali house. The people in dry areas live in such houses.”⁴⁰ A woman in a hijab sits among a diverse group of men and women learning more about medical care for children in an image from Standard 2 to accompany a lesson on protecting children.⁴¹ Later in the book, images accompany text to teach children about places of worship: “This is a **church**. Christians pray in a church. This is a **mosque**. Muslims pray in a Mosque.”⁴²

A lesson on “Social Activities in our Community” in the Standard 2 textbook is accompanied by an image of eleven men kneeling on prayer rugs, bent in prayer. The questions ask students to think about the following: “What do you see in the picture? Where do you go for your prayers? **Prayers** bring us together. We live well when we pray together. We should obey our parents and respect God.”⁴³

“Our People” are discussed in a unit on cultural activities in the Standard 4 textbook:

Each of the communities in our province has a different culture from that of the other communities. For example, the Abaluyia have a different culture from that of Agikuyu, Luo, Somali, Abagusii or Mijikenda. That means that each of our communities leads a different life from the rest of the other people.⁴⁴

A unit in the Standard 4 textbook reviews “The People of our Province” and discusses the Nilotes and the Cushites.⁴⁵ The accompanying review questions ask students to “name the children you know from the Cushitic language group.”⁴⁶ A unit further along in the Standard 4 textbook on “The Culture of our People” briefly explains the transformation of religion across Kenya:

39 Omwoyo, *Primary Social Studies* (Standard 2), 104, emphasis in the original.

40 Omwoyo and Oyaya, *Primary Social Studies* (Standard 1), 5.

41 Omwoyo, *Primary Social Studies* (Standard 2), 85.

42 *Ibid.*, 97, emphasis in the original.

43 *Ibid.*, 104, emphasis in the original.

44 Omwoyo, *Primary Social Studies* (Standard 4), 50.

45 *Ibid.*, 32–35.

46 *Ibid.*, 35.

The people of our province no longer pray in shrines. Many of our people do not belong to the traditional religions. They have become Christians, Sikhs, Muslims while others are Hindu. The Christians pray in churches, Muslims pray in mosques and Hindus pray in temples. Our people believe that God created us and gives what we need.⁴⁷

Sometimes “our people” do not agree with each other. Standard 4 discusses some of the causes of conflict in society:

The following are some of the reasons why conflicts occur in our province:

- Failing to share resources.
- Belonging to another political party.
- Our leaders at times make us to hate one another, when they tell us that people from other provinces or regions are not good. We should not hate or fight our brothers and sisters from other provinces.
- People are denied their rights.
- When head teacher, teachers, and pupils do not work as a team.
- When families do not respect one another.⁴⁸

Despite this focus on tolerance and harmony, as the Standard 4 book progresses clear distinctions are made between “us” and “them.” On citizenship:

A citizen is a person who belongs to a certain country. For example, you are a Kenyan citizen because Kenya is your home. There are people who live in Kenya, but Kenya is not their country. These people are **foreigners**. They are citizens of other countries. In Kenya, a Kenyan citizen is treated differently from the way foreigners are treated. These benefits are known as **rights**.⁴⁹

When a citizen does (begrudgingly) come across a “foreigner,” he or she has particular responsibilities: “Foreigners must be allowed by the government to visit our country. If one of us hides a foreigner in his/her home, it is our duty to report to the authorities of such a person. The foreigner may be dangerous to our country.”⁵⁰

The Standard 5 textbook offers students additional insight into what makes a good citizen:

As Kenyans we have a duty to make our country a better place to live. Non-Kenyans may not be interested to make Kenya a good place because they do not live here. . . .

Defence of our Country: Even though we have an army to protect us from other countries, it is also our duty to defend our country. We can do this either by also taking up arms or talking in defence of our country. Patriotic citizens love their country and

47 Ibid., 53.

48 Ibid., 133–34.

49 Ibid., 115, emphasis in the original.

50 Ibid., 119.

will never talk bad things about it. If a person talks bad of our country, we should defend it. This makes us patriotic. Remember there is no better country than ours.⁵¹

Standards 6 and 7 spend a significant amount of time devoted to discussions of conflict, particularly the negative impacts of conflict on national development and security. As the Standard 6 textbook states:

Some parts of Eastern Africa have been affected by war, thereby having a low population. Somalia, Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Eritrea have been involved in war in the past. . . . The clans in Somalia have been fighting each other for the last ten years. . . . Apart from people being killed, others run away and become refugees in other countries thereby depopulating their countries.⁵²

Conflicts are identified in the Standard 7 textbook as the second-most significant challenge facing African economies, preceded only by poor leadership:

In some countries the leaders conflict with one another, as they fight for leadership. Such misunderstandings may cause the governments to be overthrown or people leading their communities to fight other communities, thereby causing civil wars. In other cases some countries go to war against one another. For example, Eritrea and Ethiopia, Somalia, Burundi, Rwanda, Sudan, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. This makes people become refugees. . . . Whenever conflicts and wars take place in a country, the people's ways of life are disrupted, causing insecurity and instability in the country. . . . Africa has the largest population of refugees in the world. Refugees are not productive as they depend on support from other people.⁵³

As discussed previously, government directives and informal policies prevent refugees from becoming productive members of the host country.

It is also important to note here that Kenya has removed itself from the historical legacy of conflict in the region, despite the ongoing conflict with Somalia as well as a long history of internal conflicts. These include nearly 100,000 deaths and 400,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) between 1992 and 2007.⁵⁴ In 2011, there were an estimated 200,000 to 250,000 IDPs in Kenya. Many were still displaced as a result of violence following the 2007 election, a period during which 1,000 people died and 600,000 more were displaced.⁵⁵ While the post-election violence occurred after the textbooks in this study were published, it demonstrates that Kenya is affected by instability as are many of its neighbors.

The impact of migration patterns is a key point in Standard 8, as the series has become much more xenophobic, particularly when compared to Standards 1–4. In Standard 8, students learn about Kenya's physical environment and evolution.

51 Omwoyo and Oyaya, *Primary Social Studies* (Standard 5), 191–93, emphasis in the original.

52 Omwoyo, *Primary Social Studies* (Standard 6), 56.

53 Omwoyo, *Primary Social Studies* (Standard 7), 174–76.

54 *IRIN News*, “Kenya: Clashes, Elections and Land.”

55 *IRIN News*, “IDPs as Political Pawns”; Collier and Vicente, “Violence, Bribery, and Fraud.”

In Unit 2, “People and Population,” students learn about various types of modern migration. Internal migration focuses on rural to urban, urban to rural, and rural to rural. External migration looks at both migration into and out of Kenya. On migration into Kenya:

People from different parts of the world move and settle in Kenya largely because there is peace and stability in our country. . . . Our government does not have restrictions on the people visiting or settling in the country, so long as they fulfill the conditions set. Our country has also had an influx of foreigners (refugees) from our neighbouring countries such as Rwanda, Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Somalia due to political instability in those countries.

The effects of immigration into Kenya are that the country may benefit from many foreign investments, as these offer employment opportunities to our youth. . . . One of the negative effects is that the movement of people from war-torn countries encourages the movement of illegal arms into the country, which are used by criminals. The foreign cultures of these people end up affecting our cultures negatively.⁵⁶

As discussed previously, the textbook implies that Kenya has removed itself historically from civil conflict despite a legacy of internal strife and a large population of IDPs.

Conclusion

There is a clear link between the practices of the state toward Somalis specifically and refugees broadly and representations of refugees in the curriculum. While the activities of al-Shabaab are not representative of Somalis in Kenya or Kenyan Somalis, these groups shoulder the consequences of al-Shabaab’s attacks in Kenya via Kenyan educational policy and curriculum. The development of a revisionist history, in which Kenya removes itself as a possible contributor to regional instability, effectively creates a national narrative that views the mere existence of refugees as a danger to the health of the country. In supporting informal, and now formal, government policy that condones the torture, abuse, and intimidation of refugee groups, it is detrimental to the chance of refugees ultimately becoming productive members of the community.

To marginally address these concerns, the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), formerly the Kenya Institute of Education, is in the process of developing a new curriculum. As Kenneth Jumba, social studies editor and assistant publishing manager at Kenya Literature Bureau (KLB) explained, following the development of this curriculum, KLB began the process of review in

56 Omwoyo, *Primary Social Studies* (Standard 8), 30.

2015. The new curriculum will include a focus on peace studies, with special attention to refugees, and will reflect Kenya's new (2010) Constitution. These changes largely came about because of the post-election violence. Once the new curriculum has been reviewed and adopted, KLB will start to develop new textbooks in 2016. The first year will cover Standards 1 and 5, as well as Form 1. In 2017, KLB will develop new textbooks for Standards 2 and 6, as well as Form 2, and so on for a total of four years. Refugees will be a particular focus in relation to geography and environmental degradation.⁵⁷

Boaz Apungu, curriculum specialist at KICD, stated that the focus of the new curriculum will be on aligning it with the new Constitution; in terms of refugees, he said that the emphasis will be on all orphans and vulnerable children rather than refugees specifically.⁵⁸ Despite the reality that refugees in Kenyan camps learn from the Kenyan national curriculum, Apungu indicated that because organizations handle education in refugee camps, "the government cannot interfere because you cannot know who will receive [help] next and they can leave anytime."⁵⁹ Al-Shabaab will not be included in the new curriculum because "we cannot talk of something we don't understand. These are sensitive topics and they are an amorphous group." Charles Mwaniki, coordinator for peace studies at KICD, is working with UNHCR and UNESCO on peace education, using the International Network for Education in Emergencies Minimum Standards as a framework. They are currently developing manuals and activity books to supplement lessons if teachers seek further clarification on relevant topics, with a focus on conflict resolution.⁶⁰

Despite the KICD's seeming commitment to a more inclusive curriculum, limiting the discussion on refugees to their possible link to environmental degradation continues to contribute to an exclusionary process and potentially empowers extremist groups by alienating refugees throughout the educational process. They remain portrayed as a danger to national security and a burden to the state. In view of this, the hope of addressing these realities through a revised curriculum is unlikely to be realized, as government policy becomes far more violent and restrictive in its treatment and view of Somali refugees.

57 Kenneth Jumba (social studies editor and assistant publishing manager, Kenya Literature Bureau), interview with the author, Nairobi, April 30, 2014.

58 Boaz Apungu (curriculum specialist, Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development), interview with the author, Nairobi, May 2, 2014.

59 Ibid.

60 Charles Mwaniki (coordinator for peace studies, Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development), interview with the author, Nairobi, May 3, 2014.

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Competing Narratives of Post-independence Violence in Ghanaian Social Studies Textbooks, 1987 to 2010

Introduction¹

The politicization of education reforms that have taken place in Ghana since independence has exposed the narratives used in pre-university history education to manipulation.² Two dominant political parties, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP), have propagated this politicization over the last two and a half decades.³ The political parties disagree on the extent of the contribution of Kwame Nkrumah and the “Big Six” to Ghanaian nation-building.⁴ The NDC identifies Nkrumah as the founder of Ghana, whose singular efforts led to independence and progress in the country’s First Republic (1951–66). The NPP, by contrast, views the policies pursued by Nkrumah – such as the Preventive Detention Act of 1957, which permitted detention without trial, and the creation of a one-party state by banning all political parties except the Convention People’s Party (CPP) in 1964 – as fundamental causes of his government’s fall in 1966. These pro-Nkrumah and anti-Nkrumah sentiments propagated by the NDC and NPP have found their way into history textbooks since wide-ranging pre-university education reforms commenced in 1987, a moment that coincided with the dying days of the Cold War and broad reforms in

1 Many thanks to Professors Rashid Ishmail of Vassar College and Jacob Gordon, the Kwame Nkrumah Chair at the University of Ghana, for their useful feedback on the initial draft of this study.

2 Tonah, “Unending Cycle of Education,” 45.

3 The NDC was formed by leaders of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), a military government, with the aim of contesting the democratic elections of 1992. Jerry Rawlings led the party to two electoral victories until they lost to the NPP’s John Kufour in December 2000. The NDC regained power in December 2008.

4 The “Big Six” refers to six leaders of the first political party in Ghana, the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), who came to national prominence after their arrest by the British government in 1948. They are Kwame Nkrumah, Ebenezer Ako-Adjei, Edward Akufo-Addo, Joseph Boakye Danquah, Emmanuel Obetsebi-Lampsey, and William Ofori Atta. With the exception of Nkrumah, all of these men were founding members of the UGCC.

sub-Saharan Africa. This chapter sets out to analyze trends in the politicization of history in Ghanaian social studies textbooks since this time.

Reforms in basic education have grown common, particularly after the most comprehensive changes were rolled out in 1987, during the military rule of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC). This reform overhauled the subjects and syllabi (and was sustained by the NDC government after 1992) and introduced a three-year junior secondary school (JSS), followed by three years of senior secondary school (SSS), to replace the eleven-year British middle and secondary school that had been in force previously – thus eliminating five years of schooling. The NPP took power in 2001 and immediately reviewed the entire syllabus. Six years later, it increased the number of years needed at the SSS to four, maintained the three years of JSS, and renamed the two levels senior high school (SHS) and junior high school (JHS) respectively. When the NDC returned to power in January 2009, it reverted to the six-year system but maintained the names JHS and SHS. The media announced in September 2014 that plans were far advanced for another “thorough review” of education, which is expected to reduce the number of subjects taken at pre-university level from twelve to five.⁵ The Education Reform Review Committee of 1994 already recognized the importance of having fewer subjects to foster pupils’ engagement with and learning of those that remained, but this reform appears only now to be under consideration as a serious option. It is difficult to assess the motive behind the new review, due to the country’s history of repeated and radical reform in this area. What is certain is that the reform is likely to be politicized. Successive Ghanaian governments have been dissatisfied with the education system inherited from previous governments and, accordingly, have attempted to carry out what they have regarded as improvements, thus creating a cycle of reforms and reviews.

This chapter will analyze the ways in which the violence in Ghana prior to and after independence has been depicted in JHS social studies textbooks since 1987. “Violence” is defined here as any action – imprisonment, assassination, curfews, bloody clashes – that coerce or cause people to physically or psychologically attain less than they could in the absence of force.⁶ The study finds that the textbooks published in 1988 and 2005 were each sympathetic toward the policies and ideas of the parties in power at the time. Drawing on the developmental progression thesis proposed by Elie Podeh,⁷ this chapter concludes that the most recent textbook in circulation, published in 2007, is more mature and objective than the previous ones. This final version has emerged from many bouts of

5 Mordy, “Gov’t to Scrap 7 Subjects.”

6 See Galtung, “Violence, Peace and Peace Research,” 168.

7 Podeh, “History and Memory.”

political manipulation of the curriculum and independence narratives, which have also had some impact on the quality of education in Ghana.

In the next section, I will provide a brief account of events in Ghanaian postcolonial history that have been subject to controversy in the textbooks. This is followed by an examination of evidence for changing independence narratives in Ghana and in the JHS textbooks. The analysis then looks at a number of interviews conducted by the author with social studies teachers, followed by a critical review of the study's findings.

A History of Violence in Perspective: The 1950s and 1960s

The post-1950 history of Africa revolves in large part around the struggles of nations for independence and their mechanisms for establishing and sustaining nationhood. Post-independence clashes and coups erupted across the continent due to unmanaged expectations, mismanagement of state resources by the new leaders, their desire to remain in power for life, and, indirectly, Cold War politics. Almost all Africans had accepted the boundaries demarcated at the Berlin Conference of 1884–85, which became the limits within which independence struggles took place.⁸ Much of the post-independence violence on the continent can be explained as emerging from one or more of three main sources of conflict.

First, many of the continent's new leaders, including Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Seiku Toure of Guinea, and Patrice Lumumba of the Congo, aspired toward a united Africa, with the hope of attaining a political and economic integration of the continent. However, pan-Africanism was not embraced by all African elites, and even those who welcomed the idea were divided on the approach: gradualists, like Nyerere, wanted a step-by-step approach toward a united Africa, while immediate 'Unity Government' proponents, like Nkrumah, advocated for swift action.⁹ At the micro-level, Biney and Austin agree that one cause of conflict between Nkrumah and the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) tradition in Ghana was that the former wanted a united Ghana at all costs, while the latter (also United Party or UP tradition) insisted on autonomy for the regions.¹⁰ The UGCC tradition clashed with Nkrumah over his pan-African ideal, viewing it as an attempt by Nkrumah to subdue local socio-political alliances in Ghana, especially within the Asante Kingdom.¹¹ Incidentally, prominent members of the UGCC died in prison (one example is Joseph Boakye

8 Ade Ajayi, "Place of African History and Culture," 209.

9 Biney, "Legacy of Kwame Nkrumah," 137–38.

10 Biney, *Political and Social Thoughts*, 89; Austin, *Ghana Observed*; Austin, *Politics in Ghana*.

11 Allman, *Quills of the Porcupine*.

Danquah) and others, like Abrefa Kofi Busia,¹² remained in exile until Nkrumah's overthrow.¹³ A second source of tension existed between adherents of capitalism and socialism, supporters of the Western and Eastern blocs.¹⁴ According to Biney, Nkrumah's drift toward the East in 1961 increased animosity against his government, gradually building up pressure until his overthrow in 1966.¹⁵ The third source of conflict centered on the timing of independence. While some wanted gradual progression to independence after adequate development,¹⁶ others saw any help from colonizers as a "Trojan horse" and thus demanded immediate independence.¹⁷ This informed Nkrumah's CPP motto of "Self-Governance Now," opposed to the UGCC's slogan, "Self-governance within the shortest possible time."

Disturbances in the Gold Coast (Ghana) gathered momentum after the February 1948 shooting in Christenburg of three veterans, Sergeant Adjetey, Corporal Attipoe, and Private Odartey Lamptey, by the army. The three ex-servicemen were marching together with others who fought for the British in World War II, to present a petition to the governor of the Gold Coast, Sir Gerald Creasy, to ameliorate their poor living conditions following repeated failure by the British government to provide adequate settlement upon their return from the war. The three were killed after the colonial police opened fire to stop them from approaching the seat of government, the Christenburg Castle. This ignited the famous 1948 riots in Accra, the release of what appeared to be a buildup of public dissatisfaction with the high cost of foreign goods in the city. There was widespread looting, burning of foreign-owned shops, and nationwide strikes. Nkrumah and five founding members of the UGCC were arrested by the British colonial authorities because they had previously sent a telegram to the British authorities in London to complain about the unfavorable policies of the colonial administration. It was this arrest and subsequent public support that spurred them to national prominence; they became known in local parlance as the "Big Six." Nkrumah exited the UGCC and formed the CPP in 1949, marking the beginning of long years of political battles between Nkrumah and UGCC supporters. Nkrumah and those who considered themselves to be of the younger generation were sidelined in deliberations over a constitution for an independent

12 J. B. Danquah and Abrafah Busia were prominent members of the UGCC, later the UP party, and conspicuous political opponents in the Nkrumah regime.

13 Austin, *Ghana Observed*, 87.

14 Young, *Ideology and Development in Africa*, 1.

15 Biney, *Political and Social Thoughts*, 89.

16 Botwe-Asamoah, *Kwame Nkrumah's Politico-Cultural Thoughts*, 90.

17 Blyden, *West Africa Before Europe*, 73.

Gold Coast.¹⁸ This led Nkrumah to call for “Positive Action”¹⁹ in 1950, a declaration that precipitated a nationwide outbreak of animosity toward the colonial government.²⁰ The chaos and lootings that resulted led to the arrest of Nkrumah and other leaders of the CPP.²¹ They were released in 1951 after the CPP won a majority of seats in parliament.²² The UGCC disintegrated after the election.

Supporters of the erstwhile UGCC formed the National Liberation Movement (NLM), an Akan-based party,²³ in 1954.²⁴ The Avoidance of Discrimination Act banning ethnically based political parties was passed in 1957. The NLM and other sectarian parties coalesced into the United Party (UP), led by Busia and Danquah.²⁵ Further legislative measures curtailed the influence of traditional chiefs, as unelected representatives, in national life.²⁶ The Preventive Detention Act (PDA) was passed by parliament in July 1958, empowering the government to “detain a person for five years (without right of appeal to the courts), for conduct prejudicial to the defence and security of the state and its foreign relations.”²⁷ The combined effects of these measures made legitimate opposition impossible under Nkrumah, who lived in fear of revolt and attack,²⁸ especially as he was the target of bombs in 1956 and was targeted again in Kulungugu in 1962.²⁹ Nkrumah declared a one-party state in 1964; this notwithstanding, pressure mounted on the CPP government until its overthrow by the military in 1966. Nkrumah was given political asylum by President Seiku Toure of Guinea soon after his overthrow and was made co-president of Guinea until his death in 1974.

18 Many members of the Committee working on the constitution were considered to be of the older generation, which the younger generation believed did not represent their interests.

19 “Positive Action” is a nonviolent strategy of forceful demonstration of power from ordinary people, modeled after Mahatma Gandhi’s “Satyagraha,” meaning “soul force.” It is the opposite of armed struggles for power.

20 Austin, *Ghana Observed*, 87.

21 Powers, *Protest, Power and Change*, 215.

22 Munene, “Leadership: Kenyatta and Nkrumah,” 105.

23 The Akans are the largest ethnic group in Ghana, located mainly in the southern part of the country.

24 Allman, *Quills of the Porcupine*, 11–12; Austin, *Politics in Ghana*.

25 Kosack, *Education of Nations*, 196.

26 Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*, 100.

27 Biswal, *Ghana, Political and Constitutional Developments*, 64.

28 Salm and Falola, *Culture and Customs of Ghana*, 25; Biney, *Political and Social Thoughts*, 85; Kosack, *Education of Nations*, 196.

29 *Ghana Web Online*, “UP was behind Kulungugu Bombing.”

Politics, Historical Memory, and Education in Postcolonial Ghana

The repeated writing, rewriting, and revision of social studies textbooks in Ghana since 1987, which has been unable to escape the notice of anyone interested in history education, has centered on defining and detailing the role of Nkrumah and the Big Six in the fight for Ghana's independence and the shaping of contemporary Ghanaian identity. Despite leading Ghana to independence and heading the country's administration between 1951 and 1966, Nkrumah and his place in formal textbook narratives have become contentious, and this is no different from the formulation of historical narratives about him in both national and local circles.

Nkrumah became a major source of conflict among Ghanaians in the period leading up to and immediately after his overthrow in 1966. Between 1966 and 1981, sustained attempts were made to shroud him and his legacies in oblivion. Nevertheless, the multiple coups d'état, victimization of political opponents, massive corruption, and deteriorating socio-economic conditions³⁰ that marked this period brought about a "nostalgic revival" of the pro-poor and pro-youth policies of Nkrumah's regime.³¹ Nkrumah's rule came to represent an antithesis to military rule, as the reasons traditionally cited for his overthrow no longer seemed tenable. By the late 1970s, there was a renaissance of Nkrumahism, especially among radical university lecturers and students. The sixth successful military coup d'état in Ghana occurred in 1981, led by Jerry Rawlings and the PNDC. The PNDC government ushered in sustained efforts to rehabilitate and promote Nkrumah's memory, ideas, and legacies with initial support from students, lecturers, and the general population.³² The Rawlings regime established a mausoleum in memory of Nkrumah and renamed a prestigious university for science and technology as Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). As part of the drastic education reforms in 1987, narratives in the social studies syllabus for school students were suddenly used to glorify Nkrumah and his legacies. This revival and rehabilitation of Nkrumah occurred within an autocratic political framework and a culture of political silence that had been characteristic of the various Ghanaian military regimes since 1966. Like its predecessors, the Rawlings regime showed little tolerance for dissent or alternative views, not even for those of radical Nkrumahist students and lecturers. Nonetheless, the regime contributed to establishing the longest period of political

30 The country has embraced IMF economic recovery programs such as the structural adjustment program (SAP) designed for Africa in the 1980s (see Shillington, *Ghana and the Rawlings Factor*) and the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) program in 2001.

31 Ninsin, "Elections, Democracy and Elite Consensus"; Gyimah-Boadi, "Ghana's Fourth Republic," 1; Munene, "Leadership: Kenyatta and Nkrumah," 108.

32 Lentz, "Ghana@50," 8.

stability in postcolonial Ghana, partly because the end of the Cold War in 1989–90 ushered in a new era of global governance, which made coups d'état increasingly unattractive to potential coup makers. The Rawlings regime held on to the reins of power for eleven years before opening up the space for multi-party democracy in 1992. After that it ruled as a constitutionally elected government for eight more years.

The reopening of the political arena provided an opportunity not only for the articulation of alternative political visions and programs for Ghana, but also for a reappraisal of the country's history. While Rawlings's PNDC transformed itself into the NDC, supporters of the Big Six legacy, regarded as the Danquah-Busia traditions of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) and United Party (UP),³³ came together to form the NPP. Both parties were aware that memory reinforces history, and that history is formulated by the powerful to create a mindset for present and future generations.³⁴ In its political campaigns and during its time in office (2001–8), the NPP propagated a pro-Big Six agenda, countering the NDC's pro-Nkrumah discourse. A leading member of the NPP described Nkrumah as "a personified tragedy of twentieth-century Africa," a symbol of the "political freedom that was won and lost, the promise that was missed, the economic experiment that led to our detriment."³⁵ By contrast, Nkrumah was voted the BBC African of the Millennium in December 1999. Nkrumah's global fame supersedes that of the Big Six due to the pan-African policies he championed so vehemently.

The contention surrounding the creation of collective memory and narratives of Ghana's independence indicates the degree to which contrasting informal narratives compete in public discourse. Formal narratives have been unsuccessful in reconciling these because of the frequent changes in government and the erratic nature of official narratives prior to 1981. Unofficial narratives have found outlets in official spaces whenever an opportunity has presented itself. Mausoleums and museums have been built in memory of Nkrumah; Nkrumah has been declared the only founder of Ghana; and national monuments have been named after him by the NDC. Today, despite the fierce criticism of Nkrumah within the NPP, the party realizes that it cannot write him out of Ghanaian history. The extensive rehabilitation of Nkrumah by the NDC and his prominence in popular historical memory has driven the NPP strategy to hinge on diminishing his prominence while increasing the overall visibility and public memory of the UGCC and the Big Six. To this end, the NPP government printed

33 Danquah-Busia traditions have come to represent these persons and their ideologies of liberal democracy and capitalism.

34 See Araújo and dos Santos, "History, Memory and Forgetting," paragraph 11; Lebow, *Politics and Ethics of Identity*.

35 Gabby Otchere-Darko, quoted in Danquah Institute, "Tragedy of 20th Century Africa."

images of the Big Six on five of Ghana's Cedi notes after the currency was revalued in 2007 (see Figure 1). It further erected effigies of the Big Six at the main entrance to the only international airport in Ghana, Kotoka International Airport. The NDC challenged the use of the Big Six images on the five currency notes by redesigning and printing an additional currency note with only the image of Nkrumah (see Figure 2).



Figure 1: Bank of Ghana Redenominated Currency Notes during the NPP Era, 2007

Public monuments and national currency have not been the only sites of confrontation in the struggle to shape Ghanaian popular historical consciousness; all Ghanaian governments since the 1980s have made attempts to influence the social studies curriculum to reflect their own narratives and interpretations of Ghana's past, as this chapter will demonstrate. The major educational reforms of 1987, carried out by the PNDC and left in place by the NDC, glorified Nkrumah and downplayed the contributions of the UGCC and its leadership. Subsequent implementations of curricular reviews and educational reforms by the NPP, once it assumed power, have reduced the significance of Nkrumah in the narratives. The two dominant parties clearly recognize the utility of education in cham-



Figure 2: Additional Currency Note Printed by the Bank of Ghana during NDC Era, 2010

pioneering allegiances to historical narratives; the intrinsic links between memory, remembrance, and education mean that history education is highly susceptible to misuse as a tool to gain political influence.

The study of history is mandatory for pre-university education in Ghana, and it is part of the social studies syllabus at the JHS and SHS levels. This is consistent with best practices worldwide, in which social studies syllabi are designed to instill notions and cultures of citizenship in young people and bring them up to speed on the historical, social, and cultural realities of the state in which they live.³⁶ The Ghanaian Ministry of Education asserts that social studies should aim to help shape the attitudes and behavior of students toward the state and enable them to “appreciate the impact of history on [the] current and future development efforts of the country.”³⁷ For these reasons, the stakes are high for politicians when historical narratives in social studies syllabi and textbooks are not designed to suit their agenda.³⁸ Podeh argues that in history education, textbooks may play a dual role, transmitting acceptable historical narratives from the past into the present and altering “the past in order to suit contemporary needs.”³⁹

36 Kissock, *Curriculum Planning*, 28–30; Ross, “Struggles for the Social Studies Curriculum,” 21; Whelan, “Teaching History,” 38; Mehlinger, “International Textbook Revision”; Podeh, “History and Memory.”

37 MoESS, “Social Studies Teaching Syllabus,” ii.

38 Apple and Christian-Smith, *Politics of the Textbook*, 10; Ross, “Struggles for the Social Studies Curriculum,” 27.

39 Podeh, “History and Memory,” 66.

The events described above have been represented in a variety of conflicting ways in social studies textbooks since 1987, as the next section will discuss.

Competing Narratives in JHS Social Studies Textbooks

This section will analyze two social studies textbooks, one published subsequent to the 1987 reforms (in 1988) and one following the 2001 reforms (in 2005). The 2007 reforms and the textbooks published in 2008 are also discussed to show the progression in the narratives. The 1988 textbook was authored and published by the Ministry of Education and Culture, while the 2005 version was written by Kofi Quansah and Charles Otu with approval from the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education exclusively published, printed, and distributed all pre-university textbooks prior to 2001. However, the government's inability to fund the process led to the privatization of textbook publication and printing after this date. Under the current system, non-government authors need prior approval from the Ministry for their books to be purchased for circulation in schools. Approved social studies textbooks include those authored by Quansah and Otu (2005), Amoah et al. (2008), and Abane et al. (2008).⁴⁰

While the 1988 textbook depicts Nkrumah as a flawlessly patriotic figure with unique leadership qualities, the 2005 textbooks point out flaws in Nkrumah's approach to national politics, presenting him as aggressive. The choice of words in the 2008 textbooks is also distinct from the 2005 textbooks. The latter generally avoid derogatory remarks, especially against Nkrumah, as this chapter will describe.

The Text

The 1988 version of the book downplays the achievements of the UGCC, stating that "in general, the U.G.C.C. did not achieve much" due to disunity among its leaders.⁴¹ At the same time, the book acknowledges the UGCC as the first political grouping that successfully galvanized the population to support a common political agenda against the colonial government, after earlier unsuccessful attempts on the part of the Fante Confederation and Asante Kingdom. The 2005 version disagrees that the UGCC capitulated to disunity. It notes that its executive membership was composed of "lawyers and people from the educated elite,"

40 Quansah and Otu, *BECE Social Studies for JSS, PB 1*; Quansah and Otu, *BECE Social Studies for JSS, PB 3*; Abane et al., *Social Studies for Junior High Schools*; Amoah et al., *Social Studies for Junior High Schools 1*; Amoah et al., *Social Studies for Junior High Schools 3*.

41 MoEC, *Social Studies for Junior Secondary Schools*, 19.

which caused it to alienate young people and the working class.⁴² This constitutes an emphasis on the intellectual profile of the UGCC and subsequent traditions such as the UP. Another notable characteristic of the description in this version of the book is its spotlight on the UGCC's founding members, especially the Big Six; it frequently places Nkrumah's name last whenever the Big Six members are listed. This arrangement contrasts with the order in the 1988 version, which consistently lists Nkrumah's name first among the six.

The 1988 version idolizes Nkrumah as an exceptional leader, a "great" man who "was intelligent, brave and handsome . . . hardworking,"⁴³ who abandoned better options overseas to help forge a national and pan-African agenda. The 2005 version disagrees, asserting that the seeds of independence had already been sown by the UGCC before it invited Nkrumah to become its general secretary on the recommendation of Arko Adjei, that Nkrumah opportunistically used this invitation as a springboard, and that he stabbed the party in the back by pursuing his own agenda. It further alleges that he was disrespectful to the executive members of the UGCC, leading to his dismissal from the secretary position "just eight months after" taking the job.⁴⁴ Among his wrongdoings, as listed in the textbook, is the establishment of the *Evening News* newspaper and the Accra Workers College in 1948 without consulting the UGCC executive.⁴⁵ Nkrumah also harbored Communist ideologies, which was unacceptable to the UGCC.⁴⁶ To further emphasize his alleged disloyalty, the narrative states that he launched his own political party, the CPP, "the very next day" after resigning from the UGCC in June 1949.⁴⁷ Although the book acknowledges Nkrumah as "a good politician, a good organizer and a good speaker," it stops short of giving credit to his personal charisma.

Points of disagreement also exist in the narratives of the 1948 Accra Riots and Nkrumah's 1950 call to Positive Action (see Table 1). The 1988 textbook version justifies Positive Action as a measure of last resort adopted by Nkrumah to force the British colonial government to relinquish power. Its narrative of the events proceeds as follows: First, the J. H. Coussey Committee, which was mandated in 1949 by the colonial government to draft a constitution aimed at facilitating a transition to independence, proposed a constitution that gave too many "reserved powers" to the colonial government, which had the sole aim of prolonging

42 Quansah and Otu, *BECE Social Studies for JSS, PB 1*, 51.

43 MoEC, *Social Studies for Junior Secondary Schools*, 22.

44 Quansah and Otu, *BECE Social Studies for JSS, PB 1*, 53.

45 *Ibid.*

46 The UGCC/UP tradition extends to the current NPP, which remains a pro-capitalist, liberal political party.

47 Quansah and Otu, *BECE Social Studies for JSS, PB 1*, 53.

colonial rule.⁴⁸ Second, neither Nkrumah nor the youth of the Gold Coast were represented on that committee, heightening their fear that the colonial government was not acting in their interests. Third, Positive Action was a last resort aimed at forcing immediate self-governance and the inclusion of Nkrumah and young people in the political process. The narrative defines Positive Action as a “nationwide political strike and boycott”⁴⁹ and supplies a systematic account of how Nkrumah toured the country to insist that Positive Action aimed to achieve a peaceful handover of power. To demonstrate that Nkrumah attained the desired results, the narrative directly links Positive Action to the 1951 victory of the CPP, which saw Nkrumah’s release from incarceration after winning a parliamentary seat from inside prison. The textbook’s justification of the 1948 violence and Nkrumah’s declaration of a one-party state is consistent with the position held by Rawlings’s PNDC regime, which was in power at the time of the education reforms and had undertaken coups d’état in 1979 and 1981. Both coups d’état were justified at the time as being actions of last resort to bring the nation out of an economic, social, and political abyss.⁵⁰

Table 1: Summary of the Narratives as Presented in the Two Versions of the Textbooks

	1987 Narratives (PNDC/NDC)	2001 Narratives (NPP)
1	Nkrumah idolized	Nkrumah is aggressive, opportunistic
2	Contributions of the Big Six and UGCC downplayed	Contributions of Nkrumah downplayed
3	1948 riots praised	UGCC absolved of riots
4	Positive Action as civil strike	Positive Action as violent disorder
5	Violence led to the declaration of a one-party state	Declaration of a one-party state led to violence

Conversely, the 2005 version of the textbook depicts Positive Action as highly destabilizing, defining it as “strikes, boycotts and other forms of non-cooperation and civil disobedience” and highlighting the nationwide chaos that resulted.⁵¹ The book thus considers Nkrumah’s arrest and incarceration to be justified. It emphasizes what it depicts as the UGCC’s respect for the rule of law by listing its founding members as part of the J. H. Coussey Committee. The textbook narrative states explicitly that Nkrumah was not part of this committee. It further absolves the UGCC of any involvement in planning the 1948 Riots and portrays the arrest of the Big Six as a mistake by naming Nii Kwabena Bonnie III,

48 MoEC, *Social Studies for Junior Secondary Schools*, 25.

49 Ibid.

50 Shillington, *Ghana and the Rawlings Factor*.

51 Quansah and Otu, *BECE Social Studies for JSS, PB 1*, 54.

Osu Alata Mantse of Accra, as the initiator of the riots. This narrative is consistent with the position of the NPP, which disseminates its self-image as being the “custodian of the rule of law.” This rule-of-law narrative was especially significant for the John Agyekum Kufuor-led NPP government, which, in 2001, inherited power from the PNDC/NDC government that had transformed itself from a military into a civilian regime.⁵² The constitutionally elected government of the NPP needed to depict itself and its affiliates as law-abiding, a departure from the previous era.

The 1988 version of the textbook dedicates much of its discussion on social development to Nkrumah’s Five-Year Development Plan, initiated in 1951.⁵³ By contrast, the post-2001 version devotes considerable space to the discussion of “Citizenship and Human Rights” and portrays Nkrumah as being guilty of numerous human rights abuses. It states, for instance, that “From 1960, Kwame Nkrumah’s government became very oppressive. No one could say what he liked against the government without fear of being arrested by the security agencies.”⁵⁴ It accuses Nkrumah of stifling political freedoms:

From 1964, Kwame Nkrumah made a law which made [the] CPP the only political party in the country. No one could form or belong to any other political party. This brought a lot of trouble into the country. Now that this freedom has been restored to Ghanaians, they can now join any political party they like.⁵⁵

It further regards Nkrumah as responsible for much of the violence in post-independence Ghana, citing his declaration of a one-party state as the cause of instability: “In 1964 Dr. Kwame Nkrumah banned all political parties and the CPP became the only party in the country. Ghana then became a one-party state. This was enough to create instability in the country.”⁵⁶ By contrast, the 1988 version justifies the declaration of a one-party state as a response to instability:

From 1964 onwards, [Nkrumah] allowed the CPP to become the only political party in Ghana. This was because members of one political party regarded members of other political parties as enemies. This brought many dangers and made people feel unsafe. There were even attempts to kill the President. In these attempts, many innocent people were killed. Nkrumah therefore felt it was better to have only one party to unite all the people. It however was not liked by many people.⁵⁷

52 Kufuor was the first successful NPP leader to win presidential elections in Ghana. He led the country from 2001 to 2009.

53 MoEC, *Social Studies for Junior Secondary Schools*, 35–39.

54 Quansah and Otu, *BECE Social Studies for JSS, PB 1*, 64.

55 *Ibid.*

56 Quansah and Otu, *BECE Social Studies for JSS: PB 3*, 22.

57 MoEC, *Social Studies for Junior Secondary Schools*, 32.

In its 2008 version, the textbook no longer places specific blame. This change was likely related to the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of independence in 2007 and the renewed debates that emerged at the time surrounding Nkrumah and the Big Six. The year-long Golden Jubilee celebration of independence (2006–7) cast a positive light on both Nkrumah and the Big Six. It became clear from prolonged national debates that both Nkrumah and the Big Six shared some of the blame for the violence, but also some credit for their respective contributions to nation-building. In this context it would not have been prudent for the Kufuor-led NPP government to retain negative remarks about Nkrumah in the textbooks. Derogatory remarks that associated Nkrumah with instability were eliminated. The picture of J. B. Danquah presented alongside the Big Six in the 2005 textbook⁵⁸ no longer appeared after 2007. Textbooks began to place emphasis on the Big Six as a whole.⁵⁹ Lentz refers to the Kufuor government's gesture as "neutralization" aimed at ensuring that neither Nkrumah nor other members of the Big Six received undue publicity.⁶⁰

The general positive attitude toward Ghana's past is also evident in the way one of the books describes Rawlings' second successful coup d'état as a source of political stability in Ghana: "From 1981, when the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) under Flt. Lt. J. J. Rawlings came to power [until] today, Ghana has enjoyed a period of political stability."⁶¹ This is a reasonably complimentary description considering that over the years, the NPP had vilified Rawlings and his military regimes. In its attempt to create continuity in the independence narratives, the 2008 textbook attributes the attainment of independence to the combined efforts of members of the UGCC and CPP and reconciles their mottos as follows:

The earlier leaders did not ask for independence but [rather for] changes in the colonial system which would improve the condition of Ghanaians. However, through their activities, they prepared a suitable battle ground for the founding leaders who later won independence for us.⁶²

The JHS1 edition cites the names of the Big Six and some founding members of the CPP as the leaders of Ghana, listing Danquah first, Nkrumah second, and then the others.⁶³ Thus, following a change of attitude by the NPP government on the occasion of Ghana's Golden Jubilee celebrations in 2007, the harsh narratives

58 Quansah and Otu, *BECE Social Studies for JSS: PB 1*, 48.

59 It is during this time that images of the Big Six were printed on the redenominated Ghanaian currency.

60 Lentz, "Ghana@50," 8.

61 Amoah et al., *Social Studies for Junior High Schools 3*, 83.

62 *Ibid.*, 85.

63 Amoah et al., *Social Studies for Junior High Schools 1*, 84.

against Nkrumah in the textbooks were revised. It remains to be seen whether the proposed overhaul of pre-university curricula by the present NDC government will have any impact on these narratives.

The Perspectives of Teachers and Students

This section examines the ways in which some teachers and students in Ghana perceive the changes in historical narratives that have taken place over the years. A total of nine social studies teachers were interviewed in public and state schools, three each from Accra, Kumasi, and Tamale.⁶⁴ The longest-serving teacher in the sample had taught since 1991, while the teacher with the shortest service had taught since 1998. The perspective of teachers is crucial to any understanding of what is actually taught in Ghanaian classrooms, since teachers' attitudes toward historical narratives influence what they tell students in class. The interviews were unstructured and ranged from the sources of their social studies textbooks to their appreciation of the independence narratives in the books. Further, three second-year JHS students were interviewed in each school, with permission from their teachers and principals. The purpose of this part of the research was to cast light on the attitudes of students toward Nkrumah and other members of the Big Six.

Textbooks Teachers Use

All of the teachers agreed that the information provided in the available social studies textbooks is scanty, and that students would be at a disadvantage if these books were their only sources of information. The teachers rely on other textbooks, even if these are unapproved, including the Aki Ola and Approaches series. Dovlo,⁶⁵ for instance, stated:

I buy other books, like the Aki Ola and Flamingo series, and then I go through them to find which of them responds to the needs of the syllabus. This is because the approved textbooks give summarized information. The students themselves cannot comprehend the content of those textbooks. I think the textbook only provides pointers.⁶⁶

Dovlo also expressed frustration about the frequently late delivery of textbooks to schools; to him, exclusive reliance on government textbooks is a luxury he cannot afford, and he felt that students would suffer if he were to only use these

64 These three major cities were chosen to represent views of people from the southern, central, and northern regions of Ghana.

65 All teachers' names have been changed.

66 Dovlo (JHS social studies teacher), interview with the author, Tamale, July 11, 2014.

books. Ransford, a teacher with almost two decades of experience in the Asante Region, agreed with the view that these books' content is insubstantial:

The volume of government textbooks is very small. They are more like a summary. The Aki Ola series, for instance, gives more analysis and examples than the books approved by the ministry. The government should commit more resources to improve the quality and increase the volume of textbooks.⁶⁷

All of the teachers agreed that a lot of discretion is needed in the use of historical narratives from unapproved books.

On Changing Narratives in Textbooks

The teachers were divided on the reasons for the changes in the narratives. Some are convinced that these changes have merely cast more light on events or eliminated irrelevant material, without affecting the core ideas the books represent. Ransford stated: "If there are any changes at all, it is just due to the need to reduce cost and summarize the content, but not because of the politics around the public narratives."⁶⁸ Linda agreed and further noted: "Now the narratives depart from individuals to events which individuals participated in. Neither Nkrumah nor the Big Six is the focus in the current textbooks, but [rather] the events leading to independence."⁶⁹

Farouk, from Accra, shared similar thoughts, and added that the only change he recognized in the textbooks was that geographical and physical features of West Africa and Africa have been eliminated. The emphasis, according to him, is presently on Ghana, democracy, political parties, the constitution, and other organs of the state; narratives of independence have not been affected.⁷⁰

Some interviewees saw the presence of bias and manipulation in the changing narratives. Dovlo noted:

Even if the ministry which awards the contract for a textbook has no intention of being biased, the different authors have different political leanings, either towards Nkrumah or Danquah and his people. . . . Some of the scholars are not fair to Ghanaians. Those of us who were born after independence are not fed with the full version of events.⁷¹

Agreeing with this, Alhassan thought that Nkrumah's role has been over emphasized:

67 Ransford (JHS social studies teacher), interview with the author, Kumasi, July 2, 2014.

68 Ibid.

69 Linda (JHS social studies teacher), interview with the author, Kumasi, July 2, 2014.

70 Farouk (JHS social studies teacher), interview with the author, Accra, June 25, 2014.

71 Dovlo (JHS social studies teacher), interview with the author, Tamale, July 11, 2014.

In all the different versions, Nkrumah's image and deeds are given too much prominence. Nkrumah is made [out] to be a saint, with little or no taint on his actions and inactions. Even though the 2005 version attempted to place some spotlight on the Big Six too, this is still inadequate.⁷²

However, according to Farouk, the contributions of the founding fathers varied, and it would be unfair if textbooks treated all of them equally. He asserted: "J. B. Danquah only formed a political party; Nkrumah ruled Ghana for one and half decades. Where is the fairness if Nkrumah is given equal space like the others?"⁷³

Thus, the social studies teachers who teach history in the JHS are divided on whether there have been substantial changes to the narratives in the textbooks. Some take the view that the changes are only for lexical purposes and convenience on the part of the authors; others assert that the changes have political undertones. More research is needed to ascertain how the teachers' varying perceptions shape what they teach, and how this impacts the behavior of students.

Time with Students

As part of this study, I spent time with a small number of students to gain a sense of their knowledge on the narratives of the events at the focus of this study. An informal conversation with some of the students showed that they had a fair degree of knowledge about Nkrumah, other members of the Big Six, and other prominent Ghanaians. They were familiar with events leading to the 1948 Riots in Accra, Nkrumah's declaration of Independence in March 1957, and the establishment of the Republic in 1960. However, the students demonstrated little knowledge beyond those key moments. For many, the independence narrative was a single story that started with the UGCC and Nkrumah. Together with the UGCC, some students recounted, Nkrumah led Ghana to independence, making him the founder of Ghana as the leader of a group of willing members from the Big Six, the UGCC, and the CPP. The uniformity of student knowledge as represented by the sample is likely due to the recent "neutralization" policies, which have sought to defuse the tension inherent in the previously competing narratives.

72 Alhassan (JHS social studies teacher), interview with the author, Tamale, July 11, 2014.

73 Farouk (JHS social studies teacher), interview with the author, Accra, June 25, 2014.

Teachers and Extracurricular Influences on Students

Every person carries their socialization with them, but it is difficult to show precisely how teachers' backgrounds influence what they teach. Cole and Barsalou contend that any such influence cannot be easily quantified, since behavioral change takes time to occur.⁷⁴ Different teachers come into contact with students throughout their early years in school, and so it is difficult to know exactly how particular teachers influence one student or another. In a quick test to find out how teachers' perspectives might influence students' views, I noted the following views from one teacher about independence:

Our independence was premature. We have not added any value to what the British left in 1957. . . . At independence, Ghana didn't have experienced ministers to govern the state. The hasty search for independence has been the [cause] of Ghana's underdevelopment and overreliance on foreign aid.⁷⁵

Yet, none of the three students interviewed from this teacher's class demonstrated any sign of disapproval of independence. Teachers and the classroom are evidently not the only sources of influence on students' beliefs. In Ghana, social studies is a composite course covering environmental studies, geography, civic education, cultural studies, economic development, and history, and it is allotted six 35-minute periods per class per week.⁷⁶ This means that contact hours for pure history education are minimal. The media, such as radio stations and television, and peer-to-peer discussion are important sources of influence as well. Patriotic poems and songs such as the National Anthem, the National Pledge and "yen ara yasaase ni" in Akan (in English: "This is our land"), which are recited daily in many schools, also play a role.

The National Anthem, for instance, requests God's blessings upon the "Homeland Ghana," to "make our Nation great and strong" and to make Ghanaians "bold to defend forever, the cause of freedom and of rights." It requests God's favors to be able "to resist oppressors' rule with all our will and might forever more." These are profound, patriotic words that are enough to make any child express unflinching allegiance to the nation. The National Pledge also adds to the patriotic outlook. Its opening lines read: "I promise on my honor, to be faithful and loyal to Ghana my motherland." It further adds, "I promise to hold in high esteem, our heritage won for us, through the blood and toil of our fathers." These are intense statements that could potentially influence students' patriotic outlook beyond what is taught in the classroom.

74 Cole and Barsalou, "Unite or Divide?" 12–14.

75 Alhassan (JHS social studies teacher), interview with the author, Tamale, July 11, 2014.

76 MoESS, "Social Studies Teaching Syllabus," iii.

Discussion: Impact of the Competing Narratives on National Development

The competing historical narratives discussed in this chapter have impacted Ghana in three main ways. First, they have whipped up a national conversation *not* based on ethnic, religious, or sectarian sentiments, although these factors cannot be ruled out completely. Second, confidence in education has been affected to a large extent. Finally, and paradoxically, the competition has helped shape the social studies textbook narratives on independence in ways that have had purifying effects. This section explores these three dimensions.

National Cohesion and Stability

According to Araujo and dos Santos, memory is “associated with those who wield power, since they decide which narratives should be remembered, preserved and disseminated.”⁷⁷ Irrespective of how frequently official narratives shift, dominant narratives endure unofficially until their proponents take up positions of influence. Official narratives are bound to change when there are no institutional frameworks for restraint. In democratic regimes such as Ghana, changing narratives may not reflect specific government policies but rather power struggles and dialogues between various competing social groups.

For 13 years, from 1966 to 1979, a culture of silence was imposed in various forms on the memory of Nkrumah and his legacies. The pro-Nkrumah government of Hilla Limmam (1979–81), which was ousted from power by Rawlings’ second coup d’état, marked the end of this culture of silence. Rawlings revived and sustained the memory of Nkrumah until the political space was opened for a multi-party democracy in 1992. Under Rawlings, informal and formal narratives of independence history began to converge. The multi-party regime has provided political and social space for graduated competing narratives generated by pro- and anti-Nkrumah participants in the discourse. In this competitive socio-political space, multiple platforms such as radio stations, think tanks, political parties, and indeed social studies textbooks have been adopted to sustain the conversation.

The culture of silence in Ghana was imposed by both military and civilian governments; after 13 years of this silence on Nkrumah and the violence associated with his regime, his memory was glorified uncritically. The 14 years that followed (1979–92) prepared the country for another phase (1992–present),

77 Araujo and dos Santos, “History, Memory and Forgetting,” paragraph 12.

during which the public discourse was extended beyond Nkrumah. The gradual public remembrance of the contributions of personalities associated with the past – Nkrumah, Danquah, Busia – has successfully warded off potentially destabilizing ethnic divisions in national politics. Some degree of political ethnization is doubtless extant, with the Asante ethnic group adhering by and large to the NPP and the Ewe to the NDC,⁷⁸ but it is not a pattern seen nationally. Overtly ethnically and regionally based political parties are currently banned (Article 55 of the 1992 Constitution). Political discourses mainly center on personalities and their past achievements. This has reduced the risk of realizing the “Kaufman thesis,” which states that ethnic hatred incorporated into national politics triggers emotional hostility, which in turn leads to antagonism, domination, and in extreme cases, conflict.⁷⁹ This said, a risk remains that cults of personality can undermine institutional memory and stifle innovation. National discourses should progress from extreme emphasis on personalities to discussing what makes institutions work, while acknowledging individual contributions within the institutions and structures of state. Therefore, the latest edition of the social studies textbooks (2008) are well structured to strike a balance between emphasizing state institutions and acknowledging individual contributions.

Quality of Education

By 1965, Ghana’s education system was rated highly in terms of progression toward education for all citizens (universal coverage) and teacher and student motivation.⁸⁰ This position has, however, been downgraded since then,⁸¹ and interventions such as the 1987 reforms, the introduction of free compulsory universal basic education, and the school meals programs have been aimed at restoring past achievements. It could be opined, surveying the overall situation, that too many resources have been expended on “reforming education” rather than focusing on improving educational facilities, training teachers, and motivating both teachers and students to be more productive.⁸² A political economy of education reforms has been created, whereby the awarding of contracts to reprint textbooks and other educational materials has, in some instances, depended on relationships with politicians. Each political party that comes to power struggles

78 Gyimah-Boadi and Asante, “Ethnic Structure,” 248.

79 Kaufman, *Modern Hatreds*.

80 Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*.

81 Peil, “Ghanaian Education”; Dzobo, “Address at the National Workshop.”

82 The introduction of the Single Spine Salary Structure (SSSS) in 2010 has recently improved remuneration for teachers.

to preserve a certain historical identity, either for or against the legacies of Nkrumah. This has resulted in frequent, sometimes needless, educational reforms that have failed to build confidence in the educational system.

Developmental Progression of the Narratives

A close study of the textbooks analyzed suggests that the changes in historical narratives around independence and subsequent events do not simply reflect changes in political allegiances; they rather relate to a transformative progression in Ghana's education system. This progression can be compared to growth from childhood to adolescence to adulthood.⁸³ The period prior to the 1980s was the "prenatal" stage, during which a culture of silence reigned. The 1987 reforms marked the "childhood" stage of the JSS/JHS education system. Here, the presentation of historical memory was unidirectional, and certain omissions served to emphasize heroic myths around Nkrumah and independence, as well as stereotypes about the Big Six.

Transition to the "adolescent" stage was initiated with the establishment of the Educational Reforms Review Committee in 1994. The 1999 National Education Forum represented the climax of this transition, and the 2001 curriculum review completed it. At this stage, myths about Nkrumah were replaced with stereotypes that diminished his national stature, and the Big Six were glorified instead. The state was portrayed as the victim of Nkrumah and the political instability he supposedly brought about. There remained signs of selective remembrance and blaming the Other for unpleasant events.

The narrative reached adulthood during the 2007 reforms and the 2008 textbook review. Myths and negative stereotypes have been eliminated completely; and there is a sense that the causes of violence and political instability in the early years of nationhood are presented objectively.⁸⁴ This mature version admits that the history of Ghana is a continuum and that the current state has emerged as the sum of the actions of all those involved in the history of the Gold Coast and subsequently of Ghana. Growth is still in progress, and so far there is no strategic agenda to present as many robust facts about Ghana's past as possible, be they glorious or shameful. Much emphasis is on how the nation fought against foreign oppression, leaving out facts about the fierce domestic political struggles that were badly handled by both the ruling government and the opposition elements in the First Republic. The presentation of national independence in textbooks remains based on interpretations of the events and presentation of moral lessons,

83 This progression is similar to Elie Podeh's assessment of the Israeli education system.

84 See Amoah et al., *Social Studies for Junior High Schools* 3.

with little room for the presentation of hard history in order to enable students to make their own assessment and draw conclusions from there.

Conclusion

Nkrumah's legacy in Ghanaian history generates debate on how to interpret the violence that overshadowed Ghana's independence in the 1950s and 1960s. The violence has been justified and condemned from a range of perspectives, and formal narratives have been manipulated over the years to suit different political traditions. This has had an impact on confidence in curricula, as the urge to influence narratives in schools appears to lead politicians to tamper with the syllabi of some courses of study. This process of political manipulation has evolved to a point where the narrative has reached some level of balance. A cursory look at the present narrative in the textbooks shows some impartiality and could mark the end of the cyclical politicization of education reform. Until this end is definite, education in Ghana risks remaining a pawn in the hands of politicians.

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The Homeland War in Croatian History Education: Between “Real Truth” and Innovative History Teaching

Introduction¹

The main aim of this analysis is to give an overview of the developments in history education politics that took place in Croatia between 2009 and 2013. Its central focus lies in the policy of teaching recent history, specifically the war in Croatia from 1991 to 1995. The principle aspects examined in the analysis are history textbooks, official documents on history education (existing curricula, National Framework Curriculum), and subject-related teacher training.

The narrative of a society’s violent past as it is presented in history education is one of the most tangible official narratives of war.² Seen through the prism of transitional justice, overcoming the legacy of war is one of the preconditions for building sustainable peace in every post-conflict society. This analysis views education on recent conflicts as a pillar in a society’s process of dealing with its own violent and traumatic past. As earlier analyses of Croatian history education have already addressed, the way in which the most controversial history topics are taught tackles the question of the underlying purpose of history education.³ If its purpose is to build a critical, active, and responsible citizen, it chooses sensitive and controversial topics to develop critical thinking, acquire the concept of multiperspectivity, and foster dialogue. If history education serves simply to transfer certain preconceived, one-sided narratives, then it excludes the variety of

1 Research on this topic was undertaken from August to November 2013 at the request of the Georg Eckert Institute. It built on previous analyses of Croatian history education that dealt with the period up to 2009. This study analyzes textbooks, curricula, and teacher training sessions from 2009 to 2013.

2 An official narrative is understood in this case to be one promoted by the state with the idea of framing war memories articulated by the “common man” in a form that best serves the interests of the nation-state. See for example: Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper, *The Politics of War Memory*. For newer definitions, see: Banjevlav, *Negotiated Memory*.

3 See Koren and Baranović, “What Kind of History Education”; Agičić, “Prikaz postanka suvremene Republike Hrvatske u hrvatskim udžbenicima povijesti za osnovnu školu” [An overview of the origin of modern Croatia in Croatian textbooks for primary school].

experiences and dialogue on interpretations, and does not foster inquiry.⁴ In post-conflict societies in which the past has been abused to instill tension and conflict, using history as an obedient servant to politics and a channel through which one exclusive version of the past is transmitted not only fails to contribute to overcoming the legacy of the violent past, but can potentially preserve or deepen the tension and consequently contribute to new conflicts.

Since Croatia gained independence, history education has formed the core of several mutually exclusive goals: from being one of the compulsory “national subjects”⁵ during the 1990s to being an important component in building responsible, engaged, critically minded citizens in 2010. Many of these goals were incompatible with one another yet were being implemented in parallel, creating a dissonance that has characterized Croatian history education in recent years. Conflicting expectations and disagreement over the purpose of teaching history have continued and, I argue below, have recently become even stronger.

When it comes to teaching about the war in Croatia during the 1990s, reforms and didactic innovations in approaches and teaching methods implemented over the past years have only sporadically touched upon the subject.

Over the last four years, the Ministry of Science, Education, and Sports in cooperation with the Teacher Training Agency have announced several improvements in education that would apply to history education, too. One of the most promising moves was the introduction of the National Framework Curriculum (NOK) in 2011. This document was designed to provide a basis for the conceptualization of curricula for each subject.⁶ Built on values of democracy, pluralism, critical thinking, human rights, and civic involvement common to all subjects within social and humanities education, the NOK was also viewed as the first step in the process of history education reform.

This document presented a new vision of education, to be implemented through the new subject curricula. Three years later, no subject curricula have yet been aligned or harmonized with the NOK. History curricula written in the 1990s for secondary schools and in 2006 for primary schools are still the most important documents on history education. The fact that the existing history curricula and the NOK seem to be promoting rather different visions and goals of history education has not spurred the educational authorities to decide for either

4 See Stradling, *Teaching 20th-Century European History*; Jenkins, *On ‘What is History?’*; Koren, *Politika povijesti u Jugoslaviji (1945–1960)* [Politics of History in Yugoslavia (1945–1960)].

5 The phenomenon of creating a “group of national subjects” was present in the post-Yugoslav region during 1990s, with the explicit goal of fostering national pride and sentiment. See Dimou, “Introduction,” 25. In Croatia during this period, history, Croatian language and literature, and music were seen as the most important national subjects. See, for example, Koren and Baranović, “What Kind of History Education,” 95–96.

6 MZOS, “Nacionalni okvirni kurikulum” [National framework curriculum].

of the visions presented in the documents. Quite the contrary, these two concepts seem to be *peacefully coexisting* for some time.

This analysis also gives insight into educational approaches and the underlying understanding of history teaching communicated at the teacher training sessions on the topic of the Homeland War. It sets these approaches in relation to the ambivalence described above.

Historical Background

The term “Homeland War” is widely used in the Republic of Croatia to denote the war fought from 1991 to 1995 on its territory as a part of the process of dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY).⁷

Toward the end of the 1980s, nationalism was growing stronger throughout the SFRY and, along with other economic, cultural, and political factors, led to the dissolution of the joint multiethnic state.⁸ The rise of nationalism fostered interethnic tensions. Slobodan Milošević was the most prominent advocate of Serbian nationalist ideas, which were combined with the centralist tendencies in Yugoslavia. Under the motto, “All Serbs in one state,” he pushed changes in the governing structures of the federal state to pursue this goal. He organized rallies throughout the country to gain support for his ideas from Serbs, who made up 36 percent of the population in Yugoslavia and were living in all Yugoslav states. In other republics, especially in Croatia and Slovenia, decentralist ideas combined with nationalist tendencies aimed for disengagement from Yugoslavia and independence and were, at the time, also growing stronger.

The first free, multiparty elections in Croatia were held in April and May 1990 and led to a loss of power for the Communists and the victory of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), a national Croatian party. Constitutional changes made by the newly appointed Croatian parliament defined Croatia as “a national state of the Croats and all other minorities that live in it.” While in Yugoslavia, the concept of national minority did not exist and all ethnicities were considered to be constituent, this new formulation was perceived by citizens of non-dominant ethnicities as a degradation, a loss of status and rights. In the case of Croatia, this problem was particularly important for the Serbs, who made up 12 percent of all

7 The terms “Croatian War of Independence” and “War in Croatia 1991–1995” are also used in Croatia, but less frequently. Outside Croatia, the term “Croatian War of Independence” is more common.

8 For a general overview of the controversies surrounding the war in Yugoslavia and the independence of Croatia, see: Ingrao and Emmet, *Confronting the Yugoslav Controversies*; Silber and Little, *Yugoslavia*; Wachtel and Bennett, “Dissolution of Yugoslavia”; Stokes, “Independence.”

Croatian citizens. Propaganda was growing stronger on both sides, sparking ethnic hatred through media and other means of communication. History, namely the traumas associated with the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) during World War II, was abused in creating negative and aggressive images of other ethnicities, constructing a fear of each other that became the catalyst of events to follow.⁹

The war was preceded by an August 1990 rebellion by Serbian citizens in Knin in Southern Croatia who demanded autonomy and refused to submit to the Croatian Parliament in Zagreb, which was constituted after the elections in April/May 1990. The rebellion was encouraged by Serbia. The first armed combat began in March 1991, and in August it evolved into an open war between armed units of the Republic of Croatia on one side and the Yugoslav National Army (YNA), the Army of the Republic of Serb Krajina, paramilitary formations of rebel Serbs in Croatia, and paramilitary formations from Serbia on the other side. In areas with a significant population of Croatian Serbs, the rebel Croatian Serbs proclaimed the Republic of Serb Krajina, which covered almost a third of the territory of the Republic of Croatia (Northern Dalmatia, Lika, Kordun, Banovina, Western Slavonia, Baranja, Eastern Slavonia, and Western Sylvania). In April 1991, they declared secession from Croatia and asked for unification with Serbia. The beginning of the war and the proclamation of the Krajina were followed by ethnic cleansing and war crimes against non-Serbian citizens in these areas.¹⁰ During this phase of the war, the three-month siege on the town of Vukovar in Eastern Croatia took place, leading to the loss of hundreds of lives, severe material destruction, and the expulsion of almost all non-Serbian citizens. Toward the end of the siege, over 400 people were taken from Vukovar hospital by YNA soldiers and brought to Ovčara farm, where they were tortured.¹¹ At least 264 of them of them were executed and thrown into a mass grave by members of the Serbian forces.¹² Throughout this time, Vukovar became a symbol of Croatian victim-

9 The Independent State of Croatia was formed on the territory of today's Croatia, parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia as a puppet state of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. It carried out a genocide of Croatian Jews, Serbs, and Roma, as well as the prosecution of political opponents. In propaganda of the prewar and war period of the 1980s and 1990s, the newly formed Republic of Croatia was described in the same terms as the Independent State of Croatia, thus building fear of a new genocide of the Serbs. For more on the Independent State of Croatia, see Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia*.

10 UN International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, "Amended Indictment against Milan Martić."

11 Several hundred people sought refuge at the Vukovar hospital because it was supposed to be evacuated in the presence of international forces. Along with patients, there were staff, journalists, activists, and family members of wounded and staff in the hospital at the time of the YNA crime.

12 UN International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, "Third Consolidated Amended Indictment against Mile Mrkšić, Miroslav Radić, and Veselin Šljivančanin."

hood in the war and to this day plays an important role in the dominant Croatian narrative of the war.¹³

At the same time, in the free territory of the Republic of Croatia, there was a purge of Serbian cadre in state services. Some Serbian civilians were threatened and in some areas subject to war crimes.¹⁴

By the end of 1991 the Croatian Army was mostly defensive, with a successful operation of liberating the greater part of Western Slavonia at the end of 1991. After several unsuccessful cease-fires, a truce was signed in Sarajevo on January 2, 1992. The UN deployed peace troops (UNPROFOR) along the borders of the Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Serb Krajina and in areas under Krajina control, but numerous crimes had already been committed against the Croatian population.¹⁵ Croats were almost completely cleansed from the Krajina area. In 1993 and 1994, after a series of military operations, part of the Serb Krajina territory was returned to the control of the Croatian government. Operation Flash in May 1995 liberated Western Slavonia, and Operation Storm in August of the same year put an end to the military activities in the Republic of Croatia. During and after Operation Storm, almost the entire population of Serbs from the Republic of Serb Krajina left Croatia.¹⁶ The mass exodus of Serbs from Krajina as well as the plundering and crimes committed against the remaining Serb civilians represent to this day one of the most controversial events in recent Croatian history.¹⁷

Only Eastern Slavonia and Baranja remained under the control of rebel Croatian Serbs. The Erdut Agreement signed in November 1995 arranged for the peaceful reintegration of these areas into the constitutional and legal order of the Republic of Croatia. On January 15, 1998, the area of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja, and Western Srymia was brought back under the Republic of Croatia's control.

More than 20 years after the end of war, its consequences still burden Croatia and its neighboring countries. Debates about causes, character, and con-

13 See Kardov, "Od politike razlika do politike prostora" [From politics of difference to politics of space].

14 War crimes against Serbian civilians were committed in Gospić, Pakračka poljana, Paulin dvor, Osijek, and Sisak. See Documenta, Center for Dealing with the Past: www.documenta.hr.

15 See documentation on crimes committed in Voćin, Baćin, Kostriči, Joševica, and Sotin by Documenta, Center for Dealing with the Past: www.documenta.hr.

16 Estimates of how many Serbs left during the operation vary from 150,000 to 200,000 people. See Human Rights Watch, "Croatia: Impunity."

17 The character of the exodus is disputed (a non-planned side effect of the liberation operations or a planned human displacement). The crimes committed against Serbian civilians by Croatian forces and civilians after the operation present one of the unhealed wounds of the wars. For the dominant Serbian narrative, their memory presents "proof" of Croatian genocidal intentions; for Croats they constitute a minor set of incidents not comparable to crimes committed against Croats. For more on this and other controversies of the war, see Bjelajac and Žunec, "The War in Croatia."

troversies from the war period are still present in the public arena and used for daily political purposes. There is still no final, all-encompassing list of killed and missing persons in the Republic of Croatia during the war from 1991 to 1995. Estimates vary from 15,000 to 20,000 people.¹⁸

The Homeland War in History Textbooks and Curricula

The basic documents on which teaching in Croatia is based are the curricula (teaching plans and programs). The current history curriculum for general program secondary schools was published in 1995.¹⁹ The current curriculum for primary schools was released in 2006 and is known by its acronym HNOS. In 2011, the National Framework Curriculum (NOK) was introduced as a foundation upon which new subject curricula would be constructed. A new, experimental curriculum for vocational schools was devised in 2012.

General Program Secondary Schools

The history curriculum for general program secondary schools introduced in 1995 is structured around the titles and subtitles of history textbooks used at the time, which were devised under the watchful eye of education authorities zealously promoting the newly implemented ethnic and national paradigm.²⁰ As such, the developed curriculum clearly reflected the prevailing understanding of the purpose of history teaching at the time. The introduction to the lesson plan immediately makes clear that history teaching is viewed, almost reminiscent of early nineteenth-century methods, as the teaching of events that will inculcate patriotism and philanthropy by using “model portraits that imbue the whole of human history, which many prominent individuals from Croatian national history could be said to do.”²¹ The ratio of national to world history (60:40) contributes to this idea. Even though the curriculum calls for the development of critical thinking, it contains at least two instances that stipulate which insights students should obtain. The state considers it important

18 See Žunec, *Goli život* [Bare life].

19 Minor amendments were made in 1997 and 1999. Ministarstvo prosvjete i športa, “Nastavni Programi za Gimnazije: Povijest” [National curriculum for secondary schools: History].

20 More on this in Koren and Baranović, “What Kind of History Education.”

21 Ministarstvo prosvjete i športa, “Nastavni Programi za Gimnazije: Povijest” [National curriculum for secondary schools: History], 162.

that all activities within the curriculum are devised in such a manner that a student can see and recognize the international position of Croatia on their own, dating back to the earliest settlements in the area that we now call the homeland, demonstrating the role and the significance of Croatian history and people in the world and world history, as well as the fact that Croatia was, and still is, an integral part and co-creator of European culture and civilization.²²

Apart from stipulating the conclusions that students are expected to draw from their own analysis, the above sentence also summarizes the perspective on learning history: that it helps students realize the importance, significance, and longevity of their own nation and become aware that they belong to the European cultural circle.

The whole introduction to the curriculum defines what should be taught and what “true interpretations” students should gain. It reduces students to passive recipients of prescribed knowledge and values, and teachers to uncreative and inhibited transmitters of strictly formed knowledge and values. Therefore, it is no surprise that this curriculum does not even mention the teaching methodology.

This curriculum presents the events of the 1990s in the same way as it treats other periods, specifying lesson titles and parts of lessons such as: “Serbian Attempts to Topple the Democratic Authorities in Croatia,” the “Persecution of Croatian People” and “Croatian Veterans,” “The Invaluable Help of Emigrants” against “Serbian Aggression in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” and “Croatia’s Commitment to the Politics of Peace.”²³ A careful selection and omission of facts and the lack of variety of perspectives, coupled with a clear ethnic bias, shaped the curriculum during this period.

Primary Schools

After an experimental trial during the 2005–6 school year, the Croatian National Education Standard (HNOS) was introduced with new curricula for the later grades of primary school in 2006–7. Teachers had been included in the development of this document, which made the process – at least on one level – open to a broader community of experts. External evaluation was also introduced for the first time. However, it became apparent that the equal participation of experts had been an illusion when a new committee was introduced to tackle the part of the curriculum concerning the 1990s. This committee subsequently made significant changes to the final text of the curriculum in relation to the initial draft.²⁴

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid., 174.

24 Koren and Baranović, “What Kind of History Education,” 116.

Nonetheless, this curriculum acknowledges the need for significant changes in history teaching and recommends reducing classroom time spent on political history in favor of social and cultural history, while specific issues are left to the discretion of teachers. This curriculum also emphasizes honing students' critical skills and not only learning historical matter, as required by the previous curricula. It clearly states that "history can only be understood if students understand the methods employed by historians to learn history along with learning the outcome of historical research."²⁵ As one of the basic missions of teaching history, the curriculum cites preparation for life in a multiethnic society. It also points out that the ability to understand and apply historical concepts (multiperspectivity, among others) is a fundamental process for students' understanding of the past. Some authors have argued that the curriculum, as implemented, did not support these innovations, effectively reducing them to empty declarations not reinforced by classroom practice.

If we analyze how the new curriculum covers the 1990s, we can see that the ethnically biased narrative does not change much. In fact, there is an evident intention to consolidate the war narrative and add more detail, apparently to imbue it with an authority that excludes any form of dialogue. Military history is dominant. Pupils should become familiar with the course of liberation of Croatian areas; they should exactly specify the military operations of the Croatian Army and name prominent Croatian veterans. The causes of the war are stated as the Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, the revival of the idea of Greater Serbia, the rise of Serbian nationalism, and Serbian paramilitary units. At the same time, neither Croatian nationalism nor the changed position of the Serbian minority in Croatia before the start of the war is explicitly mentioned. The expected educational goals for the subject matter of the Homeland War do not mention any crimes against Serbian civilians. The students are also expected to name the "collective victim" and the "collective aggressor." There is no mention of Croatian involvement in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Several conclusions can be drawn from the detailed description of the lesson plan. First, as time passed, the educational authorities felt it necessary to add a lot of detail to the narrative of the Homeland War, perhaps in an attempt to augment its place in the curriculum and largely prevent a wider dialogue on different experiences and interpretations of war events from taking place in the history classroom. It is no coincidence that this curriculum originated immediately after the debate on teaching the Homeland War that was sparked by the 2006–7 publication ordeal surrounding an infamous supplement to textbooks on con-

25 MZOS, "Nastavni plan i program za osnovnu školu" [Teaching plan and program for primary school], 284.

temporary Croatian history.²⁶ By producing a detailed map of lessons with given interpretations, the new curriculum aimed to eliminate opportunities for other, non-sanctioned interpretations, at least where the Homeland War was concerned. Second, the historical concept of multiperspectivity, which is especially important when teaching sensitive and controversial issues, was not applied to the subject matter of the Homeland War. This subject is obviously regarded as being too problematic to be taught according to the contemporary guidelines of teaching such contentious topics. This curriculum does not allow critical thinking skills to be honed or prejudices and myths to be exposed. In fact, quite the contrary: a biased method is used to the exclusion of all further examination of the topic.

National Framework Curriculum (NOK)

In 2011, in an attempt to more comprehensively reform the education system, the Ministry of Science, Education, and Sports implemented the National Framework Curriculum (NOK). It was designed as a “basis for the restructuring of syllabi and subject curricula at the level of primary and secondary education, . . . and as a basis for the systematic application of interdisciplinary topics.”²⁷ The NOK consists of different educational elements. In addition to school subjects, it introduces cross-curricular topics for the first time: personal and social development; health, safety, and environmental protection; learning how to learn; entrepreneurship; using information and communication technology; and civic education.

The NOK is a development document, a document that promotes a different, more comprehensive and systematic review of the teaching process. After the previous focus on content, a document focused on competencies (aligned with the EU’s eight basic competencies for lifelong learning) and student achievements is rather progressive. One of the basic educational goals is:

26 Ordered by the Croatian Ministry of Education, Science, and Sports in 2004, the supplement was supposed to serve as a foundation for teaching recent history, including the war in Croatia during the 1990s. After it was written and delivered to Ministry, critiques of the texts were leaked before being sent to the authors. The issue caused a fierce public debate, and the authors were unfairly attacked without the text being made available to the public. They were accused of relativizing Serbian guilt and viewing the aggressor and the victim equally, mostly because they presented the suffering of the Serbian population during the war as well. The Ministry backed out of the process and decided not to publish the supplement. It was published one year later by the civil society organization Documenta, along with the records of publishing and the public debate. See: Dubljević, *Jedna povijest, više historija* [One past, several histories].

27 MZOS, “Nacionalni okvirni kurikulum” [National framework curriculum], 1.

raising and educating students in conformity with general cultural and civic values, including those of human rights and rights and obligations of the child, rendering children competent to live in a multicultural world, to respect differences, and to participate actively and responsibly in the democratic development of society.²⁸

The NOK also emphasizes the need to change teaching methods, promoting open and interactive didactic and methodological systems that encourage dialogue, choice, and joint decisions, as well as research, project-oriented and multimedia teaching, and an interdisciplinary approach (according to the principle of cross-curricular links). The area of social sciences and humanities comprises history, geography, ethics, sociology, nature and society, philosophy, and religion. The aim of this area is to contribute to the students' development as independent and responsible individuals and citizens who will be able to understand and critically consider the position and role of humankind in the modern world and be active participants in the social, cultural, economic, and political development of their own society, able to take responsibility for its democratic development.

The document requires students to be able to "recognize and evaluate the impact of minorities and European peoples on the formation of Croatian society and culture."²⁹ Where previous history teaching had included only the Croatian national identity, the NOK also requires students to "describe and critically interpret the main historical events and social structures, their causes and consequences" and to be able to compare trends in European and world history.³⁰ Thus, this document actively provides a basis for a more balanced approach to sensitive topics, issues of interethnic relations, and building coexistence. However, until individual subject curricula consistently integrate the guidelines laid out in the NOK and teaching is structured accordingly, no change can be expected to the "old paradigm" with respect to content, methodology, and evaluation.

The strategic two-year plans issued by the Ministry of Science, Education, and Sports in 2012 and 2013 each mention aligning subject curricula and suggest the creation of a national curriculum. However, no alignment has yet taken place. Vocational curricula and vocational school programs are currently in the experimental stages.³¹ Experimental history teaching programs for vocational schools have reduced the share of the course dedicated to national history and place increasing focus on competencies and educational goals. Due to the re-

28 *Ibid.*, 15.

29 *Ibid.*, 140.

30 *Ibid.*, 144.

31 MZOS, "Strateški planovi Ministarstva znanosti, obrazovanja i sporta" [Strategic plans of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports]. According to existing strategic plans, the Ministry should align the subject curricula according to the type of educational program and the number of years it should be taught, and recommend a national curriculum.

duction of lesson hours devoted to national history, the time allocated to the topic of the Homeland War has also been reduced – to a single lesson.

The Homeland War in Textbooks

History textbooks are always created in the context of the historiography and society of the country in which they are written. Therefore, they are a reflection of that historiography and of social norms prevailing in the society, a reflection of the teaching profession, and are of course colored by the personal attitudes and values upheld by their authors. Bearing in mind that many controversial issues from the Yugoslav past (of which the wars of the 1990s are only one part) have only recently become a subject of more serious and more balanced historiographical research, it is perhaps unreasonable to expect textbooks to be able to take a scientific, coolheaded, and balanced approach to the matter when the scientific community and society as a whole are struggling to achieve the same.

The topic of the Homeland War is taught in primary and secondary schools (vocational training schools and general program secondary schools). Textbooks approved in 2009 were still being used in the 2014–15 academic year.³²

Many scholars have emphasized that most innovations in history teaching in Croatia have been pushed through textbooks. Textbook pluralism, introduced in the second half of the 1990s, opened the market to different kinds of textbooks offering a different type of history education. Despite having to adhere to curricula that are outdated in terms of didactics and rather prescriptive in terms of content, some authors have managed to create textbooks that are visually more attractive, didactically more carefully devised, and different in interpretation from anything that has previously been available. These are authors who believe that the development of critical thinking is the purpose of teaching history; who reduce the narrative and introduce more historical sources that offer different perspectives on historical events; and who generally strive to develop students' skills by including more complex tasks for students. Authors who believe that the purpose of history education is to pass on certain ready-made evaluations of historical events are usually responsible for textbooks with more narrative and texts that supply historical sources only to confirm or complement the narrative essence of the textbook. In these textbooks, in many cases, the assessments and interpretations of sources appear directly adjacent to the sources themselves,

32 In accordance with the Law on Textbooks, textbooks in Croatia are approved for a minimum of four years, after which a new approval procedure is introduced. The call for a new textbook approval procedure was not voiced in 2013. It is expected that the next call will be aligned to new subject curricula developed on the basis of the National Framework Curriculum.

which, of course, diminishes their didactic potential to develop students' analytical skills. In studying the portrayal of the Homeland War period in Croatian textbooks, the authors' different epistemological and historiographical attitudes become apparent. Textbooks also differ considerably in the space they dedicate to this topic. In one approved textbook for the eighth year of primary school (published by Profil), the Homeland War covers 10 pages.³³ Školska knjiga's textbook of the same level allocates 13 pages to the subject,³⁴ while Alfa's eighth-grade textbook devotes as many as 34 pages to it.³⁵ But, as stated above, they differ not only in terms of space but also in terms of content, approaches, language, and the types of tasks they offer to the students.

The textbook published by Alfa contains by far the most continuous text, offering a traditional narrative of past events. The sources are mostly photographs and posters that do not offer a different perspective on the problem; they mostly "enrich" the existing narrative and support the version of events given by the book. A photograph is included of Franjo Tuđman, the first Croatian president, and in addition to biographical information the text below the image states that he "opposed the infliction of guilt upon the Croatian people and argued against overstating Croatian crimes in the NDH,"³⁶ the World War II-era Independent State of Croatia. The text below a photo of the NDH coat of arms and flag claims that lies have been spread abroad about the coat of arms and flag. Statements of this kind seem to be transplanted from older textbooks, which were more sympathetic toward the NDH. The majority of the text and photographic material is related to military history; the texts go into great detail on the battles of the Homeland War and their military and strategic significance, which makes for very dense and monotonous reading. Prominent veterans with their biographies and photographs take up quite a lot of space and are presented as role models for students, as in older textbooks.³⁷

Particularly interesting is the approach authors Bekavac and Jareb (Alfa) take on controversial events of the Homeland War, for example war crimes committed by Croatian forces over Serbs. After introducing several of these crimes, there is a clear attempt to relativize them with the accompanying explanation:

At the beginning of the 1990s, the Serbian political leadership that enforced the politics of Greater Serbia, and Serbian extremists who initiated the violence and committed crimes in an attempt to destabilize and conquer certain areas of Croatia, bore the majority of the responsibility for the wars in former Yugoslavia. However, in response to violent Serbian aggression against Croatia, some members of regular Croatian units

33 Koren, *Povijest 8* [History 8], 220–30.

34 Erdelja and Stojaković, *Tragom prošlosti* [Traces of the past], 226–39.

35 Bekavac and Jareb, *Povijest 8* [History 8], 186–219.

36 *Ibid.*, 190.

37 See Koren, "What Kind of History Education."

also committed crimes. Serbian nationals were killed in Gospić, Osijek, Sisak, Paulin Dvor, Medački džep, and Pakrac Valley, mostly in revenge for other attacks or in order to take property. Some of the events that followed Operation Storm garnered considerable public attention, including the events of Lora prison, where captive Serbian soldiers were abused in Croatian prisons. The Croatian system of justice has taken legal action against the perpetrators of these crimes. These dishonorable deeds were committed mostly out of revenge or for personal gain and were the actions of individuals and criminal groups, and are quite distinct from the honorable behavior of the vast majority of Croatian commanders, soldiers, and policemen in the Homeland War. The deeds were not a part of Croatian politics, and they were not planned in order to banish Serbs from Croatia.³⁸

The passage continues:

In any case, the final liberating Operation Storm resulted in minimal victims (either military or civilian). If the Croatian forces had acted the same way during Operation Storm as the YNA and Serbian paramilitary units had previously behaved, thousands of Serbian civilians would have been killed, comparable with the killings of Muslims in Srebrenica.³⁹

This type of narrative of the war is an example of traditional, patriarchal historiography, which is focused on battles and army leaders and which acknowledges the legitimacy of the state only through military victory. This textbook tendentiously defines rebel Serbs as “armed Serbian civilians,” while Serbs as a nation are labeled “the aggressor.” The natural conclusion is that Croats collectively occupy the role of “the victim.” When covering specific military operations connected to crimes against Serbian civilians, the book demonstrates a need to relativize these crimes and pin responsibility on the Serbian political elite. The book consequently inserts a map illustrating only the areas where Croats suffered. When addressing the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the authors try to absolve the Croatian political leaders of responsibility for creating Herzeg-Bosnia, the Croatian para-state within the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The authors include a photo of the demolished Old Bridge in Mostar, yet fail to state who demolished it.⁴⁰ The text does, however, suggest that both sides committed crimes in the conflicts between Bosniaks and Croats.

As other authors have argued, the textbook published by Školska knjiga⁴¹ attempts to critically review the events of the Homeland War and offer more

38 Bekavac and Jareb, *Povijest 8* [History 8], 213.

39 *Ibid.*, 214–15.

40 Jadranko Prlić, former head of the Croatian Defense Army (HVO), was found guilty of demolishing the Old Bridge in Mostar along with other war crimes against Bosniaks and Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina. See UN International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, “Prlić et al.”

41 Erdelja and Stojaković, *Tragom prošlosti* [Traces of the past], 226–39.

comprehensive insight into the past.⁴² The textbook mentions, for example, the crimes committed against Serbian civilians, even though it fails to explicitly name the perpetrators. Also, by explaining the circumstances that prevailed in Croatia before the war, the authors provide insight into the conditions that led to the escalation of interethnic intolerance. The textbook generally uses balanced and considered language.

The textbook published by Profil offers a variety of political views on the dissolution of the joint state as well as different experiences of the conflict. The use of multiple, diverse sources with accompanying analytical tasks for students, along with a narrative that makes the suffering caused by war an integral part of the story of war, rather than a passing reference, together mark a quantum leap in textbook practice. The human rights perspective on the war is most prominent in the chapter titled, “The Price of War,” which adds a dimension not present in other textbooks: a description of how war transforms the lives of “common people” and of communities as a whole.⁴³ The textbook deals with a broad range of consequences of war, starting from migration and refugee experiences to war’s effects on family relationships and social processes, regardless of the ethnicity or “the side in conflict” of those affected.

The educational concept of the general program secondary school curriculum entails returning in detail to topics covered in primary school, thereby allowing more time to cover the Homeland War. Secondary school textbooks logically follow this pattern, with publishers Školska knjiga and Profil allocating 13 pages each to the topic, while publisher Alfa allocates 16 pages.⁴⁴

In their fourth-year secondary school textbook, authors Erdelja and Stojaković (Školska knjiga) give a more complex overview, broadening their approach to history by including topics and data that are frequently still considered taboo in domestic historiography. Along with accurately presented facts of war and an easily digestible overview of military operations, the authors provide insight into the social tensions caused by the war. To this end, the chapter recounts the problems of privatization, evictions from apartments belonging to YNA officers, illegitimate property claims, and incidents of Serbs being fired from jobs. In their portrayal of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the authors point out that the Croatian authorities’ cooperation with the para-state of Herzeg-Bosnia resulted in the international isolation of Croatia, a fact overlooked by most textbooks. The

42 See Agičić, “Prikaz postanka suvremene Republike Hrvatske u hrvatskim udžbenicima povijesti za osnovnu školu” [An overview of the origin of modern Croatia in Croatian textbooks for primary school].

43 Koren, *Povijest 8* [History 8], 222–23.

44 Erdelja and Stojaković, *Koraci kroz vrijeme IV* [Steps through time IV], 284–97; Miljan and Miškulin, *Povijest 4* [History 4], 228–41; Akmadža, Jareb, and Radelić, *Povijest 4* [History 4], 206–22.

approach taken here to crimes committed after Operation Storm is especially interesting. Apart from mentioning individual crimes, the book states that the Croatian authorities failed to act:

Toward the end of the conflict, and after Operation Storm, there were many cases of criminal behavior in liberated areas that were supposed to be under the control of the Croatian army. The remaining Serbian civilians were killed; the property of refugee Serbs was plundered and destroyed. Even though the behavior of certain individuals has been punished through the criminal justice system, the general impression is that Croatian authorities did not react appropriately to these activities.⁴⁵

Akmađža, Jareb, and Radelić, authors of the fourth-year secondary school textbook by Alfa, allocate 18 pages fewer to the Homeland War than Bekavac and Jareb, authors of the eighth-grade primary school textbook for the same publisher. The approach, however, very much resembles its primary-level counterpart. In terms of the relation between text and historical sources, we can trace a similar pattern: the sources are not used for any tasks that might develop students' critical skills. Moreover, they are used to support and exemplify the explanations given in the central text and are always accompanied by a given interpretation of the source. This textbook representation generally focuses on military operations and the suffering of Croats during the war and reflects the typical, ethnically exclusive discourse with a main focus on victory and victimhood. The source selection is similar to that from Alfa's primary school textbook.⁴⁶

In Miljan and Miškulin's general program secondary school textbook, published by Profil, narrative text dominates, accompanied by maps, photos of refugees, soldiers, and images of suffering. A text about the Serb rebellion in Croatia cites a Serbian source that compares Croatia to the NDH, and a text next to it interprets Serb feelings of endangerment as invalid.⁴⁷ This statement is contentious, not only on the declarative level but also in what it omits. There is no mention of Croatian politicians who supported this view or of the spread of Ustasha iconography at the time. A chapter called "Civilians in the War" actually says little about the suffering of civilians, and the information that it does include exclusively addresses the suffering of Croats, that is, crimes committed by Serbian forces.⁴⁸ A chapter on final operations states that civilians were murdered and property plundered and burnt down after Operation Storm, but it does not

45 Erdelja and Stojaković, *Koraci kroz vrijeme IV* [Steps through time IV], 293.

46 For example, the map showing main sites of Croatian suffering is the same in both textbooks: Akmađža, Jareb, and Radelić, *Povijest 4* [History 4], 221; Bekavac and Jareb, *Povijest 8* [History 8], 214.

47 Miljan and Miškulin, *Povijest 4* [History 4], 226.

48 *Ibid.*, 234.

mention who was responsible. The end of the chapter offers, by way of explanation, that civil authorities were not established quickly enough. It concludes by saying: “But almost all Serbs left the liberated areas of their own free will. Since the relocation of Serbs was organized by the Republic of Srpska Krajina, it indisputably proves that they did not see their future in the Republic of Croatia.”⁴⁹

The textbooks analyzed do not display overt nationalism, and they make no false statements. The form of historical overview used in textbooks and their didactic approach to longer periods of complex history requires any textbook analysis to focus not only on what is said, but also on *how* things are said and what things are *not* said. What authors omit is often more indicative of their position on how history should be taught than what they include. This is particularly relevant when documenting or ignoring crimes committed by Croatian forces. The fact that most of the authors give greater space to military history than other dimensions of war (impact on society, migration, human rights aspects), speaks volumes on their perception of the essence of war and how they wish to convey it. Some authors emphasize the deleterious effect of war on all affected groups and areas, while some give precedence to the magnitude of victory. Different approaches applied derive from different values; consequently, different stances on the war are directed toward different educational goals.

Training Received by History Teachers to Teach the Homeland War

The Education and Teacher Training Agency (AZOO) is a state institution for the accreditation and organization of professional teacher training. One of its responsibilities is to organize training courses for specific school subjects. Apart from organizing annual state training courses for history teachers on teaching the Holocaust, in 2008 AZOO started organizing annual professional training courses on teaching the Homeland War, with the help of experts from the Croatian Homeland War and Documentation Center (HMDCDR). Since the Homeland War is part of the curricula but still a complicated and sensitive issue in Croatian and regional history and history education, the need for this type of training is undeniable. However, the concept of these courses – the promotion of a “one truth” narrative – has been called into question, as have its potential educational and social implications.

The co-organizer, HMDCDR, is a research institution founded by parliament for the purpose of documenting, conducting research into, and publishing information on the events of the Homeland War. This institution has, however,

49 Ibid., 239.

been criticized for its inherently unscientific ethnic bias in allowing access to documentation and its interpretation of the events of the war as being skewed toward the victors.⁵⁰

The locations chosen for these courses have all been places of conspicuous mass suffering in the Homeland War, particularly for the ethnic Croatian population.⁵¹ The professional training courses are commonly inaugurated by local Catholic bishops who bless the participants, while local performers of traditional music usually play the national anthem and patriotic songs. During the third national training course in Vinkovci in 2010, the tamburica band Najbolji hrvatski tamburaši struck up the national anthem, after which they premiered their new song “Posljednja bitka” (“The Last Battle”), which singles out the trial of generals Gotovina and Markač as the last battle of the Homeland War.⁵² The video for this song (which was also shown at the convention) contains footage of the trial and support rallies for the generals, where supporters hoisted flags of the World War II-era fascist puppet state NDH.

The majority of lectures during the seminars on the Homeland War deal with military history, and participants are informed in great detail of significant war operations and the course of liberation operations. In-depth portraits of Croatian soldiers are also presented. However, the promotion of military history stands in opposition to the approach advocated by the development documents, which call for more cultural and social history.⁵³

A common assertion made at these conventions is that it is the only space where participants can hear the *real truth* about the war. For example:

50 The Center highlights its own bias by clearly stating that it only provided documentation to the defense team in the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) case against Croatian Army and Croatian Defense Council generals Ante Gotovina, Ivan Čermak, Slobodan Praljak, Milivoj Petković, and others. See HMDCDR, “Izvešće o radu centra u 2011” [Report on the work of the center in 2011]. The Center was also criticized recently for not granting a PhD student access to the archives for research on her doctoral thesis. See Habeck, “Tuđman, klasificirano” [Tuđman, classified].

51 The first course was organized in Zadar (2008), followed by Šibenik (2009), Vinkovci (2010), Dubrovnik (2011), and Plitvice (2013), while the course in 2014 returned to Zadar. More on these state courses on the website of the Education and Teacher Training Agency (AZOO), <http://www.azoo.hr/>.

52 The case of Croatian Army generals Gotovina et al. was the most contested ICTY case in Croatia. Parts of the public (especially some veterans’ associations) organized rallies to support them after the judgments were brought. Many supporters saw them as martyrs and completely blocked out the voices of victims of the crimes they were indicted for. See UN International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, “Gotovina et al.”

53 See MZOS, “Nacionalni okvirni kurikulum” [National framework curriculum]; MZOS, “Nastavni plan i program za osnovnu školu” [Teaching plan and program for elementary school].

Admiral Domazet described the final operation of the war at the Third State Convention in Vinkovci, pointing out that, just two days earlier, he had finished his book on the Homeland War, in which we will soon be able to read the real truth, unlike the truth written by Goldstein and Jakovina.⁵⁴

Declarations on the Homeland War and Operation Storm and interpretations of events are quoted as undisputed truth at professional training conventions.⁵⁵ The purpose of history is clearly seen as the transmission of a closed, official narrative, as well as the fostering of patriotism.

These seminars often emphasize the authenticity of personal historical accounts by participants in the war:

We have been witnessing different viewpoints and attitudes to the Homeland War for almost 20 years. However, to us at the Education and Teacher Training Agency, to the teachers and all of us who are a part of the education system, there is only one viewpoint – the authentic accounts of everyone who took part and contributed to the Homeland War.⁵⁶

No debate on the advantages and limitations of personal accounts as historical sources or on their use in history teaching are addressed at these conventions. Authentic accounts of wars told by contemporaries can undoubtedly contribute to understanding the phenomenon of war, but state training on the Homeland War only interprets as authentic accounts of those on the winning side or, more specifically, the military and political elite of the “winning nation.” Excluding the diversity of personal experiences of all those who witnessed the war and claiming that only some accounts are authentic and thus worth listening to is biased and tendentious. Without an open space for different experiences, personal accounts are reduced to simply supporting the dominant narrative.

Consequently, by closing the debate off to different experiences, we also close it off to different interpretations of past. That this is an issue in teacher training on the Homeland War is reflected in the welcoming speech by Vinko Filipović, director of the AZOO, to the 2014 state seminar on the Homeland War in Zadar: “Faced with the last generations of children born in the war who are now finishing secondary school,” it is “important to pass on authentic and true in-

54 Hajdarović, “Izvjestaj sa trećeg državnog skupa o Domovinskom ratu” [Report from the third national professional training course on the Homeland War]. Ivo Goldstein and Tvrko Jakovina are two prominent Croatian historians who specialize in modern and contemporary Croatian history and hold different views on the topic.

55 Parliamentary declarations on the Homeland War and Operation Storm give a historical account of these events. For full texts of these declarations, see the National Gazette website: <http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/274008.html>; <http://www.propisi.hr/print.php?id=4905>.

56 AZOO, “Istinu o Domovinskom ratu u Dubrovniku svjedočili autentični sudionici rata” [Authentic witnesses to the truth of the Homeland War].

formation to all future generations.” He also emphasized that this subject does not allow for different opinions and “should not and cannot be interpreted in any other way.”⁵⁷ Furthermore, he stated that not all textbooks have the same relation and the same share of information on the Homeland War, and that textbooks should enforce the standard of teaching on the Homeland War. This unequivocally states that a historical event should and must have only one interpretation, and that its content is summed up in a specific standard.⁵⁸ This kind of history teaching aims to uncritically promote and instill one narrative, and it endures – even with institutional support – despite contemporary trends in historiography and didactics and developmental educational documents that push for a different kind of teaching.

Announced Formalization of Homeland War Field Trips to Vukovar Memorials

At the beginning of 2012, HMDCDR announced the founding of its branch office in Vukovar, a town that became a symbol of Croatian suffering during the war of the 1990s. Existing memorials devoted to that war will come under HMDCDR Vukovar management, along with at least two other buildings to be converted for use in a recently announced educational enterprise: obligatory field trips on the Homeland War to Vukovar.

The final program of this pilot project has not yet been made available to the broader public, even though a public debate was held on the issue. It is unclear what information was available to the public prior to the debate and how the decision was reached that this type of educational program would be in alignment with the curriculum and developmental documents on education. The information available in the media was sparse, meaning that contemporary comment was potentially ill informed and based on incomplete information.

When it comes to choosing Vukovar for these field courses, one needs to observe the symbolic role of this decision as well as its consequences for the local community. Due to the tremendous suffering of its citizens under the siege of Serbian forces, Vukovar became the symbol of Croatian suffering in the war. By taking a central place in the collective consciousness and the official narrative of the war, Vukovar became a spaceless, timeless abstraction, a victim-town, a

57 Dukić, “6. državni seminar Domovinskom ratu” [6th state seminar on the Homeland War].

58 Similarities between the enforcement of a “standard on the Homeland War” and the standardized way in which the National War of Liberation was taught in Socialist Yugoslavia have yet to be studied. On the politics of teaching history in Socialist Yugoslavia, see Koren, *Politika povijesti u Jugoslaviji (1945–1960)* [Politics of History in Yugoslavia (1945–1960)].

transcendent symbol of Croatian suffering.⁵⁹ Along with great human losses, the problems of missing people, unprocessed crimes, vast material destruction, and almost obliterated economic activity still hinder the building of a healthy postwar society. Several authors have studied social relations between the two largest ethnic groups in the city of Vukovar (Croats and Serbs), and most describe them as marked by great social distance, thus representing an impediment to normal life, intercultural development, and overcoming the war legacy in this postwar, ethnically diverse community.⁶⁰ Practices of remembering are also polarized: the town of Vukovar does not contain a single memorial that honors the suffering of Serbian civilians. At the same time, there are at least nine marked locations of Croatian suffering, now to be gathered under one umbrella institution at the new HMDCDR branch. Some scholars have recognized a sort of “excess of memory,” a body of memory that does not allow the society to move on and detach from war and suffering. Moreover, this excessive memory is selective, not recognizing the victims of Serbian ethnicity. This only feeds interethnic tension and furthers the gap within the community.

History education fits into this specific remembrance policy, which can be traced in certain documents related to teaching history as well as in teaching practices. The primary-level Croatian National Education Standard (HNOS) abounds with formulations lifted from the official narrative of the war and the appropriate way to remember the victims of Vukovar. Vukovar Memorial Day is commonly introduced in most school curricula, and many schools choose Vukovar and the surrounding area for school excursions. Visiting Vukovar memorials is a standard element of the educational part of the school excursions that visit Eastern Slavonia. As part of the new program, all eighth-grade students will come to Vukovar for two-day courses, sleep in bunk beds in the military barracks, and listen to lectures “by experts from the ranks of veterans or young historians educated by real veterans.”⁶¹

Veterans are presented as the only relevant witnesses; they are supposed to be the holders and exclusive interpreters of this one-dimensional, positivist historical truth. What is more, they are the people who should educate historians on how and what to teach. They also judge how the education process values specific content. There was no discussion on whether it is appropriate for eighth graders (14-year-olds) to sleep in barracks after being exposed to a harrowing experience. On several occasions, the Minister of Veteran Affairs emphasized that there will be a lesson of peace at the end of the course, so that the students leave with

59 Clark, “Reconciliation through Remembrance?,” See also Kardov, “Od politike razlika do politike prostora” [From politics of difference to politics of space].

60 See, for example, Clark, “Reconciliation through Remembrance?”

61 See Cvrtila, “Svi osmaši ići će na dva dana u Vukovar” [All eighth graders will go to Vukovar].

messages of peace, to guarantee that it will not happen again. But the question remains: Does “Lesson of Truth” (the pilot project with lessons conducted by veterans), with the “Lesson of Peace” as its final trinket, contribute to peace-building? Should it not start by deconstructing the *single truth*, by being introduced to the multitude of experiences and interpretations it generates? In short, to build peace, the concept of teaching has to be devised in a completely different way. Otherwise, the “Lesson of Peace” can remain just an ornament decorating an essentially different concept.

As part of the plan presented to the public, obligatory field trips for all eighth-grade students will be complimented with an additional day of field courses at memorials in local communities close to their homes. Naturally, these will be locations of the biggest conflicts in the local community and, again, places of suffering of the majority – Croatian – population. Some journalists have called this into question, citing locations of Serbian suffering in their local communities, places that locals do not like to discuss and that most certainly will not appear in field courses of this kind.⁶²

Instead of focusing on the concept of the courses, discussions have revolved around the infrastructure and economic benefits of the project for the town of Vukovar. Images of thousands of students arriving in Vukovar for their compulsory school visit have been portrayed as an engine of the town’s development. The heritage of war is offered as the only hope to improve the economic conditions of the citizens of Vukovar. Neither the educational and museum-related considerations nor the economic prudence of the program’s design have been addressed so far.

Conclusion

The focus of history teaching in contemporary Croatia is explained in the National Framework Curriculum, the country’s key developmental educational document, devised in 2011 as a means of fostering pupils’ analytical and critical thinking skills and thus educating active and responsible future citizens. At the same time, teaching plans and programs in force present a prescriptive layout of the historical content to be taught. They determine not only themes and topics teachers should teach but also interpretations and standpoints on specific topics that teachers should transmit to their pupils and students. This is especially evident in relation to contemporary history and the topic of the Homeland War as one of the most contested events in Croatia’s recent past. Even attempts to

62 For example, Matijanić, “Hoće li se u nastavu o Domovinskom ratu uključiti i lekcije iz Lore?” [Will the lessons on Homeland War include lessons from Lara?].

introduce didactic innovations by refocusing from content to outcome and competences, for example with HNOS in 2006, have shown that the educational authorities are still keen on defining both obligatory content and its interpretation. In terms of teaching the Homeland War, this has meant sticking with an ethnically biased, closed, and militarily focused narrative.

Since 2009, authors of the approved history textbooks in Croatia have managed to work around the prescriptive character of teaching plans and programs, and some have moved far beyond a content-based approach. As I have shown in this analysis, while addressing teaching topics assigned in the very prescriptive curricula, some textbook authors have devised more complex tasks for their students and included a variety of primary and secondary historical sources for students to work with. In addressing the conflict, some have even managed to include perspectives that are neglected or even silenced in the dominant narrative of the war. At the same time, other textbooks have followed through with a content-based approach, offering only content repetition tasks and presenting a closed, ethnically biased narrative with sources used only to compliment the interpretation built into the set historical narrative. In this respect, the textbooks present a variety of understandings of history and history teaching and thus a variety of approaches to covering the Homeland War. Didactically and historically they represent both mono-perspective and multiperspective approaches, both dominantly narrative and source-rich textbooks, as well as approaches that take the middle road. In some textbooks, presentations about and attitudes toward this period are more advanced and inclusive than the curricula demands, which supports the argument that most innovations in Croatian education stem from textbooks.

Still, teacher training on the Homeland War organized by educational authorities continues to promote a rather surpassed didactic approach to the matter. Stating that only one truth about the conflict is legitimate and the only interpreters of this truth are the war veterans of the Croatian Army, these teacher training sessions do not understand history as an inquiry or history education as teaching about the process of historiography. Passing on a ready-made, ethnically biased narrative in teaching these topics is accompanied by an attempt to ban all other potential visions of history and history education. The announced study visits on the topic of Homeland War seem to be in line with this position as well. Considering that the institution providing these teacher trainings is also in charge of teachers' professional development, and considering the important social role of veterans, questions arise: What educational resources do Croatian teachers use within the given framework when approaching the topic of the Homeland War? What shapes their decisions and teaching strategies? A need is growing for educational research that moves beyond analyzing teaching materials to shift its focus to educational actors and teaching processes in the context

of teaching the Homeland War in Croatia. This would contribute not only to a better understanding of the Croatian education system but also to a broader analysis of dealing with the legacies of the violent past in Croatian society.

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Petar Todorov

Teaching History in Macedonia after 2001: Representations of Armed Conflict between Ethnic Macedonians and Ethnic Albanians

Introduction

This chapter addresses the complex interethnic relationship between ethnic Macedonians and Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia as reflected in changes to the country's history textbooks since 2001. That year, the seven-month armed conflict between government forces and the National Liberation Army, NLA (UÇK),¹ came to an end, followed by the signing in Ohrid of a framework agreement granting more rights to the Albanians and other ethnic groups living in the country. During the ensuing years, the Macedonian Parliament drafted a set of laws that guaranteed, for all ethnic groups living in the country, freedom from discrimination, equitable representation, use of their own language in education and administration, and other rights. Although the agreement did not explicitly mention the question of history education, it still had important implications for how history should be taught. In 2004, the Ministry of Education directed the Bureau for the Development of Education to develop new curricula for history education, and Macedonia's first post-conflict textbooks appeared in 2005 and 2006.

Scholars are in broad agreement that the history of Macedonia after the conclusion of armed conflict is replete with divergent and contradicting narratives describing the conflict itself and the relationship between the warring parties. Further, there is widespread consensus that education in general, in particular the way that history is taught in the classroom, has the potential to act as a powerful tool for the exacerbation or, alternatively, the prevention of conflict. In this context, the armed conflict of 2001 demonstrated the importance of understanding a country's past. Recognizing this significance and attempting to

1 The Republic of Macedonia gained independence from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) in 1991. According to the 2002 census, two-thirds of the population (two million in total) consists of ethnic Macedonians, one-quarter are ethnic Albanians, and the rest identify as Turks, Serbs, Roma, Vlachs, and other ethnicities.

develop history education in the service of peace education, several workshops were held in the years after the conflict ended, attended by high school teachers, students from the teacher training departments at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje and the South-East European University in Tetovo, and students from ethnically mixed high schools. One aim of these workshops was to raise awareness of the need for an inclusive perspective on Macedonia's past.² In addition, during the years immediately after the cessation of conflict, domestic and international nongovernmental organizations became involved in efforts to train history teachers in order to generate greater understanding of the country's past and thereby prevent future conflict.³ However, a suggestion by the Skopje-based Center for Human Rights and Conflict Resolution to reform education on the shared past by introducing the recent conflict to school curricula met with strong opposition from several eminent Macedonian scholars and politicians. The acting president (2003–6) of the Macedonian parliament, Ljupčo Jordanovski, argued that it was too soon after the end of the conflict to raise the issue, while a prominent member of the Macedonian Academy of Science and Arts, Blaže Ristovski, commented that he “can't allow that the [historical] truth can be found through this kind of ‘partnership.’ It just adds petrol to the fire between the two sides.”⁴ It is important to note that history education was not high on the political agenda in the initial post-conflict years and was not a principal issue in the implementation of the framework agreement. Greater attention was paid to the use of language in administration and education, constitutional reform, and territorial and administrative reforms.

The 2004 Curriculum Reform and the First Post-conflict Textbooks

Despite the fact that some ethnic Macedonian historians and their Albanian colleagues struggled with the idea of teaching the 2001 conflict and held divergent views on the past, all agreed that history curricula were in need of reform.⁵ The principal focus of reform was the removal of the negative image attached to Albanians and other minority communities living in the country, as well as the

2 See, for example, Petroska-Beška and Najčevska, “Macedonia.”

3 For example, the Center for Human Rights and Conflict Resolution (CHRCR) Skopje, in cooperation with professional historians, published educational materials presenting to students the two historical narratives central to the development of Macedonian and Albanian ethnic identities, respectively. Petroska-Beška and Najčevska, *Наративите во нашата историја* [The narratives in our history].

4 For the comments given on the workshop organized by the CHRCR, see Popovska, “Sharing History in Post-Conflict Society.” Among other perspectives, Popovska's paper presents reactions from Ristovski and Jordanovski.

5 Panovska and Čepreganov, “Tolerance and History Textbooks.”

inclusion in textbooks of a positively presented history of all communities. Initial impressions of the textbooks published after the cessation of conflict were that they did incorporate the universal values of freedom, human rights, and respect for ethnic diversity and presented the history of all minorities included in the new curricula in a positive way.⁶ However, if the ultimate aim was to produce a textbook that would promote the aforementioned values and, ideally, serve as a tool for conflict prevention, then the process of “giving space” to the history of the other community in these textbooks was not entirely effective. A textbook genuinely equipped to act in the service of peace education should deconstruct historical myths and exclude ethnocentric approaches to understanding a shared past; it should promote history education as a factor for social inclusiveness and multiperspective approaches to history teaching. In terms of developing a peace culture, recent debates have also focused on the types of textbook revision that have proven most effective during the period of reconciliation. More importantly, they have focused on the context – that is, on locating the textbooks in a complex media space in which they represent only one of several components in the educational system, specifically in history education.⁷

Against this backdrop, a number of scholars have analyzed Macedonian history textbooks in a rather critical manner since 2006.⁸ They argue that history curricula represent one of the most contested issues in the country and are a key element used by elites in the fostering of national sentiment. Such use (and abuse) of history curricula, based on ethnocentric views of history, sets up obstacles to both their reform and their adaptation to new approaches in history education. In consequence, the major reform of history curricula, which was one outcome of the 2001 framework agreement, did not seek to apply new approaches but rather to provide more space for the history of ethnic Albanians, in other words, to create a parallel ethno-national narrative. With regard to the idea of developing more balanced representation, we might define these changes as a “classic” form of textbook revision in a post-conflict society, consisting in the attempt to eliminate the negative image of the Other. However, negative images of the Other (the ethnic Albanians, in this case) are still present in the textbooks. For example, on several occasions in the eighth-grade textbook, Macedonia and ethnic Macedonians are presented as victims of the Albanian policy of denationalization.⁹ Further, the intent to include the histories of other com-

6 UNESCO, “Fostering Peaceful Co-existence,” 38.

7 Lässig, “Introduction,” 3–4.

8 For example, Pichler, “Historiography and the Politics of Education”; Stojanov, “In Search of Autochthony”; Petroska-Beška et al., “Интегрална анализа на содржината на учебниците по историја за основно образование” [Integral Analysis of History Textbooks for Primary School in the Republic of Macedonia].

9 Ristovski et al., *Историја за осмо одделение* [History for the eighth grade].

munities led, in its realization, to the creation of two parallel ethno-national narratives (Macedonian and Albanian) in the textbooks, in which the respective ethnic community always remains at the center; the consequence is an encouragement of continued mutual exclusion between the different communities living in the country.

Textbook analyses in Macedonia have also generated broad agreement among scholars that the books currently used in the Macedonian educational system take an ethnocentric approach, and that their narratives imply that the Albanians and Macedonians have consistently lived separate from one another. The message that these parallel narratives send to students is that national and cultural boundaries are very strong and immanent. There is nothing in these narratives about the common sociopolitical experience that the two communities have lived through in the past.¹⁰ This reinforces a perception that history education, as one of the main media in the production of historical memory from Macedonia's socialist period to the present day, serves more to generate national sentiment, uphold state ideology, and reiterate political purposes than to develop skills of critical thinking and understanding the past. In fact, the new curriculum reform was in favor of reinforcing the nationalist discourse and not deconstructing it.

The textbooks issued after the cessation of conflict neither discuss the armed conflict of 2001 nor pay adequate attention to the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia. They explain the reasons for the former country's breakup in a simplistic manner by defining it as a struggle between centralist and decentralist political groups.¹¹ One could argue that the reticence apparent in Macedonia toward discussion of the 2001 armed conflict and the conflict of the 1990s is not atypical of the ways in which conflicts are often avoided in textbooks. It took more than two decades, for instance, for Germany to commence an open discussion about World War II and the Holocaust. On the other side, in countries that have openly and immediately discussed their conflicts, such as South Africa after the abolition of Apartheid, the establishment of so-called truth commissions to prosecute individual misconduct has often ended up tabooing the discussion of recent conflict in other contexts. In other cases, such as the former Yugoslav republics (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia), schools avoided a discussion of violent aspects of the past, and discourse turned to other aspects of history, such as everyday life and cultural history.¹² In the Macedonian case, it is not only the recent conflict that is completely ignored: the history of violence and conflict between ethnic Macedonians/Orthodox Christians and

10 Petroska-Beška et al., "Интегрална анализа на содржината на учебниците по историја за основно образование" [Integral Analysis of History Textbooks for Primary School in the Republic of Macedonia].

11 Ibid.

12 Stöber, "From Textbook Comparison to Common Textbooks?," 39.

Albanians/Muslims during the Ottoman period, the Balkan Wars, World War II, and other cultural or political conflicts are either omitted or selectively included.

The Interethnic and/or Interreligious Relationship: A History of Conflict

The twentieth century is known as the most violent century in the history of humankind, and the Balkans had their share in this violent period. In fact, the twentieth century commenced in the region with ethnically and religiously motivated violence that had its roots in the previous century. Various military groups consisted mainly of local Christians or Muslims with the support of the Ottoman State, and the neighboring states fought each other over Ottoman Macedonia – a conflict that would lead to the Balkan Wars of 1912–13 and World War I. Victims of these armed conflicts were mainly civilians, regardless of their religious and/or ethnic backgrounds. During the subsequent Balkan Wars, in isolated incidents, Christians attacked Muslims in acts of revenge for five centuries of Ottoman control.¹³ As a result of the wars, many Muslims fled the region to the territories left under control of the Ottoman Empire. A critical examination and presentation of these conflicts in history textbooks is of crucial importance: in the current conflict between ethnic Macedonians and Albanians also lies a religious difference and a perception that ethnic Albanians in Macedonia are an Ottoman remnant, which defines them as a strange body within Macedonian society.

Although southeastern European countries attempted to stay out of World War II, it had similar, if not even more intense violent consequences. During this world conflict, the religiously motivated violence of the previous period gave way to ideological and ethnic motives as the Communist Partisan movement, predominantly consisting of ethnic Macedonians, and Albanian armed groups opposed their forces in the western part of present-day Macedonia. The armed resistance of the Albanian armed groups within Yugoslavia continued until 1948.¹⁴ In the period after 1948, the interethnic relationship between Macedonians and Albanians was marked by cultural and political conflict and antagonism, punctuated by several armed incidents in 1968, 1981, 1992, 1994, and 1997.¹⁵

13 See Kennan, *The Other Balkan Wars*.

14 The dominant narrative in Macedonian historiography does not discuss violence and crimes committed by ethnic Macedonians. In relation to Macedonia during World War II, historians generally characterize the Albanian armed groups as pro-fascist and nationalistic, a definition that legitimizes the subsequent fight against them. See, for example, Veljanovski, *Историја на македонскиот народ* [History of the Macedonian people].

15 During these years, the ethnic Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia protested against the authorities, demanding more cultural and political rights. Some of the incidents, such as those in 1992, 1994, and 1997, resulted in fatalities on the side of the protestors.

Analysis of Seventh- and Eighth-Grade History Textbooks

In view of this contentious history, it is important to examine Macedonian textbooks and their depictions or omission of recent conflicts in which the ethnic Macedonians and Albanians took different sides. The analysis in this section will encompass the Balkan Wars, World Wars I and II, and the political conflicts that took place during the Yugoslav era. It will focus on the portrayal of these wars and the representation of ethnic Albanians in the textbooks at hand. My principal interest is to explore the following aspects: changes in textbook content over time and its influence on the complex relationship between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians; the ways in which history teaching influences the promotion of ethnic tolerance in Macedonian society; and the degree to which history education in Macedonia contributes to the elimination or reinforcement of stereotypes as potential sources of conflict. To explore these issues, I will first examine the concept and design of the part of the textbook narrating the recent past. Second, I will investigate the factual information provided, along with its interpretations. Third, I will look at the manner in which the events are narrated and the image of the past presented in the textbook. To this end, I will analyze history textbooks first published in 2005 for the seventh and eighth grades,¹⁶ in which the conflicts above – particularly the Macedonian ethno-national narrative – play a role. The textbooks analyzed here are written by mainstream historians and promote the dominant historical discourse in the country.¹⁷

Sections in the history textbooks are mostly divided according to chronological, geographical, and national criteria into three main groups. The seventh-grade textbooks consist of world history, Balkan history, and Macedonian history, while the eighth-grade book usually places the world, Europe, and the Balkans in one group and Macedonia in another (e.g., “The World, Europe, and the Balkans in World War II” and “Macedonia in World War II”). The Albanian ethno-national narrative is depicted as part of “Balkan history,” whereby the sections dedicated to Albanian history take up almost two-thirds of the space. The concept behind the history textbooks for both grades could well give the impression that the history of the twentieth century revolves entirely around war,

16 Ristovski et al., *Историја за седмо одделение* [History for the seventh grade]; Ačkoska et al., *Историја за седмо одделение* [History for the seventh grade]; Ristovski et al., *Историја за осмо одделение* [History for the eighth grade]. Several new editions of the seventh- and eighth-grade textbooks have been published in recent years, with unchanged content. The textbooks for the seventh grade depict history from the end of the eighteenth century until the beginning of the World War I, while the book for the eighth grade depicts events from World War I to the beginning of the 1990s.

17 In the Republic of Macedonia, there are currently two history textbooks per grade. For the present analysis I have selected the textbooks for seventh and eighth grade based on their frequency of use and the importance of the authors in Macedonian historiography.

politics, and the nation. For example, military and political history makes up about 85 percent of the seventh- and eighth-grade textbooks, half of which is dedicated to wars.¹⁸ The wars are usually narrated through national ideals, self-victimization, aggressive politics of neighboring countries, and military developments. This approach to late nineteenth- and twentieth-century history adheres to the traditional understanding of wars and revolutions as battles, victories, defeats, national heroes, and national tragedies; in other words, a war is seen as an exclusively political event, without acknowledging the aspects related to social history. Topics such as the everyday lives of soldiers and civilians on the front and behind the front lines, the role of women, science, art, modernization, and the humanitarian aspects of war are not included in the textbooks.

There are several problems with the representation of these wars in the textbooks and the image of ethnic Albanians. The first is the ethnocentric approach to depicting war. For example, in the Macedonian narrative of the Balkan Wars and World Wars I and II, the difficult position of the ethnic Macedonians under occupation and their struggle for national liberation always remain at the center of the story, ignoring the ethnic Albanians, Turks, or other ethnic groups living in the country.¹⁹ Furthermore, the depiction of political and military history is simplified to a linear narrative; the textbooks fail to give an accurate impression of the complexity of historical events that took place. In narratives of World War II, the conflict between the Communist Partisans and the Albanian armed groups is generally ignored or depicted in a selective and confusing manner.²⁰ In defining the ethnic Macedonians as victims, the textbooks create a negative image of the Albanians as occupiers of the western part of Macedonia.

The principal messages from sections of the textbooks dealing with wars (in both the Macedonian and the Albanian ethno-national narratives) relate to the partition of Macedonia and Albania, to victimization, and to the struggle of Macedonians and Albanians for national liberation. World War II is presented in the Macedonian narrative as the war that gave birth to the Macedonian state, although the narrative reminds students that other parts of Macedonia (Albanian, Bulgarian, and Greek Macedonia) were not included in this newly established state.²¹ Moreover, both narratives exclude the histories of other communities and focus respectively on the ethnic Macedonians or the ethnic Albanians. The reader does not learn about their shared experience of the wars.

18 Petroska-Beška et al., “Интегрална анализа на содржината на учебниците по историја за основно образование” [Integral Analysis of History Textbooks for Primary School in the Republic of Macedonia], 15.

19 Ačkoska et al., *Историја за седмо одделение* [History for the seventh grade], 114–16; Ristovski et al., *Историја за осмо одделение* [History for the eighth grade], 12–14, 86–106.

20 Ristovski et al., *Историја за осмо одделение* [History for the eighth grade], 86–106.

21 Ibid.

The seventh-grade textbooks define the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913 as “anti-Macedonian” in an ethnic sense, and their consequences are discussed in relation only to the ethnic Macedonian population, while other communities such as Muslims, Albanians, Turks or Slavic-speaking Muslims are ignored.²² There is no information about the Muslim refugees who left the region as a result of the Ottoman army’s defeat, or about the atrocities committed against the Muslims by the Balkan armies, local armed groups, and (in some cases) civilians. The myth of Macedonian victimhood is even more apparent in the narrative on World War I, whose consequences are described as tragic for the “Macedonian people,” with Macedonia remaining divided among the Balkan countries of Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia, while one small part was given to Albania. This part of the textbook ends by concluding that the Macedonian people were subjected to even harsher policies of “denationalization and assimilation” in the four parts of divided Macedonia.²³ The depiction of World War II in the textbook for eighth grade raises similar issues, focusing on the occupying regimes of Bulgaria and the “quisling Albania”²⁴ and their policies of “denationalization and assimilation.”²⁵ However, the sections on Macedonia during World War II focus more on the Bulgarian occupation than on the occupation of the western part of today’s Republic of Macedonia. The eighth-grade text informs students that the Albanian administration implemented a policy of changing people’s names to Albanian forms, introduced old taxation laws from the Ottoman period,²⁶ terrorized the ethnic Macedonians, and forced them to leave their homes; moreover, the narrative claims that Albania organized the Albanian colonization of areas abandoned by ethnic Macedonians.²⁷

The narrative of a constantly divided Macedonia and its subjection to policies of “terror,” “denationalization,” and “assimilation” constitutes an important part of how these textbooks depict historical events; in this way, the books reinforce the myth of Macedonian victimhood through the centuries. Furthermore, they tend to explain the policies and events that took place on Macedonian soil exclusively on the basis of ethnic difference. The textbooks do not supply any information on the background of the conflict or the nationalist ideas behind it. The narrative of Macedonians in the western part of the country faced

22 Ristovski et al., *Историја за седмо одделение* [History for the seventh grade], 130–31.

Ačkoska et al., *Историја за седмо одделение* [History for the seventh grade], 114–16.

23 Ristovski et al., *Историја за осмо одделение* [History for the eighth grade], 13–14.

24 While the term “quisling” (collaborator) is not common in English, its transliteration, *Квислинг*, is used frequently in Macedonian.

25 Ristovski et al., *Историја за осмо одделение* [History for the eighth grade], 86–88.

26 The image of the Ottoman Empire in Macedonian textbooks is negative. Among the interpretations of Ottoman rule, the text claims that the Ottomans economically exploited the Macedonian people during their five-century domination by imposing various taxes.

27 Ristovski et al., *Историја за осмо одделение* [History for the eighth grade], 86–88.

with terror at the hands of ethnic Albanians and forced to leave the region, is only one way in which the textbooks depict Macedonians as victims to the Albanians. A similar interpretation can be found in the sixth-grade textbook, which claims that after the Karpoš Uprising of 1689,²⁸ a significant number of Albanians (with the help of the Ottoman authorities) settled in the areas where Macedonians had previously lived and had been forced to leave their homes.²⁹ Such interpretations have the potential to support manipulation in political discourse, along with claims that since the seventeenth century there has been a constant “ethnic cleansing” of Macedonians from the western part of the country.

The treatment of the World War II occupation of western Macedonia demonstrates the tendency of the eighth-grade textbook to frame in ethnic terms the political events that took place from 1941 to 1944. By contrast, in what appears to be a continuation of textbook practices from the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, the textbooks tend to de-ethnicize the armed groups that fought against the Macedonian Partisans during World War II until 1948. In the section “Macedonia in World War II,” the Albanian armed groups known as *ballists* are referred to only as “hostile armed formations” or as “collaborators and quislings.”³⁰

In contrast to textbooks from the 1970s and 1980s, which exhibited a tendency to describe World War II in ideological or class-related terms rather than in ethnic terms,³¹ the 2005 textbooks appear to reintroduce an ethnic perspective to the conflict. Furthermore, they erase or minimize some interpretations from previous textbooks, such as the participation of other ethnic groups in the Partisan movement. Far from giving more space to Albanian history and removing the negative image of the Other (the stated aim of the 2004 curriculum reform), recent textbooks actually take a step back in this regard. In the current textbooks, the representation of ethnic Albanian participation in the Partisan movement amounts to only one individual example, Bajram Shabani, who was involved in the movement in the northern part of Macedonia. Even here, the narrative is incomplete: the political and social context is missing from the textbook’s explanation of the complex history of World War II in Macedonia and the Balkans. The inclusion of an Albanian figure in a section titled, “You might find this interesting,” is rather an exception and only confirms the predominant image of Albanians as the Other.³² This kind of interpretation creates the image of “bad”

28 The Karpoš Uprising was a local revolt in the region of northeastern and northern Macedonia against the Ottoman authorities. It began in 1689 as the Habsburg armies were approaching this part of the Ottoman Empire.

29 Boškovski, Ilioski, and Dervishi, *Историја за шесто одделение* [History for the sixth grade], 118.

30 Ristovski et al, *Историја за осмо одделение* [History for the eighth grade], 97.

31 Hoepken, “War, Memory and Education,” 200.

32 Ristovski et al, *Историја за осмо одделение* [History for the eighth grade], 91.

vs. “good” Albanians, in which the good Albanians (a minority) are those taking part in the Macedonian national struggle, while the bad (a majority) are those fighting for greater Albania.

The eighth-grade textbook includes nothing on the complex relationship between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians during the socialist period (1945–90) or afterwards, on their antagonism and their cultural and political conflicts. The Macedonian narrative in the textbook does not discuss the ethnicity-related problems in the country or the Albanian protests of 1968, 1981, 1989, 1992, 1994, and 1997. It is focused on the history of the ethnic Macedonians, the institutional development of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, and the Macedonian minority in neighboring countries (Bulgaria, Greece, and Albania). The Albanian ethno-national narrative ascribes exclusive culpability for the ethnic and economic problems in Kosovo and Yugoslavia to the Socialist Republic of Serbia.³³ There is no mention of the participation of Macedonian police forces in crushing demonstrations in Kosovo and Macedonia in 1968, 1981, and 1989, nor is any information provided on the discriminatory policies adopted by the Macedonian authorities toward the Albanian community in the country. Instead, the creation of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia and the status of the national minorities are presented in a markedly affirmative way; the textbook narrative asserts that all minorities in the Republic had the right to express their national identities freely. Further, the textbook claims that today, Albanians enjoy all national rights, and that “with the new [post-2001] constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, the rights of minorities are enlarged more than international standards prescribe.”³⁴ This type of interpretation suggests a situation in which ethnic Macedonians generously extend hospitality to the ethnic Albanians, who effectively hold the status of guests in their own country.

A further aspect of the role of textbooks in society and peace education is the fact that textbooks for grades 5–8 frequently feature a discussion of territories inhabited by ethnic Macedonians and Albanians that are not incorporated into the modern Macedonian and Albanian states. In both ethno-national narratives, the textbooks explicitly and implicitly send the message that incorporating these “lost territories” would represent a solution to this “historical injustice.”³⁵ Ethnic Macedonians are thus defined as the victims of their neighbors (Bulgarians, Greeks, Serbs, and Albanians). This type of presentation might lead a 13- or 14-year-old student to conclude that the loss of western Macedonia resulted from

33 Ibid., 121–22.

34 Ibid., 104, 134–35.

35 Adžievski et al., *Историја за петто одделение* [History for the fifth grade]; Boškovski et al., *Историја за шесто одделение* [History for the sixth grade]; Ačkoska et al., *Историја за седмо одделение* [History for the seventh grade]; Ristovski et al., *Историја за осмо одделение* [History for the eighth grade].

the nationalist ambitions of ethnic Albanians, or, conversely, from Macedonian nationalism.

Conclusion

This textbook examination joins other scholars in concluding that today's Macedonian education system continues to provide an education divided along ethnic lines. Aside from initiatives emerging from Macedonian civil society, above all those related to educational policy and historical research, there has been no genuine effort over the last two decades to create history textbooks that aim to teach students about the importance of democratic standards, societal dialogue, critical interpretation of the past, and reconciliation. This analysis shows that official historical narratives and the historical discipline still propagate an ethnocentric (nation-based) view of history. Such an approach means that the Macedonian education system, particularly history education, represents a major factor in continuing societal divisions between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians.

Significantly, the role of history as a divisive factor is not limited to educational processes. Public discourse in Macedonian society, as well as in the other societies of the region, is influenced by history – or more precisely, by ethno-national interpretations of history and the production of historical myths. It can be difficult in this context to draw clear boundaries between academic and what we might call “amateur” history. The mythologized, ethno-national version of history has an important place in the Macedonian media, which manifests itself in public debates, historical documentaries, and historians talking about their recent research and publications on television and radio. In addition, on several occasions during discussions around the project “Skopje 2014,”³⁶ initiated by the right-wing government (VMRO-DPMNE), Macedonian and Albanian historians clashed over the question of “who came first,” that is, the role of the country's ethnic groups in the past. In most cases, these debates simply added fuel to pre-established stereotypes of the Other; they sparked serious controversies between the different ethnic groups, which now appear to be developing into nationalist battles. In view of this, Macedonia appears to be not only a post-conflict society but also a pre-conflict one.

36 The “Skopje 2014” project involves erecting new monuments to “national” heroes, changing the building facades in the city center, and constructing new buildings in the so-called neoclassical and baroque style. Overall, the aim is to give the city a more “European” look and to replace its “socialist” architecture.

In his discussion of the representation of war in Yugoslav education, Wolfgang Hoepken shows how history education, in particular the history of World War II, was one factor in the violent breakup of Yugoslavia. He argues that selective and ideologized narratives of the war produced “fragmented memory” and a “vacuum of memory” that paved the way for the use of historical memory by and for nationalist causes. Further, he argues that the way in which war was remembered through education probably contributed to familiarizing students with the idea of war as a legitimate means of defending one’s own community.³⁷ While the Macedonian secession from the Yugoslav federation did not lead to an immediate conflict, history textbooks, in manifesting the long tradition of mistrust between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians, certainly played an important role in the constant antagonism and enmity between these two groups in the Republic of Macedonia and in the development of armed conflict in 2001.

In examining the first Macedonian textbooks to be issued after the end of the conflict, we can perceive similarities to the Yugoslav experience as described in Hoepken’s article. Namely, this edition of textbooks in Macedonia also fails to deal with the history of conflicts between the ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians in an open manner and thus falls short of any claim to achieve “undivided memory.” Indeed, as this analysis has shown, these textbooks tend to depict events in a selective and confusing manner, which has the effect of generating fragmented perceptions of historical memory, reinforcing an ethnocentric view on history, and perpetuating a narrative of victimhood. In addition, important elements of the conflicts between the ethnic Macedonians and Albanians since the Ottoman period are omitted or minimized, and the backgrounds of these conflicts – nationalism and religious intolerance – are ignored. In general, it is evident that these textbooks and the curricula they help deliver indicate a lack of readiness or, indeed, capacity to tackle difficult and sensitive parts of Macedonian history. The strategy of avoidance, however, defers the resolution of problematic issues and does not contribute to maintaining stability in interethnic relations; instead it allows stereotypes and prejudices between Macedonians, Albanians, Turks, Serbs and the other communities living in Macedonia to stand unchallenged and perpetuate themselves. In this way, students continue to draw conclusions about their co-citizens based on the negative images extant in society and the actions of Macedonian politicians from both main ethnic groups, who frequently cite the 2001 conflict and the country’s history with populist intent. All of these factors oppose one of the aims of the syllabus reform in 2004: to work toward overcoming interethnic conflict and to build trust among Macedonia’s communities. Recently Macedonian and Albanian historians have come together to discuss historical cases of cooperation and

37 Hoepken, “War, Memory and Education,” 201, 204–5.

joint struggle by Macedonians and Albanians against their imagined “common enemy,” in this case the Serbian government.³⁸ However, it seems that by avoiding the unpleasant part of the past and focusing only on cooperation and joint struggle, history is again being subjected to political engineering.

If Macedonian society wishes to build strong interethnic relations that will counter the perpetuation of divisions primarily between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians, it will need to change the way in which its schools teach about the past, especially in relation to conflict and other painful events. This would mean ending an approach that ignores topics related to the shared past of ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians and acknowledging that tensions arising from ethnically based nationalism were the principal catalysts of the 2001 events and the prior conflicts between the Macedonians and Albanians. Not avoidance but rather open debate and a more objective, less emotional approach can successfully tackle these ongoing issues.

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Dhananjay Tripathi

Sustainable Peace Between India and Pakistan: A Case for Restructuring the School Education System

It was not true, for example, as was claimed in the Party history books, that the Party had invented aeroplanes.¹

The whole literature of the past will have been destroyed – Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Byron – they'll exist only in Newspeak versions, not merely changed into something different, but actually changed into something contradictory of what they used to be.²

Introduction

South Asia is one of the least integrated regions in the world with regard to trade in intraregional goods, services, and the interchange of ideas.³ A number of issues have plagued the regional integration of South Asia, ranging from a lack of regional consciousness among the population to a lack of willingness on the part of nation-states to cooperate for the promotion of common regional interests. One of the most dominant issues in this respect is that of India–Pakistan relations, which have, as yet, never remained stable or harmonious over a long period of time. India and Pakistan emerged after the success in 1947 of Mahatma Gandhi's innovative, largely non-violent struggle against British colonial rule. The Muslim League (ML), which had been active in undivided colonial India, raised the issue of a separate homeland for Muslims, which led to the founding of two separate nations, India and Pakistan. As a matter of fact, the Indian National Congress (INC) and ML always held different political positions in pre-partition India. This divide widened when the INC refused to accommodate ML members in ministries after the elections of United Provinces and Bombay in 1937. While the ML was disturbed by the INC's refusal to accommodate its members, the INC aggravated the ML's worries by launching a massive campaign amongst the Muslim community. The ML thought the campaign was a plan by the INC to alienate the ML from the Muslim community. As a result, the ML become more critical of the INC and started demanding a separate homeland for

1 Orwell, 1984, 38.

2 Ibid., 55.

3 Ahmed and Ghani, "South Asia's Growth and Regional Integration."

Muslims.⁴ Thus, by the time the ML had strengthened this position, it was too late for the INC to come up with a compromise. Some believe that the ML, under the leadership of Mohammed Ali Jinnah, demanded the founding of Pakistan in order to negotiate a better deal for Muslims in India. There is also a view that the riots between Hindus and Muslims that gripped predominantly the northern part of undivided India during the period of Partition occurred because there were virtually no state authorities in place to maintain public order, partially because the British had lost interest in Indian internal affairs once they started preparing for their exit.⁵ While other factors doubtless played a role in the partition of India, this study seeks to focus on the issues that continue to this day to thwart the development of a peaceful relationship between India and Pakistan. I argue that the governments of India and Pakistan have rarely made any formal efforts to engage with these damaging historical periods in order to achieve a better and more peaceful future.

Turning specifically to education, objective historical narratives related to Partition are not part of classroom studies in either India or Pakistan. Teaching has tended to emphasize the causes of Partition, while the violence that took place in the surrounding period has not been adequately addressed.⁶ Even after more than six decades, bad memories of Partition have continued to trouble our present; school syllabi seek to justify the division of united India in 1947 and substantiate the continuing present-day hostilities between India and Pakistan by linking them with the countries' histories. In the process, the image of an "enemy nation" emerges in young minds and remains with many people into their later lives. This chapter demonstrates why these perceptions are among the principal hindrances to long-term sustainable peace between India and Pakistan. The people of both countries frequently reject government efforts toward lasting peace. This chapter will argue that changes to the school curricula of both countries will be required to improve their mutual relations, and that such changes should include units on these nations' commonly shared culture and heritage rather than a "blame game" in which India and Pakistan each hold the other responsible for the partition and the glorification of conflict.

The Memory and Justification of Partition

The question of what has prevented India and Pakistan from moving beyond the history of the partition is a complex one without a single, simple answer. Untangling the ways in which Partition defines the identities of India and Pakistan

4 Jha, "Roots of Indo-Pakistani Discord," 15.

5 Bates, "Hidden Story of Partition."

6 See Pandey, "India and Pakistan."

requires extensive academic engagement⁷ due to both the large-scale destruction of life and property at the time and the fact that relations between India and Pakistan currently seem condemned to forever bear the burden of Partition. The secular polity of undivided India that resisted British colonial rule changed when religious parties of Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs started gaining ground in the early 1940s. The secular ideology of Congress was challenged, and “Hindu–Muslim partnerships exploded.”⁸ The following lines give some idea about what the partition meant in terms of human suffering:

By one account, over 8 million refugees poured across borders to regions completely foreign to them, while other accounts state that 7 million people migrated to Pakistan from India and vice-versa. By another estimate, Partition resulted in the forced movement of 20 million people (Hindus and Sikhs to India and Muslims to Pakistan). Most estimates of the numbers of people who crossed the boundaries between India and Pakistan in 1947 range between 10 and 12 million. . . .

The death toll of this terrible episode remains very much contested. . . . A consensus figure of 500,000 is often used, but the sources closer to the truth give figures that range between 200,000 and 360,000 dead.⁹

The scale of loss of life and property incurred during the India–Pakistan partition is similar to that seen in some instances of genocide. Partition of undivided India is also associated with tormenting tales of atrocities toward women. Such instances commonly occurred when communally charged mobs targeted women of other communities. Unfortunately, crimes against women during the partition have not been properly addressed by the official historical sources. Still, there is ample literature available in the public domain due to the committed work of independent scholars on this subject. Most of these works are based on oral histories of the partition and on narratives of female survivors.¹⁰ The following excerpt from a well-received article on the subject helps draw a larger picture of brutality toward women during the time of Partition.

The fear of abduction, or of falling into the hands of enemy compelled hundreds of women to take their own lives, equal numbers to be killed by their own families and literally thousands of others to carry pockets of poison on their persons in the eventuality that they might be captured. And many committed suicide after they were released by their captors for having been thus “used” and polluted.¹¹

These horrific tales of Partition are part of larger discussions on India and Pakistan and quite common in both countries, with one community blaming the

7 Gilmartin, “Partition, Pakistan and South Asian History,” 1068.

8 Hasan, “Partition Narratives,” 104.

9 GlobalSecurity.org, “Partition – August 1947.”

10 Virdee, “Remembering Partition,” 51.

11 Menon and Bhasin, “Recovery, Rupture, Resistance,” WS3.

other for violence and crimes against humanity. However, apportioning blame is a complex matter in the case of India and Pakistan; while there were actors and factors responsible for Partition, it is difficult to establish the concrete culpability of any single cause. It has been argued that “for many British empire historians, partition has been treated as an illustration of the failure of the ‘modernizing’ impact of colonial rule. . . . For many nationalist Indian historians, it resulted from the distorting impact of colonialism itself.”¹² In other accounts, it has been argued that the leadership of the ML and the INC failed to realize the scale of the violence and destruction that marked the partition. People believed en masse the propaganda unleashed by undivided India’s national political elites in support of a separate homeland for Hindus and Muslims, and the situation spiraled out of control. Those who propagated the idea of two nations never expected that the situation would escalate to a genocidal level.¹³ Once it had begun, violence gripped the entire northern part of undivided India, spreading rapidly, while national leaders found themselves unable to restore calm. The joint appeal for peace signed by Muhammed Ali Jinnah and Mahatma Gandhi at the request of Lord Mountbatten had no effect on those who were rioting and killing one another in the name of religion. It appears that, although the main political leaders of the undivided country did not wish to escalate the violence, they were not willing to compromise on their stated positions on Partition.

After Partition, India inherited a British India while Pakistan became a new nation.¹⁴ Both nations subsequently sought narratives for the period that would justify their actions and relieve them of responsibility. For a new nation, a fresh history was required; for an old nation like India, certain changes were essential. The period after Partition saw a continuous effort on the part of both governments to create better “Pakistanis” and better “Indians.”¹⁵ Thus, the partition, in the long term, was not only defended but continued to shape the national identities of both countries and influence the objectivity of their histories. Jennifer Yusin nicely articulates this: “The partition did not necessarily end at midnight between 14 and 15 August 1947, but was instead born at the doorstep of independence and in between two nations whose identities became inextricably bound to and constitutive of each other.”¹⁶

12 Gilmartin, “Partition, Pakistan and South Asian History,” 1068.

13 Naqvi, “Politics of Commensuration,” 62.

14 Mansergh, “Partition of India,” 2.

15 Ahmad, “India–Pakistan: Friendship as Enmity,” 3231.

16 Yusin, “Beyond Nationalism,” 24.

Locating India in the Education System of Pakistan

From an idealistic viewpoint, one might hope that the education systems of India and Pakistan would, in the interests of their mutual growth and development as well as their textbooks, regard the other nation as an independent neighbor. This would help both India and Pakistan to conduct their bilateral relations in an objective manner. However, the nature of the relationship between India and Pakistan dictates, at least at present, that there remains a very thin demarcation line between objectivity and subjectivity. The politics, history, culture, and geography of India and Pakistan are so intertwined as to be virtually inseparable; yet the two countries' education systems have deliberately sought to emphasize the status of the two as distinct, opposing nations. This is certainly understandable, due to the fact that it is only through the establishment of reciprocal otherness that the act of partition is justified. Through several media, state and non-state actors are constantly engaged in reinforcing the concept of the Other with respect to India and Pakistan. One of the principal media transmitting this message has been school textbooks.

We will first turn our attention to the case of Pakistan. India as a country currently does not find much mention in Pakistan's higher education system. At secondary-level education in Pakistan, India is discussed but not with objective consideration. A certain motive becomes clear: to justify the national political position in regard to India. This has not been the case throughout Pakistan's entire history. A notable change took place after the 1960s, when Pakistan was under the military regime of Ayub Khan (1958–69); he instructed that the history of India and Pakistan be separated in school curricula and the latter be linked with Central Asia rather than with India. Previous to this decree, the history curriculum in Pakistan had defined the country's past in terms of a shared history with India.¹⁷ The main objective of the change was to create a different identity for Pakistan, linking it to other Islamic countries and thereby disentiwining it from the shared history with India. Indeed, the two countries' shared past had provided ample material for a curriculum, including the Mughal Empire and the history of common struggle against British colonial rule. Countering this record, Pakistani history textbooks deliberately created a gap between the country's history and that of India. Mubarak Ali, in an article on Pakistani textbooks, makes the point that "according to them the conquest of Sindh made the Indian Muslims a part of the Arab empire. This makes them more enchanted with the glories of Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo and Cordoba than with their Indian counterparts of Delhi, Agra or Fathepurikri."¹⁸

17 Zaidi, "Conspicuous Absence," 61.

18 Ali, "History, Ideology and Curriculum," 4530.

Another striking example is the presentation of Akbar in Pakistani textbooks. Akbar was one of the greatest Mughal rulers of India and renowned as a liberal personality who promoted Hindu–Muslim unity and respected the diversity of India. When Pakistan introduced its new education policy in 1960, Akbar found no mention; by contrast, another ruler, Aurangzeb received extensive praise. Aurangzeb, too, was a strong ruler of the Mughal Empire; however, unlike Akbar, he was not overly sympathetic to the cause of communal harmony. The inclusion of Aurangzeb and the omission of Akbar indicate the promotion in these textbooks of a particular ideology that is opposed to the idea of unity in diversity. One decade later, in the 1970s, Akbar was reintroduced to Pakistani textbooks, but not as a hero. Instead he appeared as an example of a ruler who failed to promote “Muslim interests” on the Indian sub-continent.¹⁹ This particular example demonstrates the extent of the selectivity governing the depiction of prominent personalities of undivided India in Pakistani textbooks. The intent appears to be to help create a “dedicated Pakistani” through education.

Politics and Textbooks

After Partition, the new nation of Pakistan was faced not only with the question of legitimizing its secession from India but also with the challenge of establishing a distinct identity for itself in the international arena. The first prime minister of post-independence India, Jawaharlal Nehru, was a popular international personality and regarded as one of the leaders of the Third World.²⁰ Nehru was a charismatic, modern, and secular leader who was widely respected; his personality and activism allowed India to easily carve out a place for itself in the international system. India also had other advantages, such as being a natural heir to British India, its demography (as the most populated country in the South Asian region), and its possession of a secular constitution. This set of advantages greatly eased India’s path to obtaining assistance from the international community. By contrast, Pakistan initially struggled to find support and acceptance from the international community, including the United States and some of the Muslim countries of West Asia.²¹ However, with the change in international politics during the Cold War, Pakistan emerged as a strategically important state for the United States, as evidenced by the developments around the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

19 Ali, “Akbar in Pakistani Textbooks,” 73.

20 Power, “Indian Foreign Policy.”

21 Haqqani, *Magnificent Delusions*, 10–13, 14.

The Pakistani establishment found itself faced with a dilemma in terms of how to project the country's national identity. It is generally believed that this predicament manifested itself in the various political moves undertaken by Jinnah. While Jinnah respected the diversity of Pakistani society, he remained hesitant about terming Pakistan a secular country.²² Subsequently, with the changing dynamics of international politics, Pakistan ultimately placed itself closer to the Western bloc during the Cold War as India moved closer to the Soviet Union. This move helped resolve the issue of defining the identity of Pakistan, which projected itself as a strong Islamic state that proved critical in organizing the Afghan resistance against the invading Red Army.

Creating a national identity is important for societal cohesion in any country: "In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined."²³ Every state creates national identities that largely define the character of its population, and religion, tradition, and culture have vital roles to play in the development of these identities. The focus of this chapter is not so much on the necessity of identity-building itself than on the methods used to create such identities and the nature of the ultimate objective to be achieved by identity-building projects. In the case of Pakistan, there has always been a strong emphasis on India, not in a positive or neutral sense but as a competitor.

The policy of exerting influence on students' images of the Other through textbooks and curricula was further consolidated under the regime of Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq,²⁴ a military dictator who received tacit support from the United States for his policies because Pakistan was the frontline state in its campaign against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Interestingly, during the Afghan War, the United States supplied millions of dollars to produce textbooks that would propagate a concept of *jihad* to Afghan students. These textbooks were

filled with violent images and militant Islamic teachings, part of covert attempts to spur resistance to the Soviet Occupation. . . . Even the Taliban used the American-produced books, though the radical movement scratched out human faces in keeping its strict fundamentalist code.²⁵

While US influence was less pronounced than in Afghanistan, politicized tendencies began to express themselves in Pakistani textbooks as well. The radicalization process of Pakistan, which started after the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971, picked up pace during the Afghan Civil War and has continued to the

22 Hoodbhoy, "Jinnah and the Islamic State," 3301.

23 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

24 Nayyar and Salim, "Subtle Subversion."

25 Stephen and Ottaway, "How USA Created a Vast Amount of Books." See also Center for Research and Security Studies, "Curriculum of Hate," 17–19.

present day. For instance, Professor Tariq Rahman points out that the textbooks “cannot mention Hindus without calling them ‘cunning,’ ‘scheming,’ ‘deceptive,’ or something equally insulting.”²⁶ Rather than providing objective, facts-based education, textbooks appear to be focused on supplying justifications for government actions. For Pakistan, the Other has always been India. This has helped the Pakistani state to create a distinct identity different from that of India, but not without consequences. The separation has not helped the cause of peace between India and Pakistan; instead, the divide of 1947 has only become stronger. Several works on Pakistani textbooks bring forth the issue of a purposeful distortion of objective knowledge in regard to India. The report “Curriculum of Hate,” issued by the Center for Research and Security Studies in Pakistan, has compiled the following examples from current Pakistani textbooks.²⁷

Grade 4, social studies:

“Sikhs destroyed the Muslim towns from the river Sutlej to the river Jamna. A number of times the Sikhs crossed the river Jamna and looted and destroyed the settlements of the Muslims. They turned the mosques into their ‘Gurdawaras,’ demolished the shrines of the Muslim saints and burnt religious schools and libraries.”

Grade 4, social studies:

“India invaded Lahore on the 6th of September, 1965 without any ultimatum. After 17 days, the Indian authorities laid down arms acknowledging the bravery and gallantry of the Pak Army and civilians.”

Grade 5, social studies:

“India is our traditional enemy and we should always keep ourselves ready to defend our beloved country from Indian aggression.”

A recent study of Pakistani textbooks by Ghazi et al. further discusses the following examples.

Grade 8, social studies:

“Hindus believed that there lived only one nation in the sub-continent, i.e. Hindus, the other nation should merge in[to it], otherwise they [should] quit India. . . . The current geo-political scenario in India resembles, that [which] prevailed one and half a century ago.”

“While preaching Christianity the priest and clergymen used to praise Christianity and talked ill of other religions.”

²⁶ Quoted in Cohen, *Idea of Pakistan*, 243.

²⁷ Center for Research and Security Studies, “Curriculum of Hate,” 20–22.

“They compelled the Muslim children to respect the picture of Gandhi and also the worship of idols.”²⁸

Grade 10, Pakistan Studies:

“The British damaged the Islamic values with the help of Hindus and promoted western values in [the] sub continent. This ill treatment greatly shocked the Muslims.”

“Ill emotion was created in the hearts of East Pakistani people against west Pakistani people in all India[n] Radio Programmes.”²⁹

These are just a few glaring examples of how a particular image of the Other is shaped in the minds of young children in Pakistan. These images of Other/enemy created at an early age remain in people’s memories. This type of imagery only reinforces the partition and denies space for peacebuilding.

Locating Pakistan in the Education System of India

The case of India is different, with less apparent anti-Pakistan bias, although war stories, glorification of victories, and the issue of Kashmir can be found in Indian textbooks, and some of this material is directed against Pakistan. There are two specific reasons for the different situation in India. First, India is a highly diverse country with adherents of all major religions present in its population. This renders it difficult for the state to promote one particular religion too specifically. The focus thus remains on accepting diversity and celebrating India’s multi-ethnic, multireligious identity. This chapter focuses on secondary school education (up to class X) and will examine the social sciences textbooks of India. The analysis will discuss textbooks prepared by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). Textbooks prepared by NCERT are used in central, government-managed schools. It is important to note that provincial school education boards in India have different textbooks, but every education board follows the guidelines of NCERT.

For classes IX and X, the subject of social sciences covers political science, history, and geography. The class IX political science textbook is titled *Democratic Politics – I*, with six chapters discussing various essential aspects of the democratic polity. The history textbook is titled *India and the Contemporary World – I* for class IX, and it discusses periods of world history including the French revolution and Russian revolution, as well as the rise of Hitler. In class IX, there is no specific chapter on the Indian freedom struggle and therefore no

28 Ghazi et al., “Content Analysis of Textbooks,” 149–50.

29 Ibid., 150.

specific discussion of Partition. In class X, *Democratic Politics – II* (political science) includes chapter 3 (“Democracy and Diversity”) and 4 (“Gender, Religion and Caste”), which are of some relevance to this study. Chapter 3 introduces a critical discussion on racial discrimination, drawing examples from the civil rights movement of the United States and from the situation of Roma people in Europe. After a careful reading of this chapter, one can conclude that students will be sensitized to certain critical issues facing human society. Getting further into the discussion of discrimination, chapter 4 covers issues pertaining to communalism, gender, and caste (immensely significant in the Indian context). On communalism, the chapter gives the example of Partition, but without any comprehensive elaboration on the riots and events of Partition. In the class X history textbook, *India and the Contemporary World – II*, chapter 3 addresses “Nationalism in India.” Different phases of the Indian freedom struggle are mentioned in this chapter, but again without any detailed reference to Partition.

Partition receives only nominal references in the NCERT social science textbooks for classes IX and X in India. The crucial event of Indian history and politics is not given the space it requires. One can question the rationale and purpose behind such an omission. Considering the criticality of India–Pakistan relations, it might be helpful for textbooks to provide a basic introduction to the partition. Since the topic of India and Pakistan comes up routinely in most students’ surroundings, why exclude a bold and frank discussion from the class IX and X textbooks? It would be beneficial for students to learn history from the more objective textbooks rather than from other sources such as community storytelling, movies, and media, where the chance of subjective interpretation is quite high.

A further reason for the different situation in the Indian education system compared to Pakistan might be the strong influence traditionally held by left-of-center and progressive academics. Indian academia has always resisted any attempt to distort the education system for communalist causes. To substantiate this point, we can turn to an example beyond the secondary level, from a class XII NCERT history textbook. The title of this textbook is *Themes in Indian History – III*, and theme 14 is “Understanding Partition – Politics, Memories, Experiences.” This chapter includes a collection of powerful and moving personal narratives of victims who suffered during the partition. Interestingly, the chapter covers not only Indian perspectives but also personal accounts of Pakistani nationals. There are bold sub-headings such as, “Partition or Holocaust?” The chapter does not equate violence during the partition with the Holocaust but does term the former “ethnic cleansing”:

It also helps to focus on why Partition, like the Holocaust in Germany, is *remembered* and referred to in our contemporary concern so much. Yet, differences between the two

events should not be overlooked. In 1947–48, the subcontinent did not witness any state-driven extermination. . . . The “ethnic cleansing” that characterised the partition of India was carried out by self-styled representatives of religious communities rather than by state agencies.³⁰

This is a strong, provocative chapter on Partition introduced in class XII, but the question remains of why Partition is scarcely covered in classes IX and X. The topic leaves a glaring gap. Partition requires earlier attention because familiarizing students with their critical past at a young age might be of help. Otherwise young minds will get an overdose of communalist colors from various other media, and shades of these colors can obstruct objective learning on the issue.

Indian textbooks are comparatively progressive, but there are groups and organizations that remain opposed to what they consider overly secular content that compromises discussion on Indian culture and tradition. Interestingly, by citing Indian culture and tradition, these groups imply a political Hindutava discourse in textbooks that has also been referred to as a “saffronization” of Indian school education. In other words, the pretext is a promotion of Indian culture, but in reality the textbooks aim to propagate the culture of the dominant Hindu community and thus block out the culture of diversified India. Efforts were made to change the school curriculum between 1998 and 2004, during which the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), led by the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), was in power. This period saw the increased promotion and glorification of the Hindu religion and its tenets; one concrete example was the removal of evidence from textbooks that beef was a food item in ancient India.³¹ Even so, the NDA regime did not effect major changes in school curricula, perhaps partially due to the exigencies of coalition politics. Ten years later, the political situation in New Delhi changed, with the BJP emerging from the 2014 parliamentary elections as the single largest party, no longer dependent on its coalition partners for support. Thus, there is a chance that the new establishment in New Delhi will make changes to education policy. While the actual nature and extent of these changes remains to be seen, we might draw inferences from the BJP’s election manifesto of 2014: “Education in India needs to be revitalized and reorganized to make future generations proud of their culture, heritage and history and also for creating confidence in the vitality of India.”³² Based on the political character of the BJP and on past experience, curricular changes will likely emphasize the glorification of the Hindu religion.

30 NCERT, *Themes in Indian History – Part III*, 381.

31 Thapar, “Propaganda as History Won’t Sell.”

32 Bharatiya Janata Party, “Election Manifesto 2014,” 22.

Conclusion: The Way Forward

Identities are not permanent or immutable; they undergo transformation over time and due to circumstances.³³ Education systems may be able to use this mutability of identity. School education has long-term effects, lasting until we individually decide to “de-learn” and later “re-learn.” Moreover, this individual choice is not an easy one to make, first because it tends to be resisted by society at large, and second because the step of perceiving and accepting realities beyond what has been taught and imbibed is not always straightforward. Such opportunities may only be available to a select few – that is, to those who can access higher education, particularly those who are able to continue their education in the West.

Scholars have been intensely engaged with the complex relationship between India and Pakistan for some time now, and many solutions have been proposed, including improvements in trade relations, regional integration, and cooperation in areas of common interest. Some proposals have been implemented and have helped in improving the relationship between India and Pakistan to some extent. Despite these advances, however, a deep suspicion still prevails between the people on each side of the border. One method by which this suspicion might be addressed is to effect changes in the school curricula of both India and Pakistan. Civil society groups have already undertaken some endeavors in this direction, by producing joint textbooks for students in India and Pakistan; such initiatives, however, remain without official endorsement. Another avenue might be the establishment of a joint commission or working group to identify issues that could be taught in a cross-border manner. It is beyond doubt that further studies are required on this issue, which is not only limited to the textbooks of India and Pakistan but also relates to matters affecting South Asia in its entirety.

India and Pakistan are neighbors, and such long-running enmity between them is not in the interest of South Asia. Although it is difficult to estimate, this enmity takes a great economic toll, which is paid equally by the people on both sides of the border. Both countries are developing countries, and their citizenry faces numerous common problems. India and Pakistan need to learn better lessons from different parts of the world where countries have consciously made efforts to bridge the gap between their people in order to promote friendly ties. A good example is Europe, where consistent efforts are undertaken to promote regional consciousness as part of regional integration projects. India and Pakistan have so much in common, and their shared uniqueness should be communicated to the people. This best way to do so is to change the school curriculum to propagate peace and relinquish hate.

33 Singh, “Politics of Identities,” 206.

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II. Cultures of Silence: Forgoing Invaluable Lessons from a Violent Past

Mneesha Gellman

Only Looking Forward: The Absence of War History in Sierra Leone

Introduction¹

Sierra Leone is a small West African country, population 5.7 million, bordering Liberia, Guinea, and a stretch of Atlantic coast. From 1991 to 2002, it was consumed by a civil war notorious for its brutality, with widespread sexual violence, recruitment of child soldiers, and amputation used as a fear tactic.² Nearly half the total population – approximately 2.6 million people – was internally displaced; upwards of 70,000 people were killed; and substantial infrastructure was destroyed.³ Some of the driving factors of conflict in Sierra Leone included power struggles over access to diamond revenues, societal frustration over unequal access to insufficient resources such as education, water, sanitation, and electricity, and the disenfranchisement of youth.⁴ These factors were exacerbated by rebel groups crossing the border from Liberia’s neighboring civil war. Though some progress has been made, none of these conflict factors has yet been resolved, and these same issues still shape social and political life.⁵ While the Lomé Peace Accords were signed in 1999 and a large United Nations (UN) mission

1 My thanks to Susan Shepler, Joseph Dumbuya, Joshua Dankoff, and Justine Davis for comments on earlier drafts, as well as colleagues at the Centre for Global Cooperation Research, where this study was first presented. I am also grateful for feedback from fellow participants at the 2014 Georg Arnhold International Summer School on Education for Sustainable Peace at the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, particularly Elizabeth Oglesby. Brief excerpts of this chapter originally appeared in Gellman, “Teaching Silence in the Schoolroom.” All errors remain my own.

2 Rakita, *Forgotten Children of War*, 12–17; Jalloh, “Introduction”, 5.

3 Gberie, “War and Peace in Sierra Leone,” 2; Jalloh, “Introduction,” 5; Kaldor and Vincent, “Human Security,” 4.

4 Keen, “Greedy Elites,” 67–70; Maconachie and Binns, “Beyond the Resource Curse?” 104–5; Gberie “War and Peace in Sierra Leone,” 2; Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Witness to Truth*, 5–17.

5 Clark, “Assessing the Special Court’s Contribution,” 747–48. Clark’s work looks specifically at the role of the Special Court for Sierra Leone in addressing the injustices from the conflict and those that are still potential drivers of conflict today.

presence ushered in a transition to relative calm in 2002, physically, socially, and psychologically, Sierra Leone is a country in recovery, and the 2014–15 Ebola crisis only extended this process.

In Sierra Leone, the idea that “everyone knows what happened during the war, so why talk about it?” has embedded the culture of silence throughout institutions and society.⁶ In reality, the older generation who survived the war opts for knowing silence, while the younger generation joins in the silence without knowing their national history beyond what can be gleaned from family and community lore. Since the war’s end, capacity building and infrastructure projects have addressed some of Sierra Leone’s needs, but the Ebola outbreak, as well as ongoing inequality and insufficient resources, continue to keep the underlying drivers of conflict near the societal surface. In the midst of these problems, I argue that the culture of silence about the Sierra Leonean civil war traps citizens in a discourse of forgetting. In this discourse, the societal momentum to “look forward” advances without including an understanding of why the war occurred in the first place, and what future role it may play in the country. This chapter is based on a year of political ethnographic work (2013–14) in Freetown, Sierra Leone, during which I conducted 25 formal interviews with education sector employees, analyzed school materials, and talked informally to Sierra Leoneans and expatriates involved in the education sector about the quality and content of education.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, I assess the relationship between citizen formation and processes of remembering and forgetting theoretically, looking to Charles Tilly’s notion of effective citizenship as an important part of the social contract between citizens and states. Second, I consider institutional means of remembering the violent past in Sierra Leone in both formal and informal education sectors. Third, I consider the obstacles to employees of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) teaching about the civil war in primary and secondary school classrooms, and discuss why formal sector education is so important in crafting national-level identity and discourse. I conclude by arguing that violence is more likely to reoccur within cultures of silence, and thus reassert the necessity of developing tools to discuss and learn from past violence.

6 Gellman, “Teaching Silence in the Schoolroom,” 149.

Remembering, Forgetting, and Citizen Formation

People remember when they have been wronged. Many people remember the ways previous generations of their families or communities have been wronged, but only some people talk about it.⁷ Cultures of silence pervade citizen behavior by determining what becomes part of the public discourse and what is relegated, by either state institutions or other dominant community voices, to be forgotten. Paulo Freire's work in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* describes how humans can self-actualize not through silence but only by naming things as they are; in other words, opening up dialogue.⁸ In Freire's culture of silence concept, silence is something that oppresses people by keeping them voiceless, while dialogue entails a transformation of the world by naming it, creating it, and thinking critically about it.⁹ Being voiceless or empowered as a social actor has real consequences for how people perform citizenship, especially in fragile, post-conflict democratization contexts like Sierra Leone.

In brief, citizenship signifies the status of a person with duties, rights, and privileges that are connected to a specific, state-governed territory. Tilly's contractual definition of citizenship is stated as follows:

Citizenship designates a set of mutually enforceable claims relating categories of persons to agents of governments. . . . Citizenship has the character of a contract: variable in range, never completely specified, always depending on unstated assumptions about context, modified by practice, constrained by collective memory, yet ineluctably involving rights and obligations sufficiently defined that either party is likely to express indignation and corrective action when the other fails to meet expectations built into the relationship.¹⁰

Tilly's framing of citizenship captures its contingent nature. Because the contract remains unspecified, people can perform their role as citizens hoping that their participation in the state will improve their lives. Contingency is particularly salient in democratization and post-conflict contexts, where the social contract is not well defined or has been shattered by war. In these fragile moments, institutions are not yet fixed in their rules and norms, nor are the expectations of citizens entrenched. Yet in Sierra Leone, the notion of contingent, dynamic citizenship does not culturally resonate. Legal, status, rather than a social contract between people and those that govern them, is the way citizenship is operationalized in Sierra Leone. Culturally, people do not have high or even moderate expectations that the state will address their needs, and therefore

7 Gellman, *Democratization and Memories*, forthcoming 2017.

8 Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 88.

9 *Ibid.*, 88–92.

10 Tilly, "Conclusion," 253.

political mobilization targeting national-level actors and institutions remains low. In such states, rights and duties can be ambiguous,¹¹ and even before the war there was only a tenuous connection between citizens and the state. Family and community networks were much more salient for meeting needs than a set of institutions that were often quite removed from daily life.

Tilly's definition above highlights the ability of the social contract to be "modified by practice," something that again shows the potential for change to occur in citizens' discourse with the state about their rights and duties. Tilly includes collective memory as a tool to constrain the social contract, showing how socially and institutionally constructed norms lead to expectations, which in turn reinforce the norms. In Sierra Leone, this plays out through the culture of silence that is perpetuated through traumatic memory. When combined with cultural and structural norms of political behavior, this culture of silence results in citizens not questioning the omission of the violent past in citizen-forming spaces like the formal education sector.

Bound up with Tilly's notion of citizenship is the understanding that for a regime to be considered democratic, it must include relatively broad and equal public political participation, constituent consultation, and rights protection.¹² Although voter turnout in the 2012 elections was 87.3 percent and heralded by the Carter Center as a "benchmark in democratic consolidation,"¹³ elections alone do not foster an engaged civil society, and non-electoral mobilization is low in Sierra Leone. Passive citizenship, or what I would call "voting-only citizenship," is distinct from what Tilly labels "effective citizenship," something that obliges both the state and the polity to address "political effects of inequalities in routine social life."¹⁴ Though these inequalities might be addressed in alternative spaces for citizenship performance in Sierra Leone, such as through secret societies or tribes, there is a dominant sense of resignation to the status quo in Sierra Leone because of fear of violence reigniting, because organized groups like the secret societies do not want government interference, and because tribe-based advocacy runs the risk of being labeled "tribalist."¹⁵ Ethnic groups that might otherwise be interested in organizing for cultural rights along ethnic lines are reluctant to do so because of concern about being associated with ethnically divided political

11 Addison and Murshed, "From Conflict to Reconstruction," 3, 11; Azam and Mesnard, "Civil War and the Social Contract," 2, 17.

12 Tilly, "Conclusion," 256.

13 Carter Center, "Observing Sierra Leone's November 2012 National Elections," 2.

14 Tilly, "Conclusion," 256.

15 Lamin Kargbo (program manager, Institute of Sierra Leonean Languages) and Rev. Frederick Jones (Krio literacy and scripture engagement coordinator, Institute of Sierra Leonean Languages), group interview with the author, Freetown, Sierra Leone, February 19, 2014.

parties or tribal militancy from the war era.¹⁶ Instead of practicing Tilly's "effective citizenship," people participate passively – voting rather than visibly petitioning or protesting. In interviews, civil society leaders generally characterized Sierra Leonean political engagement as low. Though there may be secret or subaltern petitioning or protesting taking place, such discourses are not particularly open to outside researchers. My own inability to access potential subaltern political discourses is an admitted limitation of this study. This limitation also points to the need for Sierra Leonean scholars and others who are more closely embedded in Sierra Leonean communities to document the range of political behaviors that do constitute enactments of the social contract, particularly those that are less visible or recognizable as such.

Democracy for Tilly is not something that can be proclaimed separately from effective citizenship, yet Sierra Leone is attempting democratization without enough attention to how citizens are formed in the first place in venues like formal-sector education. Memory about the war, and the teaching of national history, has in many ways been divorced from contemporary citizenship practices, with a few notable exceptions. Sierra Leone's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) created a means to institutionalize memories of the war by gathering stories from people affected by it. Yet even during the TRC, created by the Lomé Peace Accord in 1999 and sanctioned by domestic law in 2000, the institutionalization of memory was inhibited by several factors.

First, the tension between "truth-telling" as a healing process versus the TRC documentation as a neutral and national narrative of what transpired remains unresolved.¹⁷ Second, because of simultaneous operations by the TRC and Special Court of Sierra Leone (SCSL), there was confusion among the potential population of testifiers about how their stories would be used.¹⁸ Though amnesty was a condition of the creation of the TRC and there was generally a "firewall" of information-sharing between the TRC and the SCSL,¹⁹ misunderstandings about the purpose of the two institutions among Sierra Leoneans were rampant, and the two institutions were to some degree in competition with each other for both funding and testimonies.²⁰ Third and relatedly, because the TRC, as part of its formation in the Lomé Peace Accords, granted blanket amnesty to all combatants, many survivors who wanted punitive justice through the SCSL rather than truth alone chose to tell their stories as SCSL witnesses rather than to the TRC.²¹

16 Ibid.

17 Basu, "Confronting the Past?," 237–39.

18 Carter, "International Judicial Trials," 729.

19 This was true with the exception of the case of Chief Hinga Norman. See Bangura, "International Criminal Justice," 704–5.

20 Ibid., 728–30.

21 Bangura, "International Criminal Justice," 705–6.

Finally, a voluntary truth-telling mechanism had limited appeal to a traumatized population that had yet to see real assurances that the conflict would not re-erupt, as many of the same actors remained in positions of power. This critique is not meant to overlook the significance of the TRC, which did offer an important though limited means of memory performance. In the end, the SCSL prosecuted nine war criminals and the TRC documented human rights violations around the country. Yet these official procedures did not make a great impact on the daily reality of Sierra Leoneans commensurate with the amount of resources consumed.²² This was true in spite of significant outreach efforts by the SCSL, including radio programming, community town hall meetings, video screenings of court proceedings in rural areas, and text message information distribution.²³ Though there was some effort of behalf of both the SCSL and the TRC to create school materials – including Krio-language pamphlets and books – that would relate these two processes to schoolchildren,²⁴ language and distribution barriers, in addition to poor integration into the overall curriculum and teacher training on how to use the materials, diminished their potential impact. In sum, neither the SCSL nor the TRC served as a sufficient memory mechanism for Sierra Leoneans or successfully integrated material about their work into schools.

The Sierra Leone Peace Museum, situated on the former grounds of the SCSL, opened its doors for the first time in 2013 with the mandate to serve as a memorial to civil war victims as well as to provide an intellectual space where visitors can learn about the causes of the war and potential solutions for lasting peace.²⁵ Though funding freezes in the midst of the Ebola crisis have paused further curation and development of the exhibits, the Museum is poised to serve as a significant institution for both war memorialization and promoting a culture of peace in the future.²⁶ Civil society organizations have also worked to address the culture of silence about the war in meaningful ways in relation to the SCSL and the TRC. Fambul Tok, a nongovernmental organization (NGO) that focuses on community-driven reconciliation at the grassroots level, has led important initiatives throughout the country, engaging people at the village level to support them as they reintegrate perpetrators of civil war crimes into their communities.²⁷ Since 2012, Fambul Tok has also worked directly on the issue of cultures of silence in schools through the creation of school-based peace clubs in 2012. By 2014 there were thirty such peace clubs in schools across six districts, but momentum for

22 Ford, “How Special is the Special Court’s Outreach Section?,” 525.

23 Ibid., 505–26; Special Court for Sierra Leone, “Outreach and Public Affairs.”

24 Paulson, “(Re)Creating Education in Postconflict Contexts,” 24.

25 Joseph Dumbuya (director, Sierra Leone Peace Museum), interview with author, Sierra Leone, January 22, 2014; Sierra Leone Peace Museum, “Background.”

26 See Gellman, “Teaching Silence in the Schoolroom,” 153–55.

27 Fambul Tok, “Our History”; Terry, *Fambul Tok*.

this program, as with many programs, was severely jeopardized by the 2014 Ebola outbreak.²⁸ During the outbreak, resources and energy were reapportioned wholesale across the gamut of organizations working in Sierra Leone to contain the disease. Thus, now that Ebola is contained, these organizations are able to return to their original missions in the post-conflict reconstruction and development fields.

I have written elsewhere about the importance of the culture of silence versus dialogue in post-conflict contexts,²⁹ and reiterate here that all players at all levels are needed to overcome the challenges civil war represents to individuals, communities, and states. Though the Sierra Leone Peace Museum and Fambul Tok represent significant institutions in promoting peace, my concern continues to be centered in the need to mainstream these discourses into the formal education sector. The following section turns to the role of formal-sector education as a key site of remembering and forgetting for Sierra Leonean schoolchildren.

MEST and Citizen Formation

The culture of silence about past violence and contemporary well-being in Sierra Leone is reinforced socially but also institutionalized through the state, particularly through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), which uses class curricula, teacher capacitation, and textbooks to further the agenda of moving forward by forgetting the past. Sierra Leone's development has been significantly donor driven, and education sector reform is part of this process.³⁰ Despite ongoing efforts by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations (IOs) to supplement the low capacity and lack of resources that plague MEST, major obstacles remain for formal sector students to become well-informed citizens grounded in their national history.

Official MEST curricula do not explicitly teach the violent past to schoolchildren. Textbooks do not include narratives about the war, nor about post-conflict reconstruction processes.³¹ As of this writing, teachers receive no training on how to teach the war or its implications for young Sierra Leoneans. The director of the Textbook Taskforce at MEST stressed to me that some text-

28 Jon Lunn (member of Fambul Tok's International Advisory Group), personal communication with the author, received May 29, 2015.

29 See Gellman, "Teaching Silence in the Schoolroom."

30 Solomon, "Reconstruction Survey: Sierra Leone," 22.

31 Horacio Modupeh Nelson-Williams (executive secretary, Basic Education Commission, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology), interview with the author, Freetown, Sierra Leone, January 27, 2014; Anonymous B (international organization employee), personal communication with the author, Freetown, Sierra Leone, February 18, 2014.

books do include information about the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), for example, following the government's 2008 launch of the Emerging Issues initiative, which tries to address underlying problems in the country. However, he conceded that the last real update to syllabi and curricula was in 2003 and that it is time for revisions.³² Though it is not uncommon for textbooks to be the last sites of memory to be updated in post-conflict processes, they constitute a critical ingredient in intergenerational knowledge deserving of attention. While some Ministry officials state that they plan to include the war in history and civics curricula in the future,³³ the war officially ended in 2002, and an entire generation of schoolchildren has gone through school without these officially sanctioned spaces for remembering, storytelling, and processing their national history.

A common defense brought up regarding the work of MEST is that the list of improvements needed in the formal education sector is so enormous that peace education is simply not the first priority; it will have to wait its turn behind a host of other issues.³⁴ While it is true that Sierra Leone's formal education system faces major challenges,³⁵ other post-conflict countries such as Cambodia and South Africa have used schools as sites of peace education. The following paragraphs highlight numerous structural problems that would need to be addressed in order for Sierra Leonean schools to similarly serve as memory sites with peace-promoting intentions. Some of these problems include: affordability, corruption, teacher quality, and teaching resources, which are each addressed in turn below.

Formal education in Sierra Leone remains a luxury many cannot afford. Although primary school students theoretically incur no official attendance fees, ongoing costs include uniforms, which are worn in all public schools, notebooks and other classroom supplies, as well as informal fees paid to teachers.³⁶ In fact, corruption is endemic in Sierra Leone's formal education sector and is extensively interwoven into daily life for teachers, students, families, government

32 Edward Pessima (director, Textbook Taskforce, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology), interview with the author, Freetown, Sierra Leone, February 27, 2014.

33 Mohamed Sillah Sesay (director, Inspectorate Directorate, Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology), interview with the author, Freetown, Sierra Leone, February 26, 2014; Horacio Modupeh Nelson-Williams (executive secretary, Basic Education Commission, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology), interview with the author, Freetown, Sierra Leone, January 27, 2014.

34 Anonymous B (international organization employee), personal communication with the author, Freetown, Sierra Leone, February 18, 2014; Mohamed Sillah Sesay (director, Inspectorate Directorate, Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology), interview with the author, Freetown, Sierra Leone, February 26, 2014.

35 Harding and Mansaray, "Teacher Motivation," 10; GTZ et al., "Enhancing Transparency," 11, 20.

36 Anonymous C (international organization employee), personal communication with the author, Freetown, Sierra Leone, January 27, 2014.

officials, and the donors trying to address the problems.³⁷ Notoriously underpaid, many public school teachers augment their low salaries by teaching some of the standard curriculum in special tutorials for students who can pay for meetings after official school hours.³⁸ These tutorials often make the difference between passing or failing major benchmark exams. While the tutorial practice incurs outrage, it is also done as a survival tactic by teachers, who, because their salaries are so often paid late, are commonly denied housing by landlords worried that they will never receive their rent.³⁹ The negative stigma around public school teachers because of their low salaries is further embedded socially in the fact that parents often discourage or forbid their children to marry teachers.⁴⁰ In a survey of male and female teachers in ten schools, both urban and rural, 100 percent of teachers reported that they sometimes go to work hungry.⁴¹ With average annual secondary school fees around US\$20 per child, in addition to the cost of uniforms, notebooks, exams, and many other corrupt fees, the accessibility of formal-sector education is a major challenge for average Sierra Leoneans.⁴²

Teacher training and protocol remains a particularly central challenge in reforming formal education in Sierra Leone. Often students who fail college entrance exams choose to do a teacher training program as a last resort to salvage their career options,⁴³ while others may be strong students but lack university scholarship and so turn to teacher training as a way to get more education. The ubiquitous cycle of poorly educated students becoming poorly prepared teachers who then leave the next generation of students ill-prepared is one that must be addressed when discussing formal-sector education challenges.

Educational curricula are also a problem. In part, modifications to curricula are bogged down by highly centralized mechanisms for curricular approval and harmonization. For primary and secondary school curricula, public schools may only teach MEST-approved curricula and syllabi, though in practice many teachers do what they want, are rarely monitored, and frequently do not have a

37 GTZ et al., "Enhancing Transparency," 29.

38 *Ibid.*, 111.

39 Mohamed Sillah Sesay (director, Inspectorate Directorate, Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology), interview with the author, Freetown, Sierra Leone, February 26, 2014; Harding and Mansaray, "Teacher Motivation," 7–8.

40 *Ibid.*, 7.

41 *Ibid.*, 9.

42 Other informal and corrupt charges include students having to pay for: class-required pamphlets, lunch for the teacher, chalk and other school materials used by the teacher, grades, school projects via donation envelopes, anniversary celebrations, fees to avoid punishment, and gifts – including birthday gifts – to teachers. Anonymous A (civil society leader), personal communication with the author, Freetown, Sierra Leone, May 3, 2014.

43 Mohamed Sillah Sesay (director, Inspectorate Directorate, Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology), interview with the author, Freetown, Sierra Leone, February 26, 2014.

copy of the official curriculum.⁴⁴ In turn, the colleges that train teachers may only teach curricula approved by the National Center for Technical and Vocational Awards (NCTVA), which awards all degrees in Sierra Leone.⁴⁵

Teacher training programs, and in fact all degree programs at the college and university level, are required to harmonize their programs with all other colleges and universities offering the same degree.⁴⁶ This means that Milton Margai College of Education and Technology in Freetown, which began as a teacher training college and now offers a range of degrees including a peace and conflict studies diploma, cannot independently decide to create, for example, a teacher training certificate that specializes in peace and conflict studies. Rather, the college would first have to convoke a workshop bringing together all tertiary institutions that offer teacher training degrees, reach consensus on a curriculum and syllabus modification, and then submit it to NCTVA for approval.⁴⁷

This lengthy centralized process of education reform at the tertiary level deters innovation in the formal education sector and supports a culture of the status quo regarding the content that teachers themselves are learning and what they will therefore be implementing when they gain employment in primary and secondary school classrooms. At the same time, without central curriculum control, many teachers would, and do, commonly teach from the same notes they accumulated in their teaching training days, which have long since fallen out of date. NCTVA's centralized policies try to correct for misuse and abuse, for example by collecting final exams from individual professors and having them regraded by examiners at other institutions, with the student's final grade an average of the two. This aims to address rampant grade buying,⁴⁸ whereby students bribe their professors to inflate their grades. In this light, the centralized role played by NCTVA is actually helpful in ensuring that degrees awarded represent real merit and not corruption in academia.⁴⁹

44 Emilia Kamara (regional focal person, Human Rights Committee; chairperson, Mombali District Human Rights Committee; acting national coordinator, Women's Forum on Human Rights and Development, Sierra Leone), interview with the author, Makeni, Sierra Leone, January 24, 2014.

45 This highly centralized control of degrees is to some extent meant to diminish corruption by adding oversight to how diplomas are awarded. But in fact, fake diplomas, inside information about exams, and other types of credential fraud are a major problem in Sierra Leone despite (as well as within) NCTVA. See GTZ et al., "Enhancing Transparency," 29.

46 Focus group (anonymous focus group with Registrar's Office employees), Freetown, Sierra Leone, March 24, 2014.

47 Ibid.

48 Elizabeth Taylor Morgan (dean of education, Milton Margai College of Education and Technology), interview with the author, Freetown, Sierra Leone, March 24, 2014.

49 However, stories of deep-seated academic corruption are rampant in Sierra Leone, including the practice of female students being pressured or forced to have sex with teachers for better grades or the chance to rewrite an exam; thus, NCTVA grading has not solved the problem.

The formation of teachers also is of pressing concern. As most new graduates prefer to stay in the urban centers where they do their teacher training, the resulting dearth of trained and qualified teachers in rural areas often results in teachers instructing in the same materials that they themselves failed a few years earlier.⁵⁰ This scenario does not result in high-quality education, thus trapping rural students in cycles of limited education. Though distance-learning teacher training programs have been developed to address rural capacity, the quality of teachers charged with their own classrooms is highly variable. A 2005 survey shows that nearly 50 percent of teachers are increasingly demotivated in their jobs,⁵¹ representing an overall trend of dissatisfaction among those who have daily contact with young Sierra Leoneans.

Ineffective school administration also has a direct relationship to teacher professionalization, as effective administrators are able to keep teachers on task in spite of the aforementioned challenges, ensuring that teachers cover their classes and do not hire themselves out to private schools for additional income at the expense of their primary obligations.⁵² It is not only weak teacher motivation that poses problems for the education sector, but also the national government's failure to prioritize the education sector itself, which filters down in what MEST is mandated to do. Curricula, syllabi, and textbooks can be changed, but without political will, any real change will be hard to institutionalize.

In sum, Sierra Leone's formal education sector faces a host of obstacles in educating the next generation of citizens. Even as the culture of silence about the war in schools is recognized as a problem by some actors in the education field, especially at the tertiary level,⁵³ this issue must wait its turn behind a range of other challenges. At the micro-level, dire conditions surround the teaching profession, from late and minimal pay to the resulting social stigma that casts those charged with forming young citizens as undesirables. More broadly, schools are seen by Sierra Leoneans as centers for skills acquisition rather than primary sites of citizen formation.⁵⁴ Yet alternative sites of citizen formation,

Anonymous A (civil society leader), personal communication with the author, Freetown, Sierra Leone, May 3, 2014.

50 Focus group (anonymous focus group with Registrar's Office employees), Freetown, Sierra Leone, March 24, 2014.

51 Harding and Mansaray, "Teacher Motivation," 9.

52 One way this phenomenon is visible is that teachers will complain about the challenges at their public schools, including lack of income, but will then hire themselves out to private schools for less pay because the administration is more competent. Anonymous A (civil society leader), personal communication with the author, Freetown, Sierra Leone, May 3, 2014.

53 Abu Kamara (lecturer and head of unit, Peace and Conflict Studies, Milton Margai College of Education and Technology), interview with the author, Freetown, Sierra Leone, March 23, 2014.

54 Susan Shepler, personal communication with author, June 22, 2014.

such as the family, village, or tribe, are too loosely connected to the state to actually foster an identity that may enact nationally relevant political behavior.

Why Formal-Sector Education Matters in Sierra Leone

In the introduction to her edited volume *Teaching the Violent Past*, Elizabeth Cole posits that new approaches to teaching the violent past are particularly important in post-conflict settings because things like revised textbooks and curricula can create narratives for people and communities that change their previously embedded conflict dynamics.⁵⁵ History education is well positioned to rehumanize the Other, meaning a person or group of people previously cast in the role of enemy or stranger, and rebuild social trust through shared or multiple perspectives.⁵⁶

In addition to rebuilding trust at the community and state level, which is fundamental for the social contract to operate at both levels, history education after violence is also charged with creating a “usable past.”⁵⁷ The notion of the usable past as a vehicle of collective memory, something that can allow young people to craft their identities as proud continuations of what came before them, stands in contrast to the importance of a more critical approach to history, where violence is analyzed even when it undoes the master narrative of the state.⁵⁸ Those who advocate “forgetting” past violence as a necessary part of democratization may subscribe to the school of thought that rehashing the past through detailed analysis in the schoolroom does not help people heal. On the other end of the spectrum, subscribing to a single state-sanctioned narrative about the past may similarly require the repression of memory rather than providing a way to heal with it.

In this chapter I do not argue for either approach but rather put forth the idea that moving from a culture of silence to a culture of dialogue will require a middle way, where the violent past is taught not as a list of horrors but as a usable past that can inspire students to engage in the opportunities and challenges of their communities and state in ways that contribute to peaceful coexistence. At the same time, the real challenges faced by MEST in developing and implementing new history education curricula should not be underestimated, nor should these structural challenges operate as a mechanism that automatically defaults Sierra

55 Cole, “Introduction,” 20.

56 Ibid., 20–21.

57 Ibid., 18.

58 Ibid., 18–19.

Leone to a state-sanctioned narrative of silence without discussion of its implications.

Conclusion: Addressing the Culture of Silence

In order to address the culture of silence, national history education could be integrated into formal-sector education, where it would reach a significant portion of schoolchildren, and could continue to be developed in the informal education sectors through spaces like the Sierra Leone Peace Museum and Fambul Tok. In Sierra Leone, the drivers of the civil war are still ominously present: Poverty, disenfranchisement, and unequal access to insufficient resources pervade people's daily existence. There is currently grave concern over the violent behavior of secondary school students, particularly at sporting events, where, since the war, police are regularly summoned to intervene in fights.⁵⁹ Seen in this perspective, education is only one of many sectors that need improvement. Beyond schools, many civil society meeting places such as churches, mosques, and markets, as well as professional and community-level organizations, can play a role in promoting cultures of peace.

At the same time, MEST, as a central instrument of the state agenda, has the opportunity to break the culture of silence around war in a wide-reaching way, along with spreading concrete peacebuilding skills like non-violent communication and anger management. If the next generation of children does not learn about the impact of conflict when it gets out of control, there is less incentive for them to control their own tempers – whether on the football pitch, in the classroom, or on the street. As the underlying causes of the war continue, a pragmatic way to contain conflict is to teach people to better manage themselves and their emotions, as well as to teach the real consequences of violence through national history education. MEST will need to overcome substantial obstacles to take on such a task, and in the meantime, civil society and internationally supported organizations can move ahead with their own related agendas.

If students are not educated about their country's past and not taught skills to transform their own conflictual relationships, it is unrealistic to think they will avoid the conflict patterns of their predecessors. Without knowing their history, it may be difficult for young people to be effective citizens in Tilly's sense, holding governments accountable to their demands and renegotiating the social contract. Teaching accurate national history will not be a panacea for these problems, but

59 Abu Kamara (lecturer and head of unit, Peace and Conflict Studies, Milton Margai College of Education and Technology), interview with the author, Freetown, Sierra Leone, March 23, 2014.

as young people learn about the effects of conflict in the past, they may be more willing to participate in peacefully holding the government accountable to a new and democratic social contract, and applying this contract through community-level engagement as well.

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Michelle Savard

Using Education as a Political Tool to Advance Marginalization in Northern Uganda

I was abducted from Pader-Kilak sub-county in 2004. I was in P4. I stayed in the bush for almost two months with my father. My father was killed in front of me after the first day. I was so traumatized I thought of suicide. I then escaped and the government soldiers brought me to the barracks. When I returned home, I got to P7 and later I joined secondary school but I dropped out in S2 because there was no money. I applied to Friends of Orphans and I got in.¹

Introduction

Meet David, an 18-year-old slim man with piercing eyes. He has a ninth-grade education, no parents, no job, and is head of a household of three younger brothers and one sister. In 2014, he completed a six-month reintegration program offered by Friends of Orphans (FRO, a program for formerly abducted youth). When I asked him if he had overcome the trauma he experienced as a child soldier, he looked away and told me, “I’m fine now. I just need a job.”

The civil war in Uganda occurred from 1986 to 2007 between the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) from the north and the Uganda People’s Defence Forces (UPDF) led by the government forces from the south. This war claimed the lives of thousands of northern Ugandan citizens (largely from the Acholi tribe) and stole the childhoods of approximately 25,000–66,000 children, who were abducted to participate in the war.² During and after the war, those children who survived escaped, were rescued, or were released. Some went through reception centers run by UNICEF and were provided with accelerated education or vocational training at reintegration programs, since many had missed out on years of formal education.

1 David (former student of Friends of Orphans), in discussion with the author, May 2014.

2 Annan et al., “State of Female Youth,” 31.

There is an abundance of evidence demonstrating that many reintegration programs in northern Uganda have had limited success.³ The focus of many programs is on “fixing” former child combatants as quickly as possible even though longitudinal studies reveal that psychological symptoms resulting from trauma remain high in war-affected populations many years postwar.⁴ The programming they offer tends to be short-term and inadequate, lacks resources, and rarely provides a follow-up largely due to insufficient government funding and support.⁵ The lack of support evidences the marginalization of the war-affected populations in northern Uganda.

Marginalization is a process through which groups are stigmatized based on their physical characteristics, experiences, distinctiveness, associations, and environments.⁶ Marginalization is achieved by any number of means, such as withholding information or resources, silencing, constraining, devaluing, demonizing, and ultimately peripheralizing or othering diverse groups who do not conform to the status quo.⁷ Marginalization of a group is propagated through a master narrative. The term “master narrative” is understood to encompass the cultural standards imparted by individuals with some authority. These narratives enforce a way of seeing the world and provide the cultural standard by which to make sense of personal experience: “Master narratives are used by cultural stakeholders as strategies for the ‘management of sense-making.’”⁸ Thus, personal experiences are measured against the master narrative to create a societal center and subsequent periphery. Master narratives are essentially pervasive discursive themes that serve to establish the societal center.

Uganda’s master narrative, for the purposes of this chapter, focuses on three themes. The first serves to establish a national identity. The narrative is: *We are all Ugandan* (even though Uganda is comprised of 56 ethnic groups⁹), therefore *let’s leave the past behind us, and move forward as one*. The second theme promotes productivity as the road to modernization. This furthers the notion that the undereducated or peasants (largely from the north) are impediments to that modernization. The third is a dichotomous push–pull scenario. The push concerns the need for self-reliance to modernize, while the pull comes from the close ties to a colonial past and the need for government “protection,” with obedience

3 See for example Schomerus and Allen, “Hard Homecoming”; Leibig, “Girl Child Soldiers”; Stout, “Silences and Empty Spaces.”

4 See Priebe et al., “Psychological Symptoms.”

5 Eichelberger, “Youth Narratives”; Stout, “Silences and Empty Spaces”; Tornberg, “Ethnic Fragmentation.”

6 Hall, Stevens, and Meleis, “Marginalization,” 24–25.

7 Hall, “Marginalization Revisited,” 98–100.

8 Thorne and MacLean, “Telling Traumatic Events,” 171.

9 Rukare, “The Access to Justice Challenge,” 111.

demanded in return for that protection. This chapter will address the questions: How does the master narrative manifest itself in the education system, and how does it serve to marginalize northern Ugandans? “Education system” will include both formal education, such as government-run primary and secondary schools, and informal education that formerly abducted youth receive through re-integration programs.

For context, I will provide a brief history of the events that led to the civil war and examine the colonial ties to the marginalization of the Acholi people. I will then examine the education system, specifically history education and re-integration programming for formerly abducted youth as examples of where the voice of the master narrative can be heard. This will serve to demonstrate how these forms of education are used as a political tool to foster the marginalization of the Acholi.

Leading to the Ugandan Civil War

From the late 1800s until 1962, Uganda was under British rule. Since 1962, Uganda has had nine heads of state. They are, in chronological order, Benedicto Kiwanuka, Edward Muteesa II, Apollo Milton Obote, Idi Amin Dada, Yusuf Kironde Lule, Godfrey Lukongwa Binaisa, Paulo Muwanga, Apollo Milton Obote once more, Tito Okello Lutwa, and Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. None of these men stepped down; they were rather deposed. All are dead with the exception of Yoweri Museveni, who has been in power since 1986. Several military coups have taken place since 1962, primarily as conflicts between the north and the south. For example, Idi Amin took power in 1971 and declared himself president. In his eight-year rule, 300,000 Ugandans, primarily from the north, lost their lives at the hands of the government.¹⁰ Later, when Museveni (from the south) staged a military coup and declared himself president in 1986, the government’s National Resistance Army began terrorizing the north.¹¹

In response to Museveni’s attacks, the “Holy Spirit Movement” led by Alice Auma began. She put forward that she had been visited by the spirit Lakwena, who told her to fight evil and end the massacre of the Acholi people. Although she was able to organize some support from the Acholi people, she was defeated by government forces in 1987. That year, Joseph Kony started a similar spiritual movement, the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA). Although Kony sought support from the people of the north, he was met with resistance. Joseph Kony stated that

10 Tornberg, “Ethnic Fragmentation and Political Instability”, 20.

11 Pham et al., “Forgotten Voices,” 16.

the war went terribly wrong due to the betrayal and the abandonment of the Acholi people, which forced the LRA to turn their guns on their own people.¹²

Understanding the LRA and the government's motives behind the war is very complex. The West, assuming a reductionist perspective, widely reported it as an "ethnic issue." "Regarding war in Africa, ethnicity is most often invoked as one single cause. Consequently, African realities are reduced to little more than the antithesis to the order of western civilization, which on the other hand, is taken as modern and civilized."¹³ Finnström suggests that Kony was pursuing a new moral order based on the messages he believed he was receiving from God. He is said to have had apocalyptic visions, and believed himself to be a liberator of the Acholi people. This was supported by the media, which put forward that the LRA wanted to rule the country based on the Ten Commandments.¹⁴ Lindemann argues that the economic marginalization of the north triggered the civil war, which only exacerbated poverty. To divert attention away from the masses starving and dying in the north and the government's culpability, the government did not acknowledge Kony as a legitimate player in the political arena. Museveni likened the rebels to "Satan," "hyenas," "grasshoppers," "biting dogs," and "terrorists."¹⁵ This served to depoliticize the discussion and develop a mythology about the insurgency, which was named "Kony's war."

Since it appeared that the LRA was always one step ahead, billions of dollars in humanitarian aid continued to flood the country – which offers one explanation for the government's lack of motivation to end the war.¹⁶ Regardless of the causes of the war or why it continued for so long, the Acholi were persecuted by both the LRA and the government forces. The plight of the Acholi is best described by the African proverb, "When two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers." That suffering included death, torture, and displacement.

From the late 1990s, the government began to force northerners to leave their homes and move into "protection camps." This resulted in the internal displacement of 1.6 million people (IDPs). The camps had appalling conditions and were described as "rural prisons" and "social torture."¹⁷ Infant mortality was at 12 percent, and 20 percent of children under the age of five died. Carol Bellamy, former executive director of UNICEF, described the region as "pretty much the worst place on earth to be a child."¹⁸ The camps were often attacked by the LRA as 90 percent of all citizens were corralled in one place. Thousands of people died in

12 Bøås, "Uganda in the Regional War Zone," 290.

13 Finnström, *Living with Bad Surroundings*, 8.

14 *Ibid.*, 108.

15 *Ibid.*, 115–17.

16 Eichstaedt, *First Kill Your Family*, 138–39.

17 Spitzer and Twikirize, "War-Affected Children," 69.

18 *Ibid.*, 73.

the camps every week of curable diseases and malnutrition. Eichstaedt questions whether these camps were indeed for the Acholis' "protection":

The LRA raided these protection camps at will, demonstrating the embarrassing weakness of Museveni's tactics and raising the question as to why these people were held in camps in the first place. Clearly is it was not for their protection as they simply were not safe.¹⁹

Once a month food would be brought in by various NGOs, but the government told the IDPs that the aid was from them or that they had sent for the Red Cross. They then told them that the aid would continue only if the President was re-elected.²⁰ The government, with its control over national media, continually reinforced the master narrative that the war was a problem in the north because the Acholi were "brutal and primitive murderers," whereas the southern and western areas of the country were better educated, more prosperous and civilized. "The north is the area of the thugs who have fought Uganda's many wars, and it is in the south and the west that we find the social fabric of the new Uganda of Museveni and the NRM [National Resistance Movement]."²¹ Since Museveni became President, there have been seven insurgencies originating largely in the north, with an estimated 500,000 dead.²²

Historical Marginalization

This marginalization of the north actually started 200 years before the civil war, during the British colonization of Uganda. The British favored southern Ugandans because they were the most receptive to Christianity and Westernization. The colonial administration recruited its bureaucratic elite from the center and the south, in particular from Buganda, whereas northern Ugandans were mainly regarded as the labor force for the army and police. This ethnic division of labor reinforced differences between northern and southern Ugandans. During the colonial period, "the Acholi, far from being born soldiers, were transformed into a military ethnocracy."²³ It was at this point that Acholis were essentialized as warriors, and this identity continues to shape their present reality. Finnström points out the irony that it was the colonized subjects, *not* the oppressive colonists, who were labeled as "warlike."²⁴

19 Eichstaedt, *First Kill Your Family*, 137.

20 Finnström, *Living with Bad Surroundings*, 135–40.

21 Bøås, "Uganda in the Regional War Zone," 290.

22 Lindemann, "Just Another Change of Guard?" 388.

23 Doom and Vlassenroot, "Kony's Message," 8.

24 Finnström, *Living with Bad Surroundings*, 61.

The British also increased tensions between ethnic groups in the north and south and encouraged each region to identify against the other. In addition to providing the Buganda²⁵ with the most access to European education, they enhanced the status of Buganda chiefs, which generated resentment among other ethnic groups. “This kind of manipulation of ethno-cultural variables did not vanish with colonialism but rather increased, becoming an important tool for a string of governments from Obote I to the current NRM regime.”²⁶ Evidence of this manipulation is found in many of the political decisions made in Uganda, where the southern and central regions are favored politically and economically. In this chapter, the education system will be examined as a political tool to marginalize the north. History education and reintegration programming in particular will reveal how the master narrative manifests itself and further marginalizes formerly abducted youth.

Education for All Some

In 1997, the president of Uganda declared that there would be universal “free” primary education. Although school fees were abolished in 2001, transfer payments from the government to fund government-run schools were grossly inadequate. To keep their doors open, schools had to charge 200,000 to 400,000 Ush (US\$57–115) for government schools and 700,000 Ush (US\$202) per term for private schools. Northern Ugandans on average make a real monthly income (adjusted for inflation) of \$45 a month, while those in central Uganda make on average \$80 per month.²⁷ Given the pronounced poverty in the north as a result of the civil war and the fact that many households are headed by children, many simply cannot afford to pay these fees. In a study of 11 personal narratives of adult survivors of war trauma, one of the Ugandan women interviewed said:

The death of my mother brought great sorrow, because my mother had plans. For instance, she was keeping us in school. When she died, there were no school fees so I could not complete my studies. Maybe if I had completed my studies, I would be somewhere and earning a living.²⁸

Not only is access to education limited due to the cost, but at the height of rebel activity from 2002 to 2005, most of the public schools in the north were also

25 For the Buganda region and ethnic group, *Muganda* means one person, while *Baganda* means several members of the group.

26 Bøås, “Uganda in the Regional War Zone,” 285.

27 Uganda Bureau of Statistics, “Uganda National Household Survey 2013/2014,” 97.

28 Mattoon, “Gift of Trauma,” 118.

closed, which resulted in 250,000 children receiving no education at all during that time.²⁹

In addition, formerly abducted children get limited access to education due to their advanced age when they return home. Betancourt et al. found that those who had the opportunity to return to school reported an increased sense of normalcy in their lives. Achieving goals (completing homework, attending class daily, sitting exams) also increased feelings of normalcy and a sense of purpose. High school helped reshape their identities from soldiers to students.³⁰ Although significant steps have been made by the current government to increase access to education, the majority of secondary school graduates are from the southern and central regions of Uganda. Youth in those regions also have much greater access to pursuing medicine, law, education, government, and business. The Baganda of central Uganda are the most school-educated ethnic group in Uganda. While 89 percent of the Baganda and 70 percent of the Ugandan population is literate, only 13 percent of the Karimojong (people of the northeast region) are literate.³¹ In a study I conducted with 45 formerly abducted youth, aged 17 to 30, the median level of education achieved was equivalent to the fourth grade. In a study for UNICEF based on a survey of 619 young women in northern Uganda, Annan et al. found that overall, very few young women had been given the opportunity for even vocational training. Those who had were typically trained in tailoring, but very few found a means to earn income from this trade.³² Although this vocational issue raises the flag of gender bias as girls and women were slotted into these lower-income trades, it also raises a larger concern about the equity of educational opportunities available to youth in the north.

Although primary school enrollment throughout Uganda continues to be high (93 percent), 71 percent of primary school children drop out before reaching the seventh grade according to the Ministry of Education.³³ Quoted in a recent article in the *Guardian*, President Museveni expressed “rage” over the dropout rate and demanded answers.³⁴ Three weeks later, on the front page of the local newspaper, the headline read, “Museveni Builds 293 New Schools.” However, based on the list of schools provided, it appears that only two are in the north; the majority are in the south and southwest.³⁵ It would be enlightening for the president to fly one hour north to the town of Pader, where he would find some answers. If he visited Paipir Primary School, he would find over 80 children in one classroom, with one

29 Eichstaedt, *First Kill Your Family*, 49.

30 Betancourt et al., “High Hopes, Grim Reality,” 570.

31 Mino, “History Education and Identity Formation,” 82.

32 Annan et al., “State of Female Youth,” 79.

33 *New Vision*, “UPE: Staggering 71% Drop Out Rate.”

34 Mwesigwa, “Uganda’s Success.”

35 *New Vision*, “Museveni Builds 293 New Schools.”

textbook and one teacher. He would find over 1,000 students in the school, one-fifth of whom have special needs. Paipir is one of two schools in the north that offers education to special needs children. For five years, War Child International transported these children from the outlying districts to Paipir at the beginning of the term and returned them home at the end. However, War Child had to leave Pader for more urgent situations. This means that for the special needs students who cannot afford transportation to Paipir, their education will come to a grinding halt.

Paipir receives \$500 per term from the government for all school supplies, books, and food for the children and teachers.³⁶ By the end of the term, the school cannot even afford chalk.³⁷ According to the *Guardian*, the Ugandan education system is failing. However, I would argue that education is being used as a means to further marginalize the children in the north by creating multiple barriers to accessing education. For children who do get an education, often the curriculum becomes a tool to reinforce themes within the master narrative and to marginalize those who are not aligned with the central messages, causing feelings of exclusion. This use of education can be found within the history curriculum.

History Education

The current education system in Uganda was inherited from colonial powers and continues to mirror the British education system. Although Uganda declared independence in 1962, and the national curriculum has been revised every seven years since, the content has largely remained the same. Surprisingly, significant changes were never made to the history curriculum; it is still based on British written accounts. This could be attributed to the missionary groups who established the first European-style schools in Uganda and who remain influential in the country's nationalized education system. The history curriculum remains Eurocentric in perspective by suggesting that the British created Uganda. It leaves students to extrapolate an identity that is closely linked to a colonial past and the idea that Uganda is a product of colonial rule. Traditionally, Africans defined themselves in opposition to the Other, the colonizer, in their fight for independence. Here, however, the relationship with the Other is not antagonistic; rather it breeds admiration and suggests that the benefits of becoming the Other would contribute to the modernization of the country.

36 Pauline Laker (Paipir Primary School principal), in discussion with the author, May 2014.

37 Ibid.

In primary school (P4–P7), history is included in social studies with the objective that students will “understand the forces that have shaped their society.”³⁸ Students learn about Uganda and the different ethnic groups in a context that fosters a national identity through the message: *Although we have different tribes, we are all Ugandan*. One of the objectives in the secondary school history curriculum is to “promote understanding and appreciation of the value of national unity, patriotism and cultural heritage in East Africa and Africa in general.”³⁹

The secondary school text *History of East Africa*, by Benson Okello, covers the period from AD 1000 to independence (1962). The chapters on colonization are particularly interesting. The motives of the colonizers include the desire to end slavery, to promote economic development, and to spread Christianity.⁴⁰ The text describes the numerous victories of the British and the ways in which Ugandans were chronically defeated through treaties, battles, coercion, and manipulation. For example, northern Uganda was largely colonized through “treaties of friendship and protection. . . . The northern people thereafter started to appreciate economic, medical and educational advantages of a peaceful, settled life.”⁴¹ There are only a few stories of heroes or rulers who defied the British. The Other (the colonizer) is exalted as the savior of Ugandans who brought modernization. To embrace this narrative based on the colonial past is to favor Western conceptualizations of modernization over local traditions.⁴²

As an illustrative example, the text below provides a description of the construction of the railway:

Africans, who were quite contented with their way of life, were not willing to do construction work and, in some instances, they were downright hostile to the railway project. . . . The line was very expensive and took much longer to build than anticipated. This disappointed the British. . . . The railway generated new commercial opportunities and towns developed. . . . Job opportunities were created for Africans; they became messengers, locomotive drivers, station managers, etc.⁴³

This text depicts a colonizer who is fatherly and protective. The father values productivity and therefore *justifiably* disapproves of the slovenly Africans. The identity of the Ugandans and their agency is greatly diminished in the eyes of the father, reducing the Ugandans to the status of ungrateful children. It is a means to demonstrate that modernization includes sacrifice, which leads to greater productivity that is desirable and rewarded. There is no mention in the text of the

38 Mino, “History Education and Identity Formation,” 103.

39 Ibid.

40 Okello, *Fountain History of East Africa*, 223–30.

41 Ibid., 240.

42 Webster, “Peace Education and its Discontents,” 8.

43 Okello, *Fountain History of East Africa*, 286–89.

substantial impact the railroad had on the lives of Ugandans and their culture, or of its consequences for the villages it destroyed. The text offers one perspective: that of the colonizer. In an analysis of the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, Hartsock argues that “the colonized emerges as the image of everything the colonizer is not. Every negative quality is projected onto her/him. The colonized is said to be lazy. . . . Moreover, the colonized is both wicked and backward, a being who is in some important ways not fully human.”⁴⁴ The textbook’s implication is that the British pushed modernization forward – despite resistance – for the Ugandan’s own benefit and protection.

The theme of protection can also be found within Uganda’s master narrative. In his book *Sowing the Mustard Seed*, Museveni puts forward his views on the Ugandan peasantry. It is worth mentioning that the majority of peasants live in the north.

Uganda, and most other countries in black Africa are still pre-industrial societies and they must be handled as such. Societies at this stage of development tend to have vertical polarisations based mainly on tribe and ethnicity. . . . We pointed out to them that modern societies are no longer based on primitive agriculture, which is only suitable for subsistence.⁴⁵

This is the foundation of Museveni’s argument against a multi-party system. The implication is that the Ugandan masses must be “protected against both manipulative politicians and themselves until structural conditions change or, at a minimum, the masses acquire a better understanding of present realities.”⁴⁶ The text is paternalistic and contemptuous considering that most Acholi make their living from agriculture. As mentioned above, there is a large economic divide between the north and the south in Uganda, maintained by a pervasive narrative that promotes productivity and modernization. The narrative carries undertones of reaching for the economic benefits enjoyed by the West and leaving old traditions behind. Museveni declares:

The head of state in our circumstances is like a teacher: He goes around with chalk explaining. If you say there is a separation of the state [and the Movement], you miss a lot because the main job in a backwards society is mobilisation to create that consensus through explanation.⁴⁷

The subtext here is that Uganda needs to catch up to the modern West. However, Museveni is ambiguous and has often stressed the importance of finding “*African* solutions to African problems,”⁴⁸ while his continuous push to “modern-

44 Hartsock, “Foucault on Power,” 160.

45 Museveni, *Sowing the Mustard Seed*, 187–88.

46 Kassimir, “Reading Museveni,” 654.

47 Quoted in Halsteen, “Taking Rights Talks Seriously,” 109.

48 *Ibid.*, 108 (emphasis in the original).

ize” rings of capitalist reductionism (the belief that there is a positive correlation between economic development and social improvement). Therefore, the Others are those who are backwards and do not contribute to modernization, pointing to the disadvantaged, formerly abducted youth in the north of the country.

Another theme found in the history textbook is that of “burden,” by which students learn about the efforts made by the British to support Uganda and modernize the country. “The only way to diversify the economy so as to reduce the *burden* on the British taxpayers who shouldered colonialist administrative costs was to introduce cash crops in Uganda.”⁴⁹ The message to the youth is that the British made immense sacrifices and shouldered immense burdens for Ugandans. That the introduction of these cash crops led to the starvation of thousands of Ugandans is not mentioned; rather the text seeks to instill a kind of gratitude in the reader for the sacrifice of the British.

“The people of East Africa got involved in the First World War . . . [because] they wanted to support their colonial masters – Britain and Germany. In other words, Africans were helping to carry the ‘white man’s burden.’”⁵⁰ The expression “white man’s burden” originated from the English writer Rudyard Kipling, who in 1899 wrote a poem of the same name calling on Americans to take up the burden of colonization. The implication is that this burden does not provide economic or strategic benefit to the empire but is rather a duty “to help primitive peoples, incapable of self-government to become civilized (and Christianized).”⁵¹ Kipling’s poem now epitomizes the Eurocentrism and Western greed that led to the domination of Africa. It is disturbing and offensive to see this expression used in a secondary school text with its original, intended meaning. The text offers no explanation of its deeper meaning or history. Students are left to assume that their colonial masters made tremendous sacrifices for modernization, and by extension, that Museveni has taken on this burden.

In this history curriculum the themes work to further marginalize the north, and there is little space for critical thinking, indigenous ways of knowing, or multiple perspectives. The voice of Ugandans is silent. Senteza Kajubi, vice chancellor of Makerere University, criticized the history curriculum for its glorification of the colonial system and its disconnection from the social and cultural realities of Uganda.⁵² The textbook ends in 1962, and students are not taught any of the key events in modern history. By relegating the 20-year civil war to a non-event, the national curriculum inhibits the healing process necessary to overcome the effects of this conflict.

49 Okello, *Fountain History of East Africa*, 298 (emphasis added).

50 Ibid., 355.

51 Cody, “British Empire.”

52 Kajubi, “Educational Reform.”

In the literature on war-affected children, the effects of war are largely pathologized. However, there are some examples of children demonstrating positive competence (strength, resilience) postwar as a result of making meaning out of the political violence they experienced. For example, a survey of 900 Palestinian youth involved in the intifada showed that although the youth were negatively impacted psychologically, they reported personal growth and enhanced social competence. Conversely, a survey of 600 war-affected Bosnian youth revealed indicators of personal and social dysfunction.⁵³ The main difference between the two groups was the meaning the youth attributed to the conflict. Palestinian youth were able to extract historical significance, citing specific historical events that gave meaning to the conflict, whereas Bosnian youth reported being “mystified,” “shocked,” and “unprepared” by the onset of the war.⁵⁴ Not providing youth – particularly northern Ugandan youth – with an opportunity to study the history of the civil war robs them of the chance to make sense of the events in light of their historical, political, and cultural relevance. Postwar reconstruction of a society’s education system is an opportunity to implement new curricula that instill confidence in children, and to develop strategies to prevent the reproduction of violence.⁵⁵ The Ugandan history curriculum as it stands presents a lost opportunity.

Education in northern Uganda is not neutral but rather a stage for advancing the inequality between the north and south, although this inequality is not recognized by the government. In Museveni’s book, one of the last sections is titled, “The Problem of Northern Uganda.” Museveni writes:

*Those people, who were used to government hand-outs because they were members of the UPC or because they were in the army or the intelligence services, feel completely lost now that the approach is totally different. This is why you hear talk of the north being marginalized. . . . The whole question of the “northern problem” is overdramatized. It was a big problem in the history of Uganda because people from there were being used by colonialism and by dictatorships but, with the rise to power of patriotic forces, a basis has been created to integrate the north politically with the rest of the country.*⁵⁶

With his remarks about how they have been “used” but are now “integrated,” Museveni’s paternalistic narrative serves to ignore the agency of the northern people. While Museveni was debunking the “northern problem,” thousands of Acholi were dying at the hands of the LRA, government forces, and in “protection camps.”

53 Barber, “Making Sense and No Sense of War,” 290.

54 Ibid., 292–93.

55 Davies, “Different Faces of Education,” 492.

56 Museveni, *Sowing the Mustard Seed*, 212–13 (emphasis added).

Reintegration Programs

Ten years later, in 2007, Museveni's government issued the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) to address the inequities experienced in the north. The purpose of the PRDP was to "eradicate poverty and improve the welfare of the populace in northern Uganda."⁵⁷ Although the plan put forward objectives to improve the economy and rebuild and empower communities in the north, the plan has been criticized as a means to gain political support and as an instrument to line the pockets of government-linked contractors, the political elite, and well-positioned public servants.⁵⁸ The plan was inadequately and disproportionately funded in that its implementation did not reflect the reintegration needs of formerly abducted youth. Furthermore, it covered 55 districts when in fact only 18 were affected by the LRA.⁵⁹ It is difficult to perceive an infusion of 60 million dollars in places like Gulu and Pader, as the area continues to be impoverished and offer few livelihood opportunities.

Formerly abducted youth have needed to rely on reintegration programs to deal with their trauma and compensate for the years of lost education. These programs are impacted by the master narrative to "put the past behind" and are under pressure to churn out "productive citizens" that contribute to community development as quickly as possible. Two examples of such programs are "World Vision," an American, faith-based NGO and one of the largest reintegration programs in Gulu, and Friends of Orphans, a community-based organization located in Pader.

World Vision

Akello, Richters, and Reis have critically examined the perspectives and strategies used by World Vision. Based on over one year of ethnographic fieldwork, Akello observed individual counseling sessions and morning devotions and conducted interviews with 80 formerly abducted youth. World Vision's approach, with its roots in Christian ideology, includes confession and repentance of sins, as well as encouragement to forget past deeds, forgive the LRA, and "seek refuge in God."⁶⁰ Akello also conducted an extensive follow-up with one formerly abducted girl. "Apiyo" was abducted at age seven and was in captivity for four years. She was rescued by government forces and brought to World Vision, where she was

57 Republic of Uganda, "Peace, Recovery and Development Plan," iii.

58 Esuruku, "Peace, Recovery and Development Plan," 161.

59 Ibid., 162.

60 Akello, Richters, and Reis, "Reintegration of Former Child Soldiers," 230.

encouraged to confess and repent. A few weeks later she was given a small amount of money and returned to her family. For reasons unknown, World Vision conducted no follow-up, and Apiyo endured two years of abuse from her family and community until she rejoined the rebel forces. She was again rescued and then chose to run away to a village where no one knew her. The authors conclude that World Vision's ideology considers children to be victims, lacking in agency and in need of protection. This message was carried out into the community, who viewed the youth as perpetrators possessed by *cen* or evil spirits. World Vision refused to facilitate the cleansing ceremonies to eradicate *cen*, as this tradition was not aligned with Christian values. Therefore many of the returning youth were stigmatized and rejected by their communities.⁶¹

Friends of Orphans

Friends of Orphans (FRO) operates in the war-torn districts of Pader and Agago. This reintegration program was established by a former child soldier to provide "social protection to poor vulnerable children and communities."⁶² To achieve this objective, FRO provides a six-month program that includes psycho-social counseling, literacy training, life skills training, and vocational training to an intake of approximately 350 students twice per year. As well as needing to complete a set amount of community service hours, students are required to work in a group to produce a business plan in order to get funding for the equipment and materials they will need to start their own businesses after graduation. Conducting an evaluation of this program, I interviewed 45 former FRO students and 17 family, community, and local council members.

Almost all students, community members, and local officials reported that the relationship between youth and the community had improved to varying degrees as a result of the youth attending the FRO program. Before going to FRO, many of the youth were perceived as "violent," "idle," "useless," "a burden," and as not contributing to the community's growth and development.⁶³ Pader is a community that supports the master narrative of "productivity" and puts a high value on everyone contributing to the community. At this point in time, formerly abducted youth do not appear to be stigmatized for their role in the war; rather they are stigmatized for getting into trouble, for idleness, and for not contributing to the development of the community:

61 Ibid., 240–41.

62 Friends of Orphans, "Homepage."

63 Community members in discussion with the author, May 2014.

Before they robbed people as they had nothing to do. Now they are productive. There is a motorcycle repair shop in town now, which was started and is run by students from FRO.⁶⁴

Those students that get trained are engaged and productive and contribute to society. Those that are idle are the drug users. Those engaged contribute.⁶⁵

Training offered is free, which reduces idleness and gives the youth something to do. They have produced hireable students.⁶⁶

Almost all community members made a statement synonymous with the saying, “idle hands are the devil’s workshop.” This consistent message can be interpreted as pressure from the community to “fix” the former combatants so that they can be productive. However, many of the students and some of the parents and community members recognized that FRO may have succumbed to this pressure to produce hireable students too quickly. When asked about their emotional well-being, most of the youth said, “I’m fine now.” Similar to my evaluation, Burman and McKay also repeatedly heard “I’m fine now” from formerly abducted youth. In their study, they found that girls in particular did not want to reflect on what happened during the war but rather wanted to “move on.”⁶⁷

When students finish FRO’s program, tailors are not provided with sewing machines, drivers do not leave with licenses, and welders, carpenters, and car mechanics do not get tools. Upon graduation, students are encouraged to group themselves and provide FRO with a business plan. This plan is then evaluated and start-up funds potentially provided. However the students, with an average of a fourth-grade education, are not provided with the skills to create a business plan. Every student interviewed reported a need for more training and start-up capital. Although FRO is trying with its limited funding to put business plan training in place, students do not get the skills they need to put forward a plan or to run their own businesses. Therefore, the cost of short-term productivity is their future earning potential, as most of the students do not have the skills to engage in larger, more lucrative entrepreneurial activities.

Conclusion

The colonizers of Uganda decided which groups would form the societal center and which would be peripheralized. This distinction between central and northern Uganda persists. Postwar reconstruction and poverty reduction efforts on the part of the government were inadequate and continue to be inadequate.

64 District education officer in discussion with the author, May 2014.

65 Town council member in discussion with the author, May 2014.

66 Community member in discussion with the author, May 2014.

67 Burman and McKay, “Marginalization of Girl Mothers,” 320.

This type of marginalization can be categorized as “violence of neglect,” a failure by the government to provide a segment of the population with support, which can breed volatility.⁶⁸ The lack of access to education and livelihood opportunities has led to the economic marginalization of the people in northern Uganda, making the payment of schools fees for their children prohibitive. Formerly abducted youth who do get to school are not engaged in interpreting meaning from the war; rather they are subjected to narratives that reinforce a national identity of productivity and modernization from which they feel excluded. The communicated narratives, particularly in the secondary school history textbook, suggest that as Acholi they are militaristic, backward, and unproductive. The textbook provides a single perspective that favors Western concepts of modernization over local traditions.

Some reintegration programs are influenced by the master narrative of unity and productivity, with short-sighted aims to graduate productive workers as quickly as possible. They encourage formerly abducted youth to put the past behind them and move on. This pressure to move on may come from a push for productivity and modernization, or perhaps it reflects cultural norms that reject revealing personal feelings or displaying strong emotions. More research is needed in this area. If the purpose of reintegration programs is to foster healthy, productive youth who can contribute to modernization, then a strategy that acknowledges the agency, resilience, and potential of youth needs to replace the current “victim” narrative.⁶⁹ Both the education system and reintegration programs need to provide opportunities for the youth and the community to make meaning of the war and to move toward collective healing.

The lack of national government support for reintegration, which stems from the historical north–south divide, continues to marginalize the Acholi and serve as a barrier to reintegration success. Failing to rethink reintegration and continuing to ignore the pleas of youth for more training and education is to accept that this generation of Ugandan youth will continue to struggle with poverty and trauma armed with only a primary school education. Continuous marginalization, economic deprivation, and longstanding injustices could create a perfect storm for the recruitment of youth by rebel groups.

68 Eichelberger, “Youth Narratives,” 22.

69 Akello, Richters, and Reis, “Reintegration of Former Child Soldiers,” 240–41.

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Michelle J. Bellino

Learning through Silence in “Postwar” Guatemala

Institutionalizing Silence

When I began researching how Guatemalan youth learn about the recent civil war, I was often invited into schools with a warm reassurance that this was an important issue for educational inquiry and a simultaneous confession that “we don’t talk about that here.” Indigenous teachers explained their lack of freedom to adapt the national curriculum to the needs of Maya communities and their fears that it would cause discomfort for students and families. Mestizo educators similarly worried about teaching a story that they did not fully understand, or that was not theirs to tell, and which might cause rifts between the school and the student families it aimed to serve. Principals and teachers explained with regret that they lacked resources, training, and formal guidance about how to approach the violent past. There was often easy agreement that this long chapter of national history *should* be taught to the postwar-generation youth in their classrooms, but when it came to the purpose of this history in contemporary Guatemala, our conversations revealed the deep fissures in a society still marked by violence and division. For some educators, the challenge was pedagogical: how to approach this subject with historical accuracy and political sensitivity. But for others, it was a fundamental question of national identity and stability: teaching the violent past could shake the fragile legs on which the democratic state was resting. The present-day challenges facing “postwar” Guatemala opened like floodgates, in many cases rendering the recent violence irrelevant in the face of ongoing violence, impunity, corruption, racism, joblessness, delinquency, social distrust, and overall cynicism about the future.

History as it is taught in schools around the world makes promises: promises to encourage causal thinking that connects past and present, while conveying that the past was not inevitable; promises to shape thoughtful, engaged citizens who feel connected to their nation, but without prompting exclusion or ethnocentrism. History in the aftermath of violence stands to make even bigger promises: promises to clarify the historical record, reestablish moral frameworks, promote social rec-

conciliation, and create a new national narrative.¹ But revisiting a violent past also poses threats that render these promises elusive. The way educational policymakers, school leaders, and teachers address these challenges is central to how postwar-generation youth make meaning of violence, relate past conflict to their present lives, and orient themselves as citizens of a nation in transition.

This chapter traces postwar educational reforms in Guatemala and examines the ways in which these reforms have shaped discourses around historical memory, a culture of peace, and democratic citizenship. I begin with a brief summary of the armed conflict and the formal transitional justice processes that followed, before exploring reforms in the educational sector and the affordances and limitations of curricular representations of the conflict, peace process, and democratic transition. I then draw on ethnographic data to demonstrate the variety of ways in which classroom teachers mediate history curricula, and close with a discussion of the civic implications of postwar educational reforms.

Background: From Ethnic Genocide to Educating for Pluricultural Citizenship

From 1960 to 1996, Guatemala was entrenched in a 36-year civil war known as the “armed conflict,” which included the ethnic genocide of indigenous Maya populations. The main actors in conflict were the leftist guerrilla rebel movement and the state military, paramilitary, and police forces, though the majority of the 200,000 casualties were civilians, most of whom were indigenous and living in rural areas. The causes of the war are complex and intersect with ethnic, class, and political identities rooted in colonialism and the structures of division and inequality that this history generated. Amid decades of military dictatorships, profoundly unjust labor conditions for poor and indigenous populations, and a dwindling space to express public dissent, guerrilla movements began organizing disenfranchised groups across ethnic lines, eventually taking up arms for their cause. In response, the Guatemalan state, backed by the economic and political power of foreign actors including the US Central Intelligence Agency, organized a brutal counterinsurgency effort ostensibly aimed to dispel a Communist threat but in reality targeting an increasingly broad “internal enemy.”² Before long, indigenous peoples were regarded as the “natural” supporters of the rebel movement.

1 See Cole and Barsalou, “Unite or Divide?”; Cole and Murphy, “History Education Reform.”

2 Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico, *Guatemala*.

Guatemala’s Truth Commission and the Construction of the Human Rights Narrative

As the multiyear peace process ensued, Guatemala engaged in a number of formal mechanisms of transitional justice. With some reluctance, the transitional government consented to a United Nations–backed truth commission called the *Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico* (Historical Clarification Commission, or CEH), which worked to construct an evidence-based historical narrative aimed at contextualizing the armed conflict’s causes, anticipating long-term consequences, and making recommendations toward the project of political transition and social reconstruction. The Commission’s report, *Guatemala: Memoria del Silencio* (Guatemala: Memory of Silence), established that state actors were responsible for 93 percent of human rights violations committed during this conflict, while 3 percent were committed by guerrilla insurgency groups, leaving 4 percent attributed to unknown actors.³ Further, the report demonstrated how state actors intentionally organized and carried out acts of genocide toward indigenous Maya populations as part of the counterinsurgency campaign. The Commission constructed a historically complex narrative, couching the civil war in a pervasive and protracted conflict between the authoritarian state and the sector of civil society that sought to alter the social and political order. This argument laid bare Guatemala’s intricate relationship between violence and state formation, a link further developed by historians and other scholars.⁴

The stark numbers laid out by the CEH in its report might convey an impression of shared public outrage at the state’s systematic abuse of power. Truth commission reports in Argentina and Chile shed light on state repression in ways that forever shifted the relationship between the state and civil society, shaping the *nunca más* (never again) discourse around a set of consensus historical facts. But truth commissions and the reports they produce are bound to other mechanisms of transitional justice and the political contexts in which they unfold. Guatemala’s transitional government publicly denounced the CEH report.⁵ Under the protection of amnesty laws, few perpetrators of rights violations were brought to justice, leading to the institutionalization of impunity.⁶ Denial of ethnic genocide continues among the highest state actors, including the most recent president, Otto Pérez Molina, who himself was implicated in human rights violations.⁷ Reckoning with the long and painful period of internal armed conflict remains fraught in the legal sector and has increasingly become a wedge

3 Ibid.

4 See Grandin, “Instruction of Great Catastrophe.”

5 Oglesby, “Educating Citizens in Postwar Guatemala.”

6 Sanford, “From Genocide to Femicide.”

7 Sanford, “Breaking Down the Wall of Impunity.”

issue in public discourse. Human rights organizations continue to struggle for justice, recently charging wartime head of state Efraín Ríos Montt with genocide. Although Ríos Montt was found guilty by the national court, the landmark verdict was quickly overturned. As Ríos Montt awaits retrial, the narrative of the war and its aftermath also hangs in the balance.

Recommendations for Postwar Educational Reform

Guatemala's Peace Accords emphasized the need for the Guatemalan public to know the history of the armed conflict, and they outlined plans for "a national civic education programme for democracy and peace, promoting the protection of human rights, the renewal of political culture and the peaceful resolution of conflicts."⁸ They made clear that democratization would be strengthened by a collective understanding of the violent past, on the condition that it be conveyed "objectively and impartially."⁹ The CEH similarly stressed the need for deep engagement with history education around this period of protracted violence.¹⁰ Recognizing the particular exclusion of indigenous communities from educational opportunities, these discussions led to a collection of recommendations for systemic reform such as expanding access to schools in rural indigenous communities, shifting the language of instruction to students' mother tongues, and decentralizing decision-making to allow for local autonomy and community involvement. Yet, as in many contexts, these recommendations did not easily translate into sector-wide reforms.

Curricular Reforms: Representations of Peace, Conflict, and Democratic Citizenship in Postwar Guatemala

Though significant barriers to school access and quality remain, Guatemala's educational reform process has brought about expanded access to primary schools, investment in the training and professionalization of teachers, and increased attention to the quality of instruction. With significantly more politics involved, curricular reform has been a slower and more uneven process.¹¹

8 United Nations, "Agreement on Social and Economic Aspects."

9 United Nations, "Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace."

10 Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico, *Guatemala*.

11 Bellino, "So That We Do Not Fall Again."

Democratic Citizenship

In accordance with educational reform envisioned in the Peace Accords, curricular adjustments have focused on the human rights of children and women and the cultural rights of indigenous groups. Reforms have noticeably gravitated toward teaching respect for Guatemala’s diversity, as well as cultivating pride in the state’s pluricultural, multilingual, and multiethnic national identity.¹² The new civic narrative is premised on the wealth of Guatemala’s cultural and linguistic diversity, the freedom to express this diversity in a democracy, and the conviction that Guatemala’s unity binds across diversity.¹³

The Ministry of Education implemented a vetting process in order to remove discriminatory representations of indigenous people and culture from the curriculum, such as images of the “ancient Maya” and texts that referenced Maya peoples in the past tense, as if they were part of Guatemala’s distant cultural heritage rather than a present-day constituency. Textbook authors have made efforts to include discussions of diversity among indigenous groups and to diversify images of Guatemala and Guatemalans by including indigenous spaces, traditions, and peoples in traditional dress.¹⁴

Textbook elaborations on democratic citizenship encompass explicit references to civic values such as tolerance and inclusivity. Some texts emphasize “active and responsible participation” that extends beyond voting, promoting engaged expressions of citizenship that would have been unacceptable during authoritarian regimes.¹⁵ While citizenship is intricately tied to the culture of peace framework, it is not clear in educational materials what aspects of historical memory are relevant to the postwar citizen.

Human Rights and a Culture of Peace

The Peace Accords, as a process and an outcome of dialogue and negotiation, have proved central to the portrayal of a culture of peace, a framework that students are introduced to in primary grades, which continues through high school. The culture of peace is embedded in discussions of citizenship, making explicit a set of values and behaviors associated with *good* citizens. For example, good citizens are instructed to respect human rights, tolerate diversity, abstain

12 Ministerio de Educación, *Interculturalidad*.

13 Ministerio de Educación, *Diseño de Reforma Educativa*.

14 Importantly, these efforts have been critiqued as superficial. See Maxwell, “Bilingual Bicultural Education.”

15 Ruiz Cabrera et al., *Enlaces*, 130.

from drugs and violence, and resolve conflict through peaceful dialogue.¹⁶ Many textbooks devote a significant portion of space to outlining the twelve Peace Accords, including the names, dates, and locations of their signing, at times with no narrative of the conflict to connect the peace process to a protracted civil war. While some texts include brief synopses of the armed conflict preceding the peace process, many authors introduce the reader to the Peace Accords before delving into the conflict, leaving the evolution of a peace process a puzzling historical event devoid of social or political context. Often, textbook authors situate the Peace Accords within discussions of human rights, so that at times they appear to be an outcome of a global human rights movement rather than the resolution of the country's conflict.¹⁷

In many ways, the peace process is treated not as a significant historical outcome of war but rather as a precondition for democracy. One text summarizes the relationship between the Peace Accords and the postwar state with this explanation: "As a consequence of the Peace Accords, we Guatemalans need to recognize that our nation-state cannot continue being centralized, authoritarian, and racist, but rather must be decentralized, democratic, and pluralist."¹⁸ A more recent textbook expands the impact of the Peace Accords so broadly that their historical significance in the context of the conflict is rendered banal in comparison to the enduring lessons they carry for democracy:

The two most important effects [of the Accords] have been these: confirming that the path toward resolving conflicts is dialogue and negotiation, and establishing the principles and values that exhibited to Guatemalan society the goals to reach for. By signaling the problems, injustices, and inequalities that we have accumulated over centuries, the Accords recognize that which has gone poorly in the country, creating an opportunity for reflection and to resolve these problems through dialogue and peace.¹⁹

The effect of these portrayals is to draw out the moral lessons and positive legacies of the peace process while obscuring the three and a half decades of conflict that necessitated a peace process.

One outcome of erasing the conflict's political dimensions is the ability to denounce the guerrilla movement for taking up arms on the grounds that all violence is wrong. What is missing in this moralistic rendering is that the guerrillas took up arms in a specific historical context, one of increasingly aggressive state repression toward popular movements. Easily confused with contemporary gangs and criminal networks who resort to violence as a mechanism of social control, the guerrillas are seen as rebels whose motivation was to overthrow the state at any cost to human life.

16 Ministerio de Educación, *Curriculum Nacional*.

17 Ministerio de Educación, *Modulos de Aprendizaje*.

18 Contreras et al., *Guatemala Ayer y Hoy*, 188.

19 Ruiz Cabrera et al., *Enlaces*, 111.

Textbook images of youth dressed in camouflage and ski masks, armed with weapons, reinforce connections between the cultures of violence, both then and now, absent of the individual choices that lead to violence and the structural conditions in which social and political violence occurs.²⁰

Two Devils and the Portrayal of Neutral Accountability

One of the significant narrative tropes evoked in curricular depictions of the armed conflict is the idea of “two devils,” in which the state and guerrilla armies appear to be equally matched and therefore equally accountable for violating citizens’ human rights. The two devils trope has been coined in the context of other periods of state repression in Latin America, and is routinely critiqued for its omission of asymmetrical power dynamics and the allusion that violence exclusively involved two parties, thereby removing political agency from civilians.²¹ By extension, this “compromise narrative” diffuses accountability across the two fighting parties and, in the process, nullifies accountability; in other words, the message that *everyone* is accountable becomes mistaken for the notion that *no one* can be held accountable.²² Jelin views the myth of Argentina’s “two devils” during a similar period of state repression against liberal ideals as a discursive effort to strip victims of their agency as political actors while excusing the inaction of those who allowed violence to take place.²³ Oglesby similarly worries about the human rights narrative casting political actors as victims rather than civic agents.²⁴ In the process, the particular responsibility of state actors to uphold civil and human rights contracts are equated with the responsibilities of individual citizens to abide by the law.

The reliance on passive voice in curricular accounts of the conflict is noteworthy, contributing to the erasure of historical motivation for state and non-state actors. Across textbooks, there is a lack of clarity regarding the causes of the conflict and an ambiguous trajectory from war to peace, with much of the conflict escalating in the background as if the culture of violence exerted its own historical agency. Oglesby and others cite the inherent problems in projecting armed conflict onto a culture of violence.²⁵ For example, one textbook moves chronologically through the country’s twentieth-century presidents, noting that during General Kjell Laugerud García’s term (1974–87), “the problems derived

20 Ibid., 137.

21 See Jelin, *State Repression*; Kaiser, *Postmemories of Terror*.

22 Bellino, “Whose Past, Whose Present?”

23 Jelin, *State Repression*.

24 Oglesby, “Historical Memory.”

25 Ibid.; Huff, “Democratic Pentecost in El Salvador?”

from the civil war continued”; later, President Marco Vinicio Cerezo Arévalo (1986–91) “encountered a country struck by the long civil war.”²⁶ These fragmented characterizations of the country’s stability make it difficult for a student reader to assemble a clear narrative of what led to such deep social and political divisions. Meanwhile, these statements mask the agency of state leaders, as if they did little more than “encounter” a country at war.

In sum, there is a distinct level of historical silence on the part of schools, “no national project to address the teaching of historical memory,” a social studies curriculum with little history after the 1960s, and “only cursory mention” of the extent of the war’s brutality.²⁷ The curriculum takes on a more thematic focus in the modern era, shifting to rights and civic skills with less discussion of historical events. These aspects of citizenship education are fleshed out through discussions of justice and equality as ideals, subverting inquiry into Guatemala’s experience with injustice and inequity. This trend toward positive rather than negative rights, along with the inclination to disassociate citizenship from histories of exclusion, are representative of broader patterns of avoidance that have been recorded in many countries struggling with teaching historical injustice in schools. In this sense, these challenges are not uniquely susceptible to postwar dynamics, though the consequences of their erasures may be more harmful in a society experiencing the legacies of recent violence and division.²⁸

Classroom Interactions: Reframing the Narrative

Although the Ministry of Education standardized the national curriculum, there are several independent publishing companies that develop curricular material. Theoretically, schools have the freedom to adopt texts of their choosing, though the challenge of economic restraints, as well as the geographic isolation of rural areas, results in a scattered dissemination of textual resources. In many schools, teachers work from a single copy of an outdated textbook, photocopying or dictating excerpts.

Approaching postwar history and civic education from an ethnographic lens demands attention to not only the historical and political contexts in which curricular resources were produced but also the ways in which educators make use of them in classrooms. Studies reveal particular tensions between policy-making and implementation in postwar contexts, where the legacies of war continue to exert their influence and in some cases agitate existing divisions

26 Contreras et al., *Guatemala Ayer y Hoy*, 158, 161.

27 Oglesby, “Historical Memory,” 83; Rothenberg, *Memory of Silence*, 224.

28 Paulson, “Whether and How?”

rather than work to reconcile them.²⁹ In this section, I summarize key findings from data I collected from 2010 to 2012 at four secondary school sites, spanning Guatemala City and the rural province of Izabal.³⁰

Teacher Mediation

In all classrooms, teachers acknowledged the existence of the “two devils” narrative, which dominates textbook representations and public discourse. But the historical authority of curricular texts is bound to the way teachers make meaning and instructional use of these materials, sometimes with great care to balance the two devils, and sometimes with subtle or explicit cues that one actor was morally justified in its recourse to violence.

One teacher in an elite urban school encouraged his students to “think like a state” and consider the choices that political leaders were forced to make when the nation was under attack. Though they did not examine evidence of the brutality or destruction carried out during the war, this stance allowed them to rationalize why state actors would take such drastic measures to counter the rebel threat. The narrative in this classroom essentially became: There were two devils, but the state did what it had to do to protect itself.

At the other end of the political spectrum, a teacher in a working-class urban school emboldened her students to question whether the war ever truly ended. She encouraged them to consider ethnic discrimination, rural poverty, and the way the current government employs the state military to suppress political gatherings. Collectively, they came to the conclusion that the war was still taking place. Their narrative rejected the notion of equal accountability: There were two devils, but the state was more repressive and continues to repress people who seek change.

In one rural community school, the teacher’s outdated textbook contained no mention of the conflict. It had been several years since he taught the conflict to his students, believing that the main task for today’s rural educators was to prepare indigenous students to participate in a changing, modern society. Students had little background on the war, though with a brief internet search they came to the conclusion that both sides brought about harm and severe destruction, while innocent villagers were caught in the middle. The teacher added credence to their story, drawing on his own experience as a male youth recruited by both the army and the guerrilla movement. Their narrative highlighted the

29 For example, Weldon, *Comparative Study*.

30 Ethnographic accounts are further developed in Bellino, “Risks We Are Willing to Take”; Bellino, “So That We Do Not Fall Again.”

experience of allegedly apolitical victims: There were two devils, but the innocent people were caught between two warring parties.³¹

In a nearby rural community located in the same province, there was a strong counter-narrative that rejected the “two devil” claim. Together teachers and students drew on family experiences and local memories to illustrate that the war was not carried out by two equal parties: the state perpetrated the majority of the violence, and the guerrillas tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to protect the people. Though there was little formal instruction about this historical period, this interpretation operated in the collective consciousness of the school and informed its mission of community empowerment.

Multiple Silences

The above snapshots of four classrooms are limited in their depiction of complex social realities, where educational exchanges are co-constructed between students and teachers, even in the most authoritarian classroom contexts. However, they shed light on several distinct patterns in the way silence is upheld, subverted, and maneuvered in educational settings. Despite rhetorical claims to institutionalized silence such as, “We don’t talk about that here,” these teachers did not avoid this material on the grounds that it was too controversial. Historical silence, in this sense, does not necessarily refer to the eradication of a subject but rather to the selective erasure of agency, power, and accountability. In each classroom, teachers adjusted their framing of the conflict in ways that obscured civic agency and political contexts and at times neutralized state accountability. Although these cases are not representative of all enactments of social studies education in postwar Guatemala, they demonstrate the range of entry points in a fixed narrative, serving as a reminder that educators, not textbooks, are the ultimate “gatekeepers” of instructional practice.³²

Promoting Narratives over Dialogue

This diversity also serves as a reminder that educators’ personal histories and experiences with injustice interact with the content and context of teaching and learning opportunities.³³ Teachers’ identities played a significant role in their

31 See Stoll, *Between Two Armies*, for further elaboration on this “revisionist” historical narrative.

32 See Thornton, “Teacher as Curricular-Instructional Gatekeeper.”

33 Murphy and Gallagher, “Reconstruction after Violence.”

likelihood to engage with the past, in the pedagogical framing of these topics, and in the moral valence and significance they granted these periods within the national narrative.

Students who did not see their family experience represented in what they learned opted at times to vocalize their dissent in class, but these deviant voices – coming from the right and the left – were often quickly shut down. In most cases, students with opposing interpretations preferred to remain silent, claiming that they knew the “real history” from what they learned at home. These fissures in seemingly cohesive community narratives speak to the tensions inherent in any retelling of conflict, but also the perceived limitations of schools as forums for open dialogue.

Yet in a divided society where teachers and students in each classroom have much in common, the politics of identity contributed to the production of ostensibly homogenous narratives that simplified mass violence. Teachers promoting either liberal or conservative perspectives worked to ensure that their stance was ideologically aligned with the majority of the student community, routinely undercutting historical dialogue and debate when these discursive openings threatened the construction of a consensus narrative. While in some instances teachers pointed to student identities as a hindrance to open discussion, they ultimately shared an understanding that they were not working to avoid or silence historical dialogue but rather to ensure the good of the postwar nation. These ideas went hand in hand with the way teachers understood the linkages between the war and contemporary social ills, as well as their own responsibility to cultivate a culture of peace. While some teachers critiqued the country’s deficiency of historical memory, others warned students that the country was fixated on its past. Either casting served to justify a particular way of approaching the past as the civic narrative that young people needed in a fragile democracy.³⁴ In part, this finding is a consequence of an education system that is de facto segregated along ethnic and class lines, and whose legacies are further divided between urban and rural spaces.

Conclusion: Implications for Postwar Citizens

Given the scale of contemporary crime, as well as the imbrication of postwar violence and Guatemala’s history of violence, there is additional uncertainty among educators and communities about whether there is civic value to delving into a troubling and divided past while youth are enduring a violent present.³⁵ These various outlooks

34 Bellino, “Risks We Are Willing to Take.”

35 Bellino, “Whose Past, Whose Present?.”

on what society needs in the aftermath of war play a critical role in the way educators position a history of violence as a manifestation of entrenched racism, a warning against totalitarianism, or a trigger for a culture of violence.

But what should trouble us most about classroom mediations of textbook narratives is that students are arguably learning about the most important aspect of their country's history in ways that discourage them from questioning or judging the choices that shaped their current social realities. Importantly, the pedagogy in each of the classrooms studied positioned postwar-generation youth as passive receivers of the survivor generation's experiences. These approaches locate students as "witnesses to history rather than active participants in the narrative."³⁶

Transitional justice research demonstrates the need for history education to emphasize individual agency and choices that led to conflict.³⁷ Agentless histories give an impression of historical inevitability and promote perceptions of violence as naturalized or culturally transmitted.³⁸ But perhaps most importantly, they render citizens powerless to participate in civil society in ways that ensure the prevention of new violence and division. The lesson missing from the "two devils" narrative is not one that lends itself to a culture of violence or a culture of peace, but rather the commitment to a civic culture in which citizens recognize their agency to uphold the promise of *nunca más*.³⁹

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36 Rubin, *Making Citizens*, 3.

37 Davies, "Building a Civic Culture"; Weinstein, Freedman, and Hughson, "School Voices."

38 Bellino, "Educating for Human Rights Consciousness"; Cole and Murphy, "History Education Reform."

39 This point is further developed in Bellino, "So That We Do Not Fall Again."

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Kirsten Dyck

Confronting Genocide Denial in US History Textbooks

It seems appropriate, in a text that centers on the genocides of indigenous American groups – groups that typically place heavy emphasis on storytelling – to begin with an anecdote that illustrates one of the many kinds of violence practiced upon indigenous American peoples by Europeans over the past five centuries. This particular story takes place in the town of Maud, Oklahoma in the last days of 1897 and the first days of 1898. In the 1890s, Maud was a frontier town on the border between Oklahoma Territory and what was known as Indian Territory, an area that functioned as the nineteenth-century US government’s dumping ground for the unwanted indigenous peoples it had uprooted from the country’s densely populated southeastern states. In late December 1897, a few miles from Maud, a Seminole Indian man by all accounts murdered a white woman in front of her young children on her illegal farmstead just inside Indian Territory. When no one could figure out who her killer was, the woman’s enraged husband, along with a posse of his male friends and relatives, began hunting down and torturing dozens of indigenous men – nearly all of them descendants of Trail of Tears survivors, because the Seminole had originally been a Florida nation – stringing them up by the neck and threatening to hang them unless they confessed to the crime. After nearly a week, the small posse finally elicited dubiously translated confessions from not one but two Seminole Indian teenagers, neither of whom fit the eyewitness description of the lone killer provided by the dead woman’s oldest son. Satisfied that they could make *someone* pay for the murder even if it was not the right someone, the posse spent several hours calling in nearly all the white men living in the area, resulting in a mob of between 100 and 200 men.

One of the men who responded to the posse’s call was a 22-year-old clerk at the Maud general store, James Edward Nix, the grandson of a virulently racist antebellum Georgia slaveholder. The general store’s owner sent Nix with a wagonload of provisions to feed the growing mob, and when Nix arrived on the scene, the posse decided to use Nix and his wagon to transport the two Seminole Indian boys across the border into Oklahoma Territory in the mistaken assumption that

leaving Indian Territory would help them evade federal justice. On the other side of the border, the mob built a pyre, tied the boys to it, and had a local minister say a prayer before he lit it on fire, burning the boys to death. The next day, James Edward Nix used his wagon to drive the leaders of the lynch mob to their homes as far as two hours away before returning to his job in Maud.¹

The Maud lynching case is just one small-scale atrocity in a wider pattern of what genocide scholars have often labeled “fractal massacres”: long-running strings of small-scale atrocities over large geographical areas that often function as the micro-level events in the macro-level process of genocide.² Thousands of such atrocities have occurred across the Americas over the past 500 years as Europeans and their descendants wrested control of the New World from its original inhabitants, resulting in staggering death tolls.³ The Maud lynching, thankfully, represents one of the first cases in which at least a few of the lynch mob’s ringleaders were successfully prosecuted and sentenced to jail terms in Oklahoma. Unfortunately, that is not why I open this article by discussing it. I cite the Maud case, rather, to illustrate how close the genocides of indigenous peoples are to contemporary US citizens, even though many of us try to pretend that we have little connection to events that occurred over a century ago. James Edward Nix was my own great-grandfather. I know about his involvement in the Maud case not only because his name appears in history books – and it does – but also because he was brazen enough to write about the lynching in a set of memoirs for his children in 1942, blaming both the initial murder and the entire process of torture and lynching on the influence of alcohol.⁴

Many people would consider what my great-grandfather and his acquaintances did to be a horrendous act of interpersonal racism, but one that has nothing to do with genocide. However, this viewpoint misses the context of the Maud lynching amid centuries of mass displacement, mass murder, forced assimilation, environmental contamination, and other forms of both physical and cultural destruction. It also misses the fact that intentional and pre-meditated European colonial violence contributed significantly to an Amerindian population collapse that had reduced the indigenous population of the Americas by 90 to 98 percent of its pre-Columbian numbers by 1890.⁵ So I wanted to begin here by acknowledging Palmer Sampson and Lincoln McGeisey, the two boys my great-grandfather helped to murder, as victims of a genocide perpetrated by, among others, *my* people. My family.

1 Littlefield, *Seminole Burning*, 33–87.

2 Mann, B. A., “Fractal Massacres in the Old Northwest,” 167, 179; Semelin, “In Consideration of Massacres,” 379; Dwyer and Ryan, “Introduction,” 111.

3 Stannard, *American Holocaust*, x.

4 Nix, “Life Story of James Edward Nix,” 31.

5 Stannard, *American Holocaust*, x.

In this chapter, I explain why I see my great-grandfather's story as part of an ongoing, 500-year process of genocide. I argue that contemporary US history textbooks not only bury and deny this genocide but also contribute to the continued marginalization of indigenous groups within US borders. To do this, I draw examples from a number of recent US history textbooks from major academic publishers. I begin this analysis by exploring how colonial violence against indigenous groups in the United States fits into legal and scholarly frameworks of genocide. My goal is to demonstrate that US Americans need to offer more honest versions of our violent history in our educational system if we want to stop replicating old patterns of violence and systemic oppression.

In order to accomplish these goals, I must explain what I mean when I use the term "genocide." There are few words in the English language whose definitions have been so fraught with contention. The standard legal definition comes from the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and states that genocide is

any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.⁶

This definition bears inherent problems. It focuses disproportionately on perpetrator intent. It never specifies how *large* a part of a victim group one must intend to destroy in order for a court to rule that genocide has occurred. It leaves out key categories of victim groups, such as political collectives. With the exception of the provision against forced child removal, it limits the acts that can qualify as genocidal to those that result in bodily harm, ignoring the fact that humans are social creatures whose lives often collapse when our social support networks collapse, even if all of the people in those networks remain physically alive. I would argue that culturally destructive processes like forced religious and linguistic assimilation belong on this list as well. This is particularly important in the study of settler colonial genocides like those that occurred in the United States, Canada, and Australia, because forced assimilation was often one of the key methods of destroying victim groups' internal solidarity and capacity for resistance.

6 United Nations, "General Assembly Resolution 260 (III)."

For this reason, I use a different conception of genocide in my own research, one that comes out of the field of relational sociology. This school of thought views *relationships* among people – and not individual people themselves – as the basic building blocks of human societies. The relational sociologist Christopher Powell therefore defines genocide as a relationship between perpetrator and victim groups, which leaves no place for the victim group to exist as a self-defined entity within a given society:

The violent persecution of an ethnic minority does not in and of itself constitute genocide. Collective identification can survive or even thrive in contexts where the human beings who bear that identity suffer outrageously. The shift from abuse and persecution to genocide involves a fundamental qualitative transformation, from a relation that assigns the Other an inferior or denigrated position in the wider figuration to which both persecutor and persecuted belong, to one that works to deny them any position at all.⁷

According to Powell, then, the difference between persecution and genocide is not a straightforward division between physical violence and cultural destruction. It is, rather, the difference between a situation in which a perpetrator group is content simply to exploit a victim group and a situation in which the perpetrator group wants the victim group to disappear entirely, whether or not the bodies of individual group members remain intact.⁸ I rely on Powell's definition because recognizing that genocide stems from relationships within and among human groups will help scholars to understand *why* genocide happens and not just who its victims and perpetrators are. In the case of European colonial genocides, Powell's definition is useful because it helps genocide scholars to focus on critical power imbalances rather than just on the issues of intent, degree, and method – or, worse, on comparative victim body counts – which have too often preoccupied the discipline of genocide studies in the past. Using Powell's definition, scholars no longer need to demonstrate that key figures in the government of a perpetrator country intended to destroy a victim group in large part. Instead, we can begin to examine how interconnected patterns of physical and cultural violence toward disempowered groups converge to produce various instances and types of social, cultural, *and* physical destruction.

Powell's definition also allows scholars to examine the cultural destruction of indigenous peoples as a key element of genocide and not simply as a manifestation of racism that is somehow less destructive than physical killing, simply because it occasionally leaves the physical bodies of its victims and survivors intact. The idea of "cultural genocide," of course, may seem counterintuitive. In most mainstream discussions and in post-1948 international policy, the term

7 Powell, "What Do Genocides Kill?," 543.

8 Ibid.

“genocide” has come to imply physical destruction. However, the “genos” at the heart of the term, the social group that genocide purportedly destroys, is precisely that: a social and not a biological entity. All extant *Homo sapiens* populations can and do interbreed with one another; while some groups tend to be more culturally and genetically distinct than others, these distinctions are not absolute and can always change as group members produce offspring with members of different groups.

Difficulties with the etymology of the term “genocide” notwithstanding, focusing only on the destruction of purportedly biological groups also minimizes the suffering of non-ethnically based human social groups. For precisely this reason, the jurist Raphael Lemkin – the man who originally coined the term “genocide” – actually argued that the United Nations’ Genocide Convention should extend its protection to non-ethnically based groups that fall victim to mass murder.⁹ In particular, Lemkin fought to have the Convention recognize political collectives as potential victim groups.¹⁰ The powerful Soviet delegation to the United Nations, however, wanted to protect itself from prosecution under the Convention and blocked its passage until policymakers had removed political groups from consideration as possible targets of genocide; had the government of the USSR fallen under the same level of scrutiny as the Nazis did at Nuremberg, international courts would have uncovered millions of state-ordered murders motivated by both political *and* racial animosity.¹¹ By the time the United Nations had ratified its Genocide Convention, Soviet pressure guaranteed that the forcible removal of children was the only act of cultural destruction that the document actually banned. Lemkin’s original conception of genocide in the 1940s had accounted for the fact that human groups almost always set out to destroy one another using a combination of both physical and cultural methods, but the final draft of the UN Genocide Convention failed almost completely to acknowledge that physical and cultural intergroup violence nearly always accompany one another.

Whether or not one follows my logic in subscribing to the relational conception of genocide rather than the official UN definition, it is clear that genocide did in fact occur in the United States, as it did almost everywhere else in the Americas. In fact, the US government and its colonial predecessors knowingly and intentionally committed acts that fit into *all five* of the United Nations’ categories of genocidal acts.¹² Some of these violations, including the forced sterilization of indigenous women, were still occurring decades after the passage

9 Moses, “Raphael Lemkin,” 37–38.

10 Totten and Bartrop, “History of Genocide,” 144.

11 Pohl, “Stalin’s Genocide”; Jones, *Genocide*, 188–204.

12 Stannard, *American Holocaust*, 97–146; Jane Lawrence, “Indian Health Service,” 400; Davis, “American Indian Boarding School Experiences,” 20.

of the United Nations Genocide Convention in 1948.¹³ The United States only avoided international legal responsibility for these violations because it did not sign the UN Convention until 1988.¹⁴

Even today, US history textbooks rarely acknowledge the full extent of the mass killing, maiming, rape, kidnapping, enslavement, intentional food source destruction, forced relocation, land theft, toxic contamination of reservation land, forced child removal, forced cultural assimilation, forced sterilization, treaty breaking, and continued government neglect that occurred (and, too often, still occur) within our borders. This helps at least partially to explain why many students who emerge from the US public school system – and even from some US university history classrooms – have difficulty understanding why contemporary indigenous groups in the United States still face severe socioeconomic disadvantages.

For the purposes of this chapter, I have chosen to use contemporary US history textbooks as a lens to examine the widespread genocide denial that continues to occur in US history pedagogy. The textbooks I examine here are all designed for classes at the high school and university levels, that is, for students over 14 years of age. They are all on major academic presses; have all been published since 2008; and are all in heavy classroom use at the time of writing in early 2015.¹⁵ In fact, I chose to survey these books because publishers have recently sent them to me and to my colleagues for free in the hope that we will assign them to our students. This strategy did, in fact, contribute to my decision to assign Roark's *Understanding the American Promise* to a 110-student US history lecture class at James Madison University in the fall 2012 semester. Sending unsolicited free copies of textbooks to high school and university instructors is one of the key ways in which academic presses market their textbooks in the United States. When free copies of textbooks appear in instructors' mailboxes, this increases the chances that these books will be assigned widely and, therefore, get sold in large numbers.

Before I deconstruct the racist, nationalist, and genocide-denying rhetoric I found in many of these books, it is important to note that the authors of these volumes, on the whole, mean well. All of them *attempt* to deal with the United States' histories of slavery, racism, and violent conquest in culturally sensitive ways. In other words, these are not books written by neo-Nazis or Ku Klux Klan members who are consciously trying to portray the European-descended population of the United States in unrealistically positive ways. Some key processes and events in Native American history do receive responsible treatment in some

13 Lawrence, "Indian Health Service," 400.

14 Roberts, "Reagan Signs Bill."

15 The textbooks included in this study are: Brinkley, *American History*; Divine et al., *America Past and Present*; Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*; Henretta and Brody, *America: A Concise History*; Roark et al., *Understanding the American Promise*.

of these books some of the time. One of them, Eric Foner's two-volume *Give Me Liberty!*, does a relatively thorough job of incorporating aboriginal American lives and European colonial violence into the overall narrative of US history. To a greater or lesser degree, the others – even the one from which I personally taught in 2012 – all reproduce an old, grand narrative of US history that focuses only on the lives of European-descended Americans except when others make themselves impossible to ignore.

The first chapters of all of these books deal with indigenous life in the Americas before 1492. This in itself is problematic, even in the Foner book: given the wealth of indigenous accounts on pre-Columbian life, as well as the mounting scientific discoveries about the peopling of the Americas, this de-emphasis suggests that the period of human habitation in the Americas before Columbus, which comprised at least 15,000 and as many as 40,000 years,¹⁶ is worthy of only a few pages in books that are all hundreds of pages long.

Problems with the histories of indigenous groups multiply when textbook authors begin discussing the arrival of Europeans in the Americas. US schoolchildren and even university students learn, consistently, that European diseases like smallpox wiped out large numbers of North America's aboriginal peoples, sometimes entire tribes. This is absolutely true. No one really knows how many indigenous Americans died of European zoonotic diseases after 1492, but anecdotal evidence suggests that large areas of what is now the United States had already undergone demographic collapse before Europeans laid eyes on them, simply because European microbes often traveled faster than the colonists who originally introduced them.¹⁷ Disease probably – and I emphasize *probably*, because, again, no one kept detailed records – killed more indigenous people in the Americas than any other single force.¹⁸ The trouble is that grand narratives in the United States have tended to focus on disease to the exclusion of violence. Disease is a politically convenient explanation for the deaths of aboriginal Americans. For the most part, the Europeans did not cause the disease deaths on purpose, although this is certainly not true in every case, as when British troops knowingly gave smallpox-infected blankets to the Ottawa during the Seven Years' War.¹⁹ Focusing on disease, then, generally makes European settlers look like more benevolent invaders than many of them actually were.

The prolific textbook editor Robert Divine, an emeritus history professor for the University of Texas at Austin, offers one of the most glaringly revisionist accounts among the books I surveyed, stating:

16 Regal, *Human Evolution*, 163; Dillehay, *Settlement of the Americas*, 2.

17 Mann, C., "1491."

18 Stannard, *American Holocaust*, xii.

19 Finzsch, "Extirpate or Remove that Vermin," 222.

It was disease . . . that ultimately destroyed the cultural integrity of many North American tribes. . . . The decimation of Native American peoples was an aspect of ecological transformation known as the **Columbian Exchange**. . . . Historical demographers now estimate that some tribes suffered a 90 to 95 percent population loss within the first century of European contact. The population of Arawak Indians of Santo Domingo, for example, dropped from about 3,770,000 in 1496 to only 125 in 1570.²⁰

Likewise, the Columbia University history professor Alan Brinkley writes, “Beginning with Christopher Columbus’s first visit in 1492, and accelerating after the Spanish established their first colony on Hispaniola in 1496, the native population was all but wiped out by European epidemics.”²¹

Compare these accounts to the 1552 eyewitness testimony by the Spanish cleric Bartolomé de las Casas on the destruction of the Arawaks:

[My fellow Spaniards] laid Wagers among themselves, who should with a Sword at one blow cut, or divide a Man in two. . . . They snatcht young Babes from the Mothers Breasts, and then dasht out the brains of those innocents against the Rocks. . . . They erected certain Gibbets, large, but low made, . . . under which they made a Fire to burn them to Ashes whilst hanging on them. . . . They sent the Males to the Mines to dig and bring away the Gold, which is an intollerable labor; but the Women they made use of to Manure and Till the ground, which is a toil most irksome even to Men of the strongest and most robust constitutions, allowing them no other food but Herbage, and such kind of unsubstantial nutriment, so that the Nursing Womens Milk was exsiccated and so dried up, that the young Infants lately brought forth, all perished, and females being separated from and debarred cohabitation with Men, there was no Prolification or raising up issue among them.²²

To be clear, Bartolomé de las Casas’s *A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies* is not an obscure volume I trawled from an archive. It is one of the most commonly assigned readings in US history survey courses that actually examine primary source documents, as in the primary source collection that accompanies the Roark textbook. In fact, Foner quotes extensively from de las Casas in his textbook.²³ It would be nearly impossible for established US history professors and US history survey textbook authors like Brinkley and Divine *not* to have encountered de las Casas’s narrative or to know that several separate inquiries by reputable historians have vetted the accuracy of the account. The horrified de las Casas never proffered disease as the primary killer of the Arawaks or any of the other indigenous groups whose destruction he witnessed.

20 Divine et al., *America Past and Present*, 10–11.

21 Brinkley, *American History*, 55.

22 de las Casas, *Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies*.

23 Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, vol. 1, 38.

Why, then, do Divine and Brinkley center on disease to the near exclusion of violence? To quote David Stannard, author of the aptly titled 1992 monograph *American Holocaust: Columbus and the Conquest of the New World*:

By focusing almost entirely on disease, by displacing responsibility for the mass killing onto an army of invading microbes, contemporary authors increasingly have created the impression that the eradication of those tens of millions of people was inadvertent – a sad, but both inevitable and “unintended consequence” of human migration and progress.²⁴

Genocide scholar Norbert Finzsch agrees, emphasizing the fact that, again, even epidemic disease often became an intentional weapon in a much larger project of settler genocide and ecocide across the Americas.²⁵ Divine’s emphasis on microbes is an example *par excellence* of what genocide scholars Jeremy Silvester and Jan-Bart Gewald have called “colonial amnesia,” or ignoring the violence of colonial conquest in order to romanticize the bravery of European explorers and pioneers like Christopher Columbus.²⁶

Suffice to say that if US history textbooks regularly mangle the history of early European colonial genocides on Caribbean islands, violence that took place on US soil itself rarely receives better treatment. This violence includes open massacres of indigenous noncombatants by uniformed US military personnel, such as the atrocities that occurred at Sand Creek, Colorado in 1864 or at Wounded Knee, South Dakota in 1890. While all of these textbooks acknowledge that massacres like Sand Creek and Wounded Knee occurred, they generally discuss these incidents as if they were isolated events rather than simply the best-known examples in a centuries-long string of massacres. In fact, the open slaughter that began with the near-complete annihilation of many Caribbean groups under the Spaniards in the early sixteenth century continued unabated under other regimes in the Americas until at least the 1890s, and in places like Guatemala into the 1980s.²⁷ By describing a few well-known atrocities like Sand Creek and Wounded Knee to the near exclusion of thousands of other instances of mass killing, contemporary US history textbooks like the ones I survey here nearly always create a narrative in which Sand Creek and Wounded Knee appear to be aberrations perpetrated by a few bad people who did not represent the US government or its European-descended population as a whole. The fact that low-level killing happened at the hands of both military groups and settlers like my great-grandfather, and that small-scale massacres contributed to a catastrophic but gradual process of demographic attrition for aboriginal Americans, receives far

24 Stannard, *American Holocaust*, xii.

25 Finzsch, “Extirpate or Remove that Vermin,” 225–26.

26 Silvester and Gewald, *Words Cannot Be Found*, xiv.

27 *Ibid.*, xiii–xiv; Powell, *Barbaric Civilization*, 183–201.

less mention than spectacular (and therefore difficult-to-ignore) cases like Sand Creek and Wounded Knee.

Worse, many of these books present violence *by* aboriginal groups *against* European settlers and US government troops as if it were equal to the violence of the Europeans in both scale and motivation. Textbooks like Roark's *Understanding the American Promise* persist in referring to the violent suppression and confinement of indigenous groups as "Indian Wars," a name that in itself focuses on the violent behavior of aboriginal groups rather than white settlers. It not only assumes the non-aboriginal US population as normative but also insinuates that the indigenous groups' defensive violence was proportional in nature to the Europeans' violent conquest.²⁸ A skewed overemphasis on violence by indigenous groups becomes most startling when one examines how these textbooks discuss indigenous groups in the twentieth century. Some of these books, like Foner's, Roark's, and Henretta and Brody's, do discuss indigenous political activism and aboriginal people's continued struggles for equal treatment in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s.²⁹ In others, however, indigenous groups' twentieth- and twenty-first-century struggles go virtually unmentioned – except when the authors discuss aboriginal Americans' participation in the US Armed Forces, particularly during World War II. By virtually ignoring the recent histories of aboriginal groups outside their contribution to violent conflict, such portrayals contribute to the stereotype of indigenous Americans as savage and warlike. Omitting any mention of the vibrant cultural traditions that surviving indigenous groups have managed to create and maintain through times of almost unimaginable hardship can also leave students with the impression that traditional indigenous customs in the United States are all somehow, inexplicably, lost or dying.

These are not simply the mistaken assumptions with which students arrive in university classrooms. These are mistaken assumptions that students often *learn* in their university classrooms – mistaken assumptions that we are teaching to a new generation of history *teachers*. I could continue for hundreds of pages discussing the misrepresentations of indigenous history in some of these textbooks when dealing with themes like forced child removal and the destruction of indigenous food sources, or *not* dealing with topics such as twentieth-century forced sterilization policies or the current contamination of aboriginal reservation land with toxic industrial waste. Worse, scholars have been discussing these inaccuracies in published work for decades. Misrepresentations that I found in recent textbooks not only ignore at least five decades' worth of vetted,

28 Roark et al., *Understanding the American Promise*, 209, 237, 468.

29 Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, vol. 2, 999–1000; Roark, *Understanding the American Promise*, 789; Henretta and Brody, *America: A Concise History*, 846.

peer-reviewed publications by indigenous studies scholars like Ward Churchill, Vine Deloria, and David Stannard; they also mirror the gross inaccuracies about indigenous North Americans that James W. Loewen describes at length in his 1995 monograph *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*, which already called for an overhaul of US history textbooks and curricula more than 20 years ago.³⁰ Even without considering the content errors and misunderstandings that appear in many US history textbooks, it is important to note that scholars of history pedagogy, such as Richard J. Paxton, have routinely suggested that US history textbooks too often silence authorial voice, giving students the impression that history consists of a dry series of facts and dates, failing to teach them how real historians deal with absent and contradictory evidence, debates in the field, or long-term changes in historiographical method.³¹

No wonder, then, that my students are usually horrified when I give them the chapter of my great-grandfather's memoirs in which he writes about helping to burn two boys to death, or when I assign them excerpts from Stannard's *American Holocaust* to mark the official US holiday of Columbus Day. Like me, many of them grew up celebrating Columbus Day in school by learning that Columbus and the European settlers who followed him were heroes who discovered a brand-new world and brought peace and freedom to the people whose distant ancestors had, inconveniently, already discovered that world thousands of years earlier. Their teachers learned that story in *their* university history courses, and otherwise reputable professors sometimes continue to write that story into mainstream history textbooks.

Minimizing the violence of the European conquest, as some of these textbook authors do, is simply genocide denial. Again, I should emphasize that I do not believe this to be malicious genocide denial, committed with the intent to harm. Rather, I think this is an example of what Israel Charny calls “‘innocent denials’ and/or ‘innocent disavowals of violence’ which maintain views of oneself and/or one’s people or society as just and not evil.”³² The problem is that even if this denial is not intentional, it still harms contemporary indigenous groups. It masks the historical suffering of aboriginal peoples in the United States and makes it difficult for others to understand why many indigenous tribes and individuals are struggling now. It means that non-indigenous voters are less likely to support politicians and policies that might provide much-needed assistance to aboriginal groups. In some cases, it even obscures contemporary indigenous voices entirely, suggesting that the aboriginal populations of the United States barely exist

30 Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me*.

31 Paxton, “Deafening Silence,” 315–39.

32 Charny, “Classification of Denials,” 18.

anymore. As Charny notes, excising victim narratives that remind us of our ancestors' crimes often functions as a way to sustain feelings of nationalism and patriotism when representatives of one's government have done terrible things in the past.³³ It can be difficult to feel proud of US history if one really stops to consider the mountain of bodies it rests on, especially if one knows without a doubt, as I do, that one's own recent ancestors contributed to the slaughter.

Yet this is exactly what educators in the United States need to do if we ever want anything to change for the indigenous groups living among us. One cannot reckon with or remedy a situation one fails to acknowledge. The good news is that while none of the textbooks I have surveyed here explicitly recognizes the destruction or attempted destruction of indigenous groups in the United States as genocide, some of them – like the Foner book and, to a lesser extent, the Roark book – do ask students to confront and grapple with the country's history of violence toward aboriginal Americans. The bad news is that books like Divine's *America Past and Present* are also on the market, continuing to spread misleading messages about the United States' complicity in long-term and large-scale mass violence. This means that at least some students will continue to leave US history courses with rosy views of the United States as an idyllic place of multicultural tolerance and unlimited opportunity for everyone. As a result, many of these well-meaning students will likely persist in believing that when aboriginal people fail to thrive in US society, their struggles stem solely from their own personal decisions and not from the systemic violence and economic exploitation that they and their ancestors have suffered for centuries.

Scholars and educators can change this. Some are already starting to do so. Textbooks are not the only important components of antiracist and decolonial pedagogy, and they cannot eliminate mainstream genocide denial by themselves. Yet, convincing more textbook authors and publishers to portray violence against indigenous groups in more nuanced ways will be a crucial step in helping the US population to work through our history of genocide. One way in which we might accomplish this goal is to require textbook authors to acknowledge scholarly controversies, such as the percentages of indigenous American populations who died after the arrival of Europeans due to colonial violence rather than disease, when they discuss topics that still generate significant disagreement among reputable historians. Another helpful method would be to restore authorial voice to textbook manuscripts, so that students will know exactly who is writing each passage, as well as the sources from which each author draws historical evidence. The most important thing we can do to make portrayals of indigenous American history more accurate, however, is to hold authors and publishers to account when they propagate misinformation. New social media

33 Ibid.

platforms provide particularly fertile opportunities for publicizing textbook errors and garnering widespread social pressure to make publishers change. In 2015, for instance, the outraged mother of a 15-year-old student in a ninth-grade US history class instigated a social media storm when she posted a video of herself critiquing a page from a McGraw-Hill textbook that referred to victims of the transatlantic slave trade as “workers” whose move to the Americas constituted “immigration”; the strength of public backlash to the misrepresentation prompted McGraw-Hill to make instant changes to its online content and to rewrite the offending passages for the next edition of the textbook.³⁴ Drawing similar negative attention to inaccuracies in textbook passages about indigenous history in the United States might encourage authors and publishers to review existing content and to think more carefully about how they represent indigenous history in future volumes. Fomenting these kinds of public discussions about textbook errors and other aspects of US history pedagogy might finally produce meaningful changes not only in the quality of the textbooks that secondary and postsecondary students learn from, but also in the understandings of indigenous history among the US population as a whole.

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34 Wang, “‘Workers’ or Slaves?.”

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Problems around Teaching the History of the Armenian Genocide in Armenian Schools

Introduction

Teaching about genocide, done carefully and correctly, may be one of the most productive ways of averting the danger of further genocides. It appears to be the case that many educational programs teach about wars and victories, yet often remain silent about crimes that have taken place in history. We may be silent because we believe that in this way we can spare the delicate souls of pupils; we may be silent because we think that such atrocities cannot happen to us. In this context, we might cite a remark made by Adolf Hitler, who inspired and oversaw the most infamous genocide in world history: “Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?”¹ In other words, history undiscussed and unexamined may well prove to be history repeated. Younger generations must be aware of how and why genocides have occurred and understand their influence and consequences.

Although teaching the topic of the Armenian Genocide can be a traumatic issue, understanding and evaluating the problems associated with this task is a matter of great importance to Armenians. To this end, this chapter aims to provide a comprehensive historical background to explain the psychological and methodological difficulties that have arisen when teaching the topic of the Genocide in Armenian schools over the years. The years since the Armenian Genocide can be divided into three generations of pupils, representing differing degrees to which the Armenian education system has dealt with the issue of the Genocide: those who survived the genocide, the next generation living in the Soviet Union and the Diaspora, and the generation living in independent Armenia.

1 Adolf Hitler on August 22, 1939. Quoted from a speech delivered to the supreme commanders and commanding generals as the Nazis marched into Poland in 1939, in Lochner, *What About Germany?*, 2.

The Armenian Genocide (1915–23): Historical Overview

The twentieth century has been characterized by a series of genocides in which various perpetrator states, individual killers, and their accomplices were able to escape punishment for mass murder in the vast majority of cases.² “Under this culture of impunity, most individuals who planned or participated in mass killings were never brought to justice.”³

The Armenian Genocide (1915–23) is considered to be the earliest example of genocide in Europe and Asia Minor. The genocide was meticulously planned and carried out by the Turkish government of the Ottoman Empire, known as the Young Turks. As the Young Turks came to power in July 1908, they launched a nationalist program that foresaw the genocide of the Armenians and other national minorities in the Empire. On the eve of World War I, the Young Turks laid out a policy of “Pan-Turkism” in order to unite all Turkish-speaking people, reaching as far as the borders of China. It implied the Turkification of the Empire’s ethnic minorities. As for the Armenians, their homeland lay right in the path of the Young Turks’ plans to expand eastward. The Young Turks saw Armenians as an obstacle blocking the realization of their adopted policy, and they considered extermination inescapable. The outbreak of World War I provided an appropriate opportunity to resolve the “Armenian Question” once and for all. Decades of persecution and minor massacres of Christian Armenians in the Ottoman Empire⁴ culminated in 1915. The Armenians were subjected to mass murder and deportation to the deserts of Syria and Mesopotamia. After only a little more than a year of calm at the end of World War I, the atrocities were renewed between 1920 and 1923, and the remaining Armenians were subjected to further massacres and expulsions.

Ultimately, 1.5 million Armenians were annihilated by the Turkish perpetrators and their accomplices; this figure amounts to almost two-thirds of the 2.4–2.5 million Armenians inhabiting the Ottoman Empire.⁵ The “Armenian Question” was resolved. It was an event that would become the “forgotten genocide.”⁶

2 See Roht-Ariaza, *Impunity and Human Rights*, which lists violations of human rights from torture and disappearances to genocide.

3 Apsel, “Looking Backward and Forward,” 182.

4 Dadrian, *History of the Armenian Genocide*, 113–84.

5 Marutyan, “Museums and Monuments,” 60.

6 Strom and Parsons, *Facing History and Ourselves*; Boyajian, *Armenia*; Housepian, “Unremembered Genocide,” 55–61.

The First Generation of Genocide Survivors: The Silent Generation

During the period after the Genocide, about half a million survivors were thrust into a diaspora existence and settled in a range of different foreign countries, facing all of the issues such a new start entailed. At this stage, the existence of an Armenian education system was out of the question.

Several hundred thousand emigrants settled in Eastern Armenia.⁷ In the period immediately following the Genocide, Armenians in Eastern Armenia became temporarily independent, having established the First Republic of Armenia in 1918 after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I. News of the restoration of the Armenian Republic was not always welcomed joyfully. Because of its extremely narrow borders and famine, disease, chaos, and anarchy, few believed in the viability of the newly independent Republic. Between 1918 and 1920, important efforts were undertaken to organize the state's political, economic, and cultural life.

The government started the process of reorganizing the education system, but there was a great lack of teaching staff, textbooks, and supplies, and the school-aged children were still outside of the education system. In Armenian educational and cultural life, an important event was the opening of the university in 1919, which later became the basis for the formation of the higher education system. However, unfavorable external and internal conditions made it difficult to pursue the reforms. The Republic's existence was in danger. Kemalist Turkey on the one side and Soviet Russia on the other each wanted to bring their plans on Armenia to fruition.

In Eastern Armenia, the victory of the Soviet power was inevitable. Sovietization was generally seen as the only way of saving the physical existence of the Armenian people. The First Republic existed until 1920, when it was invaded by the Red Army and became a Soviet state. The political, economic, and cultural life of Eastern Armenia started to be adapted to Soviet standards.

At this point, the Armenians were divided into two parts: diaspora Armenians and Armenians living in Soviet Armenia. And for both parts, the 1920s became difficult years of survival.

One of the principal parallels between the two parts of this generation was silence about their experiences. Many Armenians of this first generation were so terrified and emotionally exhausted after the massacres that for some time they attempted to forget the past and shield their descendants from its trauma. An entire people and their history had essentially been erased within a matter of

7 Prior to World War I, Armenia was divided into two parts between the Russian and Ottoman Empires. Eastern Armenia was under the Russian Empire's dominance, while the western part was ruled by the Ottoman Turks.

began to visit the Republic more frequently. It was during this phase that memory of the Genocide finally awakened.

The “forced” silence on the Genocide was publicly broken in 1965.¹³ On April 24,¹⁴ for the first time in the entire Soviet Union, about 100,000¹⁵ protesters held a 24-hour demonstration in front of the Opera House to mark the 50th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. They called for the Soviet Union government to officially recognize the genocide committed by the Young Turks in the Ottoman Empire and to build a memorial in Armenia’s capital city, Yerevan, to the memory of its victims.¹⁶ This event was the first step in the struggle for recognition of the genocide of 1915. Survivors of the “forgotten genocide” began to speak more frequently about their experiences, beginning their struggle for recognition:

The survivors were able to penetrate the wall of silence around them just a little and to voice their pleas for international recognition and rectification of an outstanding crime against humanity. Many younger Armenians, affected by the transgenerational trauma of genocide, became involved in political and demonstrative activities.¹⁷

Following these examples, similar acts of protest were organized by Diaspora Armenians in various countries around the world.

In order to meet the outburst of calls for justice after a long period of enforced silence, the Soviet government permitted the construction of a memorial complex to commemorate the 1.5 million innocent victims. In November 1967, the Tsitsernakaberd Memorial Complex, designed by the architects Sashur Kalashyan and Arthur Tarkhanyan, opened and thereafter became a place of pilgrimage for Armenians worldwide.¹⁸ Since then, each year on April 24, many Armenians visit the memorial complex to honor the victims’ memory.¹⁹

In the late 1950s and the early 1960s, during the years of the so-called “thaw,” school syllabi underwent certain changes. A new textbook on Armenian history

13 Karlsson, “Memory of Mass Murder,” 33–34.

14 On the night of April 24, 1915, over 250 Armenian intellectuals and community leaders were arrested in Constantinople and sent to Chankri and Ayash, where they were later slain. See Balakian, *Burning Tigris*, 211–16.

15 Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization*, 71.

16 Bobelian, *Children of Armenia*, 121–22.

17 Apsel, *Looking Backward and Forward*, 183.

18 The memorial consists of a series of twelve slabs arranged in a circle, representing twelve lost provinces (i.e., the Armenian provinces in present-day Turkey), and a 44-meter column symbolizing the rebirth of the Armenian nation. In the center of the circular space surrounded by the twelve slabs, an eternal flame burns in a pit 1.5 meters deep. A 100-meter wall around the memorial park lists the names of towns and villages where Armenians are known to have been massacred.

19 See Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, “Remembrance Day of the Armenian Genocide.”

introduced the topic of the Armenian Genocide.²⁰ The textbook nevertheless bore the ideological influence of Communism and misrepresented some key periods of Armenian history. The resistance and struggle of the Armenian people during the Genocide, the activities of the leaders of the struggle and national political parties, and the history of the Armenian war for liberation were represented negatively and framed as propagations of “Armenian nationalistic ideas.” In consequence, it raised further questions rather than giving satisfactory answers. In search of such answers, schoolchildren and students began to seek out additional materials, to obtain and exchange books and newspaper articles on the Armenian Genocide. In this way, the restrictions inherent to the education system gave birth to a new generation that sought to know and examine its past.

Further Generations: Fighters for Justice

In 1991, after the collapse of the USSR, Armenia became an independent state. Following independence, the Republic of Armenia faced a profound socio-economic crisis, exacerbated by events such as the Nagorno-Karabakh War, the aftermath of the 1988 earthquake, and the ongoing effects of the USSR’s collapse. From 1991 onward, the education system in the Third Republic of Armenia, the successor of the Soviet education system, experienced a difficult period of transition. The old education system, including teacher training, curricula, and textbooks, needed to be completely overhauled; however, the newly created state did not have the necessary material resources. It was largely after the turn of the millennium that significant education reforms commenced. In 2006, general education in Armenia was converted from the ten-year Soviet system to a twelve-year, three-stage system comprising elementary, middle, and high school. The reforms gave rise to new textbooks that attempted to present in a new way topics that were previously bypassed.

In present-day Armenia, the topic of the Genocide appears in both formal and nonformal educational settings. In formal education, the teaching of the Genocide did not change much after independence. Pupils continued to get acquainted with it through the course on Armenian history. Chapter 15 of the 1994 textbook on Armenian History for years 7 and 8 of general education is titled, “World War I and Armenia,” in which the mass slaughter of the Western Armenians is presented as a mere succession of events and factual data. The chapter also looks at the history of Armenian self-defense during the same years.²¹ To

20 Nersisyan and Parsamyan, Հայ ժողովրդի պատմություն [History of the Armenians], 255–60.

21 Barkhudaryan, Հայոց պատմություն [History of the Armenians], 168–86.

illustrate this, I would like to cite the following questions and assignments for pupils presented at the end of the lesson on Genocide. They show that only questions are asked that require mechanical answers (i.e., a sentence, phrases, or data written in the text), and pupils are not given the opportunity to think about and discuss the phenomenon of genocide. For example: “In what stages were the mass deportations of Western Armenians carried out?” or “What were the reasons for the genocide of Western Armenians?”²² At the same time, the textbook does not contain photographs showing violence or massacre and does not introduce notions of enmity. The material is presented in a reserved manner, with little use of qualifying or emotional adjectives, and it is organized in accordance with the principle of presenting consecutive chronological facts. The textbook does not contain any propaganda against the Turkish people, with all criticism directed toward the Turkish government. The textbook’s content and scope of presenting the topic of the Genocide have been actively discussed by historians and teachers since the first textbook appeared.

The historian Ruben Sahakyan, who authored this topic in the first Armenian history textbook produced after independence, has commented that the “[purpose of the] textbook is to give pupils general education, and there is no need to burden it with facts, years and names. Pupils will study everything in a detailed way when they specialise later in their education.”²³ He also notes that he tried to present the historical facts without emotional treatment as far as possible. The academic Vladimir Barkhudaryan, who headed the authorial staff of the first textbook, has commented that maintaining the historical truth is a key priority for textbook authors and that, due to the limited space available in textbooks for extensive historical material, his textbook includes only those realities that are most important and pivotal to the continuing history of Armenia. The subsequent generations of textbooks on Armenian history since independence have, on the whole, taken similar approaches.

Today, the topic is included in the Armenian history textbook for pupils in their eighth year of schooling, aged 13. Chapter six in this textbook is titled, “Armenia and the Armenian People During the Years of World War I,” and is devoted to the tragedy of the Armenian people during this period. In particular, the third paragraph begins with an explanation of the term “genocide,” after which the massacres of the Armenians are presented as described above. The allotted time for the genocide topic is only one teaching hour. The sole novelty is the explanation of the notion of “genocide,” while the rest is essentially unchanged. The topic is again referred to in

22 Ibid., 186.

23 Quoted in Barseghyan and Sultanova, “Հատուկ ռեպորտաժ. ինչպես են պատմություն դասավանդում Հայաստանում և Ադրբեջանում” [Special report on how history is taught in Armenia and Azerbaijan].

revisions to the Armenian history textbook for pupils of the eleventh year, in high school. Many teachers hold the opinion that in the textbooks, this topic presents a dry and dreary picture of historical events, and a pupil is not given the opportunity to deeply contemplate it.

The search for a common educational method of teaching the Genocide at schools in Armenia and the Diaspora continues. The situation in diaspora settings is different from that in Armenia; there is an explicit policy in place, and there is ample current discussion on whether a separate course on the Genocide should be taught in Diaspora schools.

Education scholars in the Diaspora support the idea of having a unified education system, toward which Rubina Peroomian, in creating a teaching program on the history of the “Armenian Question” for first- to twelfth-year students, has undertaken one of the initial steps. The author attempts to acquaint pupils with the course of the Armenian Genocide, stage by stage. Peroomian proposes an educational program on the Genocide from years one to eight, using Armenian fairytales, proverbs, stories, poems, games, and other methods, thus preparing pupils to accept discussion of the actual events without trauma in higher classes and to learn about the topic of the Genocide in the complete scope of the material. Further, Peroomian believes that, to facilitate students’ comprehension of the complex notion of genocide, it is first necessary to introduce simpler ideas to pupils in years one to five, such as cooperation and perseverance, fairness, friendship and respect, freedom, compassion, honesty, loss, courage to overcome loss, and so on.²⁴ Later, the program proposes introducing pupils to ideas such as self-awareness, problem solving, survival and perseverance, similarities and differences, justice, and human rights, including a discussion of their violation and protection.²⁵ Peroomian’s initiative can indeed be considered the first attempt to present the topic to pupils while trying to avoid the development of psychological problems such as the formation of a “victim psychology” or an inferiority complex. An important advantage of Peroomian’s manual is that it is written in two languages: Eastern Armenian and Western Armenian.²⁶ Though the manual has been approved by the Ministry of Education, a separate course centering on the Genocide has not yet been planned, but the material may be used by individual teachers optionally and as a supplement to core teaching.²⁷

24 Peroomian, Հայոց ցեղասպանութիւն [Armenian Genocide], part 1.

25 Peroomian, Հայոց ցեղասպանութիւն [Armenian Genocide], part 2.

26 Eastern Armenian is spoken in the Republic of Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and by the Armenian communities in Georgia and Iran, while Western Armenian is used by the Armenian Diaspora in North and South America, Australia, Europe, and most of the Middle East.

27 Similar supplementary teaching materials on the Armenian Genocide, including course curricula, lesson plans, and teachers’ manuals, have been published widely in Armenia and

A large proportion of work on the Armenian Genocide is conducted through nonformal education. The Genocide Museum-Institute, built at the Tsitsernakaberd Memorial Complex to mark the 80th anniversary of the Genocide and working as a research center under the Armenian National Academy, supports an alternative educational method.²⁸ Hayk Demoyan, director of the Institute, has proposed setting up a special classroom in the museum to hold courses on the Genocide for high school pupils. According to Demoyan, the absence of unified approaches is detrimental to the teaching of general and comprehensive history of the Genocide. From this perspective, the issue of preparing and introducing a course on the Genocide in schools and other educational institutions in Armenia and the Diaspora is a matter whose settlement is long overdue – and one that will be of paramount significance to the ways in which future generations will access information and views on the Armenian Genocide.²⁹

Some teachers and psychologists argue that pupils should not be exposed to large numbers of historical documents detailing and depicting horrific scenes and believe that such exposure may have an “overdose” effect. Having interviewed teachers of many ages on this issue, I have come to the conclusion that most teachers of more senior generations, aged approximately 45 to 60, approach the topic very carefully, even evasively, while younger teachers are more independently minded and willing to tackle the issue.³⁰ The older teachers’ evasive attitude seems to stem from their lack of experience in approaching the difficult questions asked by their students. These teachers may well continue to be influenced by the Soviet model of teaching, in which the teacher speaks while students take a passive, listening role. Younger teachers appear more at ease with discussing the issues and support the idea of a specific textbook on the theme of the Genocide. In their opinion, the material in the textbook gives rise to numerous questions for pupils, and no class hours are allotted to their discussion. Some of these teachers have observed that outside school, pupils receive more information in their families and through public events, television, and cinema.

abroad. See, for example: Facing History and Ourselves, *Crimes Against Humanity*; Manukyan, “Ինչպես դասավանդել Հայոց ցեղասպանության թեման” [How to teach the topic of the Armenian Genocide]; Armenian Genocide Resource Center of Northern California, *Teaching the Armenian Genocide*; Payaslian, *The Armenian Genocide*. However, the use of these materials in Armenian schools is quite difficult now because of insufficient classroom hours devoted to Armenian history.

28 Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, “Mission Statement.”

29 Demoyan, “Հայոց ցեղասպանության 100-րդ տարելիցին նվիրված միջոցառումների կազմակերպման հայեցակարգային մտեցումների շուրջ” [Around conceptual approaches to organizing the events devoted to 100 years of the Armenian Genocide].

30 All conclusions presented here are based on personal interviews with 20 teachers (ten teachers of senior age, and ten young teachers) from 18 schools in Yerevan, Kotayk, Armavir, and Syunik, conducted in 2014.

Such information, partly from unsubstantiated sources, may be psychologically harmful and distort their perceptions.

To complement my study of teachers' attitudes, I invited 35 history students (aged 18–22) undertaking bachelor degrees at Yerevan State University to discuss their views on the matter. These students, who had studied the Genocide more closely during their studies and were able to reflect on their time as pupils in school, spoke with me about issues such as their own and their friends' feelings when they studied the Genocide at school; the questions they had as school-children to which they felt their textbooks or teachers did not supply answers; and the gaps in school syllabi that they felt presented them with difficulties in their higher education.

This study revealed that most of these students were not satisfied with the material on the Genocide available in textbooks. The majority felt that it was necessary to present the material to secondary school pupils on a larger scale. It appears from my findings that the presentation of the topic as a simple sequence of events, without discussion between the teacher and the pupils, is at odds with pupils' needs and emotions. The majority of the interviewees agreed that the most significant gap in the education system with regard to this issue was the absence of information on genocides committed against other peoples, information that might help students understand how others have overcome the consequences of genocide and freed themselves from collective complexes and feelings of enmity. The students' answers confirmed, in my view, that there is a need for Armenian education to feature a separate course on the theme of the Genocide and that its memory, lessons, and consequences should be presented in both global and local contexts.

Conclusion

More than two decades of Armenian independence have not been sufficient to eliminate the influence of the Soviet education system. Even today, Armenian society has not elaborated a uniform approach to teaching the topic of genocide, and discussions are still ongoing. This demonstrates that the senior generation responsible for education is still under the influence of the Soviet education system and unconsciously avoids teaching the Genocide as a separate theme. This might be one factor slowing down the educational reforms in Armenia. However, recent discussions and activities of a group of NGOs and research institutions have spotlighted the importance of teaching the Genocide as a separate school subject in order to overcome the psychological consequences of that tragedy both in Armenia and in the Diaspora.

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III. Integrating the Topics of War and Peace into the Classroom: Teacher and Student Voices and Experiences

Denise Bentrovato

Whose Past, What Future? Teaching Contested Histories in Contemporary Rwanda and Burundi

Introduction

Around the world, attempts at dealing with different nations' violent pasts have proven to be highly contentious. A history of collective violence and abuse has often led to conflicting memories and polemic confrontations around the historical "truth." It has also sparked heated debates on how to best educate younger generations about the past for the sake of a better future. Schools, as key instruments of socialization, have inevitably been affected by societal dynamics and tensions in the context and aftermath of conflicts, including power struggles and related "memory wars," making them a crucial arena in contestations for political legitimacy.¹ In particular, the history taught in schools, as an important site of collective identity and memory, has been the object of great political and societal contention in countries emerging from violent conflict. As such, the subject of history has regularly served as a symbolic battlefield. Conversely, school history has also increasingly been considered a significant element in peacebuilding and transitional justice processes aimed at reconciling divided societies.²

This chapter aims to contribute to the field of education and peacebuilding by offering novel insights into the politics and practice of teaching history in contexts of protracted, identity-based conflict and peacebuilding processes. Its particular focus is on the Great Lakes Region of Africa, one of the most unstable and conflict-ridden areas in the world, where history is deeply contested and politicized. The chapter draws on the distinct experiences of neighboring Rwanda and Burundi, two countries with many similarities, both recently emerging from civil war following decades of ethnocratic rule and internecine conflict and violence. In Rwanda, war raged between 1990 and 1994, ending with the military victory and assumption of power of a Tutsi-dominated rebel movement after

1 See Ferro, *Use and Abuse of History*; Foster and Crawford, *What Shall We Tell the Children?*.

2 See Cole and Barsalou, "Unite or Divide?"; Cole, *Teaching the Violent Past*; Cole and Murphy, "History Education Reform."

three decades of Hutu majority rule; in Burundi, the civil war, lasting from 1993 until 2003, ended through protracted negotiations and multi-party elections, which led to the political victory of a former Hutu rebellion after a long history of Tutsi minority rule.

Informed by international debates on memory politics and history teaching, this chapter draws on original empirical research to examine historical and political dynamics in independent Rwanda and Burundi and their impact on approaches to dealing with the past within and outside of schools. The chapter adopts a historical, comparative perspective in order to identify and explain patterns of continuity and change, as well as similarities and divergences, in the ways in which political elites in Rwanda and Burundi have concurrently taught society about the past. It further investigates the present-day experiences and views of teachers and pupils to assess the ways in which national policies have been translated into practice, and, more specifically, how the nation's traumatic history is taught, learned, and understood in Rwandan and Burundian classrooms. Ultimately, this study aims to retrace prevailing politics of history teaching in the two countries, to examine actual practices of teaching history in the classroom, and to reflect on the impact and legacy of government educative efforts, notably on nation-building and peacebuilding, highlighting parallels and contrasts between the two case studies.³

The argument advanced in this chapter is that, while Rwanda and Burundi have much in common, they have embarked on radically different political paths with conspicuous implications for their education sectors and, by extension, their futures. The chapter shows that contrasting types of transition and power configurations have had significant repercussions for policy and practice in relation to teaching history in schools. It also asserts that the courses taken by Rwanda and Burundi, though divergent, both remain precarious going forward. This calls special attention to the risks posed to reconciliation processes by the persistent politicization of history and its teaching, along with a concomitant failure of schools to help younger generations make sense of a complex past and a complex present.

3 The study presented in this chapter is part of a larger research project investigating the politics of memory and education in sub-Saharan Africa. See Bentrovato, "Narrating and Teaching the Nation."

Methodology

The study presented in this chapter draws on a variety of sources and methods to explore the complexities of teaching history in divided societies. First, it reviews scholarly literature and official and semi-official documents to make a historical comparison of political developments and discourses in pre- and postwar Rwanda and Burundi. It further investigates educational approaches to the past sanctioned in the two countries, by conducting an analysis of narratives transmitted through history curricula and textbooks used in Rwandan and Burundian schools before and after the recent wars. The study regards narratives, understood here as social constructs largely shaped by power and politics, as key analytical tools with which we can better understand societies and their power structures and internal dynamics and tensions.⁴ The collected narratives were subjected to a diachronic, qualitative content analysis and discourse analysis to explore the varying significance and interpretations of key historical events and figures and to identify whose stories have been told at specific historical junctures and why. Inspired by Michel Foucault's work, the research employed discourse analysis to deconstruct the relationship between power and knowledge in the societies examined, and, more specifically, to discern how particular knowledge becomes dominant and operates through societal institutions, notably schools, thus suppressing alternative truths and exerting social control.⁵

The study additionally draws on the results of extensive fieldwork conducted in the region between 2008 and 2014 as supporting evidence of how these nations' traumatic history is taught and learned in Rwandan and Burundian classrooms today. The research explored the reception and translation of official policies and discourses in schools by recording teachers' and learners' experiences and views in relation to current teaching practices. Data collection methods included classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with history teachers and pupils, and a qualitative student survey carried out via anonymous written questionnaires in 16 state and private secondary schools across the two countries.⁶ The description and assessment of current practices deriving from direct observation and stakeholders' impressions are complemented with an analysis of historical narratives collected from young Rwandans and Burundians. The survey investigated patterns of historical representation and interpretation

4 On the significance of narratives, see Wertsch, "Narrative Tools of History."

5 Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*.

6 The survey instrument was designed in the language of instruction: French in Burundi and English and French in Rwanda, with the additional option of responding in Kirundi or Kinyarwanda, respectively. While it would have been compelling information from a researcher's perspective, the respondents' "ethnicity" was not recorded due to the sensitive nature of the topic and for related ethical reasons.

in young people's narratives through an essay question inviting respondents to recount the history of their country as they knew it and recalled it.

The research in Rwandan and Burundian schools employed heterogeneity sampling to try and capture a broad spectrum of views among a cross section of teachers and pupils with mixed backgrounds and life experiences. The total purposive sample selected for this study comprised 18 teachers with varying lengths of teaching experience, ranging in age from 25 to 55, and approximately 1,500 young people aged between 12 and 25,⁷ many of whom had personally experienced violence and/or displacement.⁸

Rwanda and Burundi as Historical “False Twins”

Recognizing the situated nature of all inquiry, this section sets out to outline the specific context of the study. The chapter adopts the view of Rwanda and Burundi as “false twins” to account for both their striking resemblance and their marked differences. Among other things, Rwanda and Burundi share conspicuously similar cultural traits and sociodemographic configurations. They also share a common and intertwined experience of German and later Belgian colonial rule and a more recent past of political instability, conflict, war, and mass violence involving their two main communities: Hutu (majority) and Tutsi (minority). Yet, while they have much in common, Rwanda and Burundi took radically different trajectories after gaining independence, eventually becoming what we might describe as reversed mirror images of each other. In particular, power relations between the two communities in each country, as well as the nature and length of their recent conflicts, the dynamics that led to their conclusion, and the paths the two countries chose to deal with their respective internecine conflict, differ starkly.⁹

7 In Rwanda, the sample consisted of ten teachers and approximately 1,000 young people, including pupils from nine secondary schools as well as a smaller group of recent graduates who, in 2009, were participating in a state-organized, pre-university civic education course (*ingando*). Respondents in Rwanda were sampled in the areas of Kigali, Butare, Gisenyi, Ruhengeri, Cyangugu, Byumba, and Rwamagana. In Burundi, the sample comprised eight teachers and approximately 500 pupils from seven secondary schools in Bujumbura, Gitega, Rumonge, Kirundo, and Ntega.

8 Fieldwork was conducted with mindful awareness of the challenges and opportunities of doing research in highly politicized contexts, such as those characterizing present-day Rwanda and Burundi. On this matter, see Thomson, “Getting Close to Rwandans.”

9 For a more detailed reconstruction and analysis of Rwanda's and Burundi's trajectories, see Chrétien and Banégas, *Recurring Great Lakes Crisis*; Lemarchand, *Dynamics of Violence*; Turner, “Mirror Images”; Vandeginste, “Governing Ethnicity after Genocide.”

After independence in 1962 and until the early 1990s, Rwanda and Burundi witnessed the emergence of two distinct ethnocracies. In Rwanda, political life before the 1990s was controlled by Hutu-dominated parties that had violently come to power following the 1959 “Hutu Revolution.” Under Hutu rule, Rwanda’s Tutsi minority suffered systematic discrimination and cyclical mass violence, which forced many into exile. Concurrently, independent Burundi soon came under the rule of a Tutsi-dominated party eager to prevent a Rwanda-like scenario through systematic discrimination against Hutu and the harsh repression of violent Hutu revolts, during which thousands of Tutsi died.¹⁰ The most violent repression occurred in 1972, when 200,000 to 300,000 Hutu were methodically killed by a predominantly Tutsi army in what has been described by some as an act of genocide against the Hutu.¹¹

Both countries experienced civil war and sectarian mass violence again in the 1990s, leading to a reversal of power relations. In Rwanda, civil war broke out in 1990 following a military offensive by Tutsi refugees organized in the RPF (Rwandan Patriotic Front) rebel movement. During the war, the 1994 assassination of the country’s Hutu president triggered a state-sponsored genocide during which an estimated 800,000 Tutsi as well as “moderate Hutu” were systematically massacred. The civil war and genocide in Rwanda ended with the RPF’s military victory three months later. Since then, the country has been firmly ruled by the RPF, under whose leadership Rwanda has seen remarkable political stability and socioeconomic progress, but also increasing international criticism toward the state of its democracy and human rights. In neighboring Burundi, civil war broke out in 1993 following the assassination of the country’s first Hutu president by army officers, resulting in an estimated 300,000 deaths and massive displacement among both Hutu and Tutsi. The war, claimed by some to have included a genocide against the Tutsi in 1993, ended through a gradual process in the initial years of the new millennium after prolonged negotiations, which established a complex, consociational model of political power-sharing based on ethnic quotas. Since the multiparty elections held in 2005, Burundi has been ruled by the former Hutu rebel movement CNDD-FDD (National Council for the Defense of Democracy–Forces for the Defense of Democracy). Under its leadership, the country has seen little socioeconomic progress or stability, although

10 Before 1994, Rwanda was ruled by Parmehutu, the party of President Grégoire Kayibanda (1962–73), and later by the MRND (National Revolutionary Party for Development) of President Juvénal Habyarimana (1973–94). During roughly the same period, Burundi was ruled by UPRONA (Union for National Progress) under the successive leadership of Tutsi Presidents Michel Micombero (1966–76), Jean-Baptiste Bagaza (1976–87), and Pierre Buyoya (1987–93, 1996–2003).

11 See, for instance, Lemarchand, “Burundi 1972.”

conflict, at least until most recently, has been primarily marked by intra- rather than interethnic rivalry.

The Politics of Teaching History in Rwanda and Burundi

Throughout the conflicts experienced in Rwanda and Burundi, history and its teaching have been objects of great contention and extensive political manipulation, albeit in contrasting ways. Against this backdrop, stakeholders in both countries have repeatedly argued for their thorough revision for the sake of national reconciliation in the wake of civil war in the 1990s, the outcomes of their respective efforts in this regard again starkly differing.

Rwanda: Triumph of a Victor's History

In Rwanda over a period of many years, Hutu elites disseminated a version of history with the intent to legitimize their position of power in the country. Until 1994, the official discourse propagated through the media and largely reflected in school curricula and textbooks emphasized ethnic differences and recounted a history of conquest and oppression of an autochthonous Hutu majority, as well as of their final liberation in 1959. During the 1990–94 war, this history was used to instill resentment and fear among the Hutu population: the violent events that were unfolding, which at the time were not officially discussed in schools, were depicted as a continued struggle to defend democracy against Tutsi “aggressors” and “terrorists” eager to regain power by force at the expense of a naturally legitimate ethnic majority.¹²

After 1994, this narrative was dismissed by the winners of the war and replaced with a new official truth claiming to “correct” a “false” history that had contributed to the violence. The propagation of “the truth” as seen by the incumbent leadership has constituted an integral part of a bold attempt at social engineering undertaken by the Tutsi-dominated RPF to construct a unified “New Rwanda.” In a reversal of the old rhetoric, the past is summoned in today’s Rwanda to assert both the irrelevance and the dangers of now outlawed “ethnic” categorizations – a discursive shift many critics have denounced as intended to mask a present condition of Tutsi supremacy. The new official discourse recounts a history of ancient unity and harmony, blaming European colonizers for engendering ethnic divisions and conflict. It also perceives “a history of genocide in slow motion,” ushered in in 1959 under the “bad leadership” of Hutu elites and “under the

12 Chrétien, *Rwanda*; Bentrovato, *Narrating and Teaching the Nation*.

auspices of the Belgian Administration.”¹³ This new version of history further legitimizes the ruling RPF by describing its war as a “Liberation Struggle” that ended the “Genocide against the Tutsi” and ousted a dictatorial and murderous regime, inaugurating an era of peace and development.¹⁴ This narrative has been widely criticized abroad: Rwanda’s post-genocide government has been accused of “manipulat[ing] the historical record for the sake of an official memory,” one that is particularly silent on the many Hutu victims and survivors of the violent events and on crimes reportedly perpetrated by RPF soldiers both during and after the war.¹⁵ This exclusive narrative manifests itself in memorialization and legal processes that have primarily addressed crimes committed against the Tutsi (by Hutu): over the years, countless memorial sites and commemorative events have been dedicated to (Tutsi) genocide victims, while thousands of community *gacaca* courts were established across the country, trying nearly two million (Hutu) genocide suspects over the course of a decade. The hegemony of the government narrative in the public domain has been further sustained by severe laws on “divisionism,” “revisionism,” “negationism,” and “genocide ideology,” through which the government is accused of having enforced “censorship of alternative accounts.”¹⁶

Schools in post-genocide Rwanda have been a major vehicle of the official discourse, through which the government has zealously “(re)educated” young people about the past, especially in recent years. The role of formal education in this respect was at first restricted by the imposition of a temporary moratorium on teaching national history in Rwandan classrooms, an emergency measure taken immediately after the genocide upon the repudiation of supposedly divisive educational materials produced by the former regimes.¹⁷ After a decade of curriculum and textbook revision, new material has been produced, particularly since 2008.¹⁸ The narrative conveyed in *The History of Rwanda*, a much-anticipated teachers’ guide produced by the Ministry of Education in 2010, is illustrative of the curricular content sanctioned in schools. The guide explains the sources of Rwanda’s “troubled past” by asserting that “[it] all began when the colonial administration divided the society along ethnic lines. . . . The post-colonial Kayibanda and Habyarimana administrations,” it continues, “in-

13 Kagame, “Beyond Absolute Terror.”

14 Republic of Rwanda, *Unity of Rwandans*; Republic of Rwanda, Senate, *Genocide Ideology*; Shyaka, *Rwandan Conflict*.

15 Lemarchand, *Dynamics of Violence*, 105.

16 Buckley-Zistel, “Nation, Narration, Unification?,” 31. See also: Lemarchand, “Politics of Memory”; Reyntjens, “Constructing the Truth”; Straus and Waldorf, *Remaking Rwanda*.

17 Republic of Rwanda, MINEPRISEC/MINPRISUPRES, *La Politique et la Planification de l’Education*.

18 Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Education, *History Program for Ordinary Level*; Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Education, *History Program for Advanced Level*.

tensified this policy of divide and rule.” This publication further highlights what it clearly regards as the success of the government’s policies by concluding that the Rwandan people today “live together in greater harmony and mutual respect than ever before.”¹⁹ Overall, this narrative leaves little room for complexity or multiple points of view. Rather, the aim of history teaching in Rwanda seems to be to promote young people’s uncritical assimilation of state-approved truth and the norms and values underlying it.

Burundi: Settling on Amnesia

In contrast to concurrent developments in Rwanda, the official version of history during the first three decades of Burundi’s independence under Tutsi military rule propagated a narrative of national unity that obscured existing identity-based inequalities and tensions in the country. The elites in power widely resorted to unifying rhetoric and symbols, and they banned “ethnicity” as a malign colonial fabrication meant to divide and rule a long-standing nation.²⁰ Accordingly, curricula and textbooks developed during this period, notably the teachers’ guide *Histoire du Burundi* (History of Burundi), celebrate a proud tradition of unity and solidarity under the leadership of great kings and heroes, a tradition this narrative claims to have been undermined by European colonizers. Reflecting the official discourse, the material omits all reference to ethnicity and promotes an “illusion of ethnic harmony”²¹ by enforcing collective amnesia of the country’s postcolonial crises.²² This state-sponsored narrative was challenged by a competing discourse disseminated by the Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People (Palipehutu), a rebel movement born in exile in neighboring Tanzania after 1972. Reminiscent of the official rhetoric in pre-genocide Rwanda, by which it was presumably informed, Palipehutu’s manifesto, tellingly titled *Persecution of the Hutu of Burundi*, denounced the age-old domination and enduring injustice and violence it claimed an autochthonous Hutu population had been suffering at the hands of Tutsi “oppressors.”²³ While silenced within Burundi, the traumatic memory of the 1972 “genocide” against the Hutu featured

19 Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Education, *History of Rwanda*, 151. Much of the same narrative can be found in existing history textbooks for pupils, notably the three-volume textbook series by Bamusananire and Ntege, *New Junior Secondary History Book*.

20 Chrétien, *Le Défi de l’Ethnisme*; Lemarchand, “Burundi: The Politics.”

21 Lemarchand, *Burundi. Ethnocide*, 32.

22 République du Burundi, Ministère de l’Education Nationale, *Histoire du Burundi*; Bureau d’Etudes des Programmes d’Enseignement Secondaire, *Histoire du Burundi*. See also Bentrovato, “Narrating and Teaching the Nation.”

23 Gahutu, *Persecution of the Hutu of Burundi*.

prominently in Palipehutu's discourse and was kept alive in refugee camps across the border through outreach campaigns aimed at countering historical "falsification" by a "blood-soaked Tutsi regime" and educating "the Hutus of Burundi" so that they might "teach their children the exact truth about their subjugation."²⁴

In the wake of the 1993 war, competing memories of victimhood and conflicting interpretations of the country's past have remained a source of division and a major challenge to national reconciliation. As opposed to the situation in Rwanda, where a hegemonic history has been propagated by the government at the expense of alternative versions, in Burundi an official narrative has not been strictly imposed. Instead, history remains a highly contested and debated matter, with conflicting accounts openly competing in the public realm to this day, often along "ethnic" lines.²⁵ Also in contrast to the state of affairs in Rwanda, this polarization is relatively visible in Burundian society, where, following the institutionalization of ethnicity, references to "Hutu" and "Tutsi" are not a taboo today, although they remain a sensitive topic. Competing memories of suffering in the two communities have manifested themselves in exclusive genocide commemorations taking place at distinct times and venues, despite initiatives to establish a national day of commemoration and a national memorial site for all victims of postcolonial violence as recommended in the 2000 Arusha peace agreement.²⁶

The mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) proposed by the peace accords of 2000 was to include the task of "rewriting Burundi's history so that all Burundians can interpret it in the same way."²⁷ However, 15 years after the signing of the accords, the TRC has yet to get off the ground. A collaborative academic project sponsored by UNESCO has been expected to support the still-awaited TRC's investigative work and to contribute to nation-building and reconciliation by promoting historical knowledge and dialogue. Its primary objective is for a diverse team of scholars to supply the public, especially schoolteachers, with a general reference work on Burundian history, on the basis of which new school textbooks should be developed. Despite government support, this project has thus far failed to deliver on its promises.²⁸ Such delays have given rise to disillusionment at an ongoing situation in which, although "Burundi did not officially decide to forget the past,"²⁹ "the truth about the past has not been

24 *Ibid.*, 1. On Hutu memories in exile, see Malkki, *Purity and Exile*; Turner, "Representing the Past in Exile."

25 Centre of Alert and Conflict Prevention, "Traiter du Passé."

26 Batungwanayo and Vanderlick, "Les lieux de memoire."

27 République du Burundi, "Accord d'Arusha," art. 8, protocol 1, chap. 2, 23.

28 Interviews with project participants, Bujumbura, June 2011.

29 Vandeginste, "Transitional Justice for Burundi," 400.

told, hardly anyone had been held accountable for the crimes that were committed and victims are left without any reparation for the injury suffered.”³⁰

Against the backdrop of an uncertain transitional justice process and unresolved “memory wars,” history teaching in Burundi remains a thorny issue on which the state and society as a whole have yet to reach consensus. History curricula and textbooks have not fundamentally changed over the last two decades. While the latest available version of the secondary school curriculum, dating from 1992, covers Burundi’s history up until the Third Republic (1987–93), teachers today have to rely on outdated material, notably the old teachers’ guide, *Histoire du Burundi*, whose content omits all discussion of the period following independence in 1962 and of complex Hutu–Tutsi relations.

History in the Classroom: Teachers’ and Pupils’ Views and Experiences Today

The comparative analysis of political processes and discourses presented above shows that political conditions in Rwanda and Burundi have significantly differed and affected, in contrasting ways, official approaches to dealing with the past, both in and outside of schools. The complementary ethnographic fieldwork conducted in this context as part of the present study expands on these findings to further explore how official policies, or the lack thereof, have translated into everyday classroom practices.

Teachers in the Crossfire: Caught between Principled Beliefs and Practical Exigencies

Interviews with school personnel brought to light both shared and distinctive challenges with which teachers in the two countries have been confronted in relation to educating young people about their countries’ pasts. In both Rwanda and Burundi, history teachers appeared divided on the issue of whether and how the difficult past should and could be addressed in schools. With almost no exception, the teachers shared a principled understanding of the importance of dealing with the past in view of preparing younger generations for a future of unity and peace, in line with curricula and textbooks that highlight the potential of history teaching to warn society against the mistakes of the past.³¹ Only one

30 Ibid., 394. See also Vandeginste, “Burundi’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission.”

31 See Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Education, *History Program for Ordinary Level*, 6; Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Education, *History Program for Advanced Level*, 3, 5; Re-

Burundian respondent vehemently challenged this perspective, arguing that “dealing with the recent past in Burundi is tantamount to doing politics and should therefore have no space in history classes.”³² While the vast majority of teachers expressed a belief in the desirability of teaching young people about their country’s past, they generally appeared reluctant to address, let alone critically discuss, the country’s sensitive and controversial history in the classroom. This contradiction demonstrates the difficulty for teachers in reconciling their principled beliefs with practical exigencies.

Teachers preferred to deal with what they considered to be “less problematic” issues and to avoid contested topics, notably issues of ethnicity and conflict. One major factor explaining teachers’ reluctance was a fear of bringing conflict into the classroom and reopening still fresh wounds, a potential situation they felt they had not been trained to sensitively and constructively handle. One teacher in the Rwandan capital Kigali explained: “Here in Rwanda you cannot just say anything. In my classrooms, I have children of genocide victims sitting next to children whose parents were accused of genocide. The situation in our schools is very delicate.”³³ Similarly, a Burundian colleague in the capital Bujumbura affirmed, “It takes a lot of courage and preparation from us teachers so we don’t really speak about it as it might hurt some feelings.”³⁴ In Rwanda, another very distinctive reason for teachers’ apparent hesitance to tackle contested issues was a subtly expressed fear of being accused of propagating “divisionism” and “genocide ideology,” a fear that seems to be restricting critical reflection and debate in schools. One teacher in northern Rwanda referred to his “heightened level of alert and caution” in the classroom following official investigations into the presence of “genocide ideology” in Rwandan schools and the dismissal of some of his colleagues.³⁵ In both countries, and in Rwanda in particular, where diverging from the official discourse is increasingly felt to be dangerous, teachers showed great discomfort with ambiguity and multiple versions of the truth, and felt apprehensive about the idea of using controversy and debate in the classroom as part of critical methodology in history. Classroom observations and students’ testimonies in both countries confirmed the use of predominantly expository methods, inducing passive memorization of prescribed narratives as opposed to inquiry-based approaches geared toward stimulating active student participation

public of Rwanda, Ministry of Education, *History of Rwanda*, 6–7; République du Burundi, Ministère de l’Enseignement Primaire et Secondaire, *Programmes d’Histoire*, 176; République du Burundi, Ministère de l’Enseignement Primaire et Secondaire, *Histoire du Burundi*, 7–8.

32 Interview conducted in Bujumbura, Burundi, June 6, 2011.

33 Interview conducted in Kigali, Rwanda, June 14, 2011.

34 Interview conducted in Bujumbura, Burundi, May 25, 2011.

35 Interview conducted in Ruhengeri, Rwanda, September 5, 2008.

and critical reflection.³⁶ One Burundian teacher dismissed the latter practices, which she saw as “coming from the international community” and as being “nice but not practicable for the moment,” since “we teachers first need proper resources in order to get the facts straight.”³⁷

In Search of the Truth:

Young People’s Struggle to Navigate Silence and Contradiction

Students in both countries echoed the views and experiences of their history teachers. Some felt impatience toward the neglect of their country’s recent past and their teachers’ frequent avoidance of sensitive questions in the classroom. One Rwandan student lamented that “teachers tend to skip some topics that embarrass them because they feel responsible for some mistakes or because they don’t feel at ease when talking about things that hurt them or which they personally experienced.”³⁸ One of her peers explained, for example, that “at school we hardly ever speak about what happened in 1994” and that “teachers don’t really go into too much depth when we cover this chapter.”³⁹ Some proposed hiring foreign teachers for this sensitive task as a better option, on the grounds that “foreigners are less emotionally involved.”⁴⁰

In general, the students asserted their right to be given the means to understand an “incomprehensible” tragic past that had affected them personally (for example, “because I lost a big part of my family and I am suffering its consequences”⁴¹), or to be informed about a highly significant period in their nation’s history of which they had no direct experience (“because I wasn’t yet born”⁴²; “because I was born abroad”⁴³). This interest often derived from a desire to learn how to prevent the “return of this bad side of history.”⁴⁴ Students considered schools to have a moral duty to transmit this knowledge to younger generations in order to encourage a commitment to the motto, “Never again.” In

36 Pupils in both Rwanda and Burundi often explained that what was expected of them in history class was to “copy and learn by heart the teacher’s notes” and “just repeat whatever the teacher wants to hear.”

37 Interview conducted in Rumonge, Burundi, May 12, 2011. These findings on teachers’ attitudes and prevalent pedagogy confirm earlier studies conducted in Rwanda in particular. See Freedman et al., “Teaching History in Post-Genocide Rwanda.”

38 Survey response collected in Ruhengeri, Rwanda, September 2008.

39 Survey response collected in Gisenyi, Rwanda, June 2011. Similar comments were also articulated in more recent interviews in April and May 2014.

40 Survey response collected in Kigali, Rwanda, August 2008.

41 Survey response collected in Rwamagana, Rwanda, August 2008.

42 Survey response collected in Rumonge, Burundi, May 2011.

43 Survey response collected in Kigali, Rwanda, June 2011.

44 Survey response collected in Kigali, Rwanda, June 2011.

the words of one Burundian pupil, “Without knowing this history the next generation will be in jeopardy” because “history allows us to know the past in order to understand the present and to envision and prepare the future by correcting certain mistakes of the past.”⁴⁵

In accordance with the views expressed by their teachers, the pupils’ acknowledgment of the importance of educating young people about the troubled past was accompanied by calls for caution in teaching potentially upsetting and traumatizing stories of anguish, violence, and death, which could arouse “uncomfortable negative emotions”⁴⁶ among the pupils, including sadness and grief, as well as contempt, anger, and hatred toward those considered to be responsible for the suffering endured. One Rwandan student suggested that “one cannot teach Rwandan history in primary schools because one cannot tell young children that people took their machetes and cut their neighbors.”⁴⁷ Another pupil affirmed more generally that “because of the very particular history of this country, Rwandans cannot say whatever they like as in other countries perhaps. . . . Here we have to be careful because if you say something or ask questions about the genocide for example, children whose family members were killed or have been jailed can feel bad and be traumatized.”⁴⁸

Student responses also showed great perplexity and discomfort with the existence of multiple and contradictory versions of the past, and incongruences were commonly understood and simplistically explained as an opposition between “true” and “false” stories. Students, like their teachers, revealed their impatience with ambiguity and widely expressed a wish to be taught “the truth” about past events in order to understand “what really happened.” Strikingly, the students’ calls for a single truthful story to be passed on by the teacher was found alongside demands for the introduction of more democratic, engaging, and active teaching approaches.

In Rwanda, young people frequently expressed their desire to be taught the “historical truth” in conjunction with needing to be alert and to counter the propagation of “genocide ideology” by parents and teachers who had been “brainwashed” by former governments. Several students insisted on the need for schools to teach a “same history” strictly determined by the state, advising the government to “train teachers because they might have false information from their grandparents”⁴⁹ and to vet the material used in schools “since there are books that contain mistakes and lies.”⁵⁰ Evidently intended to demonstrate

45 Survey response collected in Gitega, Burundi, May 2011.

46 Interview conducted in Kigali, Rwanda, April 16, 2014.

47 Survey response collected in Butare, Rwanda, June 2011.

48 Interview conducted in Kigali, Rwanda, April 22, 2014.

49 Survey response collected in Butare, Rwanda, June 2011.

50 Survey response collected in Butare, Rwanda, June 2011.

knowledge of the “correct” history of Rwanda, the prevailing narrative recounted by the young people surveyed reproduced the government’s hegemonic discourse of a precolonial golden age disrupted by the arrival of the white colonizers. Students commonly identified the origins of the Rwandan conflict as being when “the Belgians divided us and destroyed our primordial unity and solidarity.”⁵¹ Postcolonial regimes were accused of having exacerbated an externally imposed conflict by “continuing to teach divisionism and teaching the Hutu to hate the Tutsi, which led to the genocide against the Tutsi in 1994.”⁵² In this tale of victimization, particularly of the Tutsi, the incumbent RPF and its leader President Kagame were unequivocally celebrated for their “heroic and victorious struggle against evil,”⁵³ through which “they stopped the genocide in Rwanda and won the war against the state, and in so doing saved the Tutsi and the Rwandans in general . . . bringing peace, unity and prosperity again.”⁵⁴ The students’ image of today’s Rwanda appears to be one of “a great nation,” where “there are no Hutu, Tutsi and Twa” but “one people,” “reconciled and united towards a fantastic 2020 Vision of development.”⁵⁵

Across the hundreds of accounts collected, there was essentially no trace of alternative versions of “the truth,” though these are believed to circulate more or less clandestinely within Rwanda.⁵⁶ In particular, the survey did not record a single allusion to RPF crimes or even the slightest criticism of the organization, and it found only a few references to Hutu suffering, notably at the hands of Hutu *génocidaires*. What the research clearly detected, aside from such silences, was a palpable sense of discomfort and caution in relation to the sensitive issue of identity and ethnicity, accompanying the oft-rehearsed slogan “We are all Rwandans.” A most telling example of this discomfort appeared in a manifestly evasive narrative of the genocide by a young pupil, according to whom “The Rwandans have killed the other Rwandans, and a little bit later the other Rwandans stopped the killings.”⁵⁷ This narrative starkly contrasts with more explicit and bold accounts of Rwanda’s recent history, according to which, as one respondent recounted, “The Hutu killed nearly 1 million Tutsi in a genocide that lasted 100 days. . . . Finally, the RPF came and fought against the genocide.”⁵⁸

51 Survey response collected in Rwamagana, Rwanda, August 2008.

52 Survey response collected in Butare, Rwanda, June 2011.

53 Survey response collected in Kigali, Rwanda, August 2008.

54 Survey response collected in Kigali, Rwanda, June 2011.

55 Survey response collected in Kigali, Rwanda, August 2008. Vision 2020 refers to the Rwandan government’s development agenda.

56 See King, “Memory Controversies”; McLean Hilker, “Everyday Ethnicities”; Thomson, *Whispering Truth*.

57 Survey response collected in Gisenyi, Rwanda, June 2011.

58 Survey response collected in Kigali, Rwanda, June 2011.

In neighboring Burundi, young people's calls to "finally" teach about the "truth" in schools were accompanied by descriptions of Burundi as a country where history remains contested and has been greatly distorted by politicians and "hidden" by curriculum planners. One pupil described the situation as one in which "everyone in this country has his own version that defends his side," leaving him to wonder: "Which one is the true one?"⁵⁹ In response to this predicament, two students stressed the urgent need to revive efforts to investigate the truth and "rewrite history" as a precondition to the revision of outdated curricula and textbooks.⁶⁰

In the absence of official guidelines, students' narratives in Burundi did not exhibit a broadly accepted interpretation of the national past to the same degree as in Rwanda. Only to a certain extent did some consensus emerge among Burundian respondents: in line with the teachings long propagated in Burundian schools, young people's accounts tended to emphasize and exalt Burundi's pre-colonial history as an idyllic era of national unity and glory under the rule of great monarchs, to demonize European colonization as a time of profound national crisis, and to celebrate Burundi's liberation struggle from foreign oppression led by the much-eulogized national independence hero Prince Rwagasore. Pupils' accounts of the postcolonial period were comparatively vague and showed apparent ignorance, discomfort, and disagreement in relation to "a bad past," whose study has been largely omitted in schools.

In recounting the country's history, most student narratives stopped in the early 1960s or simply listed Burundi's successive presidents. Only a fraction of the respondents hinted at the violent crises that broke out under their rule. These focused particularly on the events of 1972 and, even more so, the 1993 civil war and its aftermath, a crisis that many respondents had directly experienced at a young age. Unlike in Rwanda, most students in Burundi spoke of recurrent *mutual* killings *between* Hutu and Tutsi, thereby avoiding the ascription of victim and perpetrator roles along ethnic lines while primarily blaming the European colonizers and, to a lesser extent, Burundi's "own children" for having "destroyed" the country because they "wanted to govern."⁶¹ Burundian respondents only rarely spoke in terms of genocide. Echoing existing controversies within Burundian society, young people's narratives revealed a lack of consensus regarding whether there ever was a case, or even multiple cases, of genocide in Burundi, and regarding the identity of the victims of such instances of mass violence. Several narratives employed a plural form to refer indistinctly to multiple "ethnic genocides" and, more specifically, to the "two genocides" of

59 Survey response collected in Bujumbura, Burundi, May 2011.

60 Survey responses collected in Bujumbura and Kirundo, Burundi, May 2011.

61 Survey response collected in Ntega, Burundi, May 2011.

1972 and 1993. Once again, these were most commonly said to have taken place *between* Hutu and Tutsi, with only one exception describing the 1972 crisis as a “genocide against the Hutu” and the 1993 crisis as a “genocide against the Tutsi.”⁶² More rarely, the term “genocide” was presented in the singular to refer to *either* the events of 1972 *or* the events of 1993 while portraying other instances of violence as “simple” killings or massacres. Three students avoided drawing conclusions as to the nature of the violent events in a context in which, as they highlighted, the truth continued to remain obscure. In the words of one of these respondents, “in Burundi, there were wars that some called ethnic war and others genocide, but to this day we don’t know what it really was.”⁶³

While uncertainty about past events was prominent among young Burundians, opinion appeared to be very clear and, at the same time, particularly divided on the country’s present situation, ranging from accounts of progress toward democracy, peace, and development to accounts of stagnation, underscoring a sense of a lack of substantial change as manifested in enduring killings, extreme poverty, and socioeconomic injustice and inequality.

In relation to the issue of identity, findings in Burundian classrooms starkly contrasted with the situation observed in Rwanda: young Burundians seemed to more comfortably make reference to Hutu and Tutsi “ethnic groups,” pointing to a widespread recognition of the relevance and significance of these identities in the country’s past and present, although ethnicity was generally seen as being “no longer such a big problem in Burundi.”⁶⁴

Futures on the Line? Impact and Future Implications of Current Educational Approaches to Dealing with the Past

The findings presented in this chapter allow tentative conclusions to be drawn in relation to the experiences of teaching and learning history in Africa’s Great Lakes Region. First of all, the comparative analysis of Rwanda and Burundi has exposed the critical significance of local context and dynamics both in determining educational policies and practices and their wider societal impact, and in understanding shifts and differences in prevailing approaches.

In Rwanda, where violent conflict ended with an unambiguous victor in a position to unilaterally set the post-genocide agenda, history education reform has taken place within the framework of a top-down, tightly controlled social engineering project orchestrated by a strong and unchallenged regime, whose

62 Survey response collected in Gitega, Burundi, May 2011.

63 Survey response collected in Bujumbura, Burundi, May 2011.

64 Survey response collected in Gitega, Burundi, May 2011.

stated mission has been to eradicate a culture it claims led to mass violence. Within this context, history teaching in schools has primarily offered moral and civic education aimed at cultivating good and patriotic citizenship. The research conducted in Rwandan schools found evidence of this role of history teaching as well as of the current government's apparent monopoly on the production and dissemination of knowledge about the past and present, through which it seems to effectively be molding a new nation in accordance with its vision.

In neighboring Burundi, where the more protracted violent conflict came to an end through negotiations and compromise and where state power remains more fractured and fragile, the state has proven less effective in ensuring progress in educational reform, as demonstrated by the persistent lack of substantial revision to history curricula and textbooks after the war. This state of impasse can be seen as a manifestation of the prevailing norm to "forgive and forget," which has caused denial and impunity to fester. The research conducted in Burundian schools showed that the ruling CNDD-FDD has been unable to propagate and embed a state-sanctioned "truth" to the same extent as the RPF has in Rwanda. Instead, the official historical silence enforced over decades in Burundi has now made space for the possibility of open debate and contestation in society, although the possibility of collectively facing the past has been severely frustrated by political elites of all sides implicated in the violence. In the survey, this incipient freedom of expression, combined with a lack of clarification of past events and a resulting pervasiveness of the unsaid (*le non-dit*), emerged in rather diverse and critical, albeit remarkably vague, narratives recounted by young Burundians.

At first glance, the RPF's greater success in instilling a positive narrative of national rebirth and progress and in replacing long-entrenched ethnic divisions with a single and proud national identity through its educative measures gives cause for greater hope in Rwanda's younger generations than we might draw from the situation in present-day Burundi. In the longer term, however, this success may prove to be ephemeral. One could argue that Rwanda's current approach to the past might eventually have destabilizing effects for at least two reasons: First, the astonishing homogeneity of student narratives collected in present-day Rwanda appears to show young people as passive consumers of rote-learned official truths, imposed rather than embraced, and raises serious doubts about the extent to which Rwandan schools nurture independent and critical thinking. The current privileging of the top-down transmission and uncritical absorption of a definite truth – a truth that is conveniently selective, simplistic, moralizing, exclusive, and unequivocal or simply silent about controversial issues – risks forging a citizenry with renewed susceptibility to indoctrination and manipulation, thus reproducing conditions that the government itself believes contributed to the genocide. Second, the widespread evasions and omissions

found in students' historical accounts, including a general lack of expressed memories and identities falling outside the limits of the authorized, raises the question of whether young people are engaging in cautious practices of self-censorship, dissimulation, and "chosen amnesia,"⁶⁵ concealing deep-seated beliefs and feelings out of fear of transgressing the boundaries of the permissible as established by a powerful state. The survey's findings raise serious concerns that current state-sanctioned practices in this regard might ultimately make the country vulnerable to a violent eruption of denied and repressed memories in the future.

Arguably, the currently more unstable Burundi, generally seen in Rwanda as the worse-off of the "twins" due to its weaker institutions and continued adherence to ethnic categories, may eventually prove to be built on more solid foundations. This argument rests on the common assumption that the free and open circulation of diverse memories and perspectives in an inclusive public space can nurture respect and understanding and increase societal resilience against threats to peace. The fact that this reality has not necessarily translated into schools through the development of inclusive and pluralistic history curricula and textbooks might well be a matter of time, although factors such as procrastination in setting up a TRC and currently intensifying attempts by the ruling party to tighten its control over the country⁶⁶ do not augur well. In the meantime, as a result of an education system neglecting the study of Burundi's past, young Burundians are left to navigate the selective and biased views circulating in their homes and communities. Paradoxically, the student survey found that the open circulation of conflicting memories and narratives in Burundian society did not result in young people articulating one-sided views and strong accusations against the Other. Instead, although young Burundians appeared confident in their freedom to be able to speak openly, scanty, fragmented, and often evasive narratives of the recent past prevailed in the survey, pointing to young people's predominant sense of disarray, uncertainty, and conceivably ignorance about their country's history.

In conclusion, then, the findings of this study lay bare disquieting concerns around the current state and potential future impact of history education in contemporary Rwanda and Burundi. Specifically, the analysis points to a continued failure of schools in both countries to help their pupils critically confront these nations' difficult and contested histories, albeit a failure that has played out in differing ways. Acknowledging this, the crucial question is how to move forward. It is often argued that history teaching can contribute significantly to sustainable peacebuilding by promoting inclusive, democratic approaches that

65 Buckley-Zistel, "Remembering to Forget."

66 Human Rights Watch, "Closing Doors?"; International Crisis Group, "Elections in Burundi."

can raise students' awareness of the inevitable diversity of memories and narratives around past conflicts and equip them to challenge dogmatic truths and polarized narratives through the critical examination of multiple perspectives. Evidently, we cannot expect the translation of such principles into practice to be straightforward and unproblematic. Such aspirations cannot neglect the complexities dictated by the local context. In Rwanda especially, where democratic political culture has been restricted by manipulated fears of a possible renewal of violence, embracing such approaches may be unrealistic for educators, as no safe space for teaching critical history seems currently to exist. While it may well be true that powerful actors are likely to refute narratives that risk undermining their interests and visions, resistance to critical approaches can also stem from society itself. As the findings of the teacher interviews and student survey indicated, the act of addressing sensitive and controversial histories may be seen as distressing and destabilizing by many ordinary people, while those who have come to accept a specific version of events may struggle in finding their beliefs shaken in situations where internal contradictions and inconsistencies are brought to light. These views are indicative of a societal need for a "usable past," which might counter calls for a critical examination of the past. Undoubtedly, attentiveness and sensitivity to such exigencies are paramount to determining the way forward.

It is beyond question that any attempt to reckon with a violent past is a daunting prospect beset with formidable challenges. Ultimately, however, we cannot ignore the fact that any hope of reconstructing a viable society partly lies in its capacity to face its demons. Failure to do so might greatly compromise a nation's chances of arriving at a state of peace with itself.

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A Social-Psychological Perspective on Teaching a Historical Event of Collective Violence: The Case of the 1947 British India Partition

The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear.¹

Introduction²

History education has been the ground of contested, political, curricular, and pedagogical debates in many countries throughout the world, especially around the teaching of historical events of conflict or collective violence. The focus of these controversies has mostly been on the content of the history textbook. The central question is usually whether the content should be written to build a strong, coherent identity (national, political, ethnic, etc.), or to develop a cognitive and ethical understanding among the young students. In most contexts, textbook content on conflict between groups has been written to strengthen an in-group identity vis-à-vis the out-group. Events of mass violence and conflict are presented to idolize the Self and demonize the Other.

An area that has received less attention in these debates is the role of the teacher, although teachers can play a significant part in enacting the textbooks and sociocultural representations of historical events. This is critical to examine, especially when a new alternative curriculum challenging the existing discourse on the conflict with the Other is introduced. It is important to understand how teachers negotiate new content on a historical conflict event while living in the conflict context. This will help in providing insights about what the students are learning in such contexts and how this might shape their view of the Other.

This chapter applies the social-psychological perspective of conflict analysis³ to interviews with six history teachers as a lens to understand the interaction between the teacher, the textbook content, and the larger social discourse on a

1 Gramsci, *Selections*, 276.

2 I would like to thank the Fulbright Scholar Program for funding this research.

3 Kelman, "Social-Psychological Approach."

historical event of conflict and mass violence. Prior to this research, this framework has not been applied to the teaching and learning about historical events of collective trauma.

The social-psychological view on conflict was introduced by Herbert C. Kelman, a leading scholar in the social sciences and a pioneer in interactive conflict resolution. The concept posits that protracted international conflicts, like those between Israel and Palestine or India and Pakistan, are driven not only by structural issues but also by the collective needs and fears of their populations. These needs are not limited to the material necessities of food, shelter, and safety but also include psychological needs such as identity, security, and fear of annihilation. They can be triggered by several factors, such as the collective memory of events of historical trauma, decisions and policies pursued by political leaders, and the media, to name a few. To assuage these fears, beliefs that legitimize the Self and delegitimize the Other are formed. Societal norms are constructed based on these beliefs. In an effort to maintain coherence, there is usually resistance to any information contradicting or challenging these beliefs and norms.⁴

The interactive, problem-solving approach that conceptually draws on the social-psychological analysis of conflict argues that an understanding of the societal needs and fears, as well as the resulting beliefs, can provide opportunities and openings for building a sustainable peace between conflicting groups.⁵ Considering that historical conflict events and violence are tied to the collective memory of a people, a social-psychological perspective can offer a window into the needs, fears, and beliefs about such events as brought to the classroom by teachers. Beyond the *content* of the history textbook, the teaching of these events is influenced by how teachers make meaning from the collective memory of such events. This will influence students' understanding of the events themselves and of the Other in the context of these events. A social-psychological lens can thus have significant implications for teacher training and for the content and pedagogy of teaching violent events.

The study focuses on a major curriculum reform in India in 2005.⁶ Among other changes, this reform offered an alternative discourse on the 1947 partition of British India, a historical event of mass collective violence between Hindus and Sikhs on one side and Muslims on the other. India and Pakistan emerged as enemy nations following this event. The teaching of this narrative of conflict is the focus of inquiry in this chapter. The underlying question is: How and why do teachers reproduce, resist, contest, or complicate this new narrative of Partition

4 Kelman, "Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation," 19.

5 Kelman, "Interactive Problem Solving."

6 In 2005, the National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT) in India was given the responsibility of a major curriculum reform, which was implemented in 2008.

in their classrooms? Through a social-psychological meta-analysis, the study reveals a complex interplay between text, context, and teachers' beliefs and understanding of the event.

Data

Data for this study draws on interviews with six teachers on the teaching of Partition.⁷ Two teachers are from private schools and four from government-managed schools in New Delhi, India. All of these schools have adopted the new National Curriculum Framework (NCF 2005) instituted by NCERT in India. However, there are important differences among the schools in terms of resources, language of instruction, school community, religious identity, and socioeconomic status of the teachers and students.⁸

The interview excerpts presented in this study are a good example of differences in the teaching of the same material. They illustrate a case where teachers' prior beliefs and understanding of an event serve as a filter to what they teach their students. The data provides a unique opportunity to examine the underlying dynamic of how these beliefs and understandings operate in the teaching of an event of conflict and mass violence.

In light of the analysis that follows, it is important to note that the six teachers who participated in this study have all received education in schools that adopted the NCERT curriculum. The two private schoolteachers received education in English-language schools from prestigious colleges in metropolitan cities. Both of these teachers completed an undergraduate and postgraduate degree in history in addition to a bachelor's degree in education. The four government schoolteachers were educated in Hindi-language government schools, also with the NCERT textbooks. Two of them received bachelor's degrees in education through correspondence, and one of them graduated from a regional college. Only one of the teachers has a postgraduate degree in education, which she completed through correspondence. None of the government schoolteachers had history as a university subject.

7 The entire study included interviews with 20 high school teachers in India. These six interviews were selected to capture the range of differences in the themes and school contexts.

8 The private schools are fairly well funded and use English as the medium of instruction. Hindi and Urdu are the two languages commonly used in the government schools, which are marked by large class sizes and shortages of funds and resources. The majority of students in the English- and the Hindi-language schools are Hindus, while 97 percent of students in the Urdu-language schools are Muslims. The private schools are a fast-growing enterprise in India, yet a majority of the students attend government schools. 78.4 percent of all schools are government schools, with 67.2 percent of total student enrollment. See Teltumbde, "RTE: A Symbolic Gesture."

To provide a context for the study, the chapter presents a brief overview of the 1947 partition and its representation in older and current history textbooks prescribed by NCERT.⁹ A grounded theory approach¹⁰ is applied to analyze the teachers' interviews. The analysis reveals important differences in the rendition of the same text. Two main categories emerged from the interviews: teachers who accepted the new narrative on Partition and teachers who rejected it. A social-psychological argument offers a possible explanation for why some teachers may be accepting the new narrative while others are resisting it.

Analysis

1947 Partition in Textbooks – Past and Present

In South Asia, independence from British colonization in 1947 was accompanied by another watershed event in the region, namely, the partition of British India. Around fifteen million people were forced to move between the new India and the newly created Pakistan, which was further divided into the eastern and western wings. The majority of this forced migration, around ten million people, crossed the western border, which divided the state of Punjab; Muslims left for Pakistan and Hindus and Sikhs traveled to India. Brutal killing between Sikhs and Hindus on one side and Muslims on the other marked the movement across this border. Loss of life also occurred due to contagious disease and malnutrition along the way. There are no accurate figures on the casualties during the movement, but estimates vary from 200,000–500,000 people. Those who survived the migration were rendered homeless. Many of them had lost family members and friends. They were stripped away from their local and regional cultures and forced to start life from scratch in a new land.

The scope of this chapter does not allow for a review of the wealth of political narrative on Partition. While some argue that Partition was a communal event based on religious differences between Hindus and Muslims, others have presented it as a social, political, and historical inevitability of the time. Nonetheless, collective memory of the event has continued to a great extent to shape the politics between the two countries. The two countries emerged from the 1947 Partition as enemy nations with a divided historical memory, setting in motion the collective needs and fears of their people. Bitter hatred against the Other has long been institutionalized in both countries.¹¹ Since the birth of the two nations,

9 See Sethi, "Understanding Partition"; Chandra, "Struggle for Swaraj."

10 Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*.

11 Nair, "Textbook Conflicts in South Asia."

education in both has been used as a tool for nation-building. Certain sections of the shared past were highlighted and others were glossed over or even eliminated to suit the nation-building agenda. This made the school subject of history and its teaching a means of ideological indoctrination in both India and Pakistan.¹²

Although the 1947 partition frames the history of the freedom struggle and the collective memory of the people in the two countries, little attention has been given to it in school history textbooks. However, personal stories of the event have continued to be told and retold in the families that suffered. While school textbooks remained unchanged on the content of Partition for over 40 years, the teaching of Partition in university education introduced a complexity to the Partition discourse, which included multiple perspectives on the event.¹³

In 2008, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) introduced the new revised national curriculum. This curriculum advocated treating “social sciences, environment studies, language and literature as sites for discovering the self in relation to others. . . . The curriculum aims at providing classroom opportunities to examine rival perspectives.”¹⁴ In the secondary school textbook, the history curriculum strove to shift the role of the children from passive recipients of knowledge, to empower them to offer their own interpretation of the past while critiquing the ways historical knowledge is constructed.¹⁵ A new chapter was written on the 1947 partition. The narrative in this chapter offers a much-needed complexity to the existing discourse on Partition and seeks to include the perspective of the Other. This in itself is a remarkable step, given that it is a government-initiated curriculum reform.

In the previous secondary school history textbook, originally written in 1971, 1947 Partition was part of a chapter titled, “Struggle for Swaraj Part II – 1927–1947.” The chapter described India’s struggle for independence from the British between 1927 and 1947. The textbooks published by NCERT in the 1970s were written in such a way as to discourage children from thinking for themselves.¹⁶ Historical narratives were presented in the text as truths. Partition was framed as an event that divided India and described as an event of loss: “The dream of Indian unity had been shattered and brother had been torn from brother.”¹⁷ The tone of the chapter suggested a fear of further division of India and drew on the

12 See Kumar, *Prejudice and Pride*.

13 For a detailed exposition on the changes in history education in India, see Thapar, “History Debate”; Bhattacharya, “Teaching History in Schools”; Banerjee and Stöber, “Textbook Revision and Beyond.”

14 Kumar, “Education and the Nation.”

15 See Bhattacharya, “Teaching History in Schools”; NCERT, “National Curriculum Framework 2005.”

16 Kumar, *Prejudice and Pride*.

17 Chandra, “Struggle for Swaraj,” 271.

need to affirm the victimization of its people by the Other, in this case the British and the Muslim League. It emphasized nation-building and nationalism of the kind that clearly defined “us” and “them.” The Congress party, the dominant Hindu political party, was praised for its patriotic spirit, while the British and Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League, were blamed for communalism and the division of India. Implied in these statements was the identification of Pakistan as the enemy, the emergence of which had narrowed the boundaries of India, and which continues to be perceived as a threat to the unity of motherland. This content was taught for over 30 years in many schools in India, and was also a popular social discourse as reflected in ubiquitous Bollywood films.

In the present high school history textbook, there is an entire chapter on the 1947 partition, titled, “Understanding Partition – Politics, Memories and Experiences.” The chapter provides a very different narrative of Partition than what was presented in the earlier textbook. This text draws on sources from several original historical documents as well as oral narratives and popular media, including literature and film. It relates personal experiences of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. In these narratives, there are victims, perpetrators and saviors on both sides. The lesson looks at the complexity of the causes that led to Partition. Partition is not presented solely as an event of religious strife between the Hindus and Muslims, but as a complex historical event, a result of multiple social and political factors:

It would be incorrect to see Partition as the outcome of a simple unfolding of communal tensions. . . . Communal discord happened even before 1947 but it had never led to the uprooting of millions from their homes. . . . Partition was a qualitatively different phenomenon from earlier communal politics, and to understand it we need to look carefully at the events of the last decade of British rule.¹⁸

The goal of the chapter is as stated:

This chapter will examine the history of Partition: why and how it happened as well as the harrowing experiences of ordinary people during the period 1946–50 and beyond. It will also discuss how the history of these experiences can be reconstructed by talking to people and interviewing them; that is, through the use of oral history.¹⁹

Developing an understanding of the multiple perspectives on Partition and the complexity of historical documentation and presentation is the chapter’s pedagogical focus.

¹⁸ Sethi, “Understanding Partition,” 384.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 377.

Enacting the Text – Teachers’ Voices

Below are some excerpts from my interviews with the six teachers on their teaching of the 1947 partition.²⁰ The interviews asked: What do the teachers teach about the 1947 partition to their students? What do they want the students to know about the event? The teachers’ responses reveal the different ways in which they talk about teaching the chapter on Partition. The private school teachers accept the new textbook content, and the government schoolteachers reject it. While this tendency may be the case more generally, due to the limitation of the data, the study does not frame these differences as those between private and government schoolteachers. Rather, the interviews bring attention to the differences in the enactment of the same text by different teachers.

Rejecting the New Narrative

Aarti, a teacher in the Urdu-language government school, shared her conviction about teaching her students *correct facts* about Partition. In her words:

I explain to them the reasons of the Partition. The book gives too many reasons. And the children learn nothing. I tell them, the role of the British was key. The children know that. Since 1857 they (the British) were ruling India through “divide and rule” and created differences between Hindus and Muslims. Then there were some extremist elements also that led to Partition who used their religion, like Jinnah’s demand for a Pakistan for Muslims. If it were not for the British and Jinnah we would have remained one country. We had always lived together, Hindus and Muslims. The British wanted to keep us divided so they could rule us. I tell them (the children) all this.²¹

According to Hyder, a second teacher in the Urdu-language school:

I think the reason for Partition was the personal fight between Jinnah and Nehru. The public did not want Partition. Politicians wanted it. They used the people. This is my personal view. If people had not been disunited India’s economy would now be much better. We would not be spending so much money on the military. Children also laugh and say we would have the best cricket team. I want the students to know what happens when we are disunited. No one gains. This is why I tell the children to be careful about creating disunity.²²

Kiran, one of the teachers in the Hindi-language government school, had pride in her voice when she talked about how she teaches this “important” lesson:

20 Interviews were conducted in Hindi, Urdu, and English. The author is fluent in all three languages. The interviews were transcribed and translated into English by the author.

21 Aarti (government school teacher), interview with the author, New Delhi, April 12, 2011.

22 Hyder (government school teacher), interview with the author, New Delhi, April 12, 2011.

This is a very important event. I tell them the detailed story of how Partition happened. Of how the British played their games of “divide and rule” and therefore divided the country. Before that the Hindus and Muslims were living without any problems. They (The British) sowed the seeds of division in the people. I tell them about this. . . . The causes of Partition in the new book are not given clearly. It can confuse the children. First it was simple: so easy to remember. In the new textbook children are not able to understand why it happened. And what can we tell them when so many reasons are given? So I read to them but, for the exam, I tell them to remember the British and Muslim League. That is the most important. . . . I tell my students what is happening today between Hindus and Muslims is because of the British. We did not have enmity between us.²³

Rashmi, the second teacher from the Hindi-language school, said the following in response to my questions:

I feel that there is an excess of information about Partition in the new textbook. We can't give them all the information, as there is not enough time to cover so much before the exams. I also feel the way this chapter is written, with all the stories of “who did what to whom,” creates more differences in the minds of the students [between Hindus and Muslims]. It is History and it is definitely important to study it, but I feel that this chapter is not aiding in bridging the gap between Hindus and Muslims. So I don't talk much about those personal stories . . . and tell them more about how the British created the divide. I also talk about the present situation and how the government is making efforts to rectify the situation like giving opportunities to Muslims. . . . It is important for the children to know that things are not the same now. . . . We have to teach them to live together.²⁴

It is interesting to note that for these teachers, the complexity in the content of the chapter, which includes the narrative of the other side and the multiple causes of Partition, is considered “confusing,” “an excess” of information, and a potential for “creating differences.” A common theme that runs through these interviews is of teachers providing “the right answers” and blaming the British colonial rule, the Muslim League, and its leader Mohammed Ali Jinnah for the division of India and the creation of Pakistan. These three are identified as the Other, and Partition is talked about as an event to be mourned.

Causal connections are suggested between the event of Partition and the present-day communal problems between Hindus and Muslims. India is presented as a country where there were no communal problems prior to the British. The British, the Muslim League, and Jinnah are blamed for “sowing the seeds of communalism” in the country. The central message these four teachers want their students to learn from this chapter is the sanctity of a unified India. Any attempt to break this unity is considered sacrilege. This rendition of Partition as

23 Kiran (government school teacher), interview with the author, New Delhi, April 15, 2011.

24 Rashmi (government school teacher), interview with the author, New Delhi, April 16, 2011.

an event that was done to us by the Other, an event that could and should have been avoided if it were not for the British and the Muslim League and Jinnah, resonates with the narrative in the earlier textbook, also a popular line of rhetoric in India. This narrative gets tied to the present-day Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan, and Pakistan's claims to Kashmir and its perceived intent to divide India. This discourse continues to reinforce the image of Pakistan as an enemy to be feared.

Accepting the New Narrative

When asked about the new lesson on Partition, Sangeeta, one of the teachers at the private school, spoke with excitement about the content of the revised chapter:

Here again one can think of, "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." So I bring this into the chapter that any historical movement is not a unilinear thing. There are so many different matters. I did this in the past too, giving many different perspectives. . . . I think they should know the different reasons, but because the curriculum did not do it and the children would listen to different stories about Partition in their homes, about how Jinnah was to blame or how the British caused the division of the country, the children somehow lost what I was teaching them. I think the new textbooks galvanize the teaching of history. That I find so wonderful.²⁵

Aparna, the second private school teacher, describes teaching the causes of Partition this way:

For me, as a history teacher, I think it [Partition] was inevitable because historical processes are larger than the players. So neither Gandhi nor Jinnah had total control over the process; nor Nehru: none of the people can be held solely responsible for Partition. . . . Of course Mountbatten's spring of the surprise that not June '47 but August '47 [when British India would be partitioned] contributed to the chaos. I think there are multiple historical events and people that shape the progress of history . . . not a single person. Ultimately, I think by early '46, Partition was inevitable. You could not turn back the clock. This is what I tell them; I tell them about the different factors, but then I also say, "Let's see what the textbooks are saying." So in the earlier textbooks they would put the blame on the British, Jinnah and the Muslim League. I would then talk to my students about that. But the new books give the different reasons, so they get the same information as I am teaching them.²⁶

It is evident from the above that both of these teachers embrace the new narrative on Partition. They are appreciative of the multiple perspectives on the event presented in the text. Partition is depicted as being the result of several historical

25 Sangeeta (private school teacher), interview with the author, New Delhi, April 20, 2011.

26 Aparna (private school teacher), interview with the author, New Delhi, April 22, 2011.

processes and actors. The cause of Partition is not attributed to any one political party or person. It is also clear from the interview excerpts that both teachers were teaching this alternative narrative on Partition even using the previous textbook. The new chapter on Partition, as they state, makes it easier for them, as it reiterates the content on Partition that they prefer to teach.

Discussion

The intent of the new history curriculum is to disrupt the authority of the historian and the textbook and empower the student to formulate new ideas about the topic.²⁷ The textbook content on Partition speaks to these objectives by providing multiple perspectives and opportunities for critical engagement with the topic. However, the interviews suggest that rather than allowing the students to think critically about the event, teachers are transmitting information as predefined truths. While the teachers who accept the new narrative reproduce the “truth” of Partition as described in the new textbook, teachers who resist the new content replicate the old textbook narrative and existing sociocultural discourse on the topic. In either context, contrary to the pedagogical goal of the NCF 2005, there is little room for students to “discover their self in relation to others” or to engage with “rival perspectives” to form their own understanding on the topic.

While the limited data of this study does not allow for a generalizable finding, the research does bring to light similarities and differences between the two groups of teachers. The interviews demonstrate that both groups of teachers have a capacity to challenge and reject the national textbook content. While the government schoolteachers rejected the new textbook content, the private schoolteachers challenged the previous textbook narrative. The four government schoolteachers expressed a discomfort with the multivocality and the complexity in the new content and continue to teach the old narrative to their students. The two private school teachers, on the other hand, totally rejected the older narrative, upheld the new textbook content, and reiterated the same to their students. This also speaks to the differences in their goals of teaching about the event. While national integration is the central theme that government schoolteachers focus on, the private schoolteachers emphasize giving information about the multiple causes and perspectives on Partition.

Drawing on social-psychological conflict research, this study suggests that the difference in the teaching content and narratives does not necessarily imply that the private school teachers are capable of teaching historical conflict events from a more developed historical understanding, or that the government school-

27 Bhattacharya, “Teaching History in Schools.”

teachers lack this ability. Rather, it takes the position that both groups are embracing or rejecting the narratives by drawing on their own understanding of the collective memory of the historical trauma, and their self-preserving beliefs about Self and Other.

According to the social-psychological analysis of conflicts, in the context of international conflicts such as the one between India and Pakistan, collective identities are formed with strong beliefs about the Self and about the Other. Historical events of collective violence between the groups and the collective memory of these events further shape these beliefs about “us” and “them.” With these beliefs comes a degree of nonreflective certainty about “them,” which creates a sense of inner coherence and also provides a set of expectations about the world.²⁸

As Hicks states, in normal situations (when we are not in conflict), we are open to learning and integrating information from the outside and adjusting to it. We are able to tolerate some uncertainty about our beliefs, accepting that these beliefs may change after reflecting upon our experiences within our environment and accepting that they may have even been “wrong” from the beginning.²⁹

However, social-psychological research shows that in conflict contexts, psychological mechanisms come into play when new information contradicting existing beliefs is introduced. We know when we have reached the limits of our tolerance when we experience any new information as an “overload.” We begin to psychologically “disintegrate.” At these times, an automatic, self-preserving, homeostatic process is activated that shuts down the learning channels. This serves as a filter against any dramatic change. As a consequence, the capacity to take in any new information about others and the world becomes “frozen,” as do our existing beliefs about the Self, Others, and the world. As a result of this “shutdown,” beliefs calcify and we become resistant to change. Rigid certainty about our assessment of what is “right” arises, and feelings of ambivalence about what we “know” are lost. Our capacity to accommodate and assimilate new information is lost. In service of self-protection, it becomes risky and threatening to let go of those beliefs that have so long created a sense of stability. In the interest of maintaining consistency, information that does not fit our beliefs and attitudes is screened out.³⁰ The mind acts like a body in crisis, producing “antibodies” in a situation of perceived threat to long-held beliefs.

This lens of social-psychological conflict analysis provides a unique understanding of the dynamic interplay between the teachers and the textbook content. The six teachers interviewed for this study were all educated in schools that

28 Kelman, “Social-Psychological Approach.”

29 Hicks, “Functional Aspects of Identity,” 15.

30 Ibid.

adopted the NCERT curriculum. They are familiar with the old textbook narrative on Partition, which was taught for over 30 years. The teachers in private schools have subsequently earned an undergraduate and postgraduate degree in history and a Bachelor of Education degree from well-known universities in metropolitan cities in India. As previously mentioned, while history education in schools remained unchanged, in India's university education system, critical and postcolonial theories were being considered in the analysis of everyday lives and historical events. Alternative perspectives on Partition were being introduced in college history education. Hence, even though the private schoolteachers studied the content from the earlier textbook in their schools, through their history education in college they have been exposed to and have deliberated on the alternative discourse on Partition and perceptions about the Other. This discourse is similar to the multiple perspectives on Partition in the new textbook and does not threaten their notions of Self and Other. As such, the private school teachers do not hesitate to bring these different perspectives to their classrooms. As they state in their interviews, they were teaching the alternative narrative on Partition to their students even before the new textbook was introduced. The new textbook gives them a tool to further reinforce what they were already teaching.

The government school teachers have received either a diploma in education or a Bachelor of Education degree. One of them has a postgraduate degree in education. None of these teachers has studied history as a subject in college. Their knowledge about the causes of Partition is what they have learned from the older NCERT school textbooks and the existing social discourse on the event. The chapter on Partition in the new textbook is their first encounter with the alternative narrative. In this narrative, there is no Other identified as the cause of Partition. There are personal accounts that describe the plight of people from both sides. The Self is as much a perpetrator and a victim as the Other is. Boundaries between "us" and "them" are blurred. This complexity challenges the teachers' long-standing notions of this significant event, and of Self and Other. It also contradicts the societal discourse about fear of the Other as a cause of India's dismemberment, and the need to pass down to progeny the message of "us" as victims and the Other as the perpetrator.

The new information can be considered an "overload of knowledge," causing a "psychological disequilibrium" on how the teachers create meaning from this significant historical event. It can shake up their understanding of Self and Other that has been constructed through their entire learning experience. There is a need to cling to and preserve the collective memory of Partition as an event done to us by the Other. In the process of "self-preservation," a "shutdown" toward any new information takes place, and the teachers' prior understanding and beliefs about Partition are "frozen." These frozen beliefs and understandings are what they continue to transmit and perpetuate to their students.

Conclusion

As stated above, the small sample of the study does not allow for a generalized finding; further research is needed to make a broader claim. However, by integrating a social-psychological perspective on conflict analysis, the chapter offers a window onto the gaps between history curriculum reform and classroom implementation of the same. The study spotlights the role of six teachers' instilled beliefs in the teaching of a historical event of mass violence. These beliefs are influenced by the teachers' educational experience, as well as the collective memory of the traumatic event.

Merely recasting new textbook content does not guarantee its adoption by the educator. This is especially true when the material relates to an event of deep conflict and challenges the long-existing, entrenched notions of the event with respect to Self and Other. Regardless of the textbook content or the teacher's capability, without exposure to or opportunities to engage with alternative narratives about historical events of collective violence, teachers are likely to teach such events by drawing from the larger collective discourse and their own beliefs and prejudices.

Methodologically, this chapter underscores the importance of the social-psychological framework in examining the teaching of events of collective violence in contexts of conflict. This framework can provide important information regarding collective needs and fears, which influence the teaching of conflict events. It also highlights which beliefs among teachers can create opportunities or obstacles in the teaching of events of conflict in a way that advances or hinders students' historical and ethical understanding. This, in turn, can inform the design of teacher training as well as the content and pedagogy of historical events of conflict and collective trauma. Further research and action with a larger sample will be vital in this area. This can be a valuable tool in designing models for teaching about historical events of violence that do not perpetuate but rather contribute to reversing the dynamics of conflict in the direction of creating value for peace.

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Approaches to Teaching the Civil War and Franco Dictatorship in Contemporary Spain

Introduction

Despite enormous interest in recent years in the movement to recover the “historical memory” of the Spanish Civil War and the dictatorship of General Francisco Franco, the teaching of this contentious and bloody period of Spanish history has received relatively little attention. This chapter aims to address this gap in the literature. In it, I present a model of approaches to teaching the difficult past, adapted from Kitson and McCully’s “continuum of risk-taking,”¹ which sheds light on the experiences and perspectives of history educators in Spain concerning the teaching of the Civil War and the Franco regime.

The model emerged from the findings of my doctoral research, which examined the relationship between school history and the recovery of historical memory in Spain, exploring how participating history teachers approached the controversial recent past with their pupils, what challenges they encountered, and what factors influenced the approaches they adopted. The study also sought to discover whether and how history teachers broached the legacies of and contemporary controversies surrounding the 1936–39 Civil War and the Franco dictatorship when covering these periods of history in the classroom. Fieldwork for the study was undertaken in Madrid (Torrejón de Ardoz), Barcelona, Seville, and Oviedo during the spring of 2012. I conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews with a total of 24 history teachers from 17 separate secondary schools. Most of the teachers I interviewed taught in state schools, although a handful of those interviewed worked at charter or *concertado* schools, or had previous experience working in this type of school. While a few of the teachers I spoke to taught only compulsory secondary-level history (*Educación Secundaria Obligatoria*), the majority of teachers in the sample were teachers of *Bachillerato*-level history. In addition to interviewing teachers, I also interviewed five expert participants, four of whom were teacher educators.

1 Kitson and McCully, “You Hear about It for Real in School.”

Historical Background

The Civil War of 1936–39 was the fourth such conflict in Spain since the 1830s, but it was different from other wars in its length, intensity, and bloodiness, as well as its perceived international significance. The turbulent years leading up to the outbreak of the Civil War saw the resignation of dictator General Miguel Primo de Rivera in 1930 and the flight into exile of the monarch, King Alfonso XIII, prompting the birth of the Second Spanish Republic in April 1931. The coming of the Second Republic posed a significant threat to the most privileged members of Spanish society – in particular wealthy landowners, the army, and the Catholic Church – while at the same time raising the expectations of the least powerful.² During 1934 and 1935, frequent strikes and street violence enabled the right-wing press to identify the Republic with violence and disorder and to justify an uprising. Following the assassination of the monarchist leader José Calvo Sotelo, rebellion erupted against the democratically elected government on July 17, 1936.

The course of the Civil War was long and confused, not least because the military conspirators had not anticipated the strength of working-class resistance. Italy and Germany also played a significant role, supplying ammunition and armaments, in turning “a coup d’état going wrong into a bloody and prolonged civil war.”³ Within a short space of time the rebel side – which consisted mainly of right-wing, Catholic monarchists – controlled around a third of Spain, but the military coup initially failed in important centers such as Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Málaga, and Bilbao. Indeed, the siege of Madrid by insurgent troops went on, with sporadic bombing and shelling, for almost three years.

In areas where General Franco’s rebel forces were successful, they unleashed blanket repression on those loyal to the overthrown Republic (“Republicans”) – a diverse and at times bitterly divided group that included socialists, Communists, anarchists, and members of the trade unions. Republicans were shot in thousands, often “under the watchful gaze of the Church and the forces of law and order.”⁴ The atrocities were not limited to the rebel zone, however. In the first two months of the war, priests and suspected fascist sympathizers fell victim to Republican repression, with churches and convents sacked and burned and almost 7,000 priests and members of religious orders murdered by Republican loyalists.⁵ In total, approximately 50,000 civilians were killed in the Republican zone during the war,⁶ while at least 200,000 liberals and leftists were killed by the rebels – though Preston stresses that the violence in the two zones was qual-

2 Preston, *Concise History*, 24.

3 *Ibid.*, 86.

4 *Ibid.*, 146.

5 Preston, *El Holocausto Español*, 322.

6 *Ibid.*, 385.

itatively different. While Republican atrocities “tended to be the work of uncontrollable elements at a time when the forces of order had rebelled,” those committed by Francoists “were officially condoned by those who claimed to be fighting in the name of Christian civilisation.”⁷

Franco’s eventual victory at the end of March 1939 had cost Spain more than half a million lives,⁸ and a further 500,000 people fled into exile.⁹ Although some Republicans kept up a guerrilla resistance for another 12 years, by the mid-1940s many Republican loyalists had either been killed or imprisoned, or were in exile. The remainder was subject to brutal repression during the regime’s first ten years in power. Approximately 250,000 of the regime’s opponents were imprisoned immediately after the end of the war.¹⁰ Within the first five months, British consular services estimated that 10,000 people were shot, though Preston notes that the killings continued well into the 1940s.¹¹ In contrast, for “relevant services to Spain,” those loyal to Franco could expect to enjoy the spoils of victory, which covered “almost every position of power and every opportunity of gain.”¹²

From the war’s end in 1939 until Franco’s peaceful death in bed in 1975, Spain was run “as if it were a country occupied by a victorious foreign army.”¹³ Franco’s victory resulted in the suppression of separatism in Catalonia and the Basque Country as well as the destruction of organized labor, and anti-Communism became the central purpose of Francoism. The most important legacy of the Civil War, however, was the subsequent division of Spanish society into winners and losers: victors (*vencedores*) and vanquished (*vencidos*). Franco’s efforts to remove or destroy the symbolic legacies of Republicanism¹⁴ and his insistence on keeping alive the memory of the war served both to legitimize his rule and to perpetuate the divide between his supporters and Republicans. Monuments, crosses, and plaques were erected to recall the war and the memory of those who had died for the “nationalist” cause, with inscriptions reading “Fallen for God and for Spain” (*Caídos por Dios y por España*), thus linking God to the rebels’ cause and the Franco regime. In stark contrast to the very public and official nature of Francoist memory, many families who had supported the Republic sought to hide their past, often lying to their children in an effort to protect them from discrimination.¹⁵

7 Preston, *Concise History*, 168.

8 Preston, *El Holocausto Español*, 17.

9 Richards, “From War Culture to Civil Society.”

10 Seidman, *Republic of Egos*, 233.

11 Preston, *Concise History*, 218.

12 Beevor, *Spanish Civil War*, 388.

13 Preston, *Concise History*, 217.

14 Culleton, “La memoria descolocada”; Egido León, “La historia y la gestión de la memoria.”

15 Aguilar, *Memory and Amnesia*, 32.

The 1960s and 1970s saw the demise, through death and retirement, of many loyal Francoists and the rise of a new generation of the regime, which was to advocate its opening. This period also ushered in a new generation of young people who had no direct experience of the Civil War and who would play an important role in the late 1970s and early 1980s in Spain's eventual transition to democracy.

Contemporary Context

In Franco-era Spain, as in other contexts such as apartheid South Africa, education was used as an instrument of division and oppression, with school history playing a key role in this.¹⁶ History as an uncontested body of knowledge was a major tool for legitimizing the state; indeed, under Franco, the goal of education was “not the liberation of the individual, but the subordination of the individual or partisan interest to the larger ends of the patria.”¹⁷ In contemporary Spain, by contrast, there are growing calls for history education to contribute to deepening Spain's young democracy. In 2007, the Spanish parliament passed the “Law of Historical Memory,”¹⁸ an initiative of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) government of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero. The Law recognized the victims on both sides of the Civil War, condemned the Franco regime, and attempted to address some of the legacies of the Civil War and Franco era. In particular, it provided for autonomous community governments to take measures to remove symbols commemorating the military coup of July 1936, the Civil War, and the repression under the Franco dictatorship.

As Spain continues to reckon with its turbulent recent past, Spanish historian Julián Casanova argues that “it is not enough just to set up courts and judge history; it is also necessary to try to understand and explain what happened.”¹⁹ This includes through history education. With the living memory of the Spanish Civil War rapidly disappearing, the few surviving members of the generation that experienced the conflict entreat the younger generations not to forget: as one 91-year-old Civil War survivor told a reporter for the national newspaper *El País*,

16 Molinero, “Lugares de memoria.”

17 Boyd, *Historia Patria*, 237.

18 Though widely referred to in the Spanish media as the “Law of Historical Memory,” the actual title of the 2007 law is the “Law to Recognize and Extend the Rights of and to Establish Measures in Favor of Those Who Suffered Persecution or Violence during the Civil War and Dictatorship” (*Ley 52/2007, de 26 de diciembre, por la que se reconocen y amplían derechos y se establecen medidas en favor de quienes padecieron persecución o violencia durante la guerra y la dictadura*).

19 Casanova, “Death Throes of Franco,” 8.

“Young people should know what happened.”²⁰ For Valls, however, the contribution of history teaching to the reconciliation and democratization of Spanish society in the aftermath of the Civil War and the Franco dictatorship “has been important but insufficient.”²¹

Although there is evidence that history teachers in Spain believe the study of history should help young people to better understand the society in which they live, research with young adults suggests that, in fact, teachers tend not to make connections between the study of Spain’s problematic recent past and aspects of contemporary Spanish society.²² With respect to ongoing debates about historical memory in Spain, Valls notes that in spite of their enormous importance, issues relating to the process of legal reconciliation among Spaniards after the Franco dictatorship are not covered sufficiently in textbooks, and that the issue of societal reconciliation is “almost totally absent” in both textbooks and classroom discussion.²³ A study undertaken in a secondary school in Salamanca suggests that young people recognize that the education system does little to help them understand the history of the Civil War, Franco dictatorship, and transition to democracy because these “troubling issues are always located at the end of the syllabus, and the lack of time, interest, or commitment [on the part of teachers] means that they are never dealt with in the classroom.”²⁴

By considering the perspectives of history teachers themselves, this chapter seeks to explore approaches to the teaching of the Civil War and Franco dictatorship in contemporary Spain, and in particular to investigate why it is that many educators “feel uncomfortable and uncertain faced with the possibility of working with contentious issues in the classroom.”²⁵

Continuum of Risk-Taking

The findings of this study build on research undertaken in Northern Ireland by Kitson and McCully looking at the teaching of contentious topics in Irish/Northern Irish history. The authors found differences in teachers’ approaches to linking the past explicitly with the present, and characterized teachers’ positions on a continuum as shown in Figure 1, below.

20 Limón, “Éramos esclavos.”

21 Valls, “Spanish Civil War,” 170.

22 Valls, “La Guerra Civil española,” 66.

23 *Ibid.*, 67–68.

24 Molpeceres, “Conflictos: la memoria de los alumnos,” 4.

25 López Facal and Santidrián Arias, “Los ‘conflictos sociales candentes,’” 11.

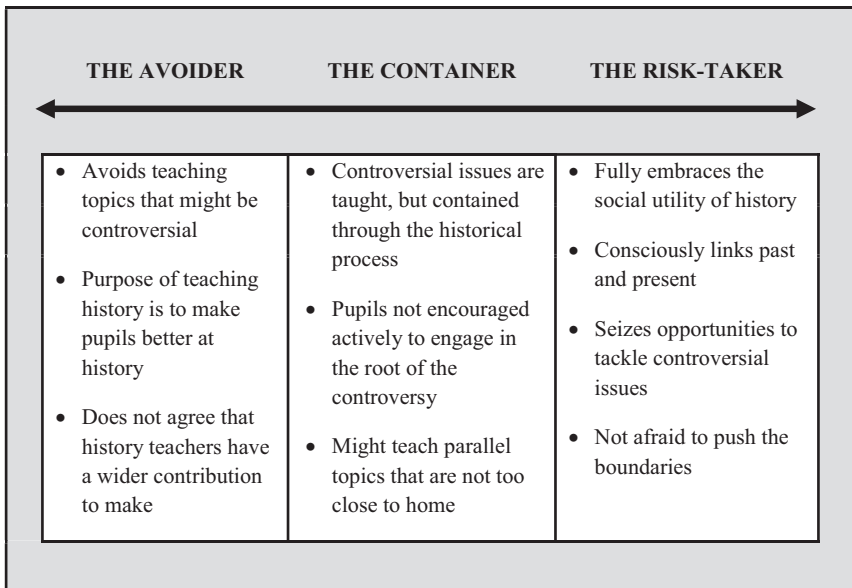


Figure 1: A Continuum of Risk-Taking²⁶

At one end of the spectrum are teachers who avoid controversy in the classroom. According to the authors, these teachers understand the purpose of history as being about enabling children “to ‘do history’ and to learn about the past,” and they do not agree that history teachers have a wider contribution to make. Somewhere in the middle are teachers who cover potentially controversial issues but contain the “possible emotional fallout” through the historical process. At the other end of the continuum are those teachers who “fully embrace the social utility of history and consciously encourage students to empathize with different perspectives.” This latter group, the “risk-takers,” “deal with contemporary and popular interpretations of the past as problematic but valuable.”²⁷

Building on this continuum, I developed the following model of history teaching approaches for the Spanish context.

²⁶ Kitson and McCully, “You Hear about It for Real in School.”

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 35.

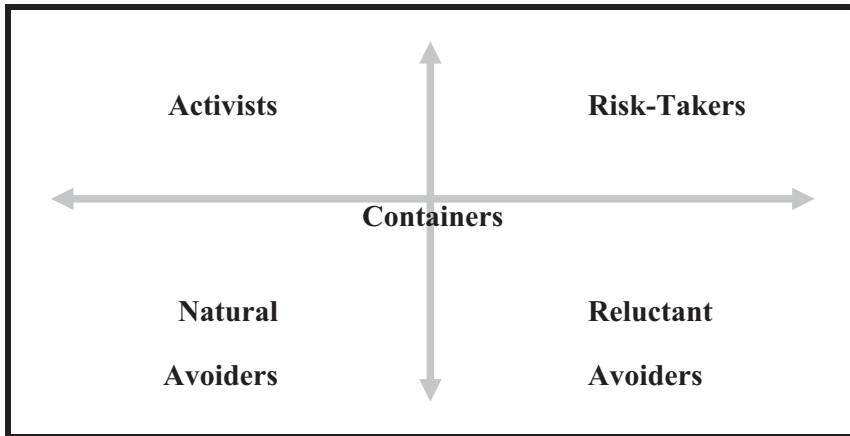


Figure 2: Model of Approaches to Teaching the History of the Spanish Civil War and Franco Dictatorship²⁸

X-axis: Perception of the social utility of history teaching

Y-axis: Continuum of risk-taking

The x-axis of the model indicates a teacher's perception of the social utility of history teaching (which would include, for example, encouraging critical and analytical thinking), with openness to the social utility of history increasing from left to right. The y-axis indicates the continuum of risk-taking, with "risk-takers" at the upper end of the axis and "avoiders" at the lower end. In accordance with the findings of this study, I adapted Kitson and McCully's continuum of risk-taking to include both "natural" and "reluctant" avoiders – a distinction that I will explain in more detail later in the chapter.

Both types of avoider tended to steer clear of topics that might be considered controversial. As such, I placed them at the lower end of the continuum of risk-taking (y-axis). The "reluctant avoiders" embraced the social utility of history education, so they are on the right end of the x-axis. As the "natural avoiders" rejected the social utility of history education, they are on the left. The "containers" did not actively seek out opportunities to confront controversial issues in their teaching, but they did not purposefully avoid such issues either. They were more likely than the avoiders to embrace the social utility of history education, yet not as open to this as the risk-takers. As such, I placed them in the center of the model, though some containers may be more to the right on the x-axis than this. The risk-takers tended to seize opportunities to tackle contentious issues in the classroom and so are at the upper end of the y-axis, the continuum of risk-taking. Since they fully embraced the social utility of history teaching, actively

28 Adapted from Kitson and McCully, "You Hear about It for Real in School."

fostering the development of critical thinking skills in their pupils, I placed the risk-takers to the right of the x-axis.

In addition to including what Kitson and McCully refer to as “avoiders,” “containers,” and “risk-takers,” I also included in the model what I call an “activist” approach. Like the risk-takers, activists consciously linked the past and the present and actively seized opportunities to tackle controversial issues. As such, I placed them at the upper end of the y-axis (the continuum of risk-taking). However, unlike the risk-takers, the activists adopted a teaching approach demonstrating that they were more concerned with getting across their own strongly held views on contentious issues relating to the past than with encouraging critical thinking skills in their pupils or helping them to make sense of the world around them. As such, the activists are to the left of the x-axis on the model.

In the following section I consider the containers before looking at the approaches adopted by the risk-takers, activists, and finally the avoiders.

Containers

In the center of my model are participants whose approach to teaching this period of history fits with what Kitson and McCully refer to as the position of “containment.”²⁹ As noted above, participants in this category did not shy away from teaching potentially controversial issues associated with the Civil War and Franco regime, but they did not actively seek out opportunities to tackle such issues either. For instance, although Jordi,³⁰ a teacher I interviewed at a *concertado* school in Barcelona, encouraged his pupils to tell each other about their grandparents’ experiences during the Civil War, he did this only when the pupils themselves brought up the issue – he did not raise the topic himself, explore it in any depth, or make connections to the ongoing legacies of the period.³¹ As with Kitson and McCully’s findings, then, containers did not generally encourage pupils to “engage with the root of the controversy,” and they tended to contain the “possible emotional fallout” through the historical process.³²

One way of “containing” was to stress the scientific nature of history. Thus, rather than getting embroiled in potentially divisive discussions about ideology, Jordi sought to “explain history from a scientific perspective, giving the whys of

29 Ibid., 35.

30 In order to protect the anonymity of the teachers who participated in my study, all names have been replaced with pseudonyms.

31 Jordi (history teacher, *concertado*, Barcelona), interview with the author, March 23, 2012.

32 Kitson and McCully, “You Hear about It for Real in School,” 35.

things, the consequences.”³³ In the face of current controversies around the issue of historical memory, Enrique, a teacher at a state school in Seville, adopted a similar approach, seeking to demonstrate “that history is documentation” and encouraging his pupils to interact with both primary and secondary sources in order to draw their own conclusions. He underlined that to be good historians, young people had to learn to be rigorous with, and critical of, the various historical sources and documents they encountered.³⁴ It was clear that with regard to the history of the Civil War and postwar era, Enrique’s motivation for using different sources was less to link these periods of history with the present than to bring history to life for his pupils and to try and spark an interest in history in general and in historical research in particular. He was also keen to give his pupils access to the most up-to-date historical research. For instance, when covering the history of the Civil War, he showed pupils a recent report submitted to the high-profile judge Baltasar Garzón about victims of the Franco regime – but he did so not to engage his pupils in the root of the controversy surrounding Garzón or the issue of historical memory,³⁵ nor indeed to justify or put forward his own views on the issue, but rather because, in his words, it was simply “the latest research, the latest results that historiography is producing.”

Another approach that fit the position of containment was to actively disrupt pupils’ preconceptions relating to the Civil War and Franco era, but to do so without exploring where such preconceptions came from or making explicit connections between the past and the present. In this regard Ricard, a teacher I interviewed in Barcelona, appeared to delight in deliberately challenging pupils’ ideas about particular aspects of history – for instance, challenging the assumption that during the Civil War era, speakers of Catalan opposed Franco. In his view, teachers could not just present their pupils with an idea; they had “to make them see, [make them] understand [for themselves].” He sought to awaken an awareness in his pupils of the ways in which the past is used (and misused) in the present.³⁶ However, although Ricard was very comfortable using his history

33 Jordi (history teacher, *concertado*, Barcelona), interview with the author, March 23, 2012.

34 Enrique (history teacher, state school, Seville), interview with the author, April 17, 2012.

35 In January 2012, Judge Baltasar Garzón went on trial in Madrid, and the following month he was convicted of overstepping his jurisdiction in a domestic corruption investigation and barred from practicing law for 11 years. Of particular relevance to this study: Shortly afterward the Spanish Supreme Court ruled that Garzón had been wrong to open an investigation into the deaths of victims of Francoist violence. The case was extremely controversial and widely covered by the Spanish media. Garzón continues to advocate for investigations to be opened into the deaths and disappearances of victims of the Civil War and Franco dictatorship and to call for the establishment of a truth commission to deal with these issues. See Junquera, “Garzón denuncia en la ONU.”

36 Ricard (history teacher, state school, Barcelona), interview with the author, March 13, 2012.

classes to challenge myths and prevailing assumptions about the past, he seemed less willing to make clear connections between the past and the present.

It was clear that for containers, the focus was on introducing pupils to the discipline of history and the tools of the historian. Thus, although on the one hand Enrique was clearly personally interested in the Civil War, the Franco dictatorship, and Spain's transition to democracy, on the other hand, from a teaching point of view, for him this was "[just] another phase of history." From this perspective, in Enrique's words, "every phase [of history] should be treated with the same rigor." The fundamental objective of school history remained the same regardless of which period of history was being taught: namely, "to open pupils' minds," as Ricard put it, or in Enrique's words for pupils to "learn something in order to [be able] to analyze the world in which they live."

Risk-Takers

In the top right-hand corner of my model are participants whose approach to linking past and present fits with what Kitson and McCully refer to as "risk-taking."³⁷ This type of approach involved confronting uncomfortable truths and challenging myths and preconceptions relating to the Civil War and Franco regime. Risk-taking participants sought to make their pupils aware of the dangers of reducing complex historical issues to overly simplistic explanations and Manichean interpretations of history. In this regard, Natalia, a teacher educator I interviewed in Madrid, insisted that teachers had a vital role to play in helping pupils to "see the nuances" because "for kids things are white or black."³⁸ It was thus crucial for teachers to "steer clear of dogmatism, of believing that they are right and everyone else is wrong," as Manuel, a state school teacher I spoke to in Oviedo, put it,³⁹ and to be "honest enough, when contradictory evidence exists, to assimilate it and not to hide it," in the words of Miguel Ángel, a teacher I interviewed in Barcelona.⁴⁰

Risk-takers also pushed their pupils to be more analytical and more critical – to discover things for themselves and use evidence to support an argument, rather than uncritically accept what others told them. For instance, Felipe, a teacher I interviewed at a state school in Barcelona, was keenly aware that his pupils often simply repeated things they had heard about the Civil War and Franco dictatorship, for example, "that Franco was very bad," "a disaster," and

37 Kitson and McCully, "You Hear about It for Real in School," 35.

38 Natalia (teacher educator, Madrid), interview with the author, February 23, 2012.

39 Manuel (history teacher, state school, Oviedo), interview with the author, April 24, 2012.

40 Miguel Ángel (history teacher, state school, Barcelona, with previous experience teaching in a *concertado*), interview with the author, March 19, 2012.

that “the Civil War was the good guys against the bad guys” – “without doing any kind of analysis.”⁴¹ Thus, he saw it as his role to challenge his pupils to find evidence to back up their claims and, as McCully puts it, to “become comfortable with complexity.”⁴² This included exposing pupils to multiple perspectives and ensuring “that they know how to critically analyze all [of them],” as Mónica, another Barcelona-based teacher, put it:

You have to be clear that reality is complex . . . that you’ll never be able to understand things by looking at them from only one point of view. . . . I believe that history is many-sided, and so what is important is to try to see the different angles. Because there isn’t one history. There just isn’t. . . . There is not *one* memory – there are many memories. There is not *one* truth – there are many truths.⁴³

Thus, Mónica wanted her pupils to understand that, particularly in relation to the issue of historical memory, there was no universally accepted “truth” and no one master narrative of history.

Risk-taking participants were also keen to confront uncomfortable and inconvenient truths. In this regard, Felipe said he had always taught his pupils “that there were people who were buried all over Spain, injustices, trials that took place without any kind of guarantees.” He observed that, for his pupils, finding out “that there was a war, that there were killings, that there were mass graves, it seems unreal to them in a country like Spain.” Felipe argued in his interview that it was vital for history teachers to “awaken” young people to the reality of Spain’s recent past not only to improve their historical knowledge but also, crucially, to help them to understand present-day Spain, and to enable them to critically engage with the differing, sometimes conflicting, interpretations of the recent past presented by the Spanish media. Natalia similarly argued in our conversation that it was important to give pupils “the tools to understand historical memory”:

What you have to discuss first of all is this concept of recovering historical memory. Why is this needed? “Recovery”? You have to face the students with this concept. Why are there some associations, some people nowadays in this country fighting for recovery? Why is that? Who has to recover? Who has no need of recovering because they were privileged, they paid homage to them after the war, whereas the other half of Spaniards did not receive that. So that is why some of our citizens are fighting for the recovery. I think that’s the main point. Why recovery?

Risk-takers often consciously sought out opportunities to explore how and why particular aspects of the past remained so controversial in contemporary Spain and indeed to make their pupils aware, as Natalia put it, “that historical memory

41 Felipe (history teacher, state school, Barcelona), interview with the author, March 12, 2012.

42 McCully, “What Role for History Teaching,” 179.

43 Mónica (history teacher, state school, Barcelona), interview with the author, March 19, 2012.

can be manipulated very easily.” Mónica used the case of Manuel Carrasco i Formiguera to this end. As she stated in her interview, Carrasco i Formiguera was “a very important character in order to understand the Civil War here [in Catalonia].” The case is indeed emblematic: Carrasco i Formiguera was forced to leave Catalonia because of his conservative, Catholic ideas, only to be captured and executed by firing squad by the Franco regime, accused of being both a Republican and a Catalan nationalist.⁴⁴ In 1994, a documentary film investigating Carrasco i Formiguera’s summary trial aired on Catalan television. The documentary, *Sumaríssim 477* (Summary Trial 477),⁴⁵ made public the names of the people who denounced Carrasco i Formiguera, effectively sentencing him to death. This public “naming and shaming” proved so controversial that the journalist who made the documentary, Dolors Genovès, who is also a historian, was taken to court by the elderly sons of one person who denounced Carrasco i Formiguera for “offending the honor” of their father.⁴⁶ Although the Constitutional Court eventually backed Genovès, the final ruling did not come until 2004, a full ten years after the documentary first aired. For Mónica, as well as showing “the madness of the Civil War” in Catalonia, the case of Carrasco i Formiguera – in particular, the huge controversy unleashed by the 1994 documentary – was a perfect example for her pupils of “how a story from the past continues today.” Thus, rather than avoiding the controversy associated with this figure in history, Mónica actively embraced the case of Carrasco i Formiguera in order to explore why some issues associated with the past are still so sensitive today.

Activists

As noted above, I adapted Kitson and McCully’s continuum to include what I call an “activist” approach. Activist teachers had few reservations about making connections between the past and the present when teaching the period of the

44 Manuel Carrasco i Formiguera was a devout Catholic and long-time member of the *Unió Democràtica de Catalunya* (Democratic Union of Catalonia) party. Denounced because of his conservative, Catholic ideas, Carrasco “was forced to abandon his beloved Cataluña because the Generalitat [Catalan government] could not guarantee his security.” He was en route to the Basque Country with his family in March 1937 when the boat they were travelling on from Bayonne (France) to Bilbao was attacked and captured by one of Franco’s ships. Carrasco i Formiguera was imprisoned and, in August 1937, accused of rebellion and tried. According to Preston, various prominent Catalans in Franco’s circle, “men whose lives and fortunes Carrasco’s intervention in Barcelona saved, were too afraid to speak in his defence.” As Preston puts it, “in a vindictive atmosphere, full of prejudice against the Catalan people,” Carrasco was executed on April 9, 1938, accused of being a Republican and a Catalan nationalist. Preston, *El Holocausto Español*, 600–601.

45 Genovès, Montserrat, and Perraut, *Sumaríssim 447*.

46 Ríos, “El Constitucional ampara.”

Civil War and Franco dictatorship; in fact, they did so actively and enthusiastically. Rather than presenting multiple perspectives and encouraging pupils to make up their own minds based on the available evidence, however, “activist” teachers tended to put forward their own strongly held views on the issue, often in an almost dogmatic fashion and without encouraging much debate or discussion. Indeed, from the perspective of Carlos, a *concertado* teacher I interviewed in Torrejón, because the events of the Second Republic and Civil War were still “politically loaded,” he felt it necessary to issue a “disclaimer” of sorts to pupils before teaching these periods. In doing so he would argue that the Civil War should be no more emotive for his students than previous civil wars from Spain’s more distant past – but that, for complex reasons, the 1936–39 conflict remained controversial:

I issue this “disclaimer,” I stop the class. . . . “Attention, now. This topic, these next topics – the Second Republic, Civil War and Franco dictatorship – are topics which, for reasons we are about to discover, are very linked to political ideas . . . they have different interpretations, many of which aren’t correct. Others are based on falsehoods. But the important thing is that what I say is *my* opinion. It doesn’t have to coincide with other interpretations, or with what your parents might say.” . . . I tell them that this is *my interpretation*. An interpretation that isn’t superficial. . . . I mean, I’m not someone who forms an opinion on this because I’ve seen a film. No, no. I am an expert. In my own personal library I have more than 153 volumes about the Spanish Civil War. . . . So let’s say that my opinion is based on facts and I can corroborate it. . . . It is an opinion that is more educated than others out there. . . . But it isn’t an objective opinion, so in fact I ask them to please talk about it at home.⁴⁷

Although Carlos appeared to encourage debate, in reality he knew that the school community was largely politically conservative; consequently, he was aware that the likelihood his pupils would encounter different historical interpretations at home that might challenge his own almost pro-Franco take was very slim.

The fact that these issues were “on the political agenda” prompted Patricia, a state school teacher in Torrejón, to issue a kind of “disclaimer” of her own – but from a very different (left-wing) political perspective:

The curriculum hasn’t changed [since the passing of the 2007 Law of Historical Memory]. What has changed is that I . . . personally, when I talk about the Civil War in my classes, apart from telling them about the process, the clashes, the causes, the consequences, this systematizing that you have to do with every period of history . . . I tend to finish with a sentence that says something like this: “And this conflict hasn’t ended.” 70 years later, it hasn’t ended!⁴⁸

47 Carlos (history teacher, *concertado*, Torrejón), interview with the author, April 19, 2012.

48 Patricia (history teacher, state school, Torrejón), interview with the author, February 29, 2012.

Patricia claimed to be aware of the danger of teachers manipulating their pupils' consciences and said that she herself was very careful in this regard; yet her behavior in class appeared to contradict this. She expressed a desire for her pupils to learn to work with primary sources "so that they can make their own conclusions." However, when she taught about the Civil War, it was clear from the type of sources Patricia gave her pupils (information about the "disappeared" taken from the websites of historical memory associations) and more importantly from the way in which she presented the topic that she was less interested in her pupils weighing the evidence and drawing their own conclusions than in putting forward her own views, as the following quotation illustrates:

We continue to have to organize ourselves, to fight to know the truth of a period [about which] . . . half the truth is known, half the truth is sufficiently recognized, honored, paid for and acknowledged, and the other half of the truth . . . the 170,000 anonymous graves that are on the roadsides of this country, the thousands of abducted children who were snatched from their mothers in Spanish jails, the thousands of people who were "disappeared". . . . Where are they? Who is responsible for that? Because [of] the repression in this country . . . More people died in this country after the [Civil] War than during the war! And my pupils need to know that. And they need to know that there are people who are determined to know the truth . . . and that it is necessary to insist on knowing the truth in order to be able to make further progress. . . . That there's no use hiding problems. . . . So let's solve them once and for all! If no one is going to jail, if no one has to pay anything, if all the victims want is that they be recognized as such, is it really so difficult? So that's where we are. That is what I tell my pupils.

Thus, these teachers adopted an almost activist stance on the issue, rejecting impartiality and openly stating their own opinions and political perspectives in class. They were often deliberately provocative in the process, as this excerpt from my interview with Miquel, a Barcelona-based state school teacher, shows:

I can't deny that I am someone who is left-wing, and I can't deny that I would be totally against many policies of the right. I can't deny it, and so I say it. I try not to proselytize, not to propagandize. . . . But probably a right-wing history teacher wouldn't like some of the things they might hear [in my class]. I say clearly that Franco is a murderer. I say it in public . . . he is a *murderer*!⁴⁹

Both Miquel and Patricia were unafraid to push the boundaries, sometimes provoking angry or emotional reactions from pupils and colleagues. For instance, one of Patricia's pupils was moved to tears when she learned what *sacas* (literally "being taken out") were: when people were taken from Francoist prisons and shot dead, often against the wall of a cemetery or in a roadside ditch.⁵⁰ This

49 Miquel (history teacher, state school, Barcelona), interview with the author, March 13, 2012.

50 It is important to note that *sacas* were not the sole preserve of the Francoists; the Republican militias also took supporters of Franco out in this way and shot them.

pupil's grandfather had spoken to her about *sacas* where he had been imprisoned for three years by the Franco regime, but the girl had misunderstood, thinking that *saca* merely meant people being taken out of the prison for a walk. When Patricia explained the term to her pupil, the girl was overwhelmed with emotion at what her grandfather had experienced and wept in class. According to Patricia, "That day the history hit her." Patricia said she understood that it was sometimes difficult for pupils to accept the truth, but she observed that "unfortunately that is our history."

In Miquel's case, a lecture he gave during a fieldtrip to Montjuïc Castle had provoked an altercation with a colleague. Montjuïc Castle, situated on a hill overlooking Barcelona's city center, is where in October 1940 Lluís Companys, President of Catalonia, was executed by firing squad on Franco's orders. When Miquel and his pupils reached the castle's moat, where Companys was shot, Miquel got his pupils to sit down on the ground so he could give them what he called a "political lecture." Afterward, one of Miquel's teaching colleagues criticized him for mixing "having a good time with politics" and announced that he would never again accompany Miquel on a school fieldtrip. Miquel was unfazed by his colleague's objections, putting them down to the fact that he was the son of a member of the *Falange*⁵¹ and, as such, was "marked by his past." From Miquel's perspective, it would have been "unacceptable" to take his pupils to Montjuïc and not tell them that a president of Catalonia had been killed there.

Although polar opposites in terms of their political views, Miquel and Carlos made strikingly similar observations in their interviews regarding what might have happened to them had they expressed their opinions openly during the Civil War and Franco era. Far from hiding their views from their pupils or trying to remain impartial, both teachers made a point of telling their pupils that they would have been killed. As Carlos put it:

I tell them that . . . I am conservative and in the Civil War . . . if the Civil War were to take place nowadays, for the same reasons, one side would kill me. Well, possibly both sides, seeing as I used to be a leftist [*laughs*]⁵² . . . Possibly both sides. But as a practicing Catholic, and proud . . . If I have to go back in time, I can't be objective. . . . This [the Republican] side would have shot me.

And Miquel:

51 The *Falange* (Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalistas) was Franco's fascist political movement in Spain.

52 Carlos made a point of telling me that he had been a left-wing activist in his youth. Over time, however, he had become increasingly conservative, due in no small part to what he saw as the manipulation of history by the Spanish political Left – in particular, the history of the Second Republic and the Civil War.

I tell them [my pupils] that if I had said this [that General Franco was a murderer and Manuel Fraga a collaborator] in the final years of the Franco dictatorship, someone would certainly have detained me for saying it. Certainly! And I tell them that for thinking what I think, they would certainly have shot me . . . in 1939. So I say it clearly. And I tell them that they are fortunate to live in a society where they can say what they like, because in reality I say what I want, without wishing to offend.

There is little doubt that in telling their pupils they would have been shot by one side or the other, both teachers meant to shock and, consciously or subconsciously, they may also have sought to influence their pupils' political attitudes.

Interestingly, although Miquel, Patricia, and Carlos all professed in conversation to want to encourage their pupils to think critically, somewhat paradoxically all three appeared to be fixated on the notion of transmitting the "truth." Patricia had attended school during the Franco dictatorship and maintained that the history taught to her generation "was lies" and the content of the textbooks when she was at school were "total and absolute falsifications." As a consequence, she wanted her pupils to learn the "truth": "because the historical truth is the historical truth, no matter whom it might hurt." Likewise, although Carlos railed against what he perceived to be the imposition of "one historical truth" by the Spanish political Left via the Law of Historical Memory, he himself appeared determined to transmit his own very particular, very conservative interpretation of events, conceding that he believed "in truth, not objectivity."

It is clear, then, that the political views of these participants – in particular, their views concerning the legacies of the Second Republic, Civil War, and Franco dictatorship – exerted a strong influence on the approach they each adopted to teaching these periods of history. Miquel and Patricia showed themselves to be as staunchly supportive of the movement for the recovery of historical memory as Carlos was vehemently opposed to it. This led to differing motivations for linking the past with the present in class. Miquel and Patricia appeared to seize opportunities to connect the past and present in order to underline the ongoing nature of the struggle for truth and recognition on the part of relatives of victims of the Civil War and dictatorship (in Patricia's words: "this conflict hasn't ended"). By contrast, Carlos sought to link the past and present in order to warn his pupils about the "very serious errors of historical memory," which, in his view, was not about seeking the historical truth but rather "imposing a paradigm of good guys and bad guys [*buenos y malos*] in politics."

Avoidance

Because of the way in which the past permeates popular and political culture in Spain, it was often impossible for teachers to completely steer clear of controversial issues in the classroom. However, where possible, one group of participants showed a clear preference for shying away from such issues. Certainly, the extensive nature of the history syllabus and the pressure to “teach to the test” seemed to discourage some teachers from linking past and present and engaging with controversial issues. In the view of Fernando, a state school teacher I interviewed in Seville, “in order not to run into problems and to meet the objectives of the external exam, the *Selectividad*, which is like a millstone [around our necks],” the majority of teachers “taught a detached view of history.”⁵³ Beyond the curriculum and exams, however, three main factors appeared to make teachers wary of broaching contentious issues relating to the Civil War and the legacies of the past in class: concern about influencing or politicizing pupils; wariness of offending pupils and/or the wider school community, including parents and colleagues; and discomfort with or opposition to the historical memory “agenda.”

It is important to note that teachers’ discomfort regarding teaching controversial issues or periods of history is, of course, not unique to Spain. Research suggests that it is not uncommon for educators to be reluctant to address more sensitive aspects of the past, particularly in post-violence societies, for instance in Cambodia,⁵⁴ Northern Ireland,⁵⁵ Rwanda,⁵⁶ South Africa,⁵⁷ and elsewhere. Indeed, Davies points to avoidance or “omission” as one of ten possible approaches that together form her typology of teaching about conflict, where “conflict is played down or not mentioned in curriculum, particularly in conflict or post-conflict states, in order not to ‘inflare’ or cement attitudes.”⁵⁸ In Northern Ireland, for instance, history teachers “have tended to ‘hide’ behind a mask of professional neutrality by portraying themselves as neutral arbiters of evidence.”⁵⁹ Evidence suggests that they do so in order to avoid personal discomfort⁶⁰ and offending

53 Fernando (history teacher, state school, Seville), interview with the author, April 16, 2012.

54 UNESCO and IIEP, “Education and Fragility in Cambodia.”

55 McCully, “Practitioner Perceptions”; Kitson, “History Teaching and Reconciliation”; McCully and Montgomery, “Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions”; Murphy and Gallagher, “Reconstruction after Violence.”

56 Freedman et al., “Teaching History.”

57 Weldon, “Memory, Identity.”

58 Davies, “Teaching About Conflict,” 24.

59 McCully and Montgomery, “Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions,” 93.

60 McCully, “Practitioner Perceptions,” 6; Murphy and Gallagher, “Reconstruction after Violence,” 18.

others,⁶¹ but also because of a “fear of emotional responses from pupils that could reinforce the very views that teachers wish to challenge.”⁶² Research undertaken in Rwanda⁶³ and South Africa⁶⁴ likewise suggests that concern about the potential divisive effect on students helps explain why teachers may be reticent to openly confront contentious issues in the classroom. Fear about potential pressure or objections from parents and the local community may also play a role.⁶⁵ Although in Northern Ireland, Kitson found that the “notion of parents objecting to the content of history lessons appeared to be more of a perceived than an actual issue,”⁶⁶ research in Guatemala suggests that parents are uneasy about their children studying topics related to the war there.⁶⁷ In Spain, in the current case, several participants had first-hand experience of parents objecting to the content of both history textbooks and history lessons.

In the Northern Irish context, Kitson and McCully’s work found that history educators who tended to avoid teaching topics that might be controversial understood the purpose of history as enabling children “to ‘do history’ and to learn about the past,” and that they did not agree that history teachers had a wider contribution to make.⁶⁸ In the Spanish context, participants who avoided engaging with potentially controversial issues relating to the Civil War and Franco era because they were uncomfortable with or opposed to historical memory all rejected the social utility of history education; they shared a belief that the purpose of history was simply for pupils to learn or become better at history. Though this fits with Kitson and McCully’s findings,⁶⁹ a separate group of participants in the Spanish context steered clear of contentious or painful topics despite being enthusiastic advocates of the social utility of school history.

Building on Kitson and McCully’s research, then, the findings from this study suggest that in the Spanish context, there were two types of avoider: what I call “natural” and “reluctant” avoiders. Natural avoiders rejected what Kitson and McCully call the “social utility of history teaching”⁷⁰ and therefore saw no value in linking past and present or in actively considering the roots of the controversy. Additionally, natural avoiders were inherently opposed to reassessing the legacies of the Civil War and Franco dictatorship – what the Spanish political Right sees as the re-opening of old wounds – and as a result were less likely to raise the

61 Murphy and Gallagher, “Reconstruction after Violence,” 17.

62 Kitson, “History Teaching and Reconciliation,” 132.

63 Freedman et al., “Teaching History,” 665.

64 Weldon, “Memory, Identity.”

65 McCully, “Practitioner Perceptions,” 5; Kitson, “History Teaching and Reconciliation,” 132.

66 Kitson “History Teaching and Reconciliation,” 142.

67 Oglesby, “Historical Memory,” 186.

68 Kitson and McCully, “You Hear about It for Real in School,” 35.

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid.

issue of historical memory in class. In other words, they avoided controversial issues *by choice*.

By contrast, reluctant avoiders understood the purpose of school history as being about helping their pupils make sense of the world around them. For them, this included the development of critical thinking skills and critical historical awareness – in other words, providing pupils with “relevant knowledge” about the past, “which might help [them] to understand present-day Spain,” as per the *Bachillerato* curriculum.⁷¹ Thus, arguably such teachers would not naturally or normally have avoided contentious issues relating to Spain’s past, but they felt obliged to do so because of external factors, for instance concern about clashes with or among pupils, fear of complaints from parents, or concern about being seen as undermining or going against the school ethos.

Natural Avoiders

Examples of natural avoiders, Ramón, Emilio, and Marta were all uncomfortable with the notion of “historical memory.” It is likely that they were reluctant to broach the issue in class or to make connections between the past and the present – particularly with regard to implementing the Law of Historical Memory – because they supported the Popular Party’s position on historical memory. They did not want to open old wounds in the history classroom or indeed introduce their pupils to a perspective with which they strongly disagreed.

Ramón, a teacher I interviewed in a state school in Torrejón, contended that the passage of the 2007 Law of Historical Memory had “sparked clashes again between the two Spains” and was akin to declaring a renewal of hostilities⁷² – very much the perspective of the Spanish political Right, which sees the law as re-opening old wounds that already healed during the transition.⁷³ In order to “avoid ideological clashes,” as he put it, Ramón did his best to steer clear of issues related to the emergence of the movement for historical memory. So, for example, when explaining the history of the Civil War to his pupils, he made a point of talking about events that took place in the local area, referring explicitly to Torrejón and the nearby village of Paracuellos del Jarama where, in November and December 1936, Republican militiamen killed more than 2,000 Francoist rebels⁷⁴ in what Preston calls “the greatest single atrocity in Republican territory

71 Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, “Real Decreto 1467/2007,” 45393.

72 Ramón (history teacher, state school, Torrejón), interview with the author, February 21, 2012. Ramón used the phrase, “desenterrar el hacha de guerra” – literally “to unearth the hatchet of war.”

73 Aróstegui, “La Ley de Memoria Histórica,” 47–48.

74 Preston, *El Holocausto Español*, 485.

during the war.”⁷⁵ In doing so, however, Ramón consciously avoided commenting on why these events remain so controversial:

Many people were killed in Torrejón and in Paracuellos, which is five or ten kilometers from here. So I tell them about this, and the kids pay close attention. It’s just that . . . of course, I don’t also tell them that afterwards, when the war ended, the people who were shot in Torrejón and Paracuellos . . . they were right-wing . . . they were disinterred and buried with dignity, whereas those on the left who were buried in mass graves here and there, in roadside ditches, well their relatives weren’t offered that possibility, no? So I link it a bit with the Law of Historical Memory, but of course trying to avoid ideological clashes.

Ramón’s approach thus stood in stark contrast to the approach adopted by “activist” teacher Patricia, who consciously pointed out to her pupils what she believed differentiates Paracuellos from other Civil War atrocities:

The difference between Paracuellos and the others is that they dug up Paracuellos, they identified [the victims], every one of them was returned to their families. . . . They are honored every year as martyrs of the Fatherland, and it’s as if the rest don’t exist. That is the difference.⁷⁶

Unlike Patricia, both Ramón and Emilio, a state school teacher I spoke to in Oviedo, observed that historical memory was – or at least should be – limited to the issue of exhumations and burials. In Emilio’s words: “Unearthing the dead is ok. But more? No.” Like Ramón, it was clear that for Emilio, the decision to avoid linking the history of the Civil War and Franco era to recent developments in Spain is due in large part to his vehement opposition to and distrust of anything having to do with historical memory, which, he argued, was misguided, politicized, and “creating a problem, or problems, where there isn’t one.”⁷⁷

Marta, a teacher I interviewed in Barcelona, also appeared to avoid potentially contentious issues relating to the Civil War and Franco dictatorship because she was uncomfortable with the notion of historical memory. “Historical memory of what?” she asked. Although she herself had not experienced the Civil War, she lived through the Franco era and observed that “it wasn’t so awful.”⁷⁸ Rather than directly addressing the issue of historical memory with her pupils, Marta’s approach was an attempt to play down or somehow defend the brutality of the Franco regime. Indeed, she seemed to suggest that it was facile or childish of historical memory activists to decry Franco’s brutality when the Republicans would have been equally brutal had they won the war. Marta was extremely critical of the fact that, from her perspective, historical memory activists seemed interested in recovering only the memory of the losing side; in her view, “it was

75 Preston, “Santiago Carrillo obituary.”

76 Patricia (history teacher, state school, Torrejón), interview with the author, February 29, 2012.

77 Emilio (history teacher, state school, Oviedo), interview with the author, April 24, 2012.

78 Marta (history teacher, *concertado*, Barcelona), interview with the author, March 14, 2012.

also unjust for those people who were killed on the other side.” It would seem, then, that it was the politicization of the issue, together with a sense that Francoist victims were being overlooked, that led Marta to avoid linking past and present in class, although her belief that the Civil War “has been forgotten and there is no desire to return to it again, to remember” may also have played a role. In her view, “normal people don’t even remember the [Civil] War anymore” in Catalonia, a perspective not shared by the other participants I interviewed in Barcelona.

Reluctant Avoiders

“Reluctant” avoiders were more likely than natural avoiders to proactively raise the legacies of the past with their pupils, but often they then failed to explore the issue in any depth. For instance, when explaining the Civil War, Ignacio, a teacher I interviewed in a state school in Oviedo, observed that he felt obliged to tell his pupils “that there is repression, there are atrocities on one side, atrocities on the other, and there are some that have gone unpunished and that still haven’t been resolved.”⁷⁹ But instead of encouraging debate and discussion on the matter, Ignacio simply pointed his pupils to where they could find information if they were interested to learn more, as the following excerpt shows:

And so, objectively, where is the information about that [atrocities on both sides]? On the Internet, in the archives, there is information. I can tell them [my pupils], “there it is – whoever is interested, they can look at it, they can look for it.” . . . But I stop there. . . . I don’t believe I have to encourage or support a particular intention. I simply have to be in my place, to offer information to whoever requests it . . . but not to go into [any] depth or to push [pupils] towards particular issues.

Ignacio’s very conscious decision to “stop there” was motivated by an awareness that going further might offend some of his pupils, particularly if they were relatives of victims – or indeed of perpetrators. The fact that Ignacio had started his teaching career in a *concertado* (charter) school, as opposed to a state school, meant that he was particularly aware of the potential to, as he put it, “offend sensitivities.” Although publicly funded until the end of compulsory secondary education, *concertado* schools do not receive subsidies from the Spanish government for the post-compulsory years, which means that at the *Bachillerato*-level pupils must pay fees. From Ignacio’s perspective, this made *concertado* schools like businesses where you had “clients who pay, so they can make demands.” He also pointed out that since most *concertado* schools were originally run by religious orders and many still have a religious affiliation, there was an expectation that teachers should uphold the schools’ often Catholic and con-

79 Ignacio (history teacher, state school, Oviedo, with previous experience teaching in a *concertado*), interview with the author, April 24, 2012.

servative ethos.⁸⁰ As Carmen, a teacher with experience in the *concertado* sector, put it, in *concertado* schools “they set the tone in relation to what you had to say.”⁸¹ This pressure to conform to the ethos of *concertado* schools – or at least not to be seen as deviating from it – had an impact, in Ignacio’s view, on how history was taught there, in particular on how teachers approached the Civil War and Franco dictatorship. Whereas in state schools “you set the limits,” in *concertados* “they can tell you where the limits are.”

One teacher I interviewed in Barcelona recounted an experience that reinforced this point. Miguel Ángel taught at a *concertado* school for six years before moving to the state sector. At one point, when he was still at the *concertado* school, he was summoned to the principal’s office in relation to his teaching of the period covering the Second Republic and the years prior to the outbreak of the Civil War. The principal told Miguel Ángel that it was fine for him to teach the concept of revolution, but asked: “Do you have to do it from such a radical perspective?” Miguel Ángel responded that “if the principal could tell me precisely which ‘moderate’ perspective he would prefer, then I would teach it!”⁸²

Certainly, at the *concertado* school where Ignacio had previously taught, he was very conscious of the political sympathies of his pupils, their families, and the wider school community. Consequently he was careful not to “step on toes,” as the following excerpt from his interview shows:

Logically, and they don’t need to tell you this when you teach history, your teaching has to be consistent with where you are. You don’t offend. . . . You try not to offend the sensitivities of your “clients.” And in that sense, personally I have to say that I never had any problems and they [the school’s senior management] never made any observations to me. . . . But that’s also because I have worked in other areas . . . in business. I had a lot of [work] experience before I started teaching, and so I was clear about the concept of a client. It doesn’t have to be explained to anyone. So, there’s no need to step on [anyone’s] toes. You can explain history without needing to step on toes, without needing to blame one side or the other.

Thus, in some *concertado* schools, teachers who might normally have broached contentious issues associated with Spain’s difficult past were reluctant to do so. In Ignacio’s case, a desire to avoid “offending the sensitivities” of pupils and the

80 Whereas teachers at state schools must pass civil service exams known as *oposiciones*, in order to teach in a *concertado* school, candidates are not required to sit for any exams. They must simply fulfill the selection criteria agreed upon by the School Council, the school head, and the owner of the institution. See EACEA, *Organisation of the Education System*, 281–82. Participants suggested that, implicitly or explicitly, this often includes supporting the school’s ethos.

81 Carmen (history teacher, state school, Oviedo, with previous experience teaching in a *concertado*), interview with the author, April 23, 2012.

82 Miguel Ángel (history teacher, state school, Barcelona, with previous experience teaching in a *concertado*), interview with the author, March 19, 2012.

wider school community meant that he saw it as his duty to “avoid that confrontation.” In his view, it was possible “to present the issue in a detached way, so that they [the pupils] are the ones who decide what they think is good and what they think is bad.” Carmen adopted a similar approach; she tried to “always base things on facts, then let them [the pupils] judge [for themselves].”

Reluctant avoiders like Carmen and Ignacio believed in the social utility of history education. They were also keen to make links between past and present and to interrogate the historical memory of the Civil War and Franco regime. However, in addition to their concern about going against the school ethos and offending or influencing pupils, they were wary of the potential for objections from parents. Carmen, Ignacio, and Emilio were all aware of cases where parents had complained that their children were being taught a subjective, biased view of the Civil War and Franco regime. In her interview, Carmen recounted an episode when the parent of one of her pupils threw his child’s history textbook to the ground in front of her, exclaiming that it “was a pack of lies, and how could we teach it in class.” He argued that they should instead be teaching young people “about what a good soldier Franco had been in Africa.” Carmen observed how older colleagues of hers tended to steer clear of controversy and that, as time went by, reluctantly she was beginning to adopt a similar approach: “As I get older, increasingly I want to avoid problems.” This included avoiding potentially divisive issues; as she put it: “Sometimes for the sake of maintaining harmony you don’t get involved in certain things.”

It is worth noting that Carmen, Ignacio, and Emilio all taught in Oviedo, a staunchly conservative city that, in defiance of the Law of Historical Memory, has refused thus far to remove its Francoist monuments.⁸³ It is possible that the city council’s stance on the issue, together with the fact that Oviedo is generally very conservative politically, may have given right-leaning parents in Oviedo the confidence to complain about biases they perceived in the way their children were taught Spanish history. It is likely, too, that as a consequence, some history teachers in the city may have adopted a cautious approach to teaching the history of the Civil War and Franco era, particularly given the controversy surrounding the city council’s stance on the removal of Francoist monuments.⁸⁴

83 Oviedo’s Plaza de España is home to one of Spain’s last remaining memorials commemorating Franco: an elaborate monument including a medallion of the dictator’s face, with an inscription reading “From Oviedo to Francisco Franco.”

84 Á. F., “El PSOE pide que se quite el medallón de Franco de la plaza de España.”

Conclusion

77 years after the end of the Civil War and 41 years after the death of General Franco, this period of Spanish history remains intensely controversial, not just in politics but also in schools. A number of factors influenced the approaches participants took to engaging with the history of the Civil War and Franco dictatorship and the legacies of this period – for instance, teachers’ own backgrounds and political sympathies, where they taught, the ethos of their schools, and worries about offending or sparking clashes with pupils, parents, and fellow teachers. What is surprising is not just the extent to which concerns about backlashes from parents, pupils, and colleagues played a role to varying degrees in participants’ decisions, but also the fact that these concerns were not unfounded, as illustrated by an experience recounted by Julián, a teacher I interviewed in Oviedo.

Julián’s interest in Civil War-era buildings and battle sites in Asturias led him to develop an optional module for pupils in their fourth year of compulsory secondary education (16-year-olds) geared toward developing their own “educational tour” of Oviedo looking specifically at the 1934 revolution and the Civil War. The module was put forward for approval by the teaching staff at the school but met with some opposition – from a science teacher. Julián explained the teacher’s objections to the module, and what happened afterward, as follows:

[He] was radically opposed [to the module] from the start. He opposed it publicly in the staff meeting, refusing [to give his approval] because too little time had passed, because they were painful events that needed to be forgotten, and because ultimately he suspected that my module, my approach, might be biased and sectarian, from a particular point of view. And it had to be put to a vote and the module was backed by a large majority, but some of the teaching staff voted in favor of the position of that colleague. . . . That is to say, that the issue, in 2012, continues to be controversial.⁸⁵

Julián was clearly upset and taken aback by his colleagues’ objections to the content of the module, not least because although he was interested in the historical period in question, he had developed the module more for its novel methodological approach, which was project-based with pupils working together as a team. As there was no prescribed curriculum for the module, there was scope for pupils to do their own research, culminating in the development of a historical tour of Oviedo that they could take their classmates on. From Julián’s perspective, the fact that some of his colleagues opposed the module was evidence that reconciliation had not been achieved in Spain. He maintained that “true

85 Julián (history teacher, state school, Oviedo), interview with the author, April 24, 2012.

reconciliation” would only be achieved “when a teacher isn’t questioned for touching on an issue like this”:

Clearly, if people are continuing to question [teachers’] objectivity and the risk of possible indoctrination . . . and something that happened 75 years ago is considered to be too recent to be studied as history, it’s clear that something is going on.

Julián’s experience is a striking example of how issues relating to the teaching of the Civil War and Franco era continue to provoke controversy and discord within schools, with potentially serious, not to mention stressful and upsetting, consequences for history teachers. Certainly the episode helps explain why reluctant avoiders steer clear of potentially divisive issues rather than confronting them and suffering the consequences.

Spain is undeniably shaped by its recent past, particularly the Civil War and the Franco dictatorship. While some teachers in certain parts of Spain may succeed in avoiding active engagement with the legacies of the past in their history classes, it remains the case that in some communities these are simply impossible to ignore. The *barrio* (neighborhood) where Fernando, a state school teacher, works is a case in point. The *barrio* grew around a canal built by Republican political prisoners in the 1940s. Given that the neighborhood is itself a product of the policies pursued by the Franco regime, and many people who live in the *barrio* were prisoners or are relatives of prisoners, Fernando had no choice but to confront the legacies of the past in class.⁸⁶ The argument that the Civil War is too recent and too painful to be studied, as Julián’s colleague put forward, is clearly unsustainable – particularly if, as the curriculum states, the study of history should provide pupils with “relevant knowledge” about the past, “which might help [them] to understand present-day Spain.”⁸⁷ Indeed, one wonders how young people, particularly those living in *barrios* like Fernando’s, could be expected to “understand present-day Spain” without critically engaging with the legacies of the Civil War and Franco regime.

What this analysis demonstrates, then, is that by rejecting the extrinsic purposes of history education – broad educational aims associated with changing society⁸⁸ – “natural avoiders” are missing opportunities to make links between the past and present and in so doing to help pupils understand present-day Spain, a principal objective of the “History of Spain” course at the *Bachillerato* level.⁸⁹ Even the “activists,” who endorse extrinsic aims such as seeking to effect social change through the teaching of history, undermine their duty to foster the “ra-

86 Fernando (history teacher, state school, Seville), interview with the author, April 16, 2012.

87 Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, “Real Decreto 1467/2007,” 45393.

88 Slater, *Teaching History in the New Europe*.

89 Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, “Real Decreto 1467/2007,” 45393.

tional, open and critical” study of the past⁹⁰ by vigorously promoting one particular interpretation of the Civil War and Franco dictatorship instead of fostering a more complex understanding. Thus, despite the fact that both the state and the autonomous community history curricula promote “extrinsic” aims for the subject, the approaches taken to teaching recent history by both the natural avoiders and the activists undermine this vision for school history. McCully argues that “history teachers should not collude with ‘social amnesia’ by avoiding sensitive aspects of the past,” nor should they present one interpretation of the past as the “truth.”⁹¹ Neither the avoider nor the activist approach does much to help young people in Spain to become informed, critical, and historically aware citizens, equipped with the analytical tools necessary to make sense of the contemporary world⁹² – an overarching aim of the history curriculum and surely an essential goal of education generally in any healthy democracy.

As noted earlier, it is clear that concerns about offending or sparking clashes with pupils, parents, and colleagues influence how participants engage with the history of the Civil War and Franco dictatorship and the legacies of this period. This is particularly the case for the “reluctant avoiders” as well as, to a lesser extent, the “containers.” It is surprising that so many years after the end of the Civil War in 1939 and the death of General Franco in 1975, teachers like Ignacio are still wary of offending the descendants of those who fought on either side of the conflict. But this gets to the very heart of why the Civil War, the dictatorship, and their legacies remain so controversial in Spain. The 1936–39 conflict was a war that divided not just families and communities but the entire country, and arguably the ideological cleavages that existed at the outbreak of hostilities in 1936 are still present today. As Diego, a state school teacher I interviewed in Oviedo, put it, “something of what was the atmosphere of confrontation, of tension [during the Second Republic and Civil War], is rearing its head again [today]” – particularly, in his view, in relation to “the political problems of recent years,” for instance clashes between the Spanish Catholic Church and anticlerical elements within Spanish society.⁹³ Thus, teachers in Spain may in fact be less concerned about offending the memory of pupils’ great grandparents than they are about offending the political sensitivities of pupils and their families.

The history of the Civil War and dictatorship is closely tied to issues of identity in Spain – personal identity, family identity, political identity, collective identity, and regional and national identity – and, as such, it continues to be emotive. For history teachers, the “comfortable tendency,” as Fernando argued in his inter-

90 *Ibid.*, 45394.

91 McCully, “History Teaching,” 151.

92 Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, “Real Decreto 1467/2007.”

93 Diego (history teacher, state school, Oviedo), interview with the author, April 24, 2012.

view, is “to avoid conflict, is to seek detachment, a kind of history that is detached . . . facts, economic and social facts and so on . . . but you don’t really get involved in controversy.”

Fernando identified a lack of appropriate training as one of the principal factors explaining teachers’ avoidance of controversial issues such as those associated with Spain’s recent past. Indeed this issue has been raised elsewhere, for example in Northern Ireland, where a lack of pedagogical training and expertise has been cited as one reason why some teachers there avoid engaging with more contentious issues.⁹⁴ Fernando argued that, as he called it, the “Anglo-Saxon tradition” of confronting controversial issues in the classroom did not exist in Spain, nor was relevant training available to teachers to enable them to actively and confidently address contentious topics with their pupils. There was a sense that reluctant avoiders like Carmen, who were interested in finding ways to tackle sensitive issues linked to historical memory, were hindered by a dearth of support – so much so that Carmen told me she resorted to looking on the Internet for teachers’ forums dedicated to such issues, but she had no success. It was clear that valuable professional development opportunities were lacking, as were opportunities to share experiences with and learn from other teachers.

The approach the “risk-takers” took to engaging with the legacies of the recent past appears to be the most viable in terms of helping pupils to “act in a responsible and autonomous way and to develop critical thinking skills [*espíritu crítico*],” in accordance with the demands of the curriculum, and “to become familiar with and to critically evaluate the realities of the contemporary world, its historical background and the principal factors in its evolution.”⁹⁵ While Kitson and McCully concede that it is not always easy to be a risk-taker, they nonetheless urge teachers “to reflect on where risks might be worth taking as long as they are handled properly.”⁹⁶ Some participants who, at the beginning of their teaching careers, found it hard to teach the Civil War and Franco dictatorship (as Diego put it in his interview, they were still “a bit of a controversial issue” and “difficult to broach”), found it possible, with the passage of time, to cover these historical periods “more thoroughly” and “with more freedom,” which is certainly very encouraging. Although it is likely that Diego’s shift had much to do with political and other developments in the 2000s, not least the movement for the recovery of historical memory and the passing of the Law of Historical Memory in 2007, it is

94 See McCully, “Practitioner Perceptions.” Related to this, the lack of appropriate resources may also be a factor in teachers’ reluctance to cover sensitive issues in history classes. Evidence gathered in South Africa in the late 1990s indicated that this was one reason why many history educators there avoided teaching the apartheid period. See Weldon, “Memory, Identity,” 170.

95 Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, “Real Decreto 1467/2007,” 45382.

96 Kitson and McCully, “You Hear about It for Real in School,” 37.

also possible that with time and experience teachers gain the confidence to confront controversial issues in the classroom. Thus, over time, teachers' positions on the continuum or diagram may shift; for example, they may go from being a "reluctant avoider" to a "container" or even a "risk-taker."

This chapter has highlighted the ways in which teachers in different parts of Spain link the past and the present, and shed light on why some teachers do not feel comfortable making these connections. If, as McCully argues, connections must be made between past events and present positions in both conflict and post-conflict situations,⁹⁷ then it is vital that both pre- and in-service teacher education give history educators the skills and confidence needed to tackle controversial issues, particularly those associated with the recent past, in the classroom. By providing insight into the experiences and perspectives of history educators with regard to teaching the difficult past, the model of teaching approaches presented in this chapter can help in the development of appropriate and relevant professional development programs both in the Spanish context and beyond. It is only by confronting the difficult past that we can move toward a better, more democratic future. Opportunities exist for history education and history educators to play a much more active role in this regard; such opportunities must be seized.

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97 McCully, "History Teaching," 155.

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Conclusion

History Education in the Midst of Post-conflict Recovery: Lessons Learned

Dilemmas of History Education

In societies with a recent history of violence, the “past” gives meaning to present events and policies, impacts how notions of justice and equality are perceived in society, constitutes intergroup relations and perceptions, and determines the ways in which people envision the future of their nation. The past appears in different forms: from the memories of people who lived through violence, to stories and traumas passed on to young people through transgenerational transmission,¹ to representations in mass media and official narratives. History education is only one mechanism that deals with the past. Nevertheless, it provides the most systemic account of the nation’s past and establishes beliefs about relations between groups within a given society.

As societies recover from violence, history education is couched in the complex process of changing systems of power and redefining national identity. As an instrument of nation-building and citizenship formation, history education depends on the views of political elites concerning the nature of the nation itself and the role of different groups in the new social order. Thus, history education in post-conflict societies is contingent upon both the meanings ascribed to the past and the power structures and connotations of identity promoted by existing political regimes.

Facing the question of how to teach students about recent violent history, recovering societies encounter four major dilemmas:

- 1) Between a critical history that helps improve the society and a monumental history that increases loyalty to the nation and submission to the ruling elite
- 2) Between history as a “thing of the past” and history as a signal of events to come
- 3) Between remembering and forgetting: What amount of remembering is most efficient for reconciliation?

¹ Volkan, *Bloodlines*.

- 4) Between investing in remembrance or supporting other important social projects

The following discussion will describe each of these dilemmas and show how post-conflict societies approach these problems, based on the studies in this book.

Monumental History versus Critical History

The first dilemma, critical history versus monumental history, refers to the most important functions of history in society. A “monumentalistic concept of the past”² serves the function of legitimizing the ruling regime and developing loyalty among the younger generation. The intention of monumental history is not to provide an understanding of what happened in reality. Instead, it promotes a process of selectively remembering particular events and specific interpretations, creating particular modes of history:

History, as it comes through the historian, retains, analyzes, and connects only important events. Unlike the physicist’s subjectivity, the historian’s subjectivity intervenes here in an original way as a set of interpretative schemata. The quality of the interrogator therefore becomes essential to the very selection of the documents interrogated.³

In other words, history narratives are based on explicit judgments about the importance of specific events in the history of a particular nation or ethnic group. These judgments are influenced by the ideology of a ruling regime that favors some events over others because they are deemed a significant and essential foundation for the regime’s ideas and goals. “Sufficient dangers remain should [specific narratives] grow too mighty and overpower the other modes of regarding the past”⁴ when one “mode of regarding history *rules* over the other.”⁵

Monumental history has mythical and poetic functions. Past events are presented as worthy and epic to inspire individuals to acts of sacrifice and heroism. In monumental history, past events are transformed into inspiring myths, and myths take the place of history. Myth making is one of the crucial mechanisms of monumental history, which provides a “management of meaning” through the

2 Nietzsche, “On the Uses and Disadvantages,” 69.

3 Ricoeur, *History and Truth*, 26.

4 Nietzsche, “On the Uses and Disadvantages,” 75.

5 *Ibid.*, 70, emphasis in the original.

production and reproduction of significance in a particular context.⁶ Durkheimian tradition treats myth as being contextualized within the political life of a community. Myth provides a symbolic foundation for the social order, reinforces social cohesion, and justifies the existing structure of society. It emphasizes and legitimizes the sacred norms and beliefs of a community, defining and redefining the core of social identity. Myth expresses people's "*reality postulates*" about the world and concerns "*a moral universe of meaning*."⁷

"Myth creates an intellectual and cognitive monopoly in that it seeks to establish the sole way of ordering the world and defining world-views. . . . The individual members of that community must broadly accept the myth."⁸ People sharing a myth constitute a specific social community with a defined identity and social boundary, whereby all others are excluded. Myth does not provide commemoration of mythical events but rather reiterates them, making the protagonists of the myth present in contemporary life,⁹ thus continuing to divide post-conflict societies. When memory is transected by political myths, people are "locked into a stultifying and potentially destructive relationship with the past."¹⁰

In monumental history, mythic narratives support the dominance of a particular group through several mechanisms: (1) impediment by outgroup, (2) condemnation of imposition, (3) positive ingroup predisposition, (4) validation of rights, and (5) enlightenment. These can be used across several types of myths or in one specific myth.¹¹

The first justification mechanism, impediment by outgroup, emphasizes a conflict between two groups with the premise that the ingroup embodies and champions the positive values of the nation. The preferred ideals of the nation endorsed by the ingroup differ from a state-based or ethnic concept of nationalism, embodying rather a civic meaning of national identity and multicultural values. The outgroup is depicted as the one that obstructs the goals of the ingroup by promoting conflict, instituting specific policies, endorsing an erroneous ideology, and oppressing and discriminating against ingroup members. Thus, the duality between the "good" and "bad" group is vindicated through the portrayal of the correct activities of the ingroup and the wrong activities of the outgroup. This mechanism postulates the right of the ingroup to exclusively define the meaning of national identity and to exclude the outgroup as an illegitimate agent of nation-building. It posits the ingroup's dominance as a true

6 See Blumenberg, *Work on Myth*; Bourdieu, *Field of Cultural Production*; Horowitz, "Ethnic Identity"; Smith "Golden Age."

7 Overing, "Role of Myth," 12, emphasis in the original.

8 Schöpflin, "Functions of Myth," 19.

9 Eliade, *Myth and Reality*.

10 Blustein, *Moral Demands of Memory*, 8.

11 The following paragraphs are based on Korostelina, *Constructing the Narratives*, 44–49.

approach to nation-building. The “impediment by outgroup” mechanism can be especially noticeable in myths of foundation, suffering and unjust treatment, and rebirth and renewal.

The second justification mechanism, condemnation of imposition, justifies the assertion that the ingroup is inclusive and embodies the interests of all groups in the nation, while the outgroup is exclusively promoting its own specific values, policies, and ideology based on traditions of its ethnic or regional culture and language. The outgroup presumably asserts itself to be the only one symbolizing the nation. The myth illuminates the alien nature of the culture or ideology of the outgroup and states that it should not be accepted by the nation. Thus, the duality between “good” and “bad” groups is vindicated by attributing the essential representation of the whole nation to the ingroup and narrow, corrupt interests to the outgroup. It also validates the greater power of the ingroup in comparison to all other groups. The mechanism of condemning imposition can be more prominent in myths of ethnogenesis, territory, and Golden Age.

The third justification mechanism, positive ingroup predisposition, portrays the ingroup as having more abilities and competencies than the outgroup. These can incorporate entrepreneurial ability and innovative skills, democratic and humanitarian values, and tolerance. The myth describes these abilities as resulting from a long history of democratic development that defines an essential core of the ingroup mentality. In contrast to the ingroup, the outgroup is characterized by its simplistic culture, backward mentality and non-progressive ideas. It is presented as underdeveloped, traditionalist, and paternalistic, promoting these ideas as essential for the nation. The myth justifies the necessity of the ingroup to fight with a backward outgroup and defend progressive national development. The duality between “good” and “bad” groups is validated by the better capability of ingroup as progressive and virtuous to lead the nation to a better future. It thereby justifies the power position of the ingroup as better suited to rule the nation. The mechanism of positive ingroup predisposition can be more noticeable in myths of foundation and election.

The fourth justification mechanism, validation of rights, defines the ingroup as having a correct vision of national development and thus possessing an entitlement to develop the nation. These rights are rooted in on a more authentic culture, connection to native land, birthright, and acknowledgement by international society. Members of the outgroup have fewer rights as strangers who immigrated and joined the nation at a later point. They cannot be equal in the nation-building process because they do not possess shared ethnic roots and are characterized by a simplistic culture. In the case of exclusion, the outgroup is denied its rights, and its members are treated as alien and hostile. The duality between “good” and “bad” groups is validated by providing exclusive rights to nation-building to the ingroup. This mechanism justifies the power of the in-

group as rooted in its history and connection to the land. The “validation of rights” mechanism can be more prominent in myths of ethnogenesis and territory.

The fifth justification mechanism, enlightenment, highlights the readiness of all people in a nation to pursue a specific aim, for example the development of civic society or the promotion of liberalism or an ethnic state. At the same time, it stresses that some people have limited abilities to achieve these desired outcomes because of their persistent, outdated mentality, a lack of agency, and a reliance on populist leadership. This myth promotes the idea that the ingroup is better able to distinguish shared ideals and enlighten others for the successful achievement of these goals. The duality between “good” and “bad” groups is validated by stressing the legitimacy of the ingroup to represent the nation and to exclude people who do not share specific visions. This mechanism justifies the power of the ingroup, being more enlightened and progressive than other groups. The enlightenment mechanism can be more prominent in foundation myths.

Through these five mechanisms of justification, mythic narratives function to define and recreate the particular connotation of national identity and legitimize the power of the ingroup. The ingroup is portrayed as a vital foundation of the nation with exclusive rights to define national identity, meriting a better place with the nation, being progressive, honorable, and signifying the shared vision of a constructive future. The outgroup is described as an illegitimate agent of nation-building, alien to the nation, regressive, with narrow and fraudulent goals. Mythic narratives depict the history and qualities of the ingroup as a basis of its power and privileged position in the social hierarchy. It validates the actions, authority, and domination of the ingroup as representing the whole nation, signifying “rightness” in a nation, and having exclusive rights to nation-building. The ingroup is presented as better capable and suitable to rule and enlighten the rest of the nation. Mythic narratives justify the attribution of positive social values to the ingroup and deny such values to the outgroup, thus supporting these views on power structure and the ingroup’s domination over all outgroups.

As Nietzsche stresses, monumental history should be constrained by critical history. A critical examination of history is important for the improvement of society and the restoration of justice, but it does not provide a sense of continuity and patriotism/loyalty. Through the critical examination of history, “the past can become a force for personal growth and political and social betterment.”¹² In critical history, narratives can be recounted through the process of confronting and considering alternative narratives.¹³ During this process, stories of different groups and communities within the nation are put together, allowing multiple

12 Blustein, *Moral Demands of Memory*, 13.

13 Ricoeur, “Reflections on a New Ethos.”

interpretations and analyses of the roots and causations of violence, as well as a reconfiguration of dominant narratives. “Plural readings” of the same historical events can lead to a reinterpretation of events and a transformation of formerly established views and positions. This process can lead to liberation “not from the past but *of* the past, or rather of the frustrated potential of the past.”¹⁴ Thus, history is no longer prisoner to a regime or powerful group but rather becomes an object of creativity, open to constant reinterpretation. The contradictions between social groups long perceived to be unchangeable can be reinterpreted; conflicts can be transformed into possible cooperation. Historical narratives that highlight incompatible interests, claims, and suffering can be transformed into inclusive narratives that accept different understandings and interpretations of history. The critical approach to history “represents an impulse to confront and undo the injustice of history, to retrospectively and retroactively move the line separating misfortune and injustice so that all human deprivations are seen as remedial injustice. It attempts to make history yield up a morally satisfying result that it did not the first time around.”¹⁵

Thus, societies recovering from recent violence can choose to create a monumental history to support the prevalence of one particular group and promote it as innocent and heroic, thus developing loyalty among the younger generation. They also can choose to teach a critical history that holds all perpetrators accountable and shows the complex roots of violence without promoting loyalty to one particular side.

This dilemma is connected to the concept of *collective axiology*. A collective axiology is a common system of values that offers moral guidance to ingroup members on how to perceive and treat members of ingroups and outgroups and how to maintain or change relations with them.¹⁶ It provides a sense of life and world, serves as a criterion for understanding actions and events, and regulates ingroup behaviors.

A collective axiology defines boundaries and relations among groups and establishes criteria for ingroup/outgroup membership. Through its collective axiology, a group traces its development from a sacred past, extracted from mythic episodes beyond the life of mortals, and seeks permanence.¹⁷

It is a set of constructs used to validate, vindicate, rationalize, or legitimize actions, decisions, and policies. Such constructs function as instruments for making sense of episodes of conflict and serve to solidify groups.

14 Dunne, “Between State and Civil Society,” 114.

15 Galanter, “Righting Old Wrongs,” 122.

16 Rothbart and Korostelina, *Identity, Morality and Threat*.

17 *Ibid.*, 4.

Two variables characterize the dynamics of collective axiology: the degree of collective generality and the degree of axiological balance.

Collective Generality

The degree of collective generality “refers to the ways in which ingroup members categorize the Other, how they simplify, or not, their defining (essential) character.”¹⁸ Collective generality includes four main attributed characteristics: homogeneity of outgroup members’ perceptions and behaviors; long-term stability of their beliefs, attitudes, and actions; their resistance to change; and the scope or range of the outgroup category.

A high level of collective generality is connected with viewing an outgroup as consistent, homogeneous, demonstrating fixed patterns of behavior, committed to durable, rigid beliefs and values, and widespread throughout the region or the whole world. A low degree of collective generality reflects the perception of the outgroup as differentiated, exhibiting a variety of behaviors, ready for transformation, and relatively limited in scope. An example of a high level of generality can be found in Greek history textbooks, which present all Turks as homogeneous in their aggressive intentions, with a barbaric culture that has dominated their society over centuries. An example of a low level of generality is the transformation of history education in Germany over the last fifty years, which has increased in complexity concerning the descriptions of the actions and motivations of ingroup and outgroups.

The degree of collective generality varies significantly between monumental and critical history. In monumental history, an enemy is perceived as a single “entity” with uniform beliefs and attitudes that support common policies toward other groups. The image of an outgroup is rigid, firm, and homogeneous. In critical history, the diversity and competing priorities within an ingroup and outgroup are emphasized and their cultural and political structures described as more complex and sometimes conflictual.

Axiological Balance

“Axiological balance refers to a kind of parallelism of virtues and vices attributed to groups. When applied to stories about the Other, a balanced axiology embeds positive and negative characteristics in group identities.”¹⁹ Balanced axiology

18 Rothbart and Korostelina, *Identity, Morality and Threat*, 45.

19 *Ibid.*, 46.

leads to the recognition of decency and morality as well as immorality and cruelty among both the Other and the ingroup. A high degree of axiological balance reflects recognition of one's own moral faults and failings, while a low degree of axiological balance is connected with the perception of one's ingroup as morally pure and superior and of the outgroup as evil and vicious. This imbalance tends to promote a "tunnel consciousness" and a diminished capacity for independent thought.

In its extreme form, a low axiological balance is correlated to an exaggeration, inflation, and fabrication of outgroup vices and ingroup glories. The "Them/Us" duality seems fixed in the timeless social order. With a fabricated sense of its collective virtues, the ingroup promotes a sense of moral supremacy over the outgroup. Such an unbalanced depiction of group differences provides ground for a struggle against criminal elements of the world.²⁰

Monumental and critical histories also differ in their presentation of axiological balance. In monumental history, intergroup relations are presented in terms of ingroup victimization and outgroup aggression. Such presentations are instrumental in denying ingroup responsibility for aggressive actions and are easy to use. The biases and prejudice are transformed into deep beliefs about the outgroup as an essential enemy, thus decreasing any possibility of mutual understanding. In critical history, education presents not only positive but also negative actions of the ingroup, providing critical analysis of political and social foundations and consequences of negative events.

As Julia Lerch demonstrates in this volume, post-violent societies face a dilemma between the aspiration to foster national unity and the temptation to maintain an exclusive national narrative that denies the rights of specific groups, including ethnic, racial, and religious minorities. More specifically, Julieta Ktshanyan describes how the desire to create a positive monumental history in Armenia has led to the long-lasting evasion of sensitive topics and critical analysis of not only the Armenian genocide but also other genocides throughout the world. Similarly, as Kirsten Dyck discusses, the positive presentation of progressive American history in textbooks limits their ability to discuss colonial violence against indigenous groups and thus critically address historical injustices. These approaches to the dilemma of monumental history versus critical history can vary within a specific country. As Clare Magill shows, history teachers in Spain differ on their presentation of the Civil War and Franco Dictatorship, from avoiding or containing the complicated discussion to actively promoting a critical understanding of complex social processes.

20 Rothbart and Korostelina, *Identity, Morality and Threat*, 47.

In Kenya, as Kim Foulds elaborates, the representation of conflict in the region takes the form of monumental history. Describing regional instability in East Africa, history textbooks completely deny Kenya's responsibility for national or regional insecurity and do not provide any information about societal conflicts. This depiction of history creates a collective axiology of a positive, peaceful Kenya surrounded by unstable, violent societies where leaders stand in conflict with one another in a continuous fight for power. History textbooks present Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Burundi, Rwanda, Sudan, Liberia, and Sierra Leone as countries where the governments have been violently overthrown or where communities fight with other communities, causing civil wars or interstate wars. This collective axiology is extended to the representation of Somali refugees. While Kenyan society is described as tolerant and diverse, Somali refugees are described as "not productive," "dangerous to our country," and "affecting our culture negatively." Kenyans are portrayed as people who care about their country and are motivated to make it a better place, while refugees are denied any motivation to contribute to the development of Kenyan society.

This form of monumental history is supported by two mechanisms: the condemnation of imposition and a positive ingroup predisposition. The mechanism of condemning imposition rationalizes the claim that Kenyan citizens represent the interests of the nation while refugees impose their own ethnic or regional culture, are involved in criminal activity, and demand support from Kenyans. It also justifies the exclusive rights and power of Kenyan citizens in comparison to refugees. The mechanism of positive ingroup predisposition describes the Kenyan nation as more peaceful and tolerant with democratic values and cultures, as well as support for human rights. In comparison to Kenya, other countries are perceived as more unstable and violent, as sources of insecurity in the region.

In Macedonia, history textbooks employ monumental history to promote an ethnocentric approach and establish a strong social boundary between Albanians and Macedonians, according to Petar Todorov. The central idea of this monumental history is that both ethnic groups have consistently lived separately from one another. Textbooks do not analyze the sources of ethnic conflict, nor do they present a discussion on nationalism. They exclude any information on the sociopolitical experience shared by both communities in the past. The Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913 are presented as "anti-Macedonian" in an ethnic sense, omitting descriptions of their consequences for Albanians, Turks, Slavic-speaking Muslims, or Muslim refugees who left the region as a result of the Ottoman army's defeat. Similarly, ethnic Macedonians are described as fighters who fought for national liberation during World War II while the ethnic Albanians, Turks, or other ethnic groups living in the country are ignored. The collective axiology depicted in the textbooks has a low balance. While Macedonians are

presented as innocent victims, Albanians are described through the history of occupation: through “denationalization and assimilation” policies of changing people’s names to Albanian forms, the introduction of an Ottoman-era taxation system, and the forced expulsion of ethnic Macedonians from their homes. The most important mechanism used by this monumental history – impediment by outgroup – describes the Macedonians as representing and supporting the nation’s positive values, while Albanians are described as a group that promotes conflict, establishes wrong policies, and uses unfair treatment, oppression, and violence. This mechanism posits Macedonians as having the sole right to define national identity and justifies their dominance within the nation.

Following Dhananjay Tripathi’s chapter, in Pakistan, history textbooks create a monumental history that establishes a gap between the history of Pakistan and India. Pakistan is described as part of the Muslim world that is entirely separate and different from Asian culture. The unbalanced collective axiology describes Hindus as cunning and deceptive in opposition to the moral and honorable Muslims. India is described as the “traditional enemy” that kills Pakistani people and destroys their property. Pakistani people are encouraged to be “ready to defend our beloved country from Indian aggression.” This negative perception of Hindus is coupled with negative attitudes toward Western societies and Christianity. The British are blamed for damaging Islamic values and promoting alien Western values on the sub-continent. Textbooks stress that Christian priests and the clergy “talked ill of other religions” and “compelled the Muslim children . . . [to] the worship of idols.”

The justification mechanism used by this monumental history, condemning imposition, rationalizes the claim that Muslims were suffering under the control of Hindus and Christians, who imposed their own religion, ideas, policies, traditions, culture, and language and wrongly claimed to represent the nation. The myth explains why the religions of these outgroups are alien to Muslim people and cannot be accepted by them. This mechanism justifies the moral power and cultural dominance of Muslims over all other groups.

In Ghana between 1987 and 2010, as Clement Sefa-Nyarko describes, two versions of monumental history were presented in history textbooks depending on the political party in power. Changes in political power resulted in changes to history curricula. Each change provided opposite interpretations of Kwame Nkrumah’s 1950 Positive Action and his legacy. The monumental history promoted after 1987 stressed his positive impact on social development, while post-2001 textbooks emphasized the numerous human rights abuses and destabilizing effect of Nkrumah’s actions, which resulted in nationwide chaos. Both versions promote a very unbalanced axiology: the past actions of the party in power are presented as important for social development and progress while the actions of the opposition are depicted as destructive and promoting violence.

This monumental history employs the “impediment by outgroup” mechanism to describe the fight between two political parties, in which the one party signifies positive values of the nation. The opposition is presented as fomenting conflict, establishing erroneous policies, promoting the wrong ideology, unfair treatment, oppression, and use of violence. This mechanism helps to promote one party’s exclusiveness in defining national policies and representing the nation. It also uses the mechanism of condemning imposition, which rationalizes the claim that the ingroup represents the interests of every group in the nation while the outgroup is imposing its own narrow ideology, ideas, policies, traditions, ethnic or regional culture, and language over everyone and wrongly claims to symbolize the nation.

However, the latest edition of Ghanaian social studies textbooks (2008) began including critical history. Instead of the simplistic praising or criticizing of specific personalities, it presents an analysis of the functions of social institutions, examining individual contributions within the institutions and structures of the state. It also dissolves social boundaries between religious and ethnic groups that were the cause of continued conflict. This step toward critical history became possible because of dialogue that has been developing between different political parties and growing political stability since the 1980s. Initiated by both political parties, this exchange has involved citizen representation from the spectrum of social groups and different political affiliations that comprise Ghana.

Based on Dea Marić’s contribution, in Croatia, history education uses both critical and monumental history. Most of the topics, even when sensitive and controversial, are presented from a variety of perspectives, which has helped to promote critical thinking. However, in some textbooks, topics of “national importance” such as the Homeland War are presented in a form of monumental history that do not allow for varied interpretations. In the presentation of the war, military history dominates the historical narrative, depicting the Croatian Army as liberators and Serbian nationalism and Serbian paramilitary units as instigators of the war. Thus, this monumental history is based on an unbalanced collective axiology. The description of the actions of Croats omits any discussion of Croatian nationalism, Croatian involvement in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the suffering of Serbs; meanwhile Serbs as a nation are positioned as “the aggressor.” The level of collective generality is also very high: students are taught to identify the collective victims and the collective aggressors. The major mechanism employed by this monumental history, the validation of rights, describes the Croats as having more rights to the nation. These rights are based on authentic culture and historical development on the native land. Serbs are described as having fewer entitlements because they are not native to the land; they arrived later, do not share the same ethnic roots, and thus cannot be treated as

equals in the nation-building process. This mechanism justifies the power of Croats and completely denies the rights of Serbs, treating them as alien, hostile, and excluded from the nation.

Another textbook presents a more critical history of the Homeland War. It does so by analyzing the circumstances that prevailed in Croatia before the war, mentioning the suffering of Serbs and other examples of interethnic intolerance that led to the escalation of the conflict. Using balanced and considered language, the textbook describes the impact of the war on the lives of “common people,” including migration, the anguish of refugees, and changes to family relationships and social processes. It presents the atrocities and criminal behavior perpetrated by both Serbs and Croats, including damages to the property of both ethnic groups.

In India, the new curriculum presents a critical history of the 1947 partition in the form of a complex and balanced narrative that includes the perspective of the other side. Based on sources from original historical documents, oral narratives, and popular media, it describes the personal experiences of Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims. The textbooks show Partition as a complex historical event, resulting from multiple social and political factors. The origins of Partition are not attributed to any one political party or person, and both sides of this conflict are described as victims, perpetrators, and liberators. However, as Meenakshi Chhabra finds in her study, teachers with a negative bias against Muslims and Pakistan found this critical history “confusing” with a potential for “creating differences.” It is important to create an opportunity for teachers to engage with alternative narratives about historical events of collective violence through teacher training or exchange programs.

Meaning of History as a Thing of the Past versus a Signal of Events to Come

The second dilemma that societies with a recent history of violence face is the tension between defining history as a thing of the past or seeing it as a warning of events that may recur in the future. This dilemma represents the understanding of history as a foundation of our values and beliefs (as discussed in multiple works of Nietzsche and Foucault). A simplistic understanding of history as “the past,” which has already happened, creates the erroneous belief that it is better to forget earlier violent events and move toward a more peaceful society. This belief implies that avoiding teaching people about violence between social groups helps to form tolerant attitudes among younger generations.

However, the past is present not only because the memory of it still remains. More importantly, the past constitutes the identity of each group and determines

what actions these groups prefer to perform. The current systems of values and beliefs and mechanisms of behavior were constructed long ago under conditions of increasing prejudice and violence; thus they become remnants of values and beliefs developed in the past. Their creation resulted from the manipulation and will of conflict entrepreneurs, and they reflect the aims of these wills and violent intentions. Analyzing the processes that led a society to violence and war has the ability to help us understand the current views and attitudes in the society and prevent future conflicts. “Direct self-observation is not nearly sufficient for us to know ourselves: we require history, for the past continues to flow within us in a hundred waves; we ourselves are, indeed, nothing but that which at every moment we experience of this continued flowing.”²¹ The social construction of biases and prejudice, as well as discriminatory behaviors in the past, gives them their meaning in the present. Analysis of the past is essential to understanding the relations between groups and creating the autonomy and agency necessary for a more tolerant and shared society. This analysis of the past – genealogy – can help people prevent cycles of violence:

We can use genealogy to make ourselves stronger, by taking an increasing control over the habits and values built into us by social-historical processes . . .

Genealogy exposes ways we have *lacked* such power – ways we have been controlled and used by forces outside us, social forces in whose interest our habits and values have been designed.²²

Teaching critically about the past can help students to make judgments about established intergroup perceptions, give them the freedom to make their own decisions about their values and attitudes, and empower them to make a positive social change. Thus, remembering or “retriev[ing] . . . what is possible” is not concerned with bringing back the past or binding the past to the present. It responds to “the possibility of existence that has been there.”²³ Teaching about a history of violence can help reduce the possibility that similar events will occur in the future.

In Sierra Leone, based on Mneasha Gellman’s research, history is simply considered as a “thing of the past” that is not important to teach. The history of the recent civil war is not included at any level of schooling, and there are no textbooks that describe the war’s background or the complex processes of post-conflict reconstruction. The idea of “looking forward” creates a culture of silence around the war. Students, as a result, lack any understanding of the causation of

21 Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, 267–68.

22 Richardson, “Nietzsche’s Problem of the Past,” 108.

23 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 353.

the war and its future implications. This treatment of history, which denies students any ability to discuss and learn from past violence, impedes reconciliation process and increases the possibility of reoccurring violence.

Similarly, in Uganda, the history of violence is perceived as a “past” that is not important for the country, according to Michelle Savard. The main idea is: “Let’s leave the past behind us and move on” in order to create a common national identity. The Ugandan national identity has strong civic connotations that concentrate on citizenship: “We are all Ugandan.” Discussions relating to the diversity of the 56 ethnic groups comprising Uganda are omitted, and history textbooks provide no description of the historical events that occurred after 1962. This denial of the importance of the past and of diversity reduces any potential opportunities to discuss different views and integrate multiple perspectives, thus inhibiting processes of reconciliation and trauma healing.

In Burundi, following Denise Bentravato’s study, history textbooks exclude any description of the period following the end of colonial power in 1962 as well as Hutu–Tutsi relations. Educators in this country are generally unwilling to address controversial historical events in the classroom, as they believe this has the potential to bring about a new wave of hate and violence. They consider the history of violence that has plagued the nation to be a sensitive issue that cannot easily be discussed. By not providing an opportunity for children to learn what happened in the country and to understand the roots of the violence, history education obstructs reconciliation in a fragile state.

In opposition to these countries, many other nations consider teaching about a violent past to be essential for the prevention of future conflicts and violence. In the United States, Spain, Croatia, India, Guatemala, and Rwanda, history education aims at preventing the occurrence of conflicts, wars, and human rights violations. The curricula and history textbooks in these countries identify the causes of conflict (although their depictions are sometimes biased and manipulated) and educate students to be more sensitive to signs of intergroup prejudice and to be ready to prevent possible hostilities.²⁴

Remembering versus Forgetting: Selective History and Reconciliation

The third dilemma, between remembering and forgetting, represents one of the most critical questions: What amount of remembering is most efficient for reconciliation? The major concern reflected in this dilemma is that providing too

24 See contributions in this volume by Kirsten Dyck, Clare Magill, Dea Marić, Meenakshi Chhabra, Michelle Bellino, and Denise Bentravato.

much information about violence can increase negative perceptions among young representatives of social groups involved in previous conflict. Proponents of this concern argue that some descriptions of ferocity should be avoided to prevent possible revenge or other aggressive intentions. “We might want to temper memory enough to permit reconciliation between warring groups who must emerge from violence to share a society and a government.”²⁵ Thus, they encourage the removal of certain descriptions of violent events from history textbooks so as not to obstruct the reconciliation processes.

However, teaching history is taking responsibility for the past. “We have to acknowledge what we have done in the past in order to make amends for it; we will be more vigilant in the future to prevent a repetition of what happened in the past; or remembering will promote collective and individual healing.”²⁶ Decisions about which events to remove from history education and which to teach are connected with the social boundary. Selective history creates boundaries with particular events: which ones we remember and which affect us today. There is a strong interconnection between social boundaries that define social identity and selective history: concepts of the Other influence the choice of events and their interpretation while events impact the meaning of the Other. Such interconnection can lead to biased selective history that promotes more prejudice and violence in postwar and post-conflict societies.

In Croatia, according to Dea Marić, most of the authors give greater space to military history than other dimensions of war (social, migratory, human, and legal), providing very selective descriptions of war atrocities. The selections made by authors reflect their position on how history and the relations between ethnic groups should be presented. The locations chosen for teacher training emphasize the idea of Croat victimhood: they are all held in places of conspicuous mass suffering for the ethnic Croatian population. During the obligatory Homeland War field trips to Vukovar, students must experience for themselves the horror of ethnic violence against Croats, thus perpetuating the trauma. This has the potential to impact negatively on reconciliation processes, as it may reinstate negative attitudes and feelings of victimhood among the younger generation.

In Guatemala, a collective view that understanding the history of violence can support the democratization processes has led to the development of new curricula that concentrate on human rights and the cultural rights of indigenous groups, as Michelle Bellino has found. These changes, in accordance with educational reform envisioned in the Peace Accords, promote respect for and pride in Guatemala’s cultural and ethnic diversity. Discriminatory representations of

25 Rosenblum, “Introduction,” 122.

26 Blustein, *Morals Demands of Memory*, 35.

indigenous people and their culture, such as images of the “ancient Maya” and texts referring to Mayan peoples in the past tense, have been removed from the textbooks. The curriculum devotes significant time to the discussion of the peace process and the twelve Peace Accords; however, the description of the conflict and the protracted civil war are mostly absent or very limited. On the one hand, many teachers and education officials believe that teaching the violent past could provoke negative intergroup relations and pose a threat to an already fragile democratic state. They believe that teaching about the history of violence is irrelevant in the face of ongoing violence and economic and social problems in the country.

On the other hand, this selective history leads to several misconceptions. One misconception is that the guerrilla groups, motivated to overthrow the state at any cost, started the violence and were entirely responsible for the civil war. The discussion of state repression toward popular movements is omitted, forming the impression of a connection between the rebels and contemporary gangs and criminal networks. This misconception favors the government side in comparison to the guerrilla movement. The second misconception is the idea of “two devils,” presenting the state and the guerrilla militants as equally accountable for brutality. This presentation excludes the discussion of asymmetrical power dynamics and the role of civilians in the civil war. The idea that everyone is responsible denies the accountability of specific groups and people and reduces the ability to reach reconciliation in the postwar society.

In Rwanda, as Denise Bentrovato describes, selective history legitimizes the exclusive power of the Tutsi-dominated RPF to construct a unified “New Rwanda.” It emphasizes that ethnic categorization is a major threat to peace and stability in Rwanda, thus denying any possibility to discuss past and present ethnic relations in the country. This selective history explains the past violence through a division along ethnic lines created by the colonial and postcolonial administrations’ policy of “divide and rule.” The current administration is praised for developing conditions in Rwanda where people now “live together in greater harmony and mutual respect than ever before.” Severe laws on “divisionism,” “reversionism,” “negationism,” and “genocide ideology” all serve to aid the government in silencing its opponents and critics of this historical narrative. This selective history reduces any possibility of deep reconciliation in Rwanda. Moreover, it promotes a simplistic, noncritical view of history and a submission to those in power.

The Importance of Remembrance versus Other Social Projects

Finally, the last dilemma – investing in remembrance or supporting other important social projects – derives from the economic problems in post-conflict societies. Facing difficult economic situations in recovering countries, governments have to make tough decisions regarding the funding of social projects. And even when some governments understand the importance of history education, it often carries less weight than issues of poverty, public health, and crime. Thus, investing in history education remains a low priority and can be delayed for decades after violence has occurred.

In this volume, Mneesha Gellman shows that Sierra Leone has placed history education behind all other social projects. The main argument for this is that the list of required improvements in education is very long, and these changes are not a top priority in the developing country.

Conclusion

The four major dilemmas presented above affect the state of history education in post-violence societies and result in different patterns across countries. Factors that impact their resolution include regime type, multicultural versus ethnic concepts of national identity, and the power of one group versus shared power. To close, I will look at these patterns of dilemma and resolution in the countries analyzed in this volume.

The dilemma of monumental history versus critical history appears to be the major dilemma in post-violent societies. The political and ethnic groups that acquire power after the end of war or ethnic conflict tend to employ monumental history to create loyalty among younger generations and increase their willingness to defend the newly established regime. In Kenya, Macedonia, Pakistan, and Croatia, monumental history is used to establish an impermeable boundary between the nation and its neighboring countries. In Kenya, history education separates the stable Kenyan nation from the volatility and violence of neighboring countries, blaming refugees for the majority of societal problems. In Macedonia, history education divides the Macedonians from the Albanians and other Muslims, emphasizing only a history of conflict and violence. In Pakistan, history education presents Pakistan and India as belonging to different cultural and religious universes and stresses that Muslims escaped Hindu dominance and the imposition of alien values. In Croatia, history education separates the Croats from the Serbs, presenting the former as victims and demonizing the latter as nationalistic and aggressive. These monumental histories employ unbalanced collective axiology with high generality, which emphasizes the positive features of

their nations and the aggressive, cunning, and immoral nature of their neighbors, thus increasing nationalistic and ethnocentric loyalties to their nations. The justification mechanisms of condemning imposition, promoting positive ingroup predispositions, validating ingroup rights, and highlighting the impediment of the outgroup all assist in legitimizing the authority of the ruling power and promoting a feeling of submission and readiness among members of the younger generation to protect their nation from the long-standing enemy.

Monumental history is also used to justify the rule of a particular political party, thereby delegitimizing and disempowering the opposition. In Ghana before 2008, the actions of the opposition party were presented as harmful and destabilizing to the nation, while the policies of the ruling party were depicted as promoting democracy and human rights. This monumental history employed unbalanced axiology along with mechanisms of impediment by the outgroup and condemnation of imposition to promote one party's exclusiveness in defining national policies and representing the nation. The ingroup portrayed its opponent as asserting its own narrow ideology, ideas, policies, and traditions over everyone and wrongly claiming to symbolize the nation.

Thus, many post-conflict countries that establish ethnic or religious concepts of the nation or are dominated by one particular political party utilize monumental history in history education to support the existing regime and promote loyalty among the younger generation. They create simplistic myths of victimization and unbalanced collective axiology and establish a strong social boundary with other political parties, ethnic groups, or neighboring nations.

The development of democracy, political and social stability, and national dialogue in post-conflict societies assists in moving from monumental to critical history in history education. In Ghana's post-2008 curriculum, several Croatian history textbooks, and India's new curriculum, historical events are presented through critical lenses. This critical history concentrates on the social, economic, and political causes of the conflict, functions of social institutions, and structures of the state. It describes conflicts as multifaceted historical episodes, resulting from multiple social and political factors. It dissolves social boundaries between religious and ethnic groups, describing the suffering and atrocities of all parties in conflict and their shared responsibility for violence. It emphasizes the impact of the war on the lives of ordinary people, describing social processes caused by wars and violence, which include forced migration and civilian devastation. Critical history promotes active citizenship, critical thinking, and an ability to recognize social manipulation, thus preventing a recurrence of violence.

Many post-conflict countries still experiencing economic, social, and political instability, facing a complex process of recovery from violence, prefer to perceive history as a "past" that should be forgotten. Such nations as Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Burundi do not provide any descriptions of the violent past in their

history textbooks. The idea of “looking forward” and “moving on” creates an erroneous belief that it is not important to teach the past in schools. Moreover, many teachers are unwilling to address controversial and sensitive history in the classroom, considering it a possible trigger for a new cycle of hate and violence. The histories of war and conflict are not included at any level of schooling, providing no opportunity for children to learn about past events and understand the causes of violence. Such an approach to the past impedes reconciliation and trauma healing in fragile recovering states and dramatically reduces the possibility of preventing future hostilities.

Facing another important dilemma, remembering versus forgetting, post-conflict societies have to decide what history should be presented in the school textbooks in order to prevent future violence but not impede reconciliation processes. In many cases, this leads to a presentation of selective history that reflects biases and political manipulation within nations. In Croatia, Guatemala, and Rwanda, history textbooks avoid the description of particular events or activities carried out by particular groups that allegedly create misconceptions about or erroneous perceptions of history. In Croatia, the emphasis on military history and places of mass violence against Croats reinforces feelings of victimhood and trauma as well as negative attitudes toward Serbs among members of the younger generation. In Guatemala, the emphasis on human rights, cultural rights of indigenous groups, and peace processes is accompanied by an absence of discussion concerning the roots of violence. This selective history creates misconceptions that favor the government side in comparison to the guerrilla movement, which is presented as unjustifiably violent, or deny the accountability of the specific groups and people. In Rwanda, the selective history criticizes ethnic categorizations and policies of “divide and rule” but prohibits discussion of the country’s ethnic relations in the past and present. It helps the government to silence its opponents and endorses the exclusive power of the Tutsi-dominated RPF. In all of these cases, selective history helps promote the power, views, and overall ideology of the group in power. Coupled with a critical presentation of other historical events, a selective history of violence creates false assumptions about the roots of violence and the responsibilities of the parties involved.

Finally, post-conflict countries recovering from past violence face complex processes of economic and social development and democratization. Teaching the past competes with other important social projects such as striving to reduce poverty and violence, improve healthcare and general education, and promote economic stability. In Sierra Leone, for example, history education is not considered a top priority among other development projects.

Thus, the state of history education in post-conflict countries is interconnected with the processes of recovering from violence and war. In one respect, history education deeply depends on the economic and political situation. De-

mocratization processes, political stability, and national dialogue create possibilities for positive changes in history education. History textbooks in countries with these characteristics tend to present critical history and analyze the roots of conflict in order to prevent new cycles of violence and increase social responsibility among the younger generation. However, in nations where a particular ethnic or religious group is dominant, history education is prone to promoting monumental or selective history. In unstable, fragile societies, the violent past is not presented in textbooks, with the goal of leaving the past behind and creating a better common future. In some recovering societies, history education is an afterthought in comparison to other social projects.

At the same time, the success of democratization and achieving political and social stability can be enhanced by history education that presents critical history, analyzes the past to prevent a recurrence of violence, and creates active and responsible citizens. Such history education can show how national rivalries, dictatorships, and desires for world domination lead to devastating wars and genocides. It can demonstrate how popular support of immoral ideologies and policies was obtained; how civilian devastation and wars became possible; how totalitarian regimes diminished the agency of people and their civic responsibility; how narrow interests of small groups were transformed into national sentiments and support for particular policies. History education can show how the aggressive actions of each side stem from histories of intergroup relations, reciprocal wrongdoings, and misinterpretations, thus emphasizing the mutual responsibility of both sides for offenses committed. Such discussions are not likely to reduce patriotism and national pride among children; on the contrary, they will create strong civic accountability and motivations to contribute to the development of the nation. This improvement in history education requires the involvement of educators at different levels, from ministries of education to scholars to schoolteachers, and includes not only changes to curricula and history textbooks but also an approach to teacher training that addresses both their skill levels and their attitudes toward other groups.

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