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School textbooks, peace and conflict: An introduction

Introduction

The aim of this article, and of the whole special issue it introduces, is to claim a more prominent role for the analysis of school textbooks when studying peace and conflict. For sure, peace and conflict studies have not entirely ignored school textbooks. There have indeed been a number of impressive studies on this topic, upon which we will elaborate further below. But overall, it is fair to say that school textbooks so far employ a peripheral position in peace and conflict studies despite their potential to contribute to several core discussions in this research field.

This marginal role of school textbooks in peace and conflict studies is remarkable for at least three reasons.

First, school textbooks are indicators of dominant – or hegemonic – political knowledge in a given society.¹ Their content is influenced by political elites, and especially by those in (partial) control of the state. This occurs through various means, including government-defined curricula and examination content, textbook approval procedures, or direct production of school textbooks by state institutions. In addition, school textbooks are frequently written by scholars or people who received academic training. They hence also reflect politically sanctioned versions of academic discourses. That said, in protracted civil conflicts, for instance in southern Sudan and Sri Lanka, rebel groups have been found to produce their own textbooks to counter government narratives, again pointing to the political relevance ascribed to these media.²

Second, school textbooks have a large coverage and audience as they typically serve as quasi-mandatory readings for young people. School textbooks are the first – and often the only – books on social, political and economic issues people read in their lifetime.³ According to Daniel Bar-Tal, school textbooks ‘are perceived by students as authoritative and factual’ and hence ‘play an important role in shaping the beliefs prevalent in a society.’⁴ Undoubtedly, the impact of textbooks can be limited by a number of factors: students (i) might have little access to these materials in poorly resourced contexts, (ii) might not fully understand their contents, (iii) are exposed to (at times conflicting) information originating from a range of other sources, and (iv)

¹ Charles Ingrao, 'Weapons of Mass Instruction: Schoolbooks and Democratization in Multiethnic Central Europe', *Journal of Educational Media, Memory and Society* 1, no. 1 (2009): 180-89; Tobias Ide, 'Critical Geopolitics and School Textbooks: The Case of Environment-Conflict Links in Germany', *Political Geography* 55, no. 1 (2016): 61-70.

² Catherine Vanner, Spogmai Akseer, and Thursica Kovinthan, 'Learning Peace (and Conflict): The Role of Primary Learning Materials in Peacebuilding in Post-War Afghanistan, South Sudan and Sri Lanka', *Journal of Peace Education* no. (2016):

³ Simone Lässig, 'Textbooks and Beyond: Educational Media in Context(s)', *Journal of Educational Media, Memory and Society* 1, no. 1 (2009): 1-20.

⁴ Daniel Bar-Tal, 'The Rocky Road toward Peace: Beliefs on Conflict in Israeli Textbooks', *Journal of Peace Research* 35, no. 6 (1998): 723-42, here 725-740.

can question and challenge narratives presented to them.⁵ Despite these potential limitations, several studies have demonstrated the longstanding impact of education and school textbooks on the political worldviews of young people, which might even be detectable at an adult age.⁶

Finally, the considerable coverage and impact of school textbooks make them important objects of peace and conflict processes themselves. This is in line with Lynn Davies' claim that education, for which school textbooks are often important tools, can support peacebuilding efforts, but also exacerbate conflicts.⁷ On the one hand, there is a notable increase in international norms and initiatives relating to issues of peace in school textbooks.⁸ Furthermore, scholars have called for prioritizing the reform of curricula in post-conflict contexts.⁹ On the other hand, textbooks have become issues of international disputes, as the example of the Sino-Japanese demonstrates.¹⁰ In Afghanistan, the US financed and developed textbooks to fuel resistance against the Soviet Union in the 1980s.¹¹

In the remainder of this paper, we draw on examples from this special issue as well as other studies to further illustrate how these three characteristics of school textbooks – as indicators and transmitters of dominant knowledge, as cultural artifacts having privileged access to young people, and as objects often affected by and/or affecting the dynamics of peace and conflict – can enable scholars to enrich wider debates in peace and conflict studies by analyzing these media. We will then conclude with a brief reflection of core findings and avenues for further research.

School textbooks and the study of peace and conflict

Conflict

⁵ Alan Peacock and Ailie Cleghorn, 'What Do We Believe Are the Issues with Text-Based and Other Learning Materials? Are We Caught in the Web or Lost in the Textbook', in *Caught in the Web or Lost in the Textbooks?*, ed. Éric Bruillard, Mike Horsley, Bente Aamotsbaaken, and Susanne V. Knudsen (Paris: Jouve, 2006), 35-48; Dan A. Porat, 'It's Not Written Here, but This Is What Happened: Student's Cultural Comprehension of Textbook Narratives on the Israeli-Arab Conflict', *American Educational Research Journal* 41, no. 4 (2004): 963-96.

⁶ See for example: Tobias Ide, Adrien Detges, and Timo Leimeister, 'Securitization through the Schoolbook? On Facilitating Conditions for and Audience Dispositions Towards the Securitization of Climate Change', *Journal of International Relations and Development* online ahead of print (2017); Nico Voigtländer and Hans-Joachim Voth, 'Nazi Indoctrination and Anti-Semitic Beliefs in Germany', *PNAS* 112, no. 26 (2016): 7931-36.

⁷ Lynn Davies, 'The Different Faces of Education in Conflict', *Development Outreach* 53, no. 4 (2010): 491-97.

⁸ Peter Buckland, *Reshaping the Future: Education and Postconflict Reconstruction* (Washington D.C.: The World Bank, 2005); Lynn Davies, *Education and Conflict: Complexity and Chaos* (London: Routledge, 2004).

⁹ Mario Novelli, Mieke T. A. Lopes Cardozo, and Alan Smith, 'The 4Rs Framework: Analysing the Contribution of Education to Sustainable Peacebuilding in Conflict-Affected Contexts', *Journal of Education in Emergencies* 3, no. 1 (2017): 14-43; Julia Paulson, ed. *Education and Reconciliation: Exploring Conflict in Post-Conflict Situations* (London: Continuum, 2011); Falk Pingel, 'Can Truth Be Negotiated? History Textbook Revision as a Means to Reconciliation', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 617, no. 1 (2008): 181-98.

¹⁰ Yoshiko Nozaki and Mark Selden, 'Historical Memory, International Conflicts, and Japanese Textbook Controversies in Three Epochs', *Journal of Educational Media, Memory and Society* 1, no. 1 (2009): 117-44.

¹¹ Vanner et al., 'Learning Peace (and Conflict)'.

Constructivist and poststructuralist perspectives in conflict research emphasize that analyzing the discourses, narratives and frames of the conflict parties is crucial for explaining the dynamics of conflict and violence. While different theoretical approaches exist, most agree that ‘conflict does not simply arise out of the competition of mutually exclusive goods but [...] is often expressed through myths and memories which provide the ground from which identity is drawn and which narrate the tale of the other as enemy and threat.’¹² Stuart Kaufman, for instance, shows how ethnic violence cannot be explained solely by referring to security dilemmas and opportunity structures for political elites. Rather, he argues that ‘myth-symbol complexes’ play an important role in shaping the timing and intensity of violence.¹³

Analyzing school textbooks can enrich research on the discursive foundations of (violent) conflict owing to their functioning as indicators of dominant discourses, their large coverage and their potential impact on young people. Past studies have shown, for instance, how school textbooks in South Asia and the Middle East have tended to reproduce state-centered narratives and conflict-prone identities.¹⁴ Among them are analyses by scholars who have demonstrated how depictions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have changed over time in Israeli textbooks, and how such changing depictions have influenced conflict-prone narratives and attitudes.¹⁵

Other, yet related approaches draw stronger from the fields of critical security studies or critical geopolitics in their aim to disentangle ‘how contexts have been constructed to justify violence.’¹⁶ Scholars in this tradition have examined discourses in Western countries, demonstrating their portrayal of the Global South as dangerous, backwards, chaotic, or in need of protection, and the role of such Orientalism in legitimizing external interventions.¹⁷ Discourses stigmatizing or marginalizing minority groups, as well as the support these discourses provide for repressive politics, are also frequently discussed.¹⁸

¹² Susanne Buckley-Zistel, ‘In-between War and Peace: Identities, Boundaries, and Change after Violent Conflict’, *Millennium* 35, no. 1 (2006): 3-21, here 6.

¹³ Stuart Kaufman, ‘Symbolic Politics or Rational Choice? Testing Theories of Extreme Ethnic Violence’, *International Security* 30, no. 4 (2006): 45-86.

¹⁴ Muhammad Ayaz Naseem and Georg Stöber, ‘Introduction: Textbooks, Identity Politics, and Lines of Conflict in South Asia’, *Journal of Educational Media, Memory and Society* 6, no. 2 (2014): 1-9; Achim Rohde and Samira Alayan, ‘Introduction’, in *The Politics of Education Reform in the Middle East: Self and Other in Textbook and Curricula*, ed. Samira Alayan, Achim Rohde, and Sarhan Dhouib (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 1-14.

¹⁵ Sami Adwan, Daniel Bar-Tal, and Bruce E. Wexler, ‘Portrayal of the Other in Palestinian and Israel Schoolbooks: A Comparative Study’, *Political Psychology* 37, no. 2 (2016): 201-17; Porat, ‘*It’s Not Written Here, but This Is What Happened*’.

¹⁶ Simon Dalby, ‘Recontextualising Violence, Power and Nature: The Next Twenty Years of Critical Geopolitics?’, *Political Geography* 29, no. 5 (2010): 280-88, here 281. See also: Kolson Schlosser, ‘Education and Intimate War of Position: The National Security League’s Committee on Patriotism through Education, 1917-1919’, *Political Geography* 60, no. 1 (2017): 66-75.

¹⁷ Tariq Amin-Khan, ‘New Orientalism, Securitisation and the Western Media’s Incendiary Racism’, *Third World Quarterly* 33, no. 9 (2012): 1595-610; David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).

¹⁸ Maja Touzari Greenwood and Ole Wæver, ‘Copenhagen-Cairo on a Roundtrip: A Security Theory Meets the Revolution’, *Security Dialogue* 44, no. 5-6 (2013): 485-506.

Several scholars have analyzed school textbooks in order to advance this research, for instance by unraveling the political assumptions and logics embedded in German textbooks' discussions of environmental conflicts.¹⁹ Similar analyses have found that education materials in the US over-emphasize the threat of terrorism, stigmatize people in the Middle East, and thus provide discursive support for the US military's engagement in the region.²⁰ The US financing and development of anti-Soviet, violence promoting textbooks mentioned above is another case in point.²¹

Complementing this research, Ann Emerson's contribution to this special issue demonstrates how Pakistani school textbooks construct an essentialist and exclusionary understanding of citizenship and, by doing so, facilitate direct, structural and cultural violence against those perceived as 'the other', notably Hindus and women.²² By considering the gendered nature of concepts such as citizenship and conflict, she further enriches the feminist literature in peace and conflict studies.²³ Through classroom observations, Emerson is also able to illustrate the narrative power of school textbooks in Pakistan.

The content and approval of school textbooks has also been an issue in various, and at times intense conflicts, not least due to their presumed importance for the political socialization of young people. The occurrence and dynamics of textbook conflicts on the national and international level have been analyzed in a number of countries, such as India, Japan and the USA.²⁴

In this special issue, Kazuya Fukuoka sheds further light on the complex dynamics of such conflicts by examining the controversy between Japan, China and South Korea about the depiction of the Second World War in Japanese school textbooks.²⁵ In doing so, his analysis links the level of international cultural diplomacy with local-level processes of politicization of textbook production and approval. Connecting to wider debates about the reasons for the failure of interstate rapprochement²⁶, Fukuoka also investigates why efforts to alleviate the conflict through joint history-writing projects have been unsuccessful.

¹⁹ Ide, 'Critical Geopolitics and School Textbooks'.

²⁰ Nicole Nguyen, 'Education as Warfare?: Mapping Securitized Education Interventions as War on Terror Strategy', *Geopolitics* 19, no. 1 (2014): 109-39.

²¹ Vanner et al., 'Learning Peace (and Conflict)'.

²² Ann Emerson, 'The Making of the (Il)Legitimate Citizen: The Case of the Pakistan Studies Textbook', *Global Change, Peace and Security* 30, no. 3 (2018).

²³ Cynthia Cockburn, 'Gender Relations as Causal in Militarization and War', *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 12, no. 2 (2010): 139-57.

²⁴ Luigi Cajani, Simone Lässig, and Maria Repoussi, ed. *The Palgrave Handbook of History Education Conflicts* (London: Palgrave, 2018).

²⁵ Kazuya Fukuoka, 'Japanese History Textbook Controversy at a Crossroads? Joint History Research, Politicization of Textbook Adoption Process, and Apology Fatigue in Japan', *Global Change, Peace and Security* 30, no. 3 (2018).

²⁶ Eric W. Cox, *Why Enduring Rivalries Do - or Don't - End* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2010).

Peace

The above-mentioned arguments on the salience of textbooks for the reproduction and entrenchment of dominant discourses, identities and social norms led to a consideration of their role in fostering peace. Various scholars have argued that educational media can contribute to intergroup reconciliation, recognition of culturally or structurally marginalised groups, and democratic citizenship.²⁷ While textbooks continue to play a relatively marginal role in strategic and scholarly debates on peacebuilding²⁸ and transitional justice²⁹, efforts to deal with legacies of conflict and to promote peace through textbook revision have a long tradition, dating back to initiatives launched under the aegis of the League of Nations in the 1920s and revived after the Second World War.³⁰ As the global conflict scenario has shifted from interstate war to internal conflict and as cosmopolitan discourses on human rights and democracy are increasingly gaining importance in dealing with the legacies of violence³¹, such practices have gradually diversified.³² Traditionally, peace-oriented reforms of educational media, organised in response to bilateral and multilateral tensions, were dominated by quasi-official bodies: they were set up on the basis of agreements between states with the purpose of coming to a consensus about narratives of a shared conflictive history. In contrast, present intervention scenarios are marked by complex constellations of actors which have posed great challenges to the capacity of nation-states to assert hegemony over the production of canonical knowledge in schools. In this new constellation, international organizations, development agencies and NGOs have more and more engaged in designing educational media and even curricula. In some cases, notably in fragile states like Afghanistan, Iraq and Bosnia, the role of these actors was pivotal as curriculum and textbook reform became part of international interventionist strategies geared towards state- and peacebuilding.³³ At a global level in fact, there is evidence of the growing influence of internationally promoted standards and normative discourses on peace and human rights on

²⁷ Lynn Davies, 'Justice-Sensitive Education: The Implications of Transitional Justice Mechanisms for Teaching and Learning', *Comparative Education Review* 53, no. 3 (2017): 333-50; Vanner et al., 'Learning Peace (and Conflict)'.

²⁸ Novelli et al., 'The 4Rs Framework'; Alan Smith, Erin McCandless, Julia Paulson, and Wendy Wheaton, *The Role of Education in Peacebuilding: Literature Review* (New York: UNICEF, 2011).

²⁹ Elizabeth A. Cole, 'Transitional Justice and the Reform of History Education', *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 1, no. 1 (2007): 115-37.

³⁰ Eckhardt Fuchs, 'Contextualizing School Textbook Revision', *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 2, no. 2 (2010): 1-12.

³¹ Kathryn Sikkink, *The Justice Cascade: How Human Rights Prosecutions Are Changing World Politics* (New York: Norton, 2011).

³² Denise Bontrovato, 'History Textbook Writing in Post-Conflict Societies: From Battlefield to Site and Means of Conflict Transformation', in *History Teaching and Conflict Transformation: Social Psychological Theories, History Teaching and Reconciliation*, ed. Charis Psaltis, Mario Carretero, and Sabina Čehajić-Clancy (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 37-76.

³³ Julia Paulson and Michelle J. Bellino, 'Truth Commissions, Education and Positive Peace: An Analysis of Truth Commission Final Reports (1980-2015)', *Comparative Education* 53, no. 3 (2017): 351-78; Pingel, 'Can Truth Be Negotiated?'.

educational media and related policies.³⁴

Consequently, the reform of educational contents is developing into an increasingly complex and conflictive globalized field, in which politics of peacebuilding, development and memory intersect. If educational media are understood as cultural artefacts that reflect hegemonic discourses and power relations, analysing their contents and the politics surrounding them can contribute to a nuanced understanding of how norms of citizenship, reconciliation and dealing with the past are framed in post-conflict contexts. Research on educational media can thus enrich peace and conflict studies beyond immediately pedagogic questions.

Transitional justice is a field that may particularly benefit from such analyses. Arguments on the contributions of truth commissions to acknowledgement of human rights violations, redress, reconciliation and democracy have proliferated since the 1990s. However, assessing the mid- and long-term effects of truth-telling on public and official discourse is still recognized as a major research gap.³⁵ Similarly, although numerous truth commissions have recommended educational reforms as policy strategies to address both the causes and effects of past conflict, empirical research on the implementation of these recommendations remain scarce while debates on the theoretical connections between transitional justice and history education specifically are in a budding phase.³⁶

In this special issue, Denise Bentrovato and Johan Wasserman revisit one of the most paradigmatic cases of truth commission research – the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Their analysis of history textbooks' engagement with the work of the TRC in the post-Apartheid era contributes to a theorisation of the role of these educational tools as 'mediators of transitional justice'. Their article shows the intersections between history school textbooks and reconciliation politics, demonstrating the function of these cultural artefacts as both 'instruments and indicators of broader post-conflict transformation'.³⁷ It thus points to the value of school textbooks in enhancing our understanding of the societal reverberations of peace processes and political transitions in the public sphere.

Another central question in peace and conflict studies relates to the globalized dynamics of peacebuilding interventions and the role of ostensibly universal and apolitical discourses of human rights, peace, democracy and good governance. Increasingly, the reliance of international actors on standardized templates of liberal peace has been criticized for taking little notice of

³⁴ John W. Meyer, Patricia Bromley, and Francisco Ramirez, 'Human Rights in Social Science Textbooks: Cross-National Analyses, 1970-2008', *Sociology of Education* 83, no. 2 (2010): 111-34.

³⁵ David Mendeloff, 'Truth-Telling, Truth-Seeking, and Postconflict Peacebuilding: Curb the Enthusiasm?', *International Studies Review* 6, no. 3 (2004): 355-80; Eric Wiebelhaus-Brahm, *Truth Commissions and Transitional Societies: The Impact on Human Rights and Democracy* (London: Routledge, 2010).

³⁶ Paulson and Bellino, 'Truth Commissions, Education and Positive Peace'.

³⁷ Denise Bentrovato and Johan Wassermann, 'Mediating Transitional Justice: South Africa's TRC in History Textbooks and the Implications for Peace', *Global Change, Peace and Security* 30, no. 3 (2018).

local political interests, value systems and social grievances of populations affected by violence. This has led to the argument that peacebuilding itself may become a source of conflict.³⁸ Relatedly, discourses on human rights, peace and justice have been scrutinized for displacing political debate and obscuring vertical power relations, both within post-conflict societies and between international and local actors.³⁹ Similarly, theoretical and empirical contributions on peace education in post-conflict societies have indicated that concepts such as peace and reconciliation can themselves reproduce epistemic power and be utilized to frame the limits of how conflict and inequalities can be discussed in schools.⁴⁰

Studying the politics of textbooks within the framework of these broader questions enables us to gain a better understanding of the political dynamics of conflicts involving international and local actors. Furthermore, such investigations can contribute to enhance our understanding of how local actors adopt, translate or contest international discourses and of the role these processes play towards supporting particular political agendas.

In this special issues, Denise Bentreovato and Marie Nissanka provide a valuable contribution to these debates by elucidating tensions between global and local peace discourses in donor-funded civics textbooks in war-torn Sri Lanka. Their study points to the role of these media as sites of the political co-optation and ‘hybridisation’ of the liberal peacebuilding paradigm espoused by international donors, but concurrently embraced and subverted in these official textbooks in ways that may be counterproductive to peace.

Eleni Christodoulou’s contribution in this special issue adds to these debates by analysing discourses on peace education and textbook revision in the Greek part of Cyprus.⁴¹ Using the lens of securitisation theory, she demonstrates how the very notion of peace education, and the ostensibly universal values it represents, may become an issue of political confrontation and resistance in contexts characterised by intergroup tensions.

Conclusion

This short communication article and the set of studies it introduces demonstrate the relevance of school textbooks for studying peace and conflict. School textbooks, and education practices

³⁸ Roger Mac Ginty and Oliver P. Richmond, 'The Local Turn in Peace Building: A Critical Agenda for Peace', *Third World Quarterly* 34, no. 5 (2013): 763-83; Roland Paris, 'Saving Liberal Peacebuilding', *Review of International Studies* 36, no. 2 (2010): 337-65; Oliver Richmond, *A Post Liberal Peace* (London: Routledge, 2011).

³⁹ Barbara Oomen, 'Donor-Driven Justice and Its Discontents : The Case of Rwanda', *Development and Change* 36, no. 5 (2005): 887-910.

⁴⁰ Elizabeth Oglesby, 'Educating Citizens in Postwar Guatemala: Historical Memory, Genocide, and the Culture of Peace.', *Radical History Review* 97, no. 1 (2007): 77-98; Michalinos Zembylas and Zvi Bekerman, 'Peace Education in the Present: Dismantling and Reconstructing Some Fundamental Theoretical Premises', *Journal of Peace Education* 10, no. 2 (2013): 197-214.

⁴¹ Eleni Christodoulou, 'Deconstructing Resistance Towards Textbook Revisions: The Securitisation of History Textbooks and the Cyprus Conflict', *Global Change, Peace and Security* 30, no. 3 (2018).

more generally, can be instruments and even objects of fierce conflicts at both national and international levels. They, however, can also be part of peacebuilding and reconciliation processes and strategies. While the work of bilateral and multilateral textbook commissions has largely been acclaimed⁴², studies on curricula and textbook reforms in the context of post-civil war peacebuilding efforts have been much more critical. The analysis of school textbooks can also enrich constructivist peace and conflict studies, as textbooks are indicators of and means for reproducing dominant discourses and important societal cleavages.

This said, a number of challenges remain for the future study of school textbooks, peace and conflict. All the articles in this special issue provide a number of recommendations for further research that are specific to the phenomena, regions and academic discourses they deal with. Building on the review of existing scholarship in this field, three overarching suggestions can be formulated here.

First, while a number of convincing case studies exist⁴³, there is a notable lack of cross-case analyses of the relationship between school textbooks and conflict dynamics, conflict discourses, peace processes, and liberal peacebuilding.⁴⁴ Such studies would enable more nuanced and potentially also more generalizable insights on school textbooks, peace and conflict. Furthermore, the creation of respective datasets could enrich the methodical repertoire of the research field by allowing quantitative, large-N analyses.

Second, while a considerable amount of research has focused on international interventions or national-level policies and debates, limited attention has been paid to very local phenomena, such as the production of 'alternative' school textbooks by conflict parties and local peace initiatives, and the critical re-interpretation of existing textbooks by parents and teachers.⁴⁵

Third, and in line with the latter point, there is little research⁴⁶ on the reception of peace and conflict-related content in school textbooks by students, especially in conflict and post-conflict contexts. We thus have limited insights on the degree to which ruling elites, international actors and local peacebuilders, among others, are able to influence students' (and teachers')

⁴² Jean-Louis Durand and Sebastian Kaempf, 'Reimagining Communities: Opening up History to the Memory of Others', *Millennium* 42, no. 2 (2014): 331-53.

⁴³ See for instance: Michelle J. Bellino, 'Whose Past - Whose Present?', in *(Re)Constructing Memory: School Textbooks and the Imagination of the Nation*, ed. James H. Williams (New York: Springer, 2014), 131-53; Denise Bentrovato, *Narrating and Teaching the Nation: The Politics of Education in Pre- and Post-Genocide Rwanda* (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2015).

⁴⁴ Notable exceptions include: Cajani et al., *The Palgrave Handbook of History Education Conflicts*; Tobias Ide, 'Terrorism in the Textbook: A Comparative Analysis of Terrorism Discourses in Germany, India, Kenya and the United States Based on School Textbooks', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 30, no. 1 (2017): 44-66.

⁴⁵ Mieke T.A. Lopes Cardozo and Celine C.M.Q. Hoeks, 'Losing Ground: A Critical Analysis of Teachers' Agency for Peacebuilding Education in Sri Lanka', *Journal of Peace Education* 12, no. 1 (2015): 56-73; Vanner et al., 'Learning Peace (and Conflict)'.

⁴⁶ Exceptions include: Kazuya Fukuoka, 'School History Textbooks and Historical Memory in Japan: A Study of Reception', *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 23, no. 3-4 (2011): 83-103; Porat, *It's Not Written Here, but This Is What Happened*.

worldviews.⁴⁷ Such knowledge would be important for assessing the role educational materials can play in facilitating peace or legitimizing (violent) conflict.

To conclude, while much remains to be done, we are optimistic – and this optimism is supported by the articles in this special issue – that the analysis of school textbooks and their surrounding politics can contribute to the progress of peace and conflict research in the future.

⁴⁷ Maria Grever and Tina van der Vlies, 'Why National Narratives Are Perpetuated: A Literature Review on New Insights from History Textbook Research', *London Review of Education* 15, no. 2 (2017): 286-301.