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Teaching and learning the most recent history in divided societies emerging from conflict: A review of the literature through the lens of social justice

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, a number of nation states have signed peace protocols and entered processes of peace and reconciliation. This has led to an increasing pool of literature on history education in these divided and diverse societies emerging from violent conflict. This article provides a review of the latest developments in this field which focuses on the often counterproductive objectives of developing critical thinking skills in students while simultaneously promoting patriotism and a vision of a nation. Through a theoretical lens centering on politics of recognition, redistribution, and representation, I analyze research literature that focuses on the teaching and learning of recent history and how the subject of history might facilitate social justice for all. Findings from this review show that the affective dimension of the curriculum and the vision of the nation in these contexts promote single narratives of the past and therefore cultivate an identity model of recognition which encourages separatism and intolerance.

Introduction

In recent years, a number of nation states such as Rwanda (Bentrovato 2017), South Africa (Tibbitts and Weldon 2017), and Colombia (Mena 2019) have signed peace protocols and entered processes of peace and reconciliation. Related to this, education, particularly the subject of history, has become a central focus of discussion, specifically after social division. Identity-based conflicts are often still present even if peace agreements have been signed and formal truth and reconciliation processes have been started. Added to this, increasing numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons are moving across borders, for example in Sri Lanka and South Sudan (Skårås 2019; Vanner, Akseer, and Kovinthan 2017). These conditions create distinct challenges for classrooms in regards to integration and segregation related to the content and teaching methods in the subject. Thematic reviews within the broader field exist (Corredor, Wills-Obregon, and Asensio-Brouard 2018; Antoon 2015; Guerra-Sua

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and María 2019; Paulson 2015; Quaynor 2012); however, there is a need for an examination of the range of approaches to the teaching and learning of the most recent history, and above all, understand how these approaches work towards social justice and to overcome misrecognition.

Based on a review of 55 articles published between 2008 and 2020, this article identifies the teaching and learning of the most recent history in more than 20 divided and diverse societies which have recently emerged from conflict (see Appendix 1). Drawing from Fraser's (2000) theory of recognition, redistribution, and representation, I analyze how the various approaches to and mediators of history teaching and learning work towards social justice. The review is narrative and aims for rich descriptions of typical themes and issues in the field (Krumsvik 2016). It creates a baseline for research while simultaneously taking a critical stance analyzing how and to what extent history education in divided and diverse societies emerging from conflict promotes social justice and peaceful coexistence within and between groups. I argue that despite recent develop- ments within the field of history teaching and learning, which encourages critical thinking skills and multiple perspectives, the most frequent approach is a promotion of singular narratives and/or silence of the recent, often violent past. Teachers are the main mediating agents in the classroom, and by using this single narrative approach often act to reify group identities and continue separatism and division. In the following, I introduce the theoretical framework, describe the search methods and process of selection of research literature, present the findings and discuss them using Fraser's (2000; Fraser et al. 2004) theory of recognition, redistribution, and representation.

Theoretical framework

In order to shed light on the complex and challenging task of teaching and learning the recent history in diverse and often divided societies in the after- math of conflict, I apply Frasers theory of recognition, redistribution, and representation combined with the concept of the null curriculum (Flinders, Noddings, and Thornton 1986; Fraser 2000; Fraser et al. 2004). In an increasingly global world, recognition of difference drive many of the world´s social conflicts. In her influential article discussing the rethinking of recognition, Fraser (2000) asks why so many conflicts take this form. She argues that in a global inter- connected world characterized with increasing capitalism and exacerbating economic inequality, 'questions of recognition are serving less to supplement, complicate, and enrich redistributive struggles than to marginalize, eclipse, and displace them' (Fraser 2000, 108). Furthermore, struggles of recognition hap- pens despite the increasing transcultural interaction within multicultural con- texts and this recognition simplify and reify group identities. Fraser (2000) argues that when struggles for recognition displace politics of redistribution and reify group identities, it might also promote economic inequality. Thus, she

provides an account of recognition that can accommodate the full complexity of social identities, instead of one that promotes reification and separatism which she argues the identity model of recognition does (109). In so doing, she points to the useful combination of a framework which combines recognition and redistribution, rather than those who choose to promote one or the other. Furthermore, she adds representation as a third scale of justice arguing for the importance of equal opportunities to take part in decision making in this increasingly global world (Fraser et al. 2004). Thus, her conceptualization of social justice rests on equal social status (cultural recognition), equal distribution of wealth (economic redistribution), and equal opportunities in decision making (political representation). In her work, she identifies a variety of hybrid categories of social differentiation which exemplifies maldistribution due to class (labor and economy), misrecognition due to a status group (cultural values), and misrepresentation due political exclusion (decision making) (Fraser et al. 2004; Fraser and Honneth 2003). Fraser's conceptualization of the three scales of justice is productive when looking at the *approaches to* and the *actors in* teaching and learning described in the research literature.

The analytical category of the null curriculum is relevant for assessing aspects of the curriculum that has potential to contribute to redistribution of power. Eisner (in Flinders, Noddings, and Thornton 1986, 34) defines the null curriculum as anything not taught to students, which includes options that students are not afforded, the perspectives they may never know about, and the skills and concepts that are not part of their intellectual repertoire. There are three dimensions to the null curriculum: a) intellectual processes, b) subject matter, and c) affect (Eisner in Flinders, Noddings, and Thornton 1986). The first dimension, intellectual process, includes cognitive processes that can be exemplified by logical analysis and deductive reasoning. The second dimension, subject matter, relates to content that is both excluded and included in the curriculum based on subject relevance in the learning process for the age group. Historical error and/or forgetting play an important part in the formation of collective memory, similarly Wertsch (2002, 33) argues that when memory is committed to an identity project, the notion of accuracy may be downplayed or sacrificed in the service of producing a usable past. Thus, certain aspects of history are consigned to the null curriculum based on their lack of relevance to the identity project of the nation. This 'identity project' of a nation seems to apply the identity model of recognition which according to Fraser (2000) 'lends itself too easily to representative forms of communitarianism, promoting conformism, intolerance and patriarchalism' (7). Affect, which includes elements such as values, attitudes, and emotions, is the third dimension of the null curriculum (Flinders, Noddings, and Thornton 1986). Flinders, Noddings, and Thornton (1986) argue that many topics are consigned to the null curricula due to their affective impact, which this review illustrates often occurs within societies emerging from violent conflict.

Methods

Educational research is useful and meaningful only when it builds on and learns from prior research and scholarship (Boote and Beile 2005). Accordingly, this review provides a systematic overview of the most recent research in the field and a critical analysis of how the different approaches and agents of history teaching and learning promote social justice. Furthermore, it creates a useful baseline for further research within the field. Krumsvik (2016) differentiates between a review *for* research, including systematic searches that identify a research gap in which one can position one's own research within and a review *of* research, which creates an overview of the field. This review primarily focuses on the latter and with a critical analysis of how the different approaches to history teaching and learning promote social justice.

Three search methods were used to identify relevant literature for the review: a database search, a citation search, and a manual search in the most relevant international journals. The database search was conducted in March 2020[1]. For the database search, I used Ebscohost as a tool and searched four databases: Education source, Eric, Academic search premier, and SocIndex.[2] The searches were limited by time, from 2008 to the present. Only peer-reviewed literature written in English was included, and the keywords for the search were *post conflict OR conflict* combined with *teaching N3 history*.[3] This generated 193 unique articles imported into Zotero. These 193 articles were reduced to 47. Literature that did not cover the classroom perspective, textbooks, or teachers were excluded, for example theoretical studies and memory studies not related to educational purposes. Furthermore, recent conflict is interpreted as after the second world war, thus excluding the large number of studies related to World War II. Hence, in line with the characteristics of a systematic review, this review is systematic in is methodology as it is systematic and transparent in the identification of literature to be included (Jesson, Matheson, and Lacey 2011). However, as other search methods are added to the systematic search, the output is not a systematic review. The manual search was carried out in two academic journals: *Journal of Peace Education* and *Comparative Education*. These journals were selected for manual review because they were the most prominent in the database search. Three additional articles were identified from *Journal of Peace Education*, and two were identified in *Comparative Education*, which adds up altogether five articles from the manual search. In addition to this, the citation search consisted of snowball referencing from the reference list of specifically relevant articles: three relevant articles were identified. Altogether 55 articles were identified, covering 24 countries across five continents: South America, North America, Asia, Africa, and Europe. Together they contain a diverse range of methods: case studies; surveys; different types of interviews; document analysis including textbook analysis, classroom observation, teaching intervention, and ethnography. For an overview of the selected publications, geographical spread, and research methods, see Appendix 1.

This review has some limitations. First, I did not include grey literature, that is, reports produced that are not controlled by commercial publishers including government, academic institutions businesses and industries (GreyLit 2018). This also means that NGO and UN reports were left out. Second, the search words in the database search excluded research on memory and history in education that did not mention conflict or post-conflict. Third, the literature includes only one article from South America, a possible consequence of excluding non-English literature. Finally, the most striking limitation is the fact that I found several relevant articles from the manual search that were not identified in the database search. This proves that important and relevant scholarly articles may not have been identified, but this is due to international indexing systems beyond my control.

After the identification of the relevant literature, I undertook a content analysis, coding for themes focusing on teaching approaches and learning of history. Frequently reoccurring themes contributed to the main themes; however, also unique cases are described in order to cover the whole range of teaching methods and actors in the teaching and learning processes. Reoccurring themes not explicitly referenced in the following text are covered through similar cases in the review. In the following sections I present how nations deal with the past and include *moratoria* on teaching history, removing history from the curriculum, and *single and multiple* narratives of the past presented to students in the classroom. I then focus on the *mediating agents* of history because their role and position in various contexts is decisive for how historical narratives are produced, negotiated and received in the classroom and beyond.

Findings

This review identifies two main objectives of teaching history in school. The first objective, described by Chhabra (2016), centers on the role of history in promoting the vision of the nation within a specific content to build a strong, coherent identity. The second objective focuses on developing a cognitive and ethical understanding about past events among young students. Based on the second objective, history teaching that applies an enquiry approach, in line with professional historians, is strongly recommended in the literature in order to develop critical thinking skills and promote peace and reconciliation. Thus, there seems to be a scholarly consensus on the legitimacy of multiple narratives when dealing with the past. However, an enquiry approach might be counterproductive in the creation of national narratives through collective memory. As a consequence, the two objectives – a) promoting the vision of the nation, and b) developing cognitive and ethical understanding among students, encouraging debate, and investigating multiple narratives – often seem to be in conflict with each other. Furthermore, this review identifies multiple

mediators and actors in the process of teaching and learning the recent past. Based on all this, I have divided the findings in two the main categories: a) approaches when dealing with the past; b) mediators of history.

Approaches when dealing with the past

McCully (2012) discusses whether multi-perspective approaches offer the best way for history to promote post-conflict understanding or not. Students and teachers are strongly influenced by the history they discuss, and the classroom might not be ready to tackle these kinds of sensitive and controversial issues. I identified multiple cases in which critical thinking and enquiry approaches are challenged by the context of war and trauma and possibly the objective of history to promote the vision of the nation. In the following subsections, I present and discuss three approaches to history teaching and learning: *moratoria, single narratives* and *multiple narratives*. The approaches are based on how classroom teaching, curricula, and textbooks deal with and present the past.

Moratoria

Nation states often put a moratorium on history education immediately after conflict. Antoon (2015) differentiates between four types of moratoria based on the nature of the conflict. The two types relevant for this review are moratoria after genocide and moratoria after racial, ethnic and religious conflict. Rwanda is an example of moratoria after genocide. Claiming that education had failed to prevent conflict and that history and civics schoolbooks had specifically supported a system of propaganda, the new Tutsi-led government banned and temporary suspended teaching of Rwandan history in schools shortly after the genocide in 1994 (Bentrovato 2017). The new regime also banned the old Hutu-centered teaching materials for being biased and divisive and contributing to hate propaganda (Antoon 2015; Freedman et al. 2008). The moratorium lasted for 15 years. In the first curriculum reform in South Africa after the fall of the apartheid regime, history education was not included because it was too sensitive and it was not reintroduced until 2001–2002 (Tibbitts and Weldon 2017). Thus, in both countries, moratoria were used as a strategy for dealing with the past and, in that way, silencing history in order to build unity. The examples illustrate how the topics concerning the most recent history are consigned to the null curriculum (Flinders, Noddings, and Thornton 1986). South Africa and Rwanda are only two of several cases that put a moratorium on the post-conflict teaching and learning of history. Antoon (2015) also mentions countries such as Moldova, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Guatemala, and Lebanon, among others. The 1989 Ta'ef Peace Accord in Lebanon includes specific points on education stating that curriculum revision is needed to strengthen national identity and social integration, arguing that

the unification of textbooks is a must (Hourani 2017). Despite this, sectarian groups still teach their version of history in private schools,[4] an action that is approved by the national ministry of education. Multiple attempts at creating a unitary history textbook have been made, with carefully composed successive committees representing the main sectarian currents in Lebanon working on the task since 1997. Despite these efforts, curricula and textbooks that emerged as a result have been banned by the Ministry of Education due to a lack of agreement on certain disputed events throughout history (Hourani 2017; van Ommering 2015). Thus, the lack of coverage of Lebanon's civil war (1975–1990), fear of discussing politics, silence on important historical events and a culture of memorization and rote learning contribute in shaping the course of conflict in Lebanon (van Ommering 2015).

South Sudan is a divided society that includes the recent, violent past in their history curriculum (Skårås and Breidlid 2016) but teachers do not implement this part of the curriculum in their classroom teaching. It could be included as a means to build new identities in a new nation, fulfilling the aforementioned objective of history education as promoting the vision of the nation (Chhabra 2016). However, due to the continuing presence of conflict and the sensitivity of the topics of recent conflict they are not discussed in the classroom (Skårås and Breidlid 2016). Thus, the avoidance of politically sensitive issues in the classroom are similar in the cases of both Lebanon and South Sudan even though their curricula have a different approach to the inclusion of these topics. Multiple country cases studied in this review, like Rwanda (Bentrovato 2017; Murphy 2010), South Sudan (Skårås 2019) and Colombia (Bickmore, Kaderi, and Ángela 2017) describe instances that do not officially apply a moratorium on the teaching and learning of history; however, they demonstrate that avoidance and silencing of sensitive and controversial issues are prominent in the classroom. Examples from the literature describe the case of Colombia in which the official curriculum guidelines have omitted any study of Colombia's recent, violent history until grade ten (Toro in (Bickmore, Kaderi, and Ángela 2017). The cases above could be interpreted as a moratorium on certain parts of history, mostly resulting in one-dimensional narratives of the past, possibly for the sake of unity inside the classroom. In line with Flinders, Noddings, and Thornton (1986), these aforementioned cases show that certain topics are consigned to the null curricula due to their affective impact, consequently leaving a single narrative of the recent past to be presented to students.

Single narratives

Multiple examples of history education promote a single narrative of the past, often including clearly defined enemy images of the Other, in order to increase nationalism, patriotism, and loyalty to the nation, or to create a specific identity

and belonging, or to avoid sensitive and controversial issues. Thus, there is a close relationship between history that has the objective of promoting the vision of the nation and the use of single narratives.

Ethno-nationalist narratives are one type of single narrative and are identified in history textbooks, a phenomenon which occurs in several country cases. In Iraqi Kurdistan, this contributes to the construction of national consciousness and increases the identity of Kurdish nationalism (Darweish and Mohammed 2018). Examples of this are words and concepts generally focusing on Muslims' alienation of the Other, which do not give a positive image of Islam. In Israel, the Israeli-Arab-Palestinian conflict presented in textbooks continuously uses distortions, inaccuracies, biases, and negative stereotypes of Arabs (Podeh 2010). Since the 1950s, history education has promoted a Jewish-Arab divide by describing the 'good' Israeli, *us*, and the 'bad' Arab, *them* (Yogev 2010). In Israel, the Arab minority attends separate Arabic-language schools that offer a different history curriculum from that taught at schools in the majority Jewish sector (Goldberg 2017). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, an 'us versus them' terminology is found in textbooks, creating hostile stereotypes about other ethnic groups in the country (Torsti 2009). In Macedonia (Popovska 2012), Albanians and Slavs both learn a similar yet opposite history of victimization by the Other in ethnically segregated classrooms.

Scholars focusing on Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot history education clearly demonstrate how the two communities have incorporated enemy images of the Other in their textbooks, promoting ethno-nationalism and presenting coexistence as an intolerable idea (Calleja 2008; Vural 2012). Recent research on North Cyprus shows how the content of history textbooks for secondary education has changed accordingly with political parties in power. While the revised textbooks in 2004 presented growing Turkish and Greek nationalist sentiments without assigning blame to one side or implying an enemy, the most recent re-revised textbooks published in 2009 have a completely different vision (Latif 2019). In these textbooks, images, and content present Turkish nationalism resting on binary opposition of us and them (Latif 2019). Similar to the case of North Cyprus, history textbooks in China also paint a distinct image of the Other (i.e. Japan), and the narrative about the Japanese changes according to the political climate in the region, the relationship between the two nations and their relationship to external nations. The image of the Other does not necessarily need to be negative; nevertheless, it is constructed in order to represent a usable past for the government.

In one period, China minimized the harm of the Sino-Japanese War on China in order to promote a victor narrative designed to encourage a triumphant and proud Chinese national image (Reilly 2011). Analyzing textbooks in Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, and Britain, Chhabra (2017) argues how the textbooks in these nations include a strong 'us versus them' discourse, singular narratives, and silence about the violence during partition. In many of these country cases,

students, and their teachers are segregated based on language, religion, and ethnicity, which in one way makes it easier to implement ethno-nationalist-narratives as a type of single-narrative approach to the past. However, segregated education and ethno-nationalist narratives encourage division and strengthen the in-group narrative (Chhabra 2017; Zembylas 2016) as it also, in line with Fraser (2000), promotes an identity model of recognition.

Rwanda is a frequently cited example of how an authoritarian government has implemented a single narrative of the past into schools, one that discourages critical thinking and debate and supports the government in power (Bentrovato 2017; Freedman et al. 2008; Hilker 2011; Murphy 2010). This single narrative does not include ethnic identification, and in a nationalist way, it describes Rwandans as a peaceful people living in harmony before the colonialists invented ethnicity, a romanticized narrative imposed from above. In contrast to this, outside the classrooms in informal conversations, Bentrovato (2017) identified 'illicit' counternarratives including tribal victimization and responsibility during the 1994 genocide, which are historical taboos in the official discourse. This suggests a conflict between a single narrative of the past, promoted by those in power and multiple ethno-nationalist narratives existing among the people in unofficial spaces of utterance. A similar distinction on types of narratives existing in different spaces of utterance are identified in South Sudan (Skårås 2019). This illustrates how single nationalist narratives exist in the controlled space of the classroom and in policy documents on education, yet multiple perspectives, often based on ethnic identification and enemy images, exist within communities and belong to the null curriculum (Flinders, Noddings, and Thornton 1986). Thus, single narratives might operate alone or in tension with multiple opposing truths within. This illustrates that there is a limitation in applying the categories of multiple versus single narrative approaches to the past because these approaches might operate simultaneously, in different spaces by different actors although within the same geographical areas. The latter a potential for the recognition of difference.

Multiple narratives

Despite the fact that many countries covered in this review employ a single narrative approach to their history teaching, the literature suggests inclusion of multiple perspectives for the sake of justice and reconciliation. The literature identifies innovative examples of joint textbook projects (Eid 2010) and integrated classrooms (Bekerman 2009) exposing students to narratives of the Other that previously have been consigned to the null content for the 'in' group. The joint textbook project includes a case study with eighty-four Palestinian students living in Israel and analyses their encounters with a dual narrative textbook, in which they were presented with both the Palestinian and the Israeli narrative of the 1948 event (Eid 2010). The findings show a strong identification with their own Palestinian narrative and anger towards the Israeli

narrative. The study and the dual narrative textbook are an innovative example of history education bridging a gap between two distinct narratives of 'the other', however the textbooks have not been implemented in schools outside of the project and thus has limitations regarding ongoing practice in all schools. Nevertheless, identification with the Palestinian narrative and anger towards the Israeli arose as emotions among the participants, exemplifying the role of emotions in history teaching and learning. Specifically, the literature emphasizes the need for history to deal with sensitive and controversial issues in order to transform history and allow multiple interpretations of the past to meet and be discussed in the classroom.

Drawing on a methodology from the organization Facing History and Ourselves, Glanvill-Miller (2017) employ silent conversations in order to tackle the affective dimensions of teaching and learning history in South Africa, this approach is specifically developed to meet the demands of handling sensitive and controversial issues. Silent conversations provide a safe space for students to converse with one another that keep emotions in check while allowing students to express their responses to sensitive and controversial topics in history. Initiating a silent conversation consists of presenting an image or a quote to students on a large sheet of paper. Then students engage in conversations by writing comments in response to what they see and they are not allowed to speak. The methodology invites multiple perspectives and provide a safe space for emotional responses to contested topics and avoid dominant voices silencing others in these difficult dialogues.

The terms *pedagogy of subversion* (Yogev 2012), *pedagogic dissonance* (Jansen 2009), and *productive conflict* (Freedman et al. 2008) are labels describing the objective of encouraging opposing views and interpretations of the past in the classroom and beyond. Furthermore, research indicates how opposing views need to touch upon emotions in each individual in order to provoke debate and subsequently lead to a transformation of a narrative in dialogue with others. Using the example of South Africa, Jansen (2009) argues that, for true social justice to be realized, the indirect knowledge (second-generation knowledge which is not experienced) white students have must be challenged and disrupted in a 'critical dialogue' with black students. Yogev (2012) argues how opposition to the uncontrolled instrumentalization of historical knowledge will subvert the politicization of history education, and she talks of 'political-critical' education. This is important in order to educate independent students that can critically engage in their own lives and be responsible reflective citizens of their nation. However, this review shows that this is not always possible because the space for freedom of speech is, in certain cases, limited. The case of Rwanda is an illustrative example of the politicized role of the subject of history.

Jansen (2009) calls for engagement and interruption of indirect received knowledge through exposure to dissonant knowledges and argues that, in order to reconfigure intrinsically biased and often a stereotypical interpretation of the past, emotions should be affected. Jansen (2009) identifies one significant challenge of the method: the fact that teachers themselves are part of the conflicting past makes it challenging for them to respond to all the emotions and questions raised by students. Thus, Jansen points to the limited capacity of critical theory and pedagogy in post-conflict settings where traumatic memories collide. Similarly, research from Cyprus (Zembylas 2016) and South Sudan (Skårås 2019) argue how critical thinking, multiple perspectives, and democratic values are not possible without pedagogical practices that are reconciliatory across social and political boundaries. Thus, there is a need for a safe classroom climate and safe spaces outside of the classroom. Several case studies in this review (Jansen 2009; McCully 2012; Skårås 2019; Zembylas 2016) point to the limitation of applying an enquiry approach to history teaching and learning, asking whether monumental or critical history is best suited for the context of nation-building and the presence of conflict.

The emotional turn in history education shows that the objective of involving students emotionally involves risks. From interviewing secondary school history teachers in Cyprus, Zembylas, Loukaides, and Antoniou (2020) argue how one consequence emerging from fostering empathy in teaching about the holocaust was that identification with the victims could be misused to indoctrinate students into specific political views. This identification resulting from the teaching methods may promote single perspectives of the past rather than open up for new perspectives and critical reflection on multiple perspectives. Furthermore, this review indicates that a multiple narrative approach alone is not enough if the narratives do not challenge opposing truths within the classroom. But, multiple narratives have the potential to recognize diversity and redistribute the power of who definiens history. Furthermore, the narratives should be presented in a way that avoid the misuse of emotional involvement by students with one version of the narrative. Opposing truths are imparted as either indirect or direct knowledge; that is, they are passed down through generations or are events that occurred during the students' and teachers' lifetimes. However, because the teacher and the students are often implicated in the social and pedagogical narrative of the past, this is a challenging task. As Skårås (2019) argues, emotional ties to the past hinder critical thinking processes. This is a central part of several dilemmas when teaching and learning the near past. This review identifies multiple cases in which critical thinking and enquiry approaches are challenged by the context of war and trauma and possibly the objective of history to promote the vision of the nation (Bellino 2015; Glanvill-Miller 2017; Klerides and Zembylas 2017; Korostelina 2015; McCully 2012; Shepler and Williams 2017).

Mediators of history

This second category of the findings focuses on the mediators of history and I illustrate the complexities of actors related to the content. Jansen (2009, 148) emphasizes the importance of mediating agents because there is a meditation that lies between historical events as they happened then and as they are received by the second generation now. Most societies in dire need of peace and reconciliation are in a post-conflict transition period where the wounds of the past are not yet healed. Due to this, the presence of sensitive and controversial topics in history often limits the agency of the teacher and the possibilities of applying an enquiry approach to history education. This leads to the role of mediating agents and their agency. In the following, I present and discuss four identified groups of mediators of history in the literature: *the government, teachers, students*, and *community*.

Government

The review shows that educational policy documents and textbooks are central mediums where governments promote their views on the past and ideals of nationhood. The politics of history textbooks revision in South Korea (Kim and Kim 2019) and North-Cyprus (Latif 2019) clearly illustrate the influence of the government and their strategic use of history to build a national identity. In South Korea, the education minister released an official order in 2008 for textbook publishers to revise fifty-five problematic statements (Kim and Kim 2019). Among the issues to be corrected, several themes emerged including holding North Korea responsible for the war and downplaying human rights abuses in North Korea. In north Cyprus, the re-revised textbooks include images and content that present Turkish nationalism resting on the binary opposition of 'us and them' (Latif 2019). In both cases, recent developments have increased the divide between groups and the government distorts historical truths. In both cases, the most recent developments have moved the content within the textbooks towards a more nationalistic, single narrative approach.

Nair (2010) argues that in the cases of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka the main objective of history education has been to promote nationalism and create a nation distinct from neighboring nations often with an objectification of 'the Other.' Nair (2010) describes the controversy over textbook as writing that is often filled with inaccuracies and false memories controlled by the political parties in power. Based on these examples of textbooks 'wars,' it is clear how history education and textbook revision often quickly follows political change and therefore top-level politicians decide much of what is included in curriculum and textbooks.

Teachers

The teachers are the main mediating agents inside the classroom, although the studies in the review shows that they have varying degree of autonomy and power across country contexts. In the cases where teachers have less autonomy, the government has a stronger role in mediation of recent history. In South Sudan, the teacher is the only connection between the syllabus and the students since there are no textbooks available (Skårås 2019). Furthermore, the teacher consigns certain parts of the curriculum, the narratives of ethnic conflicts to the null curriculum and does so based on affect and possibly also the objective of history to promote the vision of the nation. Research from Ukraine and Israel shows how teachers add extracurricular content to their teaching if they see important elements of history missing and in order to promote their own vision of a nation or to define enemies and allies (Korostelina 2015; Yemini and Yifat 2016). Similarly, Indian teachers' reactions to the revised history textbooks published in 2008 illustrate how they find multiple and nuanced descriptions of the 1947 partition too complex for students to handle which results in the teachers promoting a single version of the past based on content in older textbooks (Chhabra 2016). Thus, the teachers choose to downplay multiple perspectives and nuances and therefore multiple narratives are left to the null curriculum based on subject matter and their evaluation of the lack of student competencies to deal with complex issues. The examples above refer to a combination of the first and second dimension of why these topics are consigned the null curriculum (Flinders, Noddings, and Thornton 1986). First, teachers exclude content because they think it is outside the intellectual process capacities of their students and second, they do not see the subject matter as relevant for their view of why they teach history. This illustrates how teachers enact the intentions of the education policies and curriculum behind the classroom door.

Different national contexts provide various limitations and opportunities for the enactment of the curriculum. A case of limited teacher agency is Rwanda. Rwandan teachers promote one single and very 'narrow' historical narrative of the past dictated by the Tutsi regime in power, and there is no space for individualized narratives or subjective interpretations by teachers. Exercising free speech in Rwanda, including criticism of the government in power or promoting alternative views of history, can lead to imprisonment, harassment, or denunciation by neighbors, colleagues, and 'friends' (Murphy 2010). On the other side, in contexts where there is space for individual teacher agency to influence content and teaching methods, teachers might be carriers of troubled knowledge, which has implications for how they enact the values of the curriculum and to what extent they employ critical education (Jansen 2009). This is because the teachers are themselves implicated within the social and pedagogical narrative. Examining narratives of the 1947 partition of British India, Chhabra (2016, 2017) argues how teachers' collective memories of specific events in history and their connection to ongoing conflict impedes teachers

from fully embracing an enquiry approach to history teaching that includes multiple voices of the past. Thus, if teachers had the agency and space to teach according to their own vision of history, they might still be restricted by the emotional impact of their own position in the narrative, as well as the relationship of the past to the present. Thus, the affective dimension defines whether some parts of the curriculum content are consigned to the null.

Students

Students are co-constructors of history in the classroom and therefore also mediators of history. However, a powerful teacher, teacher-centered pedagogies, and education structures often limit their agency. One example of this is a bilingual, integrated Palestinian–Jewish school in Israel, where two teachers co-teach. Bekerman (2009) argues how there is a tension in the classroom when the Jewish and Palestinian teachers explain conflicting narratives of the same historical event. He describes how the teachers provide a dialogic (between the teachers) monologue in which the students are never allowed to become engaged, even though they also have their own stories to tell. This is similar to the case of South Sudan where the teacher actively mediates and closes narratives that are sensitive and controversial in order to keep the classroom a safe place (Skårås 2019). Thus, diversity among students in the classroom is not only a benefit inviting multiple interpretations of the past, but also a threat to dialogue and discussion because the teacher is afraid of violence reappearing which prohibits redistribution of power in the classroom.

Rwanda is another example where ethnic belonging is a public taboo and the teaching and learning of history do not touch upon sensitive and controversial issues in the past. Historical narratives of young people resonate, in general, with the principal idea presented in textbooks and syllabi: Rwandans are a united people that lived together in harmony for centuries until the colonizers came and imposed ethnic division (Bentrovato 2017); this cohesion indicates that teachers keep to this narrative in their teaching practice. However, young people's portrayal of intergroup dynamics related to the 1994 genocide showed variation regarding attributions of identity, victimhood, and responsibility, narratives not identified in classrooms. This is similar to history teaching and learning in South Sudan which identifies silencing of narratives of intergroup dynamics inside the classroom, but identifies various narratives outside the classroom (Skårås 2019). Thus, in both cases, students have limited agency to promote their narratives of the past inside the classroom as the teacher controls the narratives of the past. Contrasting to these examples, Corredor, Wills-Obregon, and Asensio-Brouard (2018) argue that by giving students agency and exploring the possibilities of this agency in the classroom, historical memory education can create a healing environment and an environment of hope.

Community

The family and wider community are important mediators of history; Bekerman (2009) describes the role of society, arguing:

> it seems as though people living in any society have no choice but to form memories in line with that which is considered the collective memory of that society. Doing so implies an alignment with a particular social group and its accompanying sense of belonging and affiliation (246).

This quote illustrates the role of the communities in which students and teachers live.

Research on the British partition of India in 1947 describes how oral narratives contrasting 'us' with 'them' have been passed down through generations among communities in both India and Pakistan. The social and political relations are still influenced by enemy images of the Other (Chhabra 2017). In Lebanon, the majority of children attend private schools, often based on the ethnic and religious belonging of children and in 2008 private schools used more than twenty different history textbooks that portrayed sectarian fanaticism (Hourani 2017). Furthermore, silence and evasion of topics about the recent, violent past in schools combined with didactic methods preventing students from engaging critically often direct student to one-sided, historical accounts from family members, peers, and politicized media. Similarly, research from Northern Ireland shows how it is challenging for students to free themselves from family and community influences on how they view the past (McCully 2012).

Corredor, Wills-Obregon, and Asensio-Brouard (2018) underline media and museums as two important informal learning environments for historical memory education. They argue that historical depictions in media sometimes contribute to foster simplistic versions of history; however, media is also a good medium for raising awareness about past violations of human rights. Also, place as a physical space is identified in the literature to be a powerful mediator of the past. Romero-Amaya (2019) argues how *Silencios* in Colombia, a series of photographs of abandoned schools, are pedagogical endeavors beyond the classroom that enable multiple processes of learning to happen like the monuments in the case of South Africa (Jansen 2009). Thus, with a broader approach to what defines a classroom, one might be able to include multiple perspectives into the teaching and learning to a greater extent.

Discussion and Conclusion

I now turn to a critical discussion focusing on how the teaching and learning of the most recent history might facilitate social justice using Fraser's (2000; Fraser et al. 2004) theory of recognition, redistribution and representation.

The review identifies a few examples of the inclusion of multiple perspectives in the subject of history in divided societies emerging from conflict (Eid 2010;

Goldberg 2017; Jansen 2009). Nevertheless, single narratives of the past presented in the classroom and in textbooks predominate in the cases, despite new knowledge and a strong consensus among scholars advocating for multiple narrative to acknowledge diversity and foster critical thinking skills. Thus, this review shows how single narratives of the past, often promoting a vision of the nation and controlled with varying degrees by the political parties in power, communities, and teachers, still dominate the history education in divided societies emerging from conflict. These narratives are characterized by unequal access to the content of history as certain content are consigned to the null. This leads to unequal recognition of ethnic, linguistic, or religious groups. Additionally, the classrooms are characterized by unequal distribution of power held by mediating agents such as students, teachers, and textbooks.

When certain narratives of the past are consigned to the null it necessarily also misrecognizes to a certain extent, groups and people involved in these narratives. Often these narratives either have the power to challenge or are directly in conflict with the grand narrative which often promotes and also creates the vision of the nation. Collective memories create groups as much as groups create collective memories. Therefore, colliding collective memories of various groups might have the power to transform a collective memory and form new groups. In line with Fraser's emphasis on redistribution, the creation and transformation of hegemonic memories of the past, contribute to the redistribution of power and possibly increase the recognition of marginalized groups. Thus, there is a need to also include the null curriculum in order to achieve justice by recognition of multiple narratives and groups and a redistribution of power. However, this redistribution of power by including parts of the null curriculum are, in many of the cases, unwanted by the political regime in power as it does not serve the state objective of nation building. Thus, without also political representation, the recognition and redistribution at the classroom and community level falls short. Furthermore, the unequal recognition of groups leads to misrecognition of minority groups; race and ethnicity are common themes among the cases and often the root cause of division and segregation. The single narratives identified in the review (Podeh 2010; Popovska 2012; Skårås and Breidlid 2016; Torsti 2009) often describe hostile stereotypes about certain groups. According to Fraser (2000) this segregation encourages an identity model of recognition and without redistribution of power, resources, and political representation this might lead to inequality on a social and economic level, thus continuing causes of division in a society.

The literature suggests that in many country contexts teachers are the main mediators of history in the classroom and students are subordinated and not given the opportunity to share their version of the history. Several studies describe how the textbook is subordinated to the teacher (Chhabra 2016; Korostelina 2015) unless in strongly controlled political regimes like Rwanda (Freedman et al. 2008). Unequal distribution of power among

mediators of history in the classroom leads to another important finding in this review: the tension between the collective memory of a particular community and that which is offered in school. This tension is what scholars call for and is what makes it possible for a pedagogy of discomfort and subversion to emerge (Jansen 2009; Yogev 2012; Zembylas 2016). Thus, an important component when teaching and learning history is the presence of multiple narratives in order to transform narratives and offer a basis for discussion among students. This can redress maldistribution of status which recognize certain parts of the history at the cost of others. Using the theoretical lens of Fraser (2000) this kind of emotional involvement does not necessarily accommodate the full complexity of social identities as it possibly leaves out the views of various actors at opposing sides of the conflict. Thus, emotional involvement risks fostering separatism as an emotional involvement risk promoting a single narrative through identification with victims only (Zembylas, Loukaides, and Antoniou 2020). Hence, the use of single or multiple narratives need to take into consideration the contextual background of social and political realities. In line with this, Eid (2010) argues that education for peace and coexistence only have a limited effect if the inequalities that are the root of the conflict remain unchanged; in other words, if political representation are still lacking. Similarly, if the education system as a whole does not redistribute power and resources, recognition of groups will not bring about social justice (Fraser and Honneth 2003).

Several cases in the review present a single narrative of the past that downplay ethnicity as a category. Using Frasers theory of recognition, this approach work towards recognition on a more equal basis as it encompasses all ethnic groups; however, it misrecognizes the suffering and challenges unique to a given group.

The governments in power, teachers, students, and the wider communities are identified as central mediating agents and constructors of historical knowledge and the history classroom as the main arena where the teacher, students, textbooks, and collective memories of societies meet. I have showed how certain aspects of the curriculum are consigned to the null because students and teachers are strongly influenced by the history they discuss, and the classroom might not be ready to tackle these kinds of sensitive and controversial issues. Related to this, restricted student agency inhibits students from expressing themselves because of the resources they have related to the past and the overall structure of teaching and learning. This indicates that the complex realities of teaching and learning history need to address challenges related to identity among individuals (recognition) as well as the maldistribution of power and resources in the teaching situation. The latter calls for redistribution of power in the classroom so that students can contribute, to a larger extent, in order to include their part of the story and increase the number and status of mediators. The silent conversations do invite all students to contribute with their version of the recent past, however if not redistributive politics and

opportunities for political representation are also put in place at different levels of the education system and society as a whole the approach might not promote social justice.

From the above discussion, I show how teaching and learning the most recent history in divided societies emerging from conflict encompass hybrid categories of maldistribution due to class (labor and economy) and misrecognition due to a status group (cultural values) (Fraser and Honneth 2003). In line with Fraser (Fraser and Honneth 2003), I would argue that race and ethnicity is a hybrid category of social differentiation. Therefore, for the aims of social justice, the teaching and learning of history should ideally address value patterns and the distribution of labor and resources. Understanding and redressing divisions related to race and ethnicity therefore requires attending to both distribution and recognition. This means that simply adding multiple perspectives of the past into the textbooks and classroom teaching is not enough as it does not necessarily address the distribution of labor and resources, like the overall structure of education situated in the political and social context of a nation. For social justice purposes and in order to work towards more peaceful societies there is a need to redress institutionalized maldistribution of resources.

Notes

1. This included two search sessions, one in May 2018 and the second in March 2020 to add to the first search.
2. Search in Education source, Eric, Academic search premier, SocIndex via Ebscohost, May 3rd, 2018, added a second round in Education source, Eric, Academic search Ultimate, SocIndex, Teacher Reference Center via Ebscohost, March 2020.
3. N3 specifies a range of three words that may be present between the two search words.
4. The vast majority of parents choose private schools along sectarian lines for their children (Anon n.d.)

Disclosure statement

Notes on contributor

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Appendix 1: Overview literature review

Database search

Author (date)	Title	Geographical area	Methods
Bekerman (2009)	The Complexities of Teaching Historical Conflictual Narratives in Integrated Palestinian-Jewish Schools in Israel.	• Israel	• Ethnography, including classroom observation
Calleja (2008)	Education and the teaching of history in the light of encouraging conflict resolution in Cyprus.	• Cyprus	• Secondary data sources
Chhabra (2017)	"A human rights and history education model for teaching about historical events of mass violence: The 1947 British India Partition."	• India	• Textbook analyses
Darweish and Mohammed (2018)	History education in schools in Iraqi Kurdistan: representing values of peace and violence.	• Iraq	• Textbook analyses • Interviews • Classroom observation
Davies (2017)	Justice-sensitive education: the implications of transitional justice mechanisms for teaching and learning	• Sri Lanka	• Case study • review of policy
Dilek (2019)	A challenging educational reform: politics of history textbook revision in North Cyprus	• North Cyprus	• Textbook analyses
Antoon (2015)	"Post-Conflict History Education Moratoria: A Balance"	• review	• Textbook analysis
Eid (2010)	The Inner Conflict: How Palestinian Students in Israel React to the Dual Narrative Approach Concerning the Events of 1948	• Israel	• Case study • Interviews
Freedman et al. (2008)	Teaching History after Identity-Based Conflicts: The Rwanda Experience.	• Rwanda	• Case study • Interviews • Observation
Glanvill-Miller (2017)	"'Teaching Maths is Easier Than This!': Pre-Service Educators Confront the Challenges and Opportunities of Teaching Emotive and Contested Pasts in Post-Apartheid History and Social Science Classrooms."	• South Africa	• Interviews
Goldberg (2014)	'Looking at Their Side of the Conflict? Effects of Single versus Multiple Perspective History Teaching on Jewish and Arab Adolescents' Attitude to Out-Group Narratives and In-Group Responsibility.'	• Israel and Palestine	• Teaching intervention • Interviews • Observation
Goldberg and Ron (2014)	'Look, Each Side Says Something Different': the impact of competing history teaching approaches on Jewish and Arab adolescents' discussions of the Jewish–Arab conflict.	• Israel and Palestine	• Teaching intervention • Interviews • Observation
Goldberg (2013)	'It's in My Veins': Identity and Disciplinary Practice in Students' Discussions of a Historical Issue.	• Israel	• Teaching intervention • Group discussions • Observation

(*Continued*)

Author (date)	Title	Geographical area	Methods
Goldberg (2017)	The useful past in negotiation: Adolescents' use of history in negotiation of inter-group conflict.	• Israel	• Teaching intervention • Focus groups discussions (student participants)
Hourani (2017)	A Call for Unitary History Textbook Design in a Post-Conflict Era: The Case of Lebanon.	• Lebanon	• Secondary data sources
Kim and Kim (2019)	Global Convergence or National Identity Making?: -the History Textbook controversy in South Korea, 2004–2018	• South Korea	• Analysis of discourses surrounding history textbooks
King (2009)	From Data Problems to Data Points: Challenges and Opportunities of Research in Postgenocide Rwanda.	• Rwanda	• Ethnography • Interviews
Klerides and Zembylas (2017)	Identity as Immunology: History Teaching in Two Ethnonational Borders of Europe.	• Cyprus	• Case study • Textbook analysis
Korostelina (2008)	History Education and Social Identity	• Ukraine	• Textbook analysis
Korostelina (2011)	Shaping unpredictable past: National identity and history education in Ukraine.	• Ukraine	• Textbook analysis
Korostelina (2013)	Constructing nation: national narratives of history teachers in Ukraine.	• Ukraine	• Interviews • Classroom observation
Korostelina (2015)	Reproduction of Conflict in History Teaching in Ukraine: A Social Identity Theory Analysis	• Ukraine	• Interviews • Classroom observation
McCully (2012)	History teaching, conflict and the legacy of the past. Northern Ireland	• Northern Ireland	• Interviews • Observation
McLean Hilker (2011)	The Role of Education in Driving Conflict and Building Peace: The Case of Rwanda.	• Rwanda	• No clear methods description
Meseth and Proske (2010)	Mind the gap: Holocaust education in Germany, between pedagogical intentions and classroom interactions.	• Germany	• Interviews • Classroom observation
Murphy (2010)	Examples of best practice 1. Teaching a Holocaust case study in a post-conflict environment: education as part of violence, reconstruction and repair	• Rwanda	• Teaching intervention, surveys, interviews, observations
Nair (2010)	Textbook Conflicts in South Asia: Politics of Memory and National Identity	• South Asia	• Textbook analysis
Palacios Mena, Nancy (2019)	Teaching violence, drug trafficking and armed conflict in Colombian schools: Are history textbooks deficient?	• Colombia	• Textbook analysis
Podeh (2010)	Univocality within Multivocality: The Israeli-Arab-Palestinian Conflict as Reflected in Israeli History Textbooks, 2000–2010	• Israel	• Textbook analysis

Author (date)	Title	Geographical area	Methods
Popovska (2012)	The Role of Teaching History for a Nation-Building Process in a Post-Conflict Society: The Case of Macedonia	• Macedonia	• Interviews
Reilly (2011)	Remember History, Not Hatred: Collective Remembrance of China's War of Resistance to Japan	• China	• Document analysis
Ritzer (2012)	The Cold War in Swiss Classrooms: History Education as a 'Powerful Weapon against Communism'?	• Switzerland	• Document analysis (including textbooks)
Sin (2008)	'How to Cross the Border' of Historical Perceptions in the History Textbooks of Korea, China and Japan: 'Liquidation' of the Asia-Pacific War and Historical Reconciliation.	• Korea, China and Japan	• Textbook analysis
Skårås, (2018)	Focused Ethnographic Research on Teaching and Learning in Conflict Zones: History Education in South Sudan	• South Sudan	• Ethnography, including classroom observation, interviews
Skårås (2019)	Constructing a National Narrative in Civil War: History Teaching and National unity in South Sudan	• South Sudan	• Ethnography, including classroom observation, • Interviews • student essays
Tibbitts and Weldon (2017)	History curriculum and teacher training: shaping a democratic future in post-apartheid South Africa?	• South Africa	• Qualitative survey • Interviews
Torsti (2009)	Segregatied education and texts: a challenge to peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina	• Bosnia and Herzegovina	• Textbook analysis
Trofanenko (2014)	Affective Emotions: The Pedagogical Challenges of Knowing War	• USA	• Case study • Interviews • Classroom observation (museums)
van Ommering (2015)	Formal history education in Lebanon: Crossroads of past conflicts and prospects for peace.	• Lebanon	• Ethnography, including classroom observation • Textbook analysis
Vural (2012)	"Seeking to Transform the Perceptions of Intercommunal Relations: The Turkish-Cypriot Case (2004–2009).	• Cyprus	• Survey • Textbook analysis
Yemini and Yifat (2016)	The global–local negotiation: between the official and the implemented history curriculum in Israeli classrooms.	• Israel	• Interviews
Yemini and Yifat (2009)	The global–local nexus: desired history curriculum components from the perspective of future teachers in a conflict-ridden society.	• Israel	• Qualitative and quantitative surveys
Yogev (2010)	A crossroads: history textbooks and curricula in Israel.	• Israel	• No clear methods description
Yogev (2012)	The image of the 1967 War in Israeli history textbooks as test case: studying an active past in a protracted regional conflict.	• Israel	• Textbook analysis

Author (date)	Title	Geographical area	Methods
Yogev (2013)	The pedagogy of subversion in history education in conflict-ridden areas.	• Israel	• No clear methods description
Zembylas (2016)	The emotional regimes of reconciliation in history textbook revision: reflections on the politics of resentment and the politics of empathy in post-conflict societies	• Cyprus	• No clear methods description
Zembylas, Loukaides, and Antoniou (2020)	Teachers' understanding of empathy of teaching about the holocaust in Cyprus: The emotional risk of identification and the disruptive potential of "empathic unsettlement"	• Cyprus	• Interviews

Manual search: Comparative education (CE), Journal of Peace education (JPE)

Author (date)	Title	Geographical area	Research approach
Bentrovato (2017)	Accounting for genocide transitional justice mass (re)education and the pedagogy of truth in present day Rwanda	• Rwanda	• Document analysis, including textbooks • Interviews • Informal conversations • Qualitative survey
Shepler and Williams (2017)	Understanding Sierra Leonean and Liberian teachers views on discussing past wars in their classrooms	• Sierra Leone	• Interviews • Document analysis
Bickmore, Kaderi, and Ángela (2017)	Creating capacities for peacebuilding citizenship history and social studies curricula in Bangladesh Canada Colombia and Mexico	• Bangladesh, Canada, Colombia and Mexico	• Document analysis
Vanner, Akseer, and Kovinthan (2017)	Learning peace and conflict the role of primary learning materials in peacebuilding in post war Afghanistan South Sudan and Sri Lanka	• Sri Lanka, South Sudan and Afghanistan	• Textbook analysis
Zembylas, M. (2011)	Teachers emerging stances and repertoires towards reconciliation, potential and challenges in Greek Cypriotic education	• Cyprus	• Interviews

Citation search

Author (date)	Title	Geographical area	Research approach
Jonathan D Jansen (2009)	On the clash of martyrological memories	• South Africa	• Teaching intervention
Meenakshi Chhabra (2016)	A Social-Psychological Perspective on Teaching a Historical Event of Collective Violence: The Case of the 1947 British India Partition	• India	• Interviews
Skårås and Breidlid (2016)	Teaching the violent past in secondary schools in newly independent South Sudan	• South Sudan	• Ethnography, including classroom observation • Interviews