
Cultural Wars and History Textbooks in Democratic Societies

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This chapter provides the background to and illustrative accounts of politically motivated clashes about how the past is represented in modern democratic societies. These clashes, often instigated by conservative/nationalist ideologues, are known more generally as ‘history wars’. In this chapter these ‘wars’ are examined on a case study basis as they occur in Australia and the USA, both liberal democracies, and in the Russian federation, a ‘sovereign democracy’. Three further purposes of the chapter are to provide a historical background to the role of textbooks in past and recent history wars, to suggest more generally why these history wars arose, what they involved and who prosecuted them, and to outline possible future changes in how information management in the history classroom, once the sole province of textbooks, might be changing.

AN OVERVIEW

In the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, the school textbook served the national project in the teaching of history. This involved the construction of a national story, with origins and formative events, and the imposi-

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tion of a binding nationhood on regional, local and, where relevant, imperial differences. For example, history textbooks commonly used in the major part of the British private school system during 1870–1914 focused on moral training in English cultural beliefs, loyalty to authority and good citizenship as a basis for training leaders who would defend the empire against internal and external threats (Cannadine, Keating, & Sheldon, 2011).

For example, such texts were produced in the Australian colonies from the establishment of public education in the 1870s (Sutherland, 1877). They related the exploration and settlement of the colonies as affirmations of British enterprise, their political and economic progress as validating the imperial patrimony (Jenks, 1895; Jose, 1899). After the federation of the colonies into the Commonwealth of Australia, these textbooks traced the growth of the nation state and the duties of the citizen as an informed and patriotic participant in its affairs (Murdoch, 1903; Scott, 1916). They validated its political regime, justified its territorial claims and inculcated patriotism. The historical pedagogy was didactic and exalted a particular moral position by making use of exemplary figures who served the nation and embodied its qualities.

Moving on to the twentieth century and the desire to foster a broader worldview, there were international attempts to revise this form of school history and the textbooks that served it, especially after the two world wars. These involved both educationalists and academic historians, and there were efforts through both the League of Nations and UNESCO to free school history from its nationalist orientation (see below). Such endeavours had limited success: they were resisted by the education departments that oversaw the school system and impeded by competition between teachers and academics. However, the disputes over the content and purpose of school history were typically intramural and did not usually give rise to public controversy (Fuchs, 2010; Sluga, 2013).

When we get to the closing decades of the twentieth century, the history curriculum and the history textbook gave rise to sustained and acrimonious public contestation on a global basis. These disputes may have been national in their circumstances and specific to the particular national history, but the history wars remain an international phenomenon.

History wars tend to coincide with a weakening of the authority of the nation state. This is most obvious in zones of conflict such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria that have fractured along ethnic, religious and tribal lines. But the history wars are less evident there than in countries where nationalism is asserted against perceived threats. These include rivalries with neighbouring states (e.g. Japan and China) and the claims of irredentist minorities as in, for example, the Israel/Palestine issue.

For the most part the perceived threat arises from the cosmopolitan implications of globalisation. It has been argued that globalisation has eroded the sources of national identity, and that in their place a multiplicity of group identities based on ethnicity, religion, regional membership and lifestyle have narrowed the ambit of national identification (Castells, 2010). With the weakening of national cohesion, the liberal conception of citizenship—as an autonomous

member of a self-governing community—is replaced by the assertion of loyalties incumbent on all who live within the territorial boundaries.

Of particular concern in the history wars is the professional and managerial class, which has prospered in the knowledge economy. Mobile and increasingly global in outlook, it is seen to isolate itself from the majority and reduce its ties to the nation (Lasch, 1994). The politics of the history wars are thus marked by neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism. Governments have pursued neo-liberal economic policies in pursuit of competitive advantage, but also seek social cohesion and it is progressive élites who are commonly blamed for undermining national unity. Populist politicians, commentators and the media act as self-appointed guardians of these countries' traditions and denounce those who question them.

A similar divergence is apparent in educational policy. Education is aligned increasingly with the needs of the economy, with an emphasis on essential skills and vocational studies, which in turn is monitored by performance management and measurable outcomes, but is also expected to meet social objectives. Hence national school curricula tend to encompass skills, values and ethical capacities, especially as they relate to past events (see, e.g. Marginson, 1997: 92–130).

Accordingly, the history wars arise in various settings (e.g. commemoration, memorials, museums, cinema) but have special force in school history. They are less marked in universities, where disciplinary practices place greater emphasis on methods of critical interpretation in specialist studies of different times and places. School history differs from university history in that it is taught to all students, rather than those who choose to study it, and places a particular emphasis on national history. Moreover, school history is defined in mandated curricula, whereas universities are self-accredited institutions with a high level of curricular autonomy.

The history wars are conducted over national history. They arise when received versions of a country's past, its formative events, cultural lineage and achievements are perceived to be under threat. Military aggression and atrocities are a common source of contention (as in Japan, dealt with at length in Taylor, 2007, 2008), along with genocide such as in Turkey and Germany (see Taylor, 2008), or internal repression in Russia and Argentina for example (see Taylor, 2016, and Gonzalez, 2012, respectively). In settler societies (such as Australia), it is the treatment and of displacement of indigenous peoples that is most sensitive, and efforts to include minorities and recognise cultural difference form two other flashpoints (Macintyre & Clark, 2003).

The history wars typically fix on curriculum documents and textbooks. In doing so the prosecutors treat the curriculum as a prescriptive document that determines what all students will be taught, learn and believe, and textbooks as definitive statements. They pay little attention to the obstacles of realising curriculum, the 'powerful, obstructive local filters' that modify the mandated curriculum through variations in jurisdictional response, teacher mediation and student response (Taylor & Guyver, 2012: xiii). The history wars are thus con-

ducted in circumstances where the educational system can have a degree of autonomy from state control, and where historians and the teaching profession do have a capacity to resist political pressure.

A principal battleground of one form of the history wars is the national content of the curriculum. In Europe, for example, efforts to develop a supra-national history that fosters a common European identity have foundered on the insistence on preserving the national past—as was the case, for example, in the Netherlands with the introduction in 2009 of the Dutch Canon (Grever & Stuurman, 2007, and see below). In the UK too the conservative government's education minister adopted a new curriculum that emphasised national history at the expense of world history (Guyver, 2014).

A further point of conflict is pedagogical method. From the 1970s onwards, in many Western nations, teaching and textbooks shifted from a teacher-centred form of instruction in the events of the past to an inquiry-based approach that sought to teach the skills and concepts of historical thinking. Arguably, the best-known example of such an approach was the UK's 1970s Schools Council History 13–16 Project (Shemilt, 1980). Such teaching emphasised the multiplicity of historical interpretation, and encouraged students to construct their own understanding (Klerides, 2010). In opening up received accounts to critical interrogation, it attracted accusations of moral relativism. In prosecuting Australia's history wars in 2006, for example, the conservative Prime Minister John Howard undertook to restore a factual narrative in place of what he described as a 'stew of themes and issues' as did President Vladimir Putin in his 2000–2015 campaign to turn the Russian secondary history curriculum into a fact-based, patriotic narrative (Taylor, 2016) while in the Netherlands, the coalition government of the then Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende (Christian Democratic Appeal party) introduced the controversial essentialist Dutch Canon (50 key windows into Dutch history) into schools in 2009. Having said all that, while curriculum design provides the basis for the structure of history education, pedagogy in both liberal and illiberal societies is often dependent on how interpretations and representations of the past are framed in school textbook, especially in textbook-dependent education systems.

TEXTBOOKS AND HISTORY EDUCATION

Compared with the amount of sustained inquiry into pedagogical methods and into educational theory and policy generally, research into the use of textbooks as a crucial element (or not) in history classrooms was until the 1990s a low-yield activity that was methodologically varied and geographically scattered. This paucity of attention is almost certainly because of the huge number of variables associated with the use of textbooks in the classroom. For example, large-scale empirical studies would, in many democratic societies, encounter teacher-to-teacher, school-to-school, year-to-year and publisher-to-publisher variations that might militate against anything other than the most anodyne

conclusions. Further, classroom micro-studies, while useful anecdotally, can only offer, at best, vivid but isolated and often atypical findings. What this means is that our understanding of any patterns of the relationship between textbooks and historical controversy remains fragmented and incomplete (Pingel, 2010: 46).

Consequently, apart from the highly regarded work of Germany's Georg Eckert Institut (www.gei.de/en/the-institute.html), the field of history textbook study is relatively barren. The UK history educator Stuart Foster (2011) has bemoaned the lack of a corpus of literature in such a key pedagogical area, stressing the central importance of more research in the field. In attempting to produce conceptual categories that might frame new research he has arrived at a two-part classification of how history textbooks are, and might yet be, researched and critiqued.

His first category is the *conciliatory tradition* approach, where textbook researchers work with practitioner educators from a range of nations to produce textbooks that show a broad, common understanding of past events and at the same time are aware of the histories of other nations. This approach, from 1925 to the present, has been applied to much of the work of the League of Nations, UNESCO, the Council of Europe and to the activities of the Georg Eckert Institut (see e.g. Aleksashkina, 2006). The second category is the *critical tradition* in which academics and researchers examine textbooks as a way of answering questions about the development of historical consciousness, as in Peter Seixas's view (drawn from Macdonald & Fausser, 2000) that this kind of consciousness is an amalgam of 'individual and collective understandings of the past, the cognitive and cultural factors that shape those understandings, as well as the relations of historical understandings to those of the present and the future' (Seixas, 2006: 10).

The Conciliatory Tradition

For almost a century, the idea of school textbook revision has played a growing part in how progressive and well-intentioned international organisations have viewed representations of the past in the classroom. Combining the commentaries of the Georg Eckert Institut researchers Falk Pingel (2010) and Eckhart Fuchs (2010), we can see that the initiative started with a post-Great War appeal by the *Föreningen Nordenbrief* (Nordic Association Brief) for de-biased Nordic textbooks. The process then moved on to a largely ineffectual 1925 League of Nations *International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation* that urged, through the 1926 *Casares Resolution*, a transnational checking for bias. These ecumenical endeavours led to a 1932 League of Nations report critical of humanities textbooks, and several mid-1930s initiatives in Europe and Latin America culminating on 2 October 1937 in a League of Nations six-page *Declaration Regarding the Teaching of History* advocating international perspectives in history textbooks (Fuchs, 2010; Pingel, 2010).

Evidence is not forthcoming about the responses of the 16 member states that signed this declaration but Fuchs has pointed out that the League of Nations was not in a position to enforce its declarations. What we do know, however, is that one month after that October 1937 League declaration, on 5 November 1937 Hitler outlined his war plans to the small *Hossbach Memorandum* meeting of Nazi diplomatic and military leaders in the Reich Chancellery. Four days after that event, and on the other side of the world, the Imperial Japanese Army entered Shanghai. These two aggressor states, each of which had left the League of Nations in 1933, clearly held very different views from those outlined in the 1937 *Declaration* about what constituted international perspectives. Looking at these three events together, we can infer that if a nation's government is not receptive to international advice, there can be little or no progress when it comes to producing a conciliatory textbook culture. The 1930s were not a good time to ask nations to show more understanding of each other.

Following the end of World War Two, UNESCO took on the renewed task of internationally based guidance in textbook revision with its 1949 *Handbook for the Improvement of Textbooks and Teaching Materials as Aids to International Understanding*. This was part of a UNESCO Model Plan that stressed, amongst other matters, the importance of multinational Asian/Western representations as well as the significance of bilateral representations in the textbooks of nations formerly in conflict with each other. This latter initiative shifted UNESCO's emphasis more from internationalist to bilateral national perspectives but it came at a time when the Cold War was verging on hot war status. The Korean War, the continuing Cold War as well as colonial conflicts of the 1950s and 1960s seem to have stymied any further attempts for improving bilateral relations. In 1974, to meet the challenges of the enduring Cold War and a post-colonial world, UNESCO then adopted a resolution that was intended to encourage 'international understanding, co-operation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms' (Pingel, 2010: 13).

As for history textbooks, this resolution pointed out (Pingel, 2010: 13):

Member States should encourage wider exchange of textbooks, especially history and geography textbooks, and should, where appropriate, take measures, by concluding, if possible, bilateral and multi-lateral agreements, for the reciprocal study and revision of textbooks and other educational materials in order to ensure that they are accurate, balanced, up-to-date and unprejudiced and will enhance mutual knowledge and understanding between different peoples.

'Consultations' in Europe, Latin America and Africa ensued. Again it remains unclear what the consequences of these consultations were. At this stage, it is interesting to note that this 1974 resolution came in the year following the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War and the introduction of the OAPEC oil

embargo. Further, the resolution was agreed upon in the very year that India detonated its first nuclear device.

A declaratory hiatus followed until 1988 when a UNESCO-aided and ponderously titled conference *International Consultation with a View to Recommending Criteria for Improving the Study of Major Problems of Mankind and their Presentation in School Curricula and Textbooks* was held at the Georg Eckert Institut in Braunschweig. This conference flagged a return to a more global strategy with a complementary regional approach. While there may be no evidence to hand of any significant shift of policy at a national or publishing house level as a consequence of the 1974 Resolution, the 1988 initiative did advocate equal weighting to be given to ‘knowledge, attitudes and skills’ in history textbooks as well as active student and teacher research into textbooks as sources, and it did lead to the establishment of the UNESCO/Eckert 1992 *International Textbook Research Network*.

Following the collapse of communist political systems in Russia and Europe, the pedagogical focus in former Soviet bloc nations turned from commentary into a practical contribution to the shaping of post-Cold War textbooks. Here, among other ideological matters, Marxist historiography, the prominence of political economy and the paramount importance of martial and pro-party narratives had dominated history textbooks (Cary, 1976). During the 20 years that followed the destruction of the Berlin Wall, it was UNESCO, the Council of Europe and Euroclio (www.euroclio.eu) programs that helped guide education officials and teachers away from pre-1989 moralising and ideologically based curricula towards open-ended, inquiry-based learning and the kinds of textbooks that this approach demanded (see e.g. Aleksashkina, 2006). Indeed, at the 2010 Euroclio Nijmegen conference, there was discussion by Euroclio staff about reduced Council of Europe funding and the expected winding down of that post-Soviet era professional development initiative following its supposedly successful implementation.

More recently, UNESCO policy initiatives, together with research funding from philanthropic organisations such as the Carnegie Council for Ethics (Cole, 2007), have turned towards post-conflict societies in, for example, the Balkans, Northern Ireland and the Middle East. They have also turned to the issue of multiculturalism with the 2005 publication of the UNESCO *Comprehensive Strategy for Textbooks and Learning* and the 2006 publication of the UNESCO *Guidelines on Multicultural Education*. These documents promoted a normative approach to textbook design and an anti-confrontational cultural pedagogical approach based on values education, discussion of ‘self’ and ‘other’ and the formation of informed worldviews.

In his clear and incisive summary of where these latest developments are heading, Pingel (2010) raises thought-provoking questions about the nature of the ideal in textbook construction and the relationship of these ideals, amongst other things, to curriculum construction, educational standards, commercial considerations, intercultural issues, identity politics, over-generalisation, tem-

poral categorisation and essentialism. These are all good questions to ask, and in asking them, Pingel seems to raise the possible intractability of dealing with quite so many complexities in researching the design and actual use of textbooks.

The Critical Tradition

Stuart Foster's 2011 version of the critical tradition is outlined as follows (paraphrasing and additions in italics made by first author):

- Who or what owns knowledge selection *and chooses pedagogical approaches* in textbooks and what is the relationship between the ideological, *religious*, economic and intellectual elements in this process of selection?
- Whose voices are represented in textbooks? *Who are the in-groups and the out-groups in any given narrative?*
- What are the cultural, political, geographical and historical perspectives in history textbooks that are influenced by particular *factional*, national or *international* pressures?

In Foster's view, there are two key historiographical/controversial elements in the critical tradition. First, we have textbook representations of the role and activities of social groups, as in race, ethnicity, class, gender and disability. Second, we have textbook depictions of ideological and political perspectives, particularly, for example, when it comes to the framing of national identity. Both of these elements are, of course, linked and form part of a general approach to the exploration of historiography at the classroom level.

We can now add to the Pingel/Foster mix of styles of activity and research into history education and textbooks the work of Maria Repoussi and Nicole Tutiaux-Guillon (2010). This was outlined in their summary of the 2009 conference of the International Society for History Didactics/Georg Eckert Institut in Braunschweig on controversiality as a history education issue. Repoussi and Tutiaux-Guillon accentuate the significance of what they called the *uphill* or content and production issues of textbook use including the changing nature of appearance and functionality of textbooks, market demand, production/pedagogy tensions and the use of the wider range of sources now available to students and teachers both inside and outside the classroom. It would probably be fair to say that at this stage, textbooks are on the cusp between publishing models based on hard copy with some online support and online-only models that are making good use of tablet and laptop technology. This latter development may have three long-term effects on history pedagogy. First, the primacy of the textbook as a resource may soon be at an end. Second, offering easy access to digital resources to students opens up a Pandora's Box of evidential possibilities and improbabilities (see also Klein, in this volume). Third, and researchers have already noticed this phenomenon, tablet technology reduces reader focus and attention span (Carr, 2010).

Next, Repoussi and Tutiaux-Guillon deal with the *downhill* aspect (use and perception) of textbooks. This stage in textbook usage involves multiple variables when assessing the use and perception of textbooks that would seem to militate against reaching substantive conclusions. However, digital technology of the Pandora's Box kind, as outlined above, must become just one of many sources to be subjected to the kind of student scrutiny and comparisons that good teaching would demand of less traditional resources.

A slightly different development in the 'meaning and mention' variation of Foster's critical tradition has been the advocacy of a postmodernist approach where, for example, textbooks are to be investigated as artefacts in themselves that are open to discourse analysis and genrefication. A case in point is a comparative study of Cypriot and UK textbooks by Eleftherios Klerides in which he concludes that

'This imagining of the textbook gives rise to a range of new analytical priorities for textbook research...The study of the form and motivations of heterogeneity, ambivalence, dilemmas, and compromises in textbooks within a given society, and the examination of their different shapes and sources across sociocultural settings are of particular relevance for textbook researchers, particularly in the field of comparative textbook research.' (Klerides, 2010: 20)

We think this is a bold claim, based on decontextualised conceptual speculation that overlooks, amongst other matters, the uphill and downhill aspects of textbook production and the deterministic nature of curriculum.

This brings us to a more detailed discussion of the uphill/downhill model in three different education systems where a centralised curriculum seems to be the key determinant in the shaping of textbooks.

THREE CASE STUDIES IN CONTESTABILITY AND CONTROVERSY IN THE USE OF TEXTBOOKS

There are at least three categories of textbook culture in developed nations. First, there is the *pluralist textbook system*, for example, in Australia and the UK, where a significant number of rival publishers, some large and some small, compete within an education system to gain a profitable share of an entire market or a market sector. Second, there is the *adopted textbook system* where a limited number of mega-publishers compete with each other for adoption by a major education system, as in half the states in the USA, for example, including the large and politically important states of California and Texas (Whitman, 2004). Third, there is the *endorsed system* where state-approved textbooks published by a limited number of large publishers are given an imprimatur (or denied one) by a government agency. Prominent examples of this endorsed model are the Russian Federation and Japan—although it needs to be said in the latter case that the notoriously nationalist Japanese *New History Textbook* has had a

very low take-up rate in that nation's middle schools (Taylor, 2008). What follows is a series of three case studies in textbook use and the political/historiographical context in which these case studies exist. There is no attempt in this account to draw point-by-point comparisons. They are meant to be illustrative examples about which generalisations might be made. Nevertheless, as with the need for more research into how teachers actually use textbooks, there is a similar need for more comparative studies on textbook use in different political environments. These case studies are intended to provide a starting point.

The Pluralist System: Australia

Initially, based on the first author's extensive professional experience in the UK and Australia as well as visiting over 400 sites in the UK, Australia, Canada, the USA and Northern Ireland since 1981, it should be noted that teachers who work in pluralist textbook systems such as Australia, the UK and New Zealand tend not to be textbook dependent. They will use a variety of sources as a matter of course. For a variety of reasons, including expense, suitability, in-school availability, appropriateness of level and dislike of textbooks, some teachers may not use textbooks at all. Having said that, a more systematic investigation of textbook use by teachers in these education systems is needed. It is useful to point out at this stage that a useful indicator of the centrality (or not) of history textbooks in school culture is whether or not history wars debates in any given democratic nation focus mainly on curriculum, mainly on textbooks or on both.

If we turn to Australia as a pluralist model, the national curriculum, first introduced into schools over the period 2011–2016, is served for the most part by six commercial textbook publishers.¹ For the purpose of this exercise we shall look at the Year 10 (final year of compulsory schooling at age 16) textbooks of Macmillan, Cambridge University Press and Oxford University Press. This brief investigation will centre on these Australian textbooks' approaches to contestability as represented by their dealing with two controversial incidents in recent Australian history. Before we reach that point, however, some backgrounding on the feasibility of historiography in the Australian classroom may be useful.

In the Australian national curriculum, historiographical analysis in schools is a threefold phenomenon, often linked together at the classroom level. First, there are the conventional academic historical debates as expressed at school level, as in the *Sonderweg* ('special path') issue in twentieth-century German history (see Blackbourn & Eley, 1984, for elucidation). Next, there are public debates about controversial historical issues, for example, colonial encounters with Australia's Indigenous population. Third, we have contrasting representations of the past in popular media, for example, the importance of teachers' classroom use of feature film in developing historical consciousness (Donnelly, 2012). These three elements are grouped together in the Australian national history curriculum Years 7–12 as 'Contestability', one of seven 'Historical Understandings' (Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2010).

Following on from this approach to contestability, we know from the work of the Australian National History Education Centre (2001–2007) that students as young as 9–10 years of age in Year 5 can deal comfortably with historiography in the classroom when exploring, for example, the question ‘Was [legendary Australian outlaw and political rebel] Ned Kelly a hero or a villain?’ Evidence and classroom discussion is based on primary sources, an excerpt from an academic text and discussion of films of Ned Kelly’s life. These sources are contained in the national centre’s online textbook resource *Making History: Investigating our Land and Legends* (Hattensen & Parry, 2003). We also know from the Australian experience that conservative politicians and commentators are wary about introducing historiographical elements into the school curriculum, which they feel should be more of a celebratory chronicle that moves on quickly from discussion of past ‘errors’ and unfortunate incidents (Taylor, 2013). Having said that, we can now explore how commercial textbooks handle three controversial issues or incidents in modern Australian history.

The first issue, bearing in mind that Australia is a society where immigration and multiculturalism have long been contested topics, concerns the prominent conservative historian Geoffrey Blainey’s anti-multicultural comments. These inspired a 1980s controversy and have remained a continuing element in partisan conservative political rhetoric in Australia for 30 years (Macintyre & Clark, 2003). Two 2001 incidents were also very controversial. In brief, the first of these involved (mainly Afghan) refugees/asylum seekers stranded at sea, a Norwegian freighter (the *MV Tampa*) acting as an improvised rescue vessel, an Australian conservative government embargo on the landing of refugees/asylum seekers, a coercive intervention by Australian special forces and finally a refugee/asylum seeker landing on the Micronesian island of Nauru. The Australian government later accepted 28 of the 438 refugees/asylum seekers, whereas New Zealand took 150. In the second incident in October 2001, a different group of refugee/asylum seekers was accused by an Australian government minister of throwing children overboard in an attempt to force an Australian rescue operation. These claims were later shown to be totally unfounded. The Tampa incident had occurred just before the attacks on US domestic targets on 11 September 2001 and both events preceded a federal election, influencing public opinion in favour of an anti-refugee stance taken by the conservative coalition government which, prior to Tampa incident, had been losing popularity.

In the 2010 and current Australian national curriculum, these multiculturalism and immigration controversies are contained within a Year 10 Depth Study titled *Migration Experience 1945—present*. Students are expected to bring into play the seven Historical Understandings as well as the historical skills required. The Understandings are: use of evidence; continuity and change; cause and effect; significance, perspectives; empathy and contestability. The skills mainly concern source evaluation, identification and analysis of perspectives, as well as the development and communication of explanation. Neither Geoffrey Blainey nor the 2001 asylum seeker incidents are specifically mandated in the curriculum framework.

The 2012 Oxford University Press 269-page volume *Big Ideas History 10* (Carrodus et al., 2012) allocates 23 pages (236–269) to the migration topic, mainly consisting of a longish narrative interspersed with primary sources. Some of these provide case studies of personal experiences and others are excerpts from official documents. Interestingly, the volume's version of events contains only a short narrative passage on Blainey's 1984 speech on multiculturalism, briefly describing the incident as an event that led to the politicisation of the issue. On the other hand, the text does have a three-page feature on the 2001 Tampa and the (later proved to be false claims of) 'children overboard' incidents. The editorial stance is plain. For example, the Australian Prime Minister John Howard is described as a pre-election mode politician who decided to show 'firm leadership' by making 'a show of strength', and it is stated that he condemned asylum seekers for their 'cruel treatment' of their own ('thrown overboard') children. The case studies and primary sources used highlight the predicament of asylum seekers and refugees. The Australian government's behaviour is portrayed as heartless, mendacious and opportunistic.

The Cambridge University Press textbook *History for the Australian Curriculum 10* (Woollacott, 2012) is a 315-page volume with 20 pages on the multiculturalism/migration topic. These pages tend to take the form of narratives interspersed with illustrations, primary sources and inquiry activities. The Blainey affair gets three paragraphs (p. 298) and the Tampa and 'children overboard' incidents get two pages (308–309). Blainey is seen in this text in much the same way as in the Oxford University Press book, as the idiosyncratic originator of a highly contested debate that dominated politics in the 1980s and which gave a fillip to backlash movements provoking a harder, assimilationist conservative political line on immigration. The 2001 asylum seeker events are outlined in a less loaded fashion than in the Oxford University Press book, with a more factual commentary, a reference to the September 11 attacks against the USA, the Howard government's anti-refugee/asylum seeker policy, ministerial argumentation about the children overboard incident and a summary of international criticism of Australian government actions. The Australian Labor Party's failed attempt in 2011 to deal with 'unauthorised' asylum seekers merits a brief paragraph (pp. 309–310).

The 232-page Macmillan textbook *History 10: The Modern World and Australia* (Ashton & Anderson, 2012) devotes 27 pages (205–232) to the issue of multiculturalism and immigration from 1945 to 2012. These are a mix of narrative commentary, case studies, primary sources, maps and illustrations, which include a brief three-paragraph introduction about the impact of multiculturalism in Australia. This introduction suggests that multiculturalism is an ideology that has generated polarising debates, giving rise to a backlash *One Nation* political movement in 1996 led by the populist politician Pauline Hanson. The book links opposition to multiculturalism to 'the continuation of racist attitudes' which come to the fore 'during times of economic recession', arguing that multiculturalism has not gained 'consistent support from

any party'. In a clever source exercise, there follows a transcript of the Blainey's 1984 speech that started the debate and a verbatim copy of a 1984 opposing response in the *Sydney Morning Herald* by leftish academic Duncan Waterson, then professor of history at Macquarie University. A third source consists of an excerpt from pro-multiculturalism sociologist Andrew Jakubowicz's 1994 book *Racism, Ethnicity and the Media*. The follow-up activities take the form of 20 questions, the majority of them closed-ended. Interestingly, the *Tampa* and 'children overboard' cases are not mentioned.

These three sample books take much the same editorial approach, which is that migration has been beneficial to Australia, and has changed its culture for the better; that multiculturalism in itself is largely non-problematic, and that opposition to immigration and multiculturalism is a minority xenophobic or even a racist activity. The Oxford and Cambridge texts state that the *Tampa* and 'children overboard' incidents were criticised domestically and internationally, and suggest that political opportunism affects how recent Australian governments deal with immigration policy. At the same time, the Oxford book is much more partisan in its representation of the 2001 incidents than the Cambridge University Press book and even has sections on contestability throughout the volume to highlight the nature of controversial issues in history.

On the face of it, little can be deduced from these representations except that a combination of curriculum imperatives, a publisher's editorial policy and authorial voices seem to determine what controversial events are chosen for investigation within a broadly framed topic and how those events are written up for a student audience. If there is a broad observation to be made, it is that in a modern pluralist publishing environment, history textbooks rarely, if ever, come under fire from aggrieved politicians or public commentators. As noted above, this is presumably because when it is the curriculum that determines the construction of multiple versions of textbooks it is the curriculum itself that attracts political censure. Indeed, during the period that preceded and followed the introduction of Australia's first national history curriculum in 2010, the conservative federal opposition, the News Corp (Murdoch) press and other media in Australia attacked the curriculum framework for its alleged left-wing bias (Taylor & Collins, 2012). Once in power in 2013, the conservative government set up a 2014 review of the whole Australian curriculum (Department of Education and Training, 2014) to be led by two prominent conservative supporters who were directed to look for ideological bias. They did so but the review came to nothing, mainly because of its politicised origins and its farcical character (Taylor, 2014).

The Approved System: The United States

As noted above, while it is practically impossible to make exact comparisons between the small Australian textbook system based on a national curriculum and the very much larger US system based on multiple curricula, the politi-

cal contexts for history textbook authorship and production in each liberal democratic nation can be explored successfully as indicators of similarities and differences. Three points need to be made at the outset. First, textbooks in the USA are very big business (Hogan, Lingard, & Sellar, 2015). Publishers keep sales figures to themselves but the ‘Big Three’ textbook corporations operating in the USA—the UK’s Pearson, Boston’s Houghton Mifflin Harcourt and New York’s McGraw-Hill Education—control 85 % of a \$US13.7 billion elementary and high school market in the USA (figures from 2013). Second, the hard-copy textbook industry is slowly dying. Third, teachers in the USA seem to be moderately textbook dependent but are moving to other, cheaper and more varied sources (Strahler, 2012).

Having said that, the US education system provides an interesting and controversial example of an *approved* print textbook arrangement at work in a decentralised curriculum culture where textbooks are seen as key deliverers of, and elaborators on, a largely permissive set of ‘national standards’ (US term for curriculum guidelines and syllabuses). However, in the 1980s, the outstanding educational issue when it came to history education was not so much about textbooks but was indeed a controversy over the voluntary national history standards (Nash, Crabtree, & Ross, 2000). According to the account by Nash and colleagues, from 1986 to 1994, the redoubtable Lynne Cheney, at that time chair of the US National Endowment for the Humanities (1986–1993) and fellow of the neo-conservative American Enterprise Institute, was aided by the *Wall Street Journal* in a fierce but ultimately unsuccessful fight against the national history standards on the grounds that they were corrupted by leftist tendencies.

Since then, the arena for national debate has shifted back to the individual states. In these debates the California’s post-2001 progressively framed elementary school textbooks are under fire from conservative and religious groups for allegedly favouring Islamic perspectives. The struggle continues, having now incorporated supposedly critical attacks on textbook representations of Hinduism (Sewall, 2003; Taylor, 2007; Watanabe, 2006). More recently, in several conservative US states, education authorities have reacted against education professionals’ views of the past, which conservative administrators, commentators, politicians and business figures see as secularist and subversive: for the last of these, see especially the influence of the Koch brothers (Schulman, 2015). The most egregious example of this conservative reaction is Texas, where the Religious Right dominated the small (15 member) Texas State Board of Education since the mid-1990s.

For example, according to *New York Times* columnist Gail Collins (2012a), in Texas’s 2010 decennial social studies/history curriculum review and promulgation, McCarthyism could be studied but only if controversial Soviet espionage documents, since published as the *Venona project* transcripts, were also included as a ‘balanced’ justification for McCarthyism. Students of modern history were also obliged to study closely the triumphs of the Moral Majority and the National Rifle Association. The Texas board also insisted that the his-

tory of country and Western music be studied. Considering the state's cultural and demographic contexts and country and Western music's prominence in US musical culture, this might seem a reasonable suggestion but perhaps not a reasonable directive. Collins goes on to cite many more examples of the Board's determination to include and exclude topics for study in Texas editions of nationally offered textbooks.

There are two key points to be made about the activities of the Texas board. First, until recently, the board has been run in a determined if eccentric fashion by an elected group dominated by the Christian Right who have insisted on including pro-Christian, far-Right curriculum topics and excluding unfavoured topics such as advances in anti-discrimination and the critique of hetero-normative narratives (see Scott Wylie in Hickman & Porfilio, 2012: 129–148). These interventions are so extensive that the textbooks produced by the major publishers who try to accommodate both the conservative Christian and the progressive sides are now regarded even by the moderately conservative Thomas B. Fordham Institute as overblown and unreadable manuals that are a 'confusing, unteachable hodgepodge, blending the worst of two educational dogmas' (Stern & Stern, 2011: 142). For example, the 2013 Holt McDougall one-year textbook, *World History: Patterns of Interaction*, (Beck, Black, & Krieger, 2013) totalled a massive 1011 pages, more than the combined length of all three equivalent Australian history textbooks cited above.

Second, these books are part of an ideological movement that crosses state boundaries. In 2011, Texas had an estimated 4.8 million school-age students who were potential textbook readers. Since the state itself pays for the students' textbooks and since the captive audience is so huge, the publishers are obliged to take into account the proclivities of the Texas Board when commissioning their books. This means that many of the smaller and less wealthy states are obliged to use the Texas version across the curriculum. In Gail Collins's sardonic view expressed in her article *How Texas inflicts bad textbooks on us* (Collins, 2012b):

Texas didn't mess up American textbooks, but its size, its purchasing heft, and the pickiness of the school board's endless demands—not to mention the board's overall craziness—certainly made it the trend leader. Texas has never managed to get evolution out of American science textbooks. It's been far more successful in helping make evolution—and history, and everything else—seem boring.

Some publishers have circumvented the problem by offering special Texas editions but that was a hard-copy solution. If recent digital trends in textbook publishing continue, such as the Big Three's iPad alliance with Apple, online student and school customisation of discrete historical topics, the once anticipated 19 % decline in print sales between 2010 and 2014 (still going down) and the forecast death of the textbook (Lee, 2013) the idea that Texas 'inflicts bad textbooks' on the rest of the USA may be history itself.

The Endorsed System: The Russian Federation

Unlike Australia and the USA, Russia has a very centralised education system with a regularly revised national history curriculum, strong teacher dependence on state-provided textbooks and textbook approval overseen by the Ministry of Education and Science. History textbooks that support the national curriculum are scrutinised by the appropriate committees from the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Russian Academy of Education. For example, 60 or so approved books (numbers vary from year to year) published during 2013 were sent off to the Ministry of Education and Science for final approval before being published and distributed by a small number of major publishers. Among these is *Prosveshcheniye* (Enlightenment), a Moscow-based leader in the field with as its Chair of the Board billionaire Arkady Rotenberg. This martial arts companion of Vladimir Putin was being touted in November 2013 as owner of *Prosveshcheniye*, a company that owes half its income to state contracts (*Moscow Times*, November 1, 2013).

According to Liudmilla Aleksashkina, Russian Academy of Education researcher and author of the 2010 Russian national curriculum policy document (Aleksashkina, 2011), Russian history teaching in the late 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century, while still narrative based, was dealing with different narratives. It had strong pedagogical foundations in historical knowledge, skills and inquiry tasks and, more recently, had an emphasis on extension activities as well as discrete topics at different stages within the narratives. However, all that had begun to change. During the early years of Vladimir Putin's presidency over his 'managed democracy' (more recently constructed in 2005 by the United Russian party as a 'sovereign democracy'), there began a noticeable move away from multiple perspectives towards a nationalist ideologisation of curriculum and a Putin-demanded emphasis on the 'bright spots' in Russian history (Zajda, 2009: 381–382).

This meant that, despite these progressive pedagogical foundations described by Aleksashkina, textbooks continued to promote nationalism and patriotism, with an emphasis on Russia's heritage, love of *Rodina* (Motherland) as well as feelings of patriotism, and citizenship (Rybakov & Preobrazhenskii, 1993: 273, cit. Zajda, 2009). During the period 1993–2001 this kind of patriotic exhortation prevailed, as in a 2001 Grade 10 textbook *Rossia v XX veke* (Russia in the twentieth century: Levandovski & Schetinov, 2001: 3–4) where students were asked to look at the 'bright and dark pages of life prior to 1917' and enjoined to investigate 'the depressing shadow of massive repressions... the growth of our Fatherland [sic], with great achievements and unforgivable errors... More than ever before it is necessary for you to explain... the inner logic of historical process, and find the answers to the questions why such events occurred' (cit. Zajda, 2009). The use of the phrase 'inner logic' is interesting, suggesting perhaps some form of rationalisation for the Civil War atrocities by both sides, Soviet-era purges and post-war suppression of dissent and attempts at self-determination (Zajda, 2012).

These books, according to researcher Joseph Zajda, increasingly emphasised what he calls a positive re-affirmation of the historical greatness of the present Russian state—from the ancient *Rus*, through the imperial period and on to the Soviet era, which seems to contradict the intention of the 2010 curriculum framework as outlined by its author, Aleksashkina.

On the face of it, during a transition period from 1993 to 2010 a four-stage curriculum has existed in Russia in contradiction with itself. First, there is the intended curriculum, meant to be Putinesque in its brightness. Second, there is the stated curriculum, which is expected to be investigative and open-ended. Third, there is the enacted curriculum, which, in a textbook-dependent system, seems closed-ended and nationalistic. As for the realised curriculum, based on Zajda's 2012 survey of 200 Russian teachers, in St Petersburg and 15 regional centres, a majority of Russian teachers surveyed (77 %) agreed with the statement that they did not feel pressured to present a particular point of view regarding events in Russian history. At the same time, the greatest level of agreement (87.5 %) came from the very distant Chinese borderland regional city of Khabarovsk and the lowest level of agreement came from metropolitan Moscow (47 %). These figures suggest that the metropolitan teachers, while still hugely dependent on their state salaries (very low by Western European standards), are part of, or may be sympathetic to, the 2011 manifestation of a middle-class anti-Putin movement while the resource-poor teachers of remote Khabarovsk are less bothered about the politicisation of textbooks and feel they are well beyond the reach of metropolitan Russian politics.

Finally, Putin has, through the newly established Russian Historical Society (a successor of the Imperial Russian Historical Society), set up a process in October 2013 which, it was suggested, would lead to a single volume on Russian history—from *Rus* to the Russian Federation—to be distributed in to all students in Russian schools. After some controversy, his single textbook notion was later turned into a 'single concept' or 'single flow' view of Russia's past. The official 80-page guidelines for authors omitted the Western-influenced modernisation period of Peter the Great, the Molotov pact, the 2004 Beslan shooting, the sinking of the submarine *Kursk* in 2000 and the 2011 protests against Putin's regime. The guidelines did, however, emphasise the heroic achievements of both Ivan the Terrible and of Vladimir Putin, who is to get a chapter to himself (Hoyle, 2013; *The Telegraph*, 2013). More recently, the curriculum has been guided towards rationalising Russia's coercive activities in Georgia and Ukraine as a legitimate anti-encirclement strategy (Taylor, 2016).

Putin made his intentions plain throughout his two terms as president. History in schools must serve the needs of the Russian state as he sees them and, at this stage in Russia's history, the state needs include a classroom-based, textbook-sourced revival of Russia's glorious past and a curriculum that justifies Russia's resumption of authority over its former borderlands (Taylor, 2016).

In mid-2014, Putin even edged towards outright anti-Bolshevik revisionism in his latest attempt to change how Russians thought about their nation's

past. On 5 August 2014, when unveiling a memorial to World War I heroes at Moscow memorial site Poklonnaya Gora, Putin took his reworked view of the past a step further (Putin, 2014):

Today we are restoring the historical truth about World War I...this victory was stolen from our country. It was stolen by those [Bolsheviks] who called for the defeat of their homeland and army, who sowed division inside Russia and sought only power for themselves, betraying the national interests'... Today, we are restoring the kinks in time, making history a single flow once more.... Justice is finally triumphing in the books and textbooks, in the media and on cinema screens... [references to, amongst others, Nikita Mikhailov's *Burnt by the Sun* (1994) and Andrei Kravchuk's *The Admiral* (2008)]

Arguably, Putin's view of the past, the new Russian historiographical orthodoxy, is a synthesis of past nationalist/imperialist borrowings which include the late nineteenth/early twentieth century German *Einkreisung Politik* (politics of encirclement) theory with a 1920s White Russian variation of the German 1919 *Doltschlosslegende* (Great War stab-in-the-back myth) combined yet again with a nineteenth-century Tsarist imperialist worldview, but with the anti-semitism of those earlier times replaced by anti-Islamic sentiment (Taylor, 2016).

CONCLUSION

As noted above, and for obvious reasons, there appears to be a clear relationship between levels of political interference in the provision and character of school curriculum and the chief mode of curriculum delivery. Where schools operate in a pluralistic education system that is situated within a national curriculum framework allowing a wide range of independently authored textbooks, as in Australia, politicised criticism of how the past is represented at school level focuses on teaching programs as the main drivers of curriculum. A diverse and less easily targeted range of books remains beyond attack. Where curriculum exists in diverse forms based in part on a variety of localised prescribed syllabuses, as in the USA, politicised attacks tend to focus on a different curriculum driver, the school textbook. Where curriculum is devised with specific governmental interests in mind and promulgated via an endorsed textbook system, as in Russia, the political focus is on the precise nature of both the curriculum and of the textbooks in equal measure.

That being the case, of the three illustrative case studies mentioned in this chapter, it is in Putin's Russia that we find the most alarming incidence of blatant political interventionism and unconcealed exploitation of school history as government propaganda, a phenomenon that takes the Russian education system back to the 1970s when the history curriculum in the USSR was directly subservient to the needs of an autocratic state. Having said that, the growing

significance of digital technology in curriculum dissemination and textbook production, over time, may well change the political nature and role of the history textbook.

In summary, while history textbooks remain key players in the ongoing and often controversial debates about how we understand our various pasts, there is a strong prospect that, in most developed democratic nations, their central role will gradually be sidelined by multimedia digital technology. This move is brought about by publishers' desires to keep costs down, by school/parental desire to avoid buying expensive textbooks, by the unwieldy nature of the books themselves and by the consolidation of digital culture in education systems worldwide. Even so, the retail cost of the current (with digital add-ons) version of *World History: Patterns of Interaction* remains high at \$US108.25.

In contrast, new digital technologies, the chief competitor of the hard copy textbook (with add-ons), can produce localised curriculum variations which can be disseminated cheaply and easily by teachers, by students themselves, by schools, by bloggers and by education authorities, thus reducing the interpretative authority of the major publishers and their carefully briefed authors.

Indeed, there is a need for further detailed research into the uphill and downhill models at the practical level. For example, as well as just looking at the printed page, there are questions that could be asked about the changing pedagogical, editing, production and commercial contexts within which publishers, editors and authors work and the effect that these contexts have on the finished product. Further, there is room for comparative classroom research on how students see and use their textbooks using more subtle and less culturally specific research models based on the recent work by Richard Nesbitt and others on how different cultures think (Nesbitt, 2003). Finally, there is certainly a need for research that charts the transition from the hard copy history textbook to the growing use of digital technology in the history classroom.

There may be two exceptions to these ongoing progressive developments which would also merit further research. Russia and Japan each have a centralised, endorsed textbook system that slowly became more progressive in the 1990s and during the first decade of the twenty-first century. However, because of recent emphases on nationalist causes in both nations, first with Russia's attempted renewal of its great power status and second because of continuing Sino-Japanese diplomatic tensions, these changes may lead to a continuation of a managed approach to historical perspectives. This 'management' could either be in hard copy textbooks (large swathes of Russia are still without adequate information technology provision) or by centralised and censored digital delivery.

As for textbooks in the totalitarian or authoritarian regimes not dealt with in this chapter such as North Korea, Syria, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan

and Belarus, on the face of it, the chances of multiple perspectives in history education curriculum and classroom texts remain slim.

NOTE

1. They are Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press, Jacaranda, Macmillan, Nelson/Cengage and Pearson.

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