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The ideological and political role of the school textbook in constructing national memory

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Textbooks as ideological discourses

Textbooks are the dominant definition of the curriculum in schools and are a representation of political, cultural, economic and political battles and compromises. Textbooks are ‘... conceived, designed and authored by real people with real interests’ and are ‘... published within the political and economic constraints of markets, resources and power’ (Apple 1993:46). Textbooks are social constructions which during their process of manufacture include and exclude the expectations of numerous, and often competing, interested parties concerning what constitutes legitimate curriculum knowledge (Anyon, 1979). Although authored by specific individuals, textbooks present broader cultural messages and in terms of their social function bear similarities to government policy documents (De Castell, 1991). The function of textbooks is to ‘... tell children what their elders want them to know’ (Fitzgerald 1979:47) and to ‘... represent to each generation of students a sanctioned version of human knowledge and culture’ (De Castell 1991:78). As instruments of socialisation and as sites of ideological discourse, textbooks introduce young people to an existing cultural and socio-economic order with its relations of power and domination. Exploring the social construction of textbooks provides an important context from within which to critically investigate the dynamics underlying the cultural politics of education, and to examine the social movements that form it and which are formed by it.

Textbook analysis provides a context for the analysis of the interplay of power, history and culture. Here I agree with Giroux that ‘... the importance of challenging, remapping and renegotiating those boundaries of knowledge that claim the status of master narratives, fixed identities and an objective representation of reality is central’. (1992:26). The process of constructing textbook knowledge involves what Williams (1961) called a ‘selective tradition’ where, from the vast store of available knowledge, the school curriculum is manufactured to reflect the values considered important by powerful groups. Thirty years ago Bernstein identified the hegemonic power of curriculum in claiming that ‘How a society selects, classifies, distributes transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers to be public reflects both the distribution of power and the principles of social control.’ (1971: 47).

The selective tradition constructs what is claimed to be legitimate knowledge which, by its elevation, is provided with status, territory and resources; through a process of textual inclusion and exclusion one group’s cultural knowledge is given an official stamp of approval. The outcome of constructing social representation, historical memory and identity in this fashion is that it produces cultural silences. There is an absence of any plurality of discourses and narratives which might emerge from oppositional histories, or what Apple calls ‘mentioning’ where ‘...limited and isolated elements of the history and culture of less powerful groups are included in the texts’. (Apple 1993:56).

The process through which historical factual knowledge is transformed into legitimate curriculum knowledge for pupil consumption through school textbooks involves two

stages. First, the factual historical knowledge, which will represent the core of official knowledge to be transmitted through the curriculum, is selected, reproduced, and structured around specific sets of cultural, socio-economic and ideological aims (Arnove 1995; Jansen 1991; Kwang 1985; Adamson and Morris 1997; Oispuu, 1992; Silova 1996). In analysing the maturation of Environmental Studies into a curriculum area, Goodson (Goodson & Ball (Eds) 1984) writes of its development at a time when environmentalism became a social movement. Goodson quotes Gomm who claimed that the 'climate of opinion which made environmental studies a credible label for curriculum innovation ... is best understood in terms of the historical circumstances of post-war capitalism'. (1984: 41).

Whitty (1976) makes a similar case in charting the growth of the Social Studies curriculum claiming that one of its aims was to 'fit the changing demands of British capitalism and democracy' (1976:36; see also Whitty 1985; Ross 1995). More recently, Washburn's (1997) study of US textbook portrayal of slavery between 1900 and 1992 identified a pronounced shift of emphasis from the multicultural texts of the 1960s and 1970s to the more conservative representations of the 1980s and 1990s.

Second, the selected text is modified through further selection, simplified and condensed in order to satisfy the demands of textbook publishers. Textbooks are economic commodities and it has been argued that they are published for economic rather than intellectual reasons (Apple 1991b). School textbook sales in the USA is a \$2.5 billion a year business with many books being adopted for a five to seven year period requiring repeat print runs. In Russia Aleksandr Krutik, a leading figure in the Dorfa publishing company which publishes 30% of the textbooks used in Russian schools, was shot dead by a sniper outside his apartment. The leading suspects were the Russian Mafia, anxious to gain control of a lucrative textbook market as books were re-written in a post-communist world (*The Times*, 28th August 1997; *Times Educational Supplement*, 22nd May 1999).

The economics of textbook publication influences the work of authors in terms of content, emphasis and pedagogy. The aim of textbook publishing is to produce a product accessible to a particular audience, in an often competitive and volatile market, that conforms to the requirements of national curriculum programmes of study. To manage this process successfully, knowledge must be manufactured as textbook content, and this involves the reproduction of knowledge in a form that reinforces the selective tradition, rather than the production of knowledge.

Because textbooks are based upon the cultural, ideological and political power of dominant groups, they enforce and reinforce cultural homogeneity, they promote shared attitudes and they construct shared historical memories. Debates, controversies and tensions over the construction of school textbooks involve a struggle over the manufacture of and control of popular memory. The objective is to create a shared hegemony, a process through which powerful groups offer intellectual and moral leadership which enables them to rule not by *coercion* but to *lead* a society in which subordinate groups actively support and subscribe to dominant cultural norms. School textbooks are one vehicle through which attempts are made to disseminate and reinforce those dominant cultural forms. Griffin and Marciano have claimed that 'Textbooks offer an obvious means of realising hegemony in education ... Within history texts ... the

omission of crucial facts and viewpoints limits profoundly the ways in which students come to view history events.’ (Griffin and Marciano 1979:35).

In some societies this is achieved through direct political control, in others the control is perhaps less visible resulting in more pragmatic responses, populist cultural imperatives and economic conditions and, consequently, to an achieved hegemony. Apple, reflecting on the fierce textbook wars of the USA, wrote: ‘There is considerable pressure to ... standardise their content, make certain that the texts place more stress on American themes of patriotism, free enterprise and the Western tradition...’ (Apple 1993:52). For Foster, USA history textbooks have:

...championed the capitalist system, endorsed traditional lifestyles, urged unquestioned patriotism and preached reverence to the ‘Western’ tradition ... The function of history in American schools essentially has been to instil in the young a sense of unity and patriotism and a veneration for the nation’s glorious heritage. (Foster 1999:3).

In his critique of USA history textbooks, Loewen claims that the teaching of history is dominated by textbooks whose contents are predictable, uncontroversial and exclude material which ‘...might reflect badly on our [USA] national character’ (Loewen 1995:13): For Loewen the American past is presented as a morality tale with textbooks encouraging students to believe that ‘... history is facts to be learned’. (Loewen 1995:16).

Most publishers in the USA ensure that the content and of their textbooks will be approved by state textbook adoption committees (not all states have such committees but many, particularly in the south, do) especially those in the highly populated states of Texas and in California, and more recently Florida, which exert tremendous power over what counts as official knowledge nationally. For example, Texas legislation asserts that textbook content will:

...promote citizenship and understanding of the essentials and benefits of the free enterprise system, emphasising patriotism and respect for recognised authority, and promote respect for individual rights ... Finally, textbooks approved for use in Texas shall not encourage lifestyles deviating from generally accepted standards of society. (Delfattore 1992:139).

Pressure groups can be powerfully influential in shaping textbook policies (Sewall 1987). In the UK *Environmental Education*, published by the Institute of Economic Affairs, claims that US and UK textbooks are inaccurate and heavily biased. In promoting market forces as solutions to economic problems, the IEA argued that texts too often present a ‘Doomsday scenario’ of the planet’s imminent destruction. Claims include that Keynesian welfare economics still dominates economic textbooks at the expense of neo-liberal explanations focusing upon supply side economics, enterprise, competition and the work of Friedman and Hayek (Chapman, 1998). In Japan a group called *Jiyushugi Shikan Kenkyukai* (the Study Group of Liberal Historical View) in 1995 protested that positive aspects of modern Japanese history should be taught in order to nurture pride among children. Moreover, they insist on the necessity of teaching the view of history in which the ‘national interest’ is regarded as most important.

The UK experienced similar tensions during the construction of the 1991 National Curriculum for history (Crawford 1995; Phillips 1998). Conservative historians such as

Norman Stone, Jonathan Clarke and Lord Skidelsky voiced their opinions. Stone considered that historical facts and dates were like mathematical tables which had to be learnt (*The Sunday Times*, 8th April 1990) and that all children should have the nation's culture '...rammed down their necks' (*Times Educational Supplement*, 25th May 1990). Jonathan Clarke considered it appropriate that the political right colonise the history curriculum in order to define a particular concept of 'nationhood'. Skidelsky claimed that the final history report represented '...a widespread educational doctrine that knowledge is less important than skills' (*The Sunday Times*, 8th April 1990); and argued that traditional history had been swept away. The 1994 revision of the UK National Curriculum for history generated further criticism. Claims were made that 'While politicians are engaged in weakening the British nation state, the schools will be preparing our future citizens to abandon any idea of belonging to a nation. It will be goodbye to patriotism and objective knowledge' (*The Sun*, 5th May 1994).

The construction of truth and knowledge

What appears in textbooks has been allocated an official stamp of 'truth' but what are offered are not truths but claims to truth. Foucault provides a definition of 'truth' which I find helpful in this context:

Truth is a thing of this world ... Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctified; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (1980: 131).

For Foucault "'Truth" ... is produced and transmitted under the control of a few great political and economic apparatuses; ... it is the issue of a whole political debate and social confrontation (ideological struggles)' (1980: 132). It is generally assumed that what appears in textbooks is accurate (factually) and true (Graham Down 1988; Lastrucci 1999). Yet, the evidence from a number of nations is such that it is not possible to conclude that they offer 'truthful' or accurate accounts. Malhi, in his exploration of factual inaccuracies in Malaysian history textbooks, writes:

It does appear that there is a trend of 'rewriting' our history which glorifies certain local rulers, leaders and personalities but conceals their weaknesses ... What concerns me most is that our history textbooks have been plagued with factual errors and contradictions since 1989. Something is terribly wrong with our system of writing history textbooks. Could it be the authors are selected by the Ministry to write a single textbook which will be approved regardless of quality? (1999:23)

Bates (2000) has described how in Indian social studies textbooks Muslims and Christians are described as 'alien villains', and how textbooks in the state of Gujerat extol the Aryan race, ignore Jewish persecution and call for an increase of 'national spirit'. Behera (1996) has analysed how ruling regimes in Pakistan have tried to re-write the national past to suit present political ideologies.

Following Hong Kong's return to Chinese control, China's vice-premier, Qian Qichen, confirmed that the ex-colonies' history textbooks not conforming to Chinese principles

would be revised. In China children are instructed on the history of Hong Kong through textbooks which present an unflattering image of colonial rule and credits the Chinese for Hong Kong's economic success. Chinese officials have said that in Hong Kong textbooks not enough is taught about China, patriotism and nationalism (*Times Educational Supplement*, March 21 1997; 16th May 1997:21). Within China the writing of textbooks is closely monitored by the state to ensure that they provide pupils with a foundation for the development of ideological and moral character and the interests of the socialist state (Liu Bin, 1994). Higgins has observed that one Chinese text '...cites Tiananmen student protesters as evidence of popular support for the party, claiming to see a shared contempt for corruption among the protesters and the government' (Higgins, 1997:14).

Lisovskaya and Karpov (1999) in their study of recent ideological changes in the content of Russian secondary school textbooks in the social sciences and humanities have analysed how under Communist rule textbooks' representations of history, society, and culture were distorted in order to match the ideological dogma of Leninism. Under Gorbachev's perestroika textbooks continued to support communism but included topics which had been forbidden, including critiques of Stalinism. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union concepts such as capitalism, economic entrepreneurship, political freedom and the rights of individuals have found their way into textbooks. More recently these changes have been attacked by diverse ideological groups such as neo-Stalinists and conservative nationalists. Lisovskaya and Karpov conclude that the content of Russian textbooks has shifted from support for the key ideas of Marxism-Leninism toward support for a combination of nationalism, Westernisation and a reinterpretation of communism.

In Israel there is evidence that textbooks paint a simplistic picture of the Arab-Israeli conflict and are avidly ethnocentric. Daniel Bar-Tal, a researcher from Tel Aviv University, analysed one hundred and twenty four history, geography and civics textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education and found evidence of a belief in Israeli victimisation and the negative stereotyping of Arabs. For example, one textbook states that 'They [the Arabs] are extremists and we are more moderate. They murder indiscriminately and we defend ourselves'. (Surkes 1997:4). On the other side of this divide *Reading, Writing and Hate*, a study of three hundred and thirty Egyptian, Jordanian, Syrian and Palestinian textbooks by Susan Sachs, found that reference to Arab-Israeli co-existence was ignored, Egyptian textbooks did not name Israel on maps and Jordanian textbooks contained evidence of anti-Semitism (Surkes 1996). Russian textbooks have been accused of being crudely patriotic, nationalistic and anti-Semitic and links have been suggested with attacks on Jewish communities and with a rise in extreme forms of Russian nationalism (Pirani, 1999).

Smith (1994) has explored the politics of textbook construction in Japan and the intense internal and external re-writing and re-positioning of Japanese history and its relationships with its neighbours in south east Asia. In 1997 Japanese historian, Saburo Ienaga won a victory against government censorship when the Japanese Supreme Court ruled that the removal from a school textbook of a passage about Japanese germ warfare experiments in World War Two was unlawful. However, the Supreme Court rejected Ienaga's claim that descriptions of the Battle of Okinawa in which 160,000 residents died, some killed by Japanese troops, and of the 1937-1938 Rape of Nanking, in which up to 300,000 Chinese soldiers and civilians were slaughtered by Japanese troops, also be included uncensored. The Education Ministry asked Ienaga to write that most of the victims in Okinawa died in mass suicides and to modify his descriptions of Japanese

brutality in the Rape of Nanking (*International Herald Tribune*, Saturday, August 30, 1997, page 1; *Times Educational Supplement* 10th January 1997); *Times Educational Supplement* 2nd July 1993; *Asia Wall Street Journal* 12th May 1997).

In Italy Lastrucci (1999) reports a nationalistic and ethnocentric bias in Italian history books and Kallis (1999) reached a similar conclusion in his study of German, Italian and Greek textbooks. In Spain problems over selection and bias are even more pronounced, in a nation where textbook publishers have to provide seven versions of history texts in response to regional demands. For example, Castilla and Cataluña have very different views on the role of Ferdinand and Isabella's contribution to financing the voyages of Columbus, and history texts in the Basque region describe France *and* Spain as neighbours (Mackay 1997).

In the UK Cowans claims that his sample of history textbooks focusing upon World War Two portrayed Germans as 'crude and thoughtless' and that 'none of the texts used German primary sources in written text, only three asked pupils to consider the Germans' position ...' (1996:335). Cowans concluded that as a result primary-aged children '... understood the war to have involved unprovoked, irrational and unchallenged German aerial bombardment of British civilians' (1996:335). Rutland (1999) has reported a high degree of negative stereotyping and national prejudice towards Germany among primary-age children. There is also evidence that Second World War images of a victorious Britain shape definitions of what it means to be British (Calder 1991) and that British children lack a moral understanding of the Second World War as a result of the neglect of sensitive issues, where the Holocaust is marginalised and where there is an over-concentration on the Blitz (see *Times Educational Supplement*, 5th May 1995). This might help explain the manner in which the British have continued to mythologise about Germany. Michael Naumann, the German culture minister, has claimed that 'there is only one nation in the world that has decided to make the Second World War a sort of spiritual core of its national self, understanding and pride'. (*The Sunday Times*, 19th February 1999:1).

This range of evidence suggests strongly that there is a need to engage in the critical analysis of textbook production and to uncover the ideological and political forces at work in their manufacture. In the following sections we suggest a possible framework for such investigations and offer a tentative research agenda.

An empirical framework?

In their analysis of the 1988 Education Reform Act in the UK, Bowe and Ball with Gold (1992) identify three sites within which they claim that the construction and reconstruction of educational policy takes place:

The Context of Influence: where the ideological and political basis of policy is decided by government and powerful interest groups;

The Context of Text Production: where texts deemed to represent policy are constructed;

The Context of Practice: the professional sites within which policy and policy texts are interpreted by teachers.

This framework provides a useful model from which to mount studies of textbook construction both *within* individual contexts, and crucially, exploring textbook construction in terms of the structural, ideological and political relationship between different contexts. The context of influence provides the arena within which educational

policy is initiated and policy discourses are constructed, the context where ‘interested parties struggle to influence the definition and social purposes of education’ (Bowe and Ball with Gold 1992: 19). Within the context of influence co-exist private and public decision-making networks. Private debate takes place within policy-making groups at work within political parties, government and their agencies. Public debate takes place within teacher unions, pressure groups and the media. It is at this level, the level of the political, ideological and educational state, that cultural wars are conducted and where a selective tradition is formed.

In Bowe and Ball with Gold’s description of the context of text production three points are significant. First, a policy text is ‘... based upon claims to popular (and populist) common sense and political reason’ (1992: 20). Second, individual texts are ‘The outcome of struggle and compromise’. (1992: 21). Third, the control of the representation of policy is problematic. Within this context textbook authors, publishers, pressure groups etc. construct what is claimed to be legitimate curriculum knowledge through turning selected historical knowledge into school textbook knowledge. Bowe and Ball with Gold claim that ‘The key point is that policy is not simply received within this arena, rather it is subject to interpretation and then “recreated” ...Parts of texts will be rejected, selected out, ignored, deliberately misunderstood, responses may be frivolous etc’. (1992:22).

In order to develop coherent understandings of textbook construction we need to develop an historical appreciation of state schooling and the nature of curriculum and social change. This task is particularly important given the claimed changes taking place at a global, cultural and educational level. The challenges of globalisation have placed pressure on the nation state; international relations have become fluid and multi-centric leading to more global integration and the potential of greater national disintegration. The globalisation of economic markets has posed a threat to the power of nation states that have found their economic, social and political agendas threatened internationally. The notion of the nation state as an unstable, rather than stable, entity has important implications for the construction of curricula.

One outcome has been the fragmentation of social and cultural politics, coupled with the rise of oppositional and factional groups characterised by pressure groups supporting particular, sometimes single issue, causes relating to, for example, gender, race and the environment. The outcome is the construction of cultural pluralism and the manufacture of new culturally politicised groups who question the geopolitical, socio-economic and cultural principles of the nation as defining characteristics that bind people together. This condition has created new alliances resulting in new forms of political expression, which challenge conservative notions of state authority. The traditional authority of political order, authorised legitimacy and congruence is shattered by a growing scepticism of government and realignments in political affiliations in a climate of change and uncertainty. Principles such as discipline, authority and duty are marginalised by those of freedom, leisure and spontaneity (Gibbins 1989; Gilbert 1995).

Studies of the social construction of school textbooks, which integrate into their analyses an historical dimension within the context of influence, help trace the continuities and discontinuities in curriculum construction within the context of text production and their impact upon implementation. The identification and analysis of what Goodson calls the ‘structural legacy’ (1995:187) is important because antecedents, precedent and tradition provide a set of parameters, sometimes constraining and sometimes enabling, upon which

individuals and groups draw and within which they work. The absence of a structural and historical perspective, which is all too obvious in many studies of curriculum construction, does not allow the critical exploration of individual and group agency, within the contexts of text production and practice, particularly in terms of choice in response to political structures, institutional rules, cultural norms and the pervasive power and influence of historical precedent.

Micro-studies in classroom interpretation arguing that curriculum subjects and themes are open to the potential of agency in terms of re-definition tend to, perhaps unintentionally, render any discussion of the preactive nature of the curriculum unnecessary. It is unfortunate that the emphasis placed upon post-structural and postmodernist accounts of agency have tended to marginalise the powerful structural context within which schools, teachers and the curriculum 'work.' Arguments that within the context of practice schools and teachers bring an interpretative repertoire to policies run the risk of significantly narrowing debate about the wider social purposes of schooling.

Based upon this model, textbook studies could usefully focus upon:

1. The influence of state control over school knowledge and the nature of the structural, (historical, economic, cultural, ideological and political) constraints impinging upon textbook construction; the relationship between the exercise of power, the selection of curriculum knowledge and its classroom implementation.
2. Within the context of text production what is the process through which textbook knowledge is constructed; what claims to truth and knowledge are presented. Who are the characters, heroes and villains? How does the process of textual inclusion and textual exclusion work? Is what is presented nationalistic or national history? Are accounts 'safe' and uncontroversial, excluding material that reflects badly on national sensitivities? Does a dominant elite suppress the development of a critical historical consciousness? Here the focus might be upon the following questions:
 - Who is it that selects school textbook knowledge and what are the ideological, economic and intellectual relationships between different interest groups?
 - Through what process is textbook knowledge declared to be official knowledge and how is it filtered through sets of political screens and decisions before it is declared legitimate?
 - What voices are heard in textbooks, *whose* knowledge is included, which group(s) receive the most sustained attention, whose story is being told?
 - To what extent do school textbooks act as a 'distorting filter' in the ignoring of other views? Do texts exclude or marginalise particular groups who are part of a nation's history e.g. those representing social, cultural, religious, economic, ethnic or geographical groups?

There is a need to be careful about assuming that what is written in textbooks gets either taught or learnt. A number of critical ethnographies of school and classrooms have shown that written texts can be subject to a multiplicity of readings and that the manner in which a text is received can vary (Ball 1990).

Within the context of practice, teacher and pupil responses to textbooks can offer the potential to be different from that intended by authors. Material can be re-structured or re-interpreted and part, or all, of what is said to constitute official knowledge can be rejected. I find Usher and Edwards' claim helpful that texts [here I include textbooks] are stories or narratives that education tells about itself or that are told on its behalf. They write:

These stories, like all stories, have a plot, a narrative, a cast of characters including heroes ... and villains (feared and rejected) and a style (a set of metaphors which 'animate' the text) ... these stories, because they are texts, always have sub-texts, that which is implied but not overtly stated ... Above all stories are 'read' and through being read have effects - effects that position 'readers' in different ways, which affect their lives by rendering them as powerful or powerless subjects. (Usher and Edwards, 1994:145)

This perspective acknowledges that written texts are subject to a multiplicity of readings and meanings, and that the manner in which a text is received varies significantly. Barthes' (1976) notion of 'readerly' and 'writerly' texts illustrates this point, although I am cautious about its use. Barthes writes:

Literature may be divided into that which gives the reader a role, a function, a contribution to make, and that which renders the reader idle or redundant, left with no more than the poor freedom to accept or reject the text and which thereby reduces him to that apt but impotent symbol of the bourgeois world, an inert consumer to the author's role as producer. (1976: 113)

Whereas some documents might be interpreted as 'writerly' by readers constrained by circumstances within which they adopt the text's discourse, other readers might view them as 'readerly' texts, open to interpretation, re-interpretation and translation. The result is that the original intentions of the text may be obscured. Apple (1991a) talks of 'dominant', 'negotiated' and 'oppositional' readings. Dominant readings result in the reader accepting the text uncritically, as a 'writerly' text; in a negotiated reading the reader accepts the basic premise of the text - even if there are doubts over certain elements it is accepted as broadly accurate. In an oppositional reading the text is rejected outright.

Within the context of practice useful areas of investigation might focus upon:

- The extent to which teachers re-select, re-define and re-interpret textbook knowledge in their teaching; are elements of texts rejected, ignored or deliberately misunderstood?
- The pedagogic approaches teachers adopt and their impact upon presenting textbook knowledge as 'writerly' or 'readerly'; what evidence is there of dominant, negotiated or oppositional readings? Do teachers engage in interpretation and meaning-making, creative and novel readings?
- The impact of teacher belief and values systems on curriculum delivery; and
- The structural limitations to teachers' work which impact upon the use of textbooks and evidence of teacher's work being over-regulated, over-determined and bureaucratised.

Conclusions

Textbook analysis should focus upon exploring particular problems, issues and themes such as the nature of Europe and its representation in textbooks, the principles and practices of citizenship education, the presentation and representation of issues of environmental concern, human rights education and education in a multicultural society. There are a

number of organisations across Europe which can aid this task. For example, the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, Braunschweig, Germany compares historical, political, and geographical presentations in the textbooks of the Federal Republic of Germany and those of other countries, and submits recommendations for making them more objective. In addition, the Institute organises conferences, advises authors, editors and publishers and disseminates the outcomes of research through publications and lectures. In April 1993 the Council of Europe Union established EUROCLIO: the European Standing Conference of History Teachers' Associations. EUROCLIO represents about 65,000 History teachers in more than 40 countries with the aim to defend and promote History teaching as an essential subject. (see j.vanderleeuw@pobox.ruu.nl). UNESCO has also sponsored a conference on history textbook revision (see <http://www.marebalticum.com/disarminghistory>).

The Textbook Research and Information Centre for the Baltic Countries at the Institute of Pedagogics in Vilnius, Lithuania, is developing collections of history, geography and social science textbooks and is carrying out textbook research aimed at textbook authors, publishers and users. In June 1999 the centre organised a conference for social science textbook authors, publishers and specialists in civics didactics from all the Baltic countries, and at the end of 1999 ran a workshop on the image of Russian/USSR history in the history textbooks of the Baltic countries after the dissolution of the Soviet Union (see <http://www.pedagogika.lt/vtic/newsletter>). A project on the teaching of history at school and the formation of new historical narratives in Russia in the period 1985 to 1995 was conducted by the research team of the Cummings Centre for Russian and East European Studies, Tel-Aviv University (see <http://www.tau.ac.il/~russia>). The aim of the project was to investigate the teaching of history in secondary schools in post-Soviet Russia. The project analyses history textbooks with the objective of describing the changes that have taken place in the historical narrative they contain.

Methodologically, textbook analysis offers the potential for historians, geographers, social scientists, and educationalists to join in inter-disciplinary research through which can be developed more coherent and grounded understandings of different cultures. The role of textbook study should be to expose to analysis the type, variety and content of knowledge, insights and value judgements included in textbooks. Textbook study ought to involve individuals and groups engaging in critical enquiry into national perceptions of nation, culture and history, enabling the development of cross-national networks of researchers and practitioners.

All of us live in nation-states whose territory; culture and history are represented in textbooks as sacred and long-standing. Some nations can as part of their cultural discourse attempt to trace their past back thousands of years and in doing so often claim for their nation a past which is invented. The definition of nation does not provide an idea of what people understand or feel their nation to be and that the 'nation' is whatever its citizens imagine it to be. Colley (1992) and Ross (1995) have suggested that the creation of attitudes and values through which national identity is shaped is done through '... a

process of exclusion, of contrasting it against the other' (1995:90). The nation is not defined through a set of specific statements which mark out an intrinsic distinctiveness but is defined through contrasts with other nations, other groupings, other cultures and sub-cultures through a discourse of negative comparison.

Textbook research needs to focus upon more than textbook revision in an effort to identify and eliminate factual errors. It must explore the interrelationship between socio-historical, ideological and geo-political influences. Textbook research would contribute little if it failed to analyse the elaborate and complicated inter-relationship of ideological and cultural legitimation and historical, geographical and political consciousness. This is an important and legitimate task, in such a rapidly changing world the mark of a mature democracy, confident with itself and with its place in the world, is the extent to which it consciously enables its young people to engage with the national past in a critical manner.

Figure 1: Methodological framework for textbook analysis

Contexts	Focus	Questions
1a) The Context of Influence	This context is where the ideological and political basis of policy is decided by government and interest groups. The context of influence provides the arena within which educational policy is initiated, policy discourses are constructed, it is the context where those with an interest in education attempt to influence the definition of what constitutes legitimate curriculum knowledge and the social purposes of education. It is within this context, in political, ideological and educational sites, that cultural wars are conducted.	<p>a) The influence of state control on school knowledge; what are the nature of the structural, (historical, economic, cultural, ideological and political) constraints impinging upon textbook construction?</p> <p>b) The relationship between the exercise of power, the selection of curriculum knowledge and its classroom implementation; how is a selective tradition manufactured?</p>
1b) The Context of Text Production	Here texts deemed to represent policy are constructed. Texts are constructed in a way that appeals to Popular common sense and the process of their construction is marked by struggle and compromise. Interest groups compete in an effort to ensure that their view of an issue, theme or problem dominates. Within this context textbook authors, publishers, pressure groups etc. construct what is claimed to be legitimate curriculum knowledge.	<p>a) Who selects school textbook knowledge and what is the ideological, economic and political basis of that selection?</p> <p>b) How is textbook knowledge declared to be official knowledge and how is it filtered before it is declared legitimate?</p> <p>c) <i>Whose</i> knowledge is included, whose story is told ?</p> <p>d) Do texts exclude or marginalise particular groups e.g. social, cultural, religious, economic, ethnic or geographical groups?</p> <p>e) Do textbooks glorify and justify power groupings through the teaching of national myths?</p>

Contexts	Focus	Questions
1c) The Context of Practice.	The professional sites within which texts are interpreted by teachers. Texts are not simply received but are subject to interpretation. It is within this context where there exists, at the very least, the potential for teachers through pedagogical approaches to re-interpret and to re-select that historical textbook knowledge to which they wish to expose their children.	a) Do teachers re-select, re-define and re-interpret textbook knowledge in their teaching? b) What pedagogic approaches do teachers adopt and what is their impact upon presenting textbook knowledge? c) What is the impact of teacher belief and values systems on the delivery of textbook knowledge? d) Are their structural limitations to teachers' work which impact upon their use of textbooks?

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