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Abstracts

Introduction: School Textbook Revision

Eckhardt Fuchs

Textbook Revision and Beyond. New Challenges for Contemporary Textbook Activities

Basabi Khan Banerjee and Georg Stöber

Whereas “classical” textbook revision involved two or more nation-states, this article explores current challenges in this field which are internal or go beyond the level of nation-states: textbook activities after internal wars, the search for a “European textbook,” immigration, international schools and examinations. All of these challenges touch upon the question of identities which are distinct from “traditional” national identities. The article sketches the respective backgrounds of these current challenges as well as practical aspects that need to be considered. The authors also question whether solutions can be found by replacing constricted identities with more comprehensive ones.

Textbook Conflicts in South Asia: Politics of Memory and National Identity

Deepa Nair

The aftermath of the Second World War saw the emergence of many new nation-states on the Asian geopolitical map and a simultaneous attempt by these states to claim the agency of nationhood and to create an aura of a homogenous national identity. Textbooks have been the most potent tools used by nations to inject an idea of a national memory – in many instances with utter disregard for fundamental contradictions within the socio-political milieu. In South Asia, political sensitivity towards transmission of the past is reflected in the attempts of these states to revise or rewrite versions which are most consonant with the ideology of dominant players (political parties, religious organizations, ministries of education, publishing houses, NGOs, etc.) concerning the nature of the state and the identity of its citizens. This paper highlights the fundamental fault lines in the project of nation-building in states in South Asia by locating instances of the revision or rewriting of dominant interpretations of the past. By providing an overview of various revisionist exercises in South Asia, an attempt will be made to highlight important issues that are fundamental to the construction of identities in this diverse continent.

Univocality within Multivocality: The Israeli-Arab-Palestinian Conflict as Reflected in Israeli History Textbooks, 2000-2010

Elie Podeh

Previous research on the way in which the Arab-Israeli conflict and the image of the Arab have been presented in Jewish history and civics textbooks established that there have been three phases, each typified by its own distinctive textbooks. The shift from the first to the third generation of textbooks saw a gradual improvement in the way the ‘other’ has been described, with the elimination of many biases, distortions and omissions. This article explores whether new history textbooks, published from 2000 to 2010, have entrenched or reversed this trend. With the

escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since the early 2000s, one might have expected that the past linear process of improvement would be reversed. However, textbooks written over the last decade do not substantially differ from those written in the 1990s, during the heyday of the peace process. The overall picture is, therefore, that the current textbooks do not constitute a fourth generation.

Nationalism, Peace Education, and History Textbook Revision in Scandinavia, 1886-1940

Henrik Åström Elmersjö & Daniel Lindmark

History as a school subject has been a thorny issue for advocates of peace education at least since the 1880s. Efforts, including the substitution of cultural history for military history, have been made to ensure that it promote international understanding, not propagate chauvinism. The Norden Associations of Scandinavia, which were involved in textbook revision since 1919, achieved some success by altering contents, but national myths remained central to each country's historical narrative, making it difficult to give history education its desired international orientation.

The Politics of Historical Memory in Germany: Brandt's Ostpolitik, the German-Polish History Textbook Commission, and Conservative Reaction¹

Yangmo Ku

Prior to the late 1960s, history textbooks lacked coverage of Poland and depicted Germany's eastern neighbour with negative images. The 1970s and 1980s, however, witnessed positive changes to the contents of German school textbooks - particularly with respect to their descriptions of Poland and German-Polish relations. How and why did Germany promote a more reflective view of history and correct negative descriptions of the Poles in German history textbooks between the 1970s and 1980s? The article addresses this question by focusing on the influence of Brandt's Ostpolitik on the activities of the German-Polish History Textbook Commission. The article also shows how contemporary conservative reaction was not powerful enough to reverse these positive changes to German history textbooks.

Geschichtsdeutung als Macht? Schulbuchforschung zwischen wissenschaftlicher Erkenntnis- und politischer Entscheidungslogik

Falk Pingel

This article explores the relation between scholarship, politics and education in projects devoted to international textbook revision. It focuses on the sequencing of and interconnections between politics and science during the consultation process, with reference to the German-Polish Textbook Commission, textbook revision in Bosnia Herzegovina and Israeli-Palestinian project groups. The author draws conclusions from this analysis which might contribute towards the design of further projects in the future

History Textbooks in Twentieth Century Japan: A Chronological Overview

Shinichi Arai

Despite modernization of the Japanese school system after 1872, this period was marked by the war in East Asia and nationalism focusing on the emperor, whereby the imperial rescript of 1890 defined the core of national education. Following defeat in the Second World War, Japan reformed its education system in accordance with a policy geared towards peace and democracy in line with the United Nations. However, following the peace treaty of 1951 and renewed economic development during the Cold War, the conservative power bloc revised history textbooks in accordance with nationalist ideology. Many teachers, historians and trade unions resisted this tendency, and in 1982 neighbouring countries in East Asia protested against the Japanese government for justifying past aggression in history textbooks. As a result, descriptions of wartime misdeeds committed by the Japanese army found their way into textbooks after 1997. Although the ethnocentric history textbook for Japanese secondary schools was published and passed government screening in 2001, there is now a trend towards bilateral or multilateral teaching materials between Japan, South Korea, and China. Two bilateral and one multilateral work have been published so far, which constitute the basis for future trials toward publishing a common textbook.

Historical Textbook Research: Textbooks in the Context of the “Grammar of Schooling”

Carsten Heinze

This piece defends the hypothesis that methodologically well-grounded historical textbook research is only possible if one has an understanding of the context in which textbooks acquire meaning. Based on the theory of a “grammar of schooling” (Tyack/Tobin; Cuban), the article develops a concept on the basis of which it is possible to describe particular contexts and the way in which they relate to teaching materials. Textbooks are thus understood as an element of the “grammar of schooling” and, from the perspective of discourse and theory, as a “point of intersection” between discourse and its corresponding teaching practice.