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Source: *Journal of Educational Media, Memory & Society*, AUTUMN 2014, Vol. 6, No. 2, Special Issue: Textbooks, Identity Politics, and Lines of Conflict in South Asia (AUTUMN 2014), pp. 42-86

Published by: Berghahn Books

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44320034>

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Living in Harmony? “Casteism”, Communalism, and Regionalism in Indian Social Science Textbooks

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Abstract • Three societal lines of conflict, “casteism”, communalism, and regionalism, are regarded as severe challenges in present-day India. This article discusses and compares differences between presentations of these lines of conflict in six textbook series for social sciences prepared by the Indian states of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, and by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in New Delhi. The variations in perspective, scope, and approach are related to changing educational approaches and to specific discourses of identity politics, which may be explained in terms of the impact of different positions adopted by states and the union towards the issues, and in terms of the discursive dominance of specific sociopolitical viewpoints.

Keywords • social science, conflict, history, identity politics, India, political science, textbooks

Introduction

In India, as in many societies, living in harmony and peace is seen as a guiding principle and a prerequisite for social and economic development. However, the reality is far from being harmonious. Indian mass media cover daily a broad range of issues that are related to different lines of conflict within society or between India and its neighbors. How do textbooks address these conflicts, and what factors shape textbook discourses?

In general, the ways in which textbooks refer to conflicts are related to the ways in which a society conceives itself and imagines “the nation” and the “external other”. The Indian national movement conceptualized “the nation” differently from that of the European nation-states, which assumed linguistic and cultural unity. Indian politicians accepted linguistic and cultural diversity¹ during the “last wave” of national movements.²

*Journal of Educational Media,
Memory, and Society*
doi: 10.3167/jemms.2014.060204

Volume 6, Issue 2, Autumn 2014: 42–86 © GEI
ISSN 2041-6938 (Print), ISSN 2041-6946 (Online)



As Subrata Mitra argues, in postcolonial India, the “nation” is opposed by “sub-national” movements based on language, ethnicity, or culture.³ In a later stage of development, when these movements are, to use Michael Billig’s term, “banalized,”⁴ they might become official political players, for example, in the context of linguistic states (like Maharashtra or Tamil Nadu) or autonomous regions.⁵ Both the central national state and the subnational federal states, however, are contested by subnational movements in a stage of agitation. These pursue identity politics by making use of “cultural” markers in order to demarcate space and mobilize supporters. The central state and the subnational states try to oppose references to divergent cultural identities by pursuing their own identity politics and thereby legitimizing the status quo. The discourses on these two levels overlap only partly. Moreover, they are (possibly) countered by discourses that propagate different identity formations.

Indian discourses on national identity are still deeply rooted in colonial times and in the political controversies that arose in the aftermath of partition and independence. To this day, these discourses are, according to Vibha Pingle and Ashutosh Varshney, internally driven, barely influenced by globalization.⁶

Bipan Chandra draws attention to the development of national consciousness in India, which during the second half of the nineteenth century was seen as an ongoing process in confrontation with colonialism.⁷ Only during the twentieth century did India develop a composite “cultural nationalism” or the perception of a perennial Indian nation going back at least to the Vedic age.⁸ Further, Chandra points to the “extremely uneven development ... of national and anti-imperialist consciousness” among the people,⁹ where other group identities based on such identifiers as region, language, religion, and caste dominated as points of reference. In this context, such identities, which are restricted in scope, can become an issue in the form of “casteism”, regionalism, or communalism, especially from the perspective of the nationalism that encompasses them, which makes them absolute and renders other aspects of unity and division irrelevant.¹⁰

As Chandra et al. have indicated, communalism, and, it might be added, the other “isms”, developed as means of mobilization. They did not precede nationalism, even when they referred to long-established, though not absolute, identities. They began emerging in the later decades of the nineteenth century in competition with nationalism as a means of making use of economic and political opportunities offered by the colonial system. Communalism became extreme and acquired a mass base only after 1937, yet led to partition within a decade. Textbooks naturalized communalist perspectives both prior to and after independence.¹¹

After partition, the direction of Indian politics was negotiated largely among secularists, Hindu traditionalists, and Hindu nationalists. Nehru-

vian secularism, with its focus on “unity in diversity,” dominated Indian politics for most of the time, despite a strong Hindu traditionalist wing within the party. In the forty-second amendment to the Indian constitution in 1976, secularism was added to the preamble as a state goal. Hindu nationalist tendencies, which became strong in several states, especially those of the “Hindi belt,”¹² became a leading force in the union government from 1977 to 1979 and from 1999 to 2004, and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won a landslide victory in the elections of May 2014. As a main issue of present-day mass politics,¹³ Indian identity politics between composite and Hindu nationalism led to public controversies over textbook discourses during the two periods referred to above.¹⁴

For several reasons, identity politics are perceived differently from India’s federal states than from the center. Political and social developments or issues that receive prime importance in national discourse do not arouse similar interest in some states. Geographical distance and remoteness from the events in the center play a crucial role here. This is especially true for the issue of partition, which had affected Northern India and had the greatest effect in the provinces of Punjab and Bengal. Similarly, the freedom struggle was understood differently in the south and the north. Moreover, the states situated outside the Hindi belt developed their identity politics partly in opposition to the center and the north. Here, the discourses are not, or not only, marked by secular versus communalist positions, but appear to be antidomination discourses pitted against central or dominant impertinences. Thus in Tamil Nadu, the leading regional parties, such as the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), grew out of the anti-Brahmin and Dravidian (lower-caste) movement, which took up an anti-Hindi stand against the language policies of the center and against Congress Party positions.¹⁵ Despite erstwhile separatist tendencies, these parties ended up as spearheads for the reinforcement of the power of the federal states against the center.¹⁶ In Maharashtra the situation is more complex. Apart from during the second half of the 1990s, Congress and breakaway parties (Progressive Congress, Nationalist Congress Party) formed the state governments. But these parties have a strong regional focus. On the other hand, the dominant regional force, Shiv Sena, added a communalist outlook to the regionalist one and became a strong ally of the BJP.¹⁷

These identity discourses exhibit oppositions along two main dimensions or coordinates: a secular versus communal or Hindu nationalist dimension,¹⁸ and a national versus a subnational, state, or regionally based one. Both of these find their way into schools and textbooks as the official versions of identity politics, used as tools to promote the official reading of the desired shape of Indian identity.

Beside the involvement of union and state governments in education and their respective interests, political influences pass through the prism of educational considerations. Thus, educational concerns, alongside political ones, urged a focus on unity and societal harmony and called for conflicts within India, especially the violent ones, to be dealt with mostly by silence so as not to disturb young minds.¹⁹ An opposite standpoint emerged from the 1990s, arguing that conflict-related questions must also be addressed in schools. Partition with its consequences and India's relationship to Pakistan are the most striking cases, but current internal rifts, for example, should also be addressed.²⁰

Beside educational intentions, what does the handling of societal conflicts in Indian textbooks reveal? Where textbooks are used as tools for the development of national consciousness among future citizens, conflicts with neighbors portray metaphorical borderlines against the "external other", which tend to unify and homogenize the nation, especially where it perceives itself as under threat from a foreign enemy. The discussion of internal conflicts, however, qualifies notions of national unity and homogeneity. From the point of view of identity politics, such discussion might seem counterproductive, and is only of use if directed against an "internal other". In this case, the presentation of conflict in textbooks reflects political fronts between groups struggling for discursive power to decide on the content of textbooks, and aiming for political power in a general sense.

The two coordinates of identity politics mentioned above (secular versus communal and center versus state) are visible in part when we compare subsequent textbook discourses under governments of different political orientations. A synchronic comparison can examine the second dimension: differences in the discourses between the center and the states. Thus we ask which messages the discourses reveal with changes of government, and whether textbooks produced by the center and those in use in the states reflect concurrent positions, seeing as education is on the "Concurrent List," which determines that union and state governments jointly develop policies and decide upon matters related to those issues on it. Moreover, we address which educational means are used to bring topics to pupils and whether the means of implementation support the political messages in this content.

This article looks into shifts in textbook discourses along societal lines of conflict in India. The focal points are, first, textbook revisions in line with political changes and, second, central as opposed to regional perspectives. When analyzing textbooks in use over the last fifteen years, from the end of the 1990s to 2013, we combine a diachronic and synchronic comparison of six textbook series, including three from the center (NCERT, the National Council of Educational Research and Training), two from the state of Tamil Nadu, and one from Maharashtra (both of these states emerged out of subnational movements). The current books, in use

during the time of the study, are part of the sample. Older series could not be acquired for Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra.²¹ With the focus on three major interrelated issues, which are held responsible for destroying “harmony” and hampering “national integration”, we analyze positions in textbooks that view events from different political angles. With reference to the treatment of societal conflicts, the article argues that, beside the effects of different identity politics, there are other factors, in this case educational ones, that influence textbook discourses, and that might clash with the purpose of identity formation pursued in the textbooks.²²

After giving background information about the textbooks, we reconstruct the various textbook narratives on caste and “untouchability”, communalism, linguistic diversity, and regionalism and related concepts, and look into the educational treatment of the issues. A conclusion will sum up our findings.

Social Science Textbooks in India

In federal India, education’s inclusion on the Concurrent List means that policy in this arena is a matter jointly for the union and state governments. At the union level, NCERT in New Delhi develops curriculum frameworks and model textbooks that are used all over India in schools affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education, which is responsible for examination matters. At the state level, each state has its own education boards. Schools affiliated to them use textbooks prescribed by these boards.

Apart from the state-run schools in India, there are private and community-run schools, which often use books by private textbook publishers. These will not be discussed here. Tamil Nadu textbooks for schools affiliated to the State Education and Examination Boards are published by the (state-owned) Tamil Nadu Textbook Corporation in Tamil and in English. As English has become very prominent as a language of instruction, many, if not most, pupils study using the English books. We analyze editions published in 2005, which were also in circulation and use some years later, and in 2011 (cited as TN 1/school year and TN 2/school year respectively). Alongside books from Tamil Nadu, English-medium textbooks published by the Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, Pune, are taken into account. For the higher secondary stage, besides state bureau publications, publications by private publishers are available, which have to be licensed by the Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Education. We analyzed editions published between 2010 and 2012, which were the books in use during the period of writing (cited as M/school year).²³

The NCERT books are used in around 9000 “central schools” and also serve as model textbooks, meaning they have a wider influence. A

first generation of books (cited as NCERT 1/school year), published in the 1990s but going back to earlier editions, was denounced as “Marxist” and replaced by new books between 2002 and 2004 under the NDA (National Democratic Alliance) government, which in their turn were regarded as “Hindu-nationalistic” (NCERT 2/school year).²⁴ After a passionate controversy on the “saffronization” of history textbooks in particular²⁵ and a change of government in 2004, new curricula and a third generation of textbooks were developed, which appeared between 2006 and 2008 and are currently still in use in schools (NCERT 3/school year). These three generations of books on social science subjects, particularly civics, are the bases of this study. To denote the school year, the books and syllabi use the terms “class” or “standard”. In this article, apart from direct references to the book titles, we generally apply the term “year”.

Social studies are taught as an umbrella subject combining history, geography, civics/political science, and, in part, economics, as separate units in one textbook per school year in Tamil Nadu (years VI to X) and in the second NCERT series (years VI to X). In Maharashtra, history and civics are combined, as well as geography and economics (years III to V and IX to X). The other years, like the NCERT textbooks of the first and third series, issue books for each subject, including sociology for the upper secondary stage (years XI and XII). As the subjects are treated separately, they frame the conflict-related discourses specifically. In geography, the discussion of resources, especially water, is one of the contexts, and demography, particularly the gender aspect of the Indian population’s sex ratio, another one. Disasters and regional geography also present opportunities to mention specific lines of conflict. However, such discussions or mentions are comparably rare, and geography, along with economics, is the social science subject that refers to conflicts least. History is, of course, full of descriptions of past wars and conflicts. The lines of conflict discussed in this article are more specific and find their mention predominantly in the context of pre- and postindependence history, the developments towards partition, and the making of independent India. The subjects of civics and political studies are central to the discussion of conflict in the books. Here, the constitution, the organization of government, or the workings of Indian democracy are the contexts in which our topics are mentioned or discussed. Themes related to social life in primary school years, or framed as “Indian society” in more advanced stages of education, adopt a perspective that is more sociological than political. It is notable that the same frames and issues are repeated in several different school years.

In all textbook series, India is presented as a country of physical and cultural diversity, which strengthens the motto “unity in diversity,” a mantra we find repeated several times.

Caste and “Untouchability”

The specific structure of Indian society, which European discourse has objectified as the “caste system”, produces one of the gravest issues for Indian development, and its presentation in textbooks appears to be in agreement with this assessment. Caste and “untouchability” is a topic not only in civics or political science, but also in some series of history textbooks: “Caste creates social gradation and social grouping, which leads to social distinction, discrimination and disintegration. All men are born equal. Casteism is against this principle. ... This hinders the smooth functioning of a democracy and the growth of national [i]ntegration” (TN 2/VIII).²⁶

Besides this and similar characterizations of the caste system, most textbook series, whether concerned with history or civics/politics, look back into the past in a few lines or, especially in the first and third series of NCERT books, on several occasions. The first series covers the development of caste inequality throughout history in all of the history textbooks, pointing towards changes and growing rigidity, as here: “Caste was a major divisive force and element of disintegration in 18th century India. It often split Hindus living in the same village or region into many social atoms.”²⁷ The consumption of beef by Brahmins during the Vedic age²⁸ served as one of the arguments for deleting passages and replacing the whole series under the BJP-led government during the early years of this century.²⁹ In line with its affirmative policy toward Hindu traditions, the second NCERT series omits most historical references to caste inequalities. The third series of NCERT covers the caste issue in history again, taking a broader approach.³⁰

One aspect all series take into account is that of the reform movements during the nineteenth century. The first NCERT series discusses the religiously inspired movements of the nineteenth century that criticized caste divisions,³¹ and describes how, in the second half of the century, “the lower castes themselves” “became conscious of their basic human rights and began to rise in defence of these rights” against the higher castes, also questioning Brahman authority in the field of religion. “The struggle against the evils of the caste system, however, still remains an urgent task before the Indian people, especially in the rural areas.”³²

Likewise, the year VIII book of the second NCERT series discusses the “social and cultural awakening” in the nineteenth century, presenting ideas and activities of individual reformers. The chapter centers on revivalist tendencies within Hinduism and “religious awakening among the Muslims” and does not touch on the social movements. Still, the “zealous social reformer” Jyotiba Phule is mentioned, “who took up earnestly the cause of women and the cause of downtrodden people in Maharashtra. ... However, his campaign for the economic regeneration of the depressed classes and the removal of untouchability soon acquired the character of

an anti-Brahmin movement. Nonetheless, his endeavours went a long way in creating a consciousness about the plight of the depressed classes among the people.”³³ It sounds here as if the anti-Brahmin orientation is disapproved of by the textbook author, and the euphemistic phraseology diminishes the issue to some extent.

With a different approach, the relevant chapter of the third NCERT series, “Women, Caste and Reform,” concentrates on the social aspects of reform movements, not only those led by high-caste protagonists, but also low-caste temple entry, self-respect, and non-Brahmin movements with protagonists like Phule, Ambedkar, and Periyar: “But orthodox Hindu society also reacted by founding Sanatan Dharma Sabhas and the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal in the north, and associations like the Brahman Sabha in Bengal. The object of these associations was to uphold caste distinctions as a cornerstone of Hinduism, and show how this was sanctified by scriptures. Debates and struggles over caste continued beyond the colonial period and are still going on in our own times.” (NCERT 3/ VIII)³⁴ The same aspects are also highlighted in books from Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra. In Maharashtra, a chapter entitled “The Struggle for Social Equality” covers peasants, workers, and women’s movements as well as the Dalit movement.³⁵ In the new edition of Tamil Nadu books, reform movements against “untouchability” are referred to in a chapter entitled “Contemporary Social Issues of Tamil Nadu,” which mentions activities conducted by several reformers. The issues are quite clearly described here: “Large sections of the society, mostly doing manual work, had been termed as Sudras and Panchamas. These people were deprived of education, government jobs, right to temple entry, property and usage of public paths and water sheds; such a system resulted in exploitation of [the] majority of people by the people of higher castes.... Thus the masses of Tamil Nadu were deprived of rights, property, education, office and social status for thousands of years leading to their deplorable backward conditions in the modern times.” (TN 2/IX)³⁶

The book shows a strong anti-Brahmin slant and links the fight against “untouchability” closely to the anti-Brahmin movement. Whereas formerly “the Brahmins ... [had] captured the priesthood in the rich temples,” already under British rule the “monopolistic exploitation of rich temples was restrained by [the] ‘Hindu [R]eligious Endowment Act’.”³⁷ Among others, the Congressman E. V. Ramasamy intended “to liberate the Dravidians from Brahmin order and to expose its tyranny and deceptive methods by which they controlled all spheres of Hindu life.”³⁸ These wordings expose an anti-northern line of conflict that refers to “the masses of Tamil Nadu” while linking Brahmins strongly to northern Indian Hinduism. This is specific to the Tamil Nadu series, which in this regard holds an opposite position to that of the second NCERT series.

Interestingly, the assessment of the role of the colonial power differs between the series. The second NCERT series states: “The British exploited casteism to keep Indians divided and to perpetuate their rule over India,”³⁹ suggesting that they are to blame for strengthening it. Others are at least ambivalent. Maharashtra mentions that “[t]he British introduced the concept of social equality. They enrolled Dalits in the army. This increased confidence among them. They protested against injustice. In British rule they got opportunities for education and employment. They became aware of their downtrodden condition. This led to social tension.”⁴⁰ Likewise, the first NCERT series points to the British introduction of the rule of law and equality before the law and the “humanitarian measures” the colonial power implemented.⁴¹ On the other hand, later, reforms are described as having to be in line with administrative prerequisites where, for example, “[t]he foreign government was afraid of arousing the hostility of the orthodox sections of society,”⁴² and, in a more pronounced tone, “[a]s usual, orthodox Hindu sections gave stiff opposition to these developments.”⁴³ By arguing along the same lines, the third NCERT series uses other wordings that do not reference today’s lines of conflict: “There was a feeling that any strong attack on local customs, practices, beliefs and religious ideas might enrage ‘native’ opinion.”⁴⁴

After independence, the Indian constitution granted equality to all citizens and abolished “untouchability”. Reservation politics and other union and state laws were introduced to “protect the interests of certain weaker sections of the society.”⁴⁵ These aspects are referred to by all textbook series in the context of history (the drafting of the constitution) or civics (the content of the constitution). However, the second NCERT series puts less emphasis on the topic and mentions the abolition of “untouchability” in the constitution only briefly, in year VII.⁴⁶ Further, “[t]he great legal luminary and depressed classes’ leader Dr B. R. Ambedkar” is only briefly mentioned as president of the institutional drafting committee,⁴⁷ reflecting the ambivalent position of Hindu nationalists towards Ambedkar.⁴⁸ The other series name him in the context of the constitution and social movements with more emphasis, for example in texts published by Maharashtra: “Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar [Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar; ‘Babasaheb’ is a title of reverence] aimed at establishing a society based on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. He was convinced that the injustice to the Dalits and inequality would not end unless the caste system was entirely rooted out. Social equality, according to him, is a right of the Dalits” (M/VIII).⁴⁹ Instead of highlighting the achievements of Ambedkar, the political science books in the third NCERT series cite his experiences as a (Dalit) child in the general context of diversity, stereotypes, and discrimination, to make caste discrimination approachable in a pupil-oriented way.⁵⁰

Besides Ambedkar, the position of Gandhi in relation to the “Harijans” (“God’s folk,” the term used by Gandhi to refer to Dalits, traditionally considered “untouchable”) is mentioned in nearly all the books covering this period. But only the third series points to differences between the positions of Gandhi and Ambedkar; a closer look at the role of Dalits in the independence movement reveals that they were not content and began to organize themselves,⁵¹ also opposing Gandhi’s stand.⁵² These books are the first to supply sources for pupils to experience the proceeding of these controversies during the development of the constitution.⁵³

The specific veneration of Ambedkar led to one of the most recent controversies about Indian textbooks. A historical cartoon in a NCERT book, which showed Ambedkar, a Dalit, and the high-caste Nehru framing the constitution and which was wrongly interpreted as disrespectful, gave rise to a violent dispute in 2012, which served to demonstrate how important the inclusion of such cartoons in textbooks is for the training of interpretative capabilities.⁵⁴

The second NCERT series adopts a restrained approach to the importance of castes in today’s India. It is accepted that “[c]aste creates social gradation and social groupings, which leads to social distinction, discrimination and disintegration.” A person belonging to a low caste “is subjected to many inhuman and discriminatory treatments [*sic*]. His or her caste becomes a curse for life without any fault of his or her [own].” Today, it continues, “caste discrimination has drastically declined but conversely the [political] importance of caste consideration has increased.”⁵⁵ Thus, we might read, the real problem is not discrimination but the politicization of caste differences, an argument that seems mainly to be directed against the low-caste movements.⁵⁶

In the year XII sociology book from the series, the caste structure is described as an obstacle to the unity of the country; its opposition to “national consciousness by imposing social restrictions and ideas of purity and pollution,” and the hindrances it presents to social mobility are pointed at: “Untouchability is the cancer of the society.”⁵⁷ Later, in a chapter entitled “Deprived Groups,” the author states: “Moreover, caste violence has witnessed a dramatic increase over the last couple of years.”⁵⁸ Despite its clearer stance, the book joins with the rest of the series in minimizing the negative role of caste, stating that “[the c]aste system is making adequate adjustments with the changing times. It has retained its relevance by becoming more resilient and accommodative,” among others by the process of Sanskritization.⁵⁹

In contrast to the second series, the first NCERT series discusses caste and “untouchability” broadly, stating that neither are problems of the past:

In spite of all these measures, narrow casteism is still followed at different places. Specially in small towns and villages the evils of [the] caste system can be found on a large scale. There are instances of caste-riots with tragic loss of life and property. ... In these days of technological advancement, our country can never progress unless casteism is uprooted totally. (NCERT 1/VIII)⁶⁰

It is a matter of shame that untouchability is still practised in our country in one form or the other. Still let us hope that in the years to come people will be successful in erasing the blot of untouchability from the face of India. To achieve this much depends on the children who are the future citizens of this country. (NCERT 1/VIII)⁶¹

Implicitly, the books link the topic to counterdiscourses such as those revolving around the “glorious” Hindu past. They admit that “[i]t is good to be proud of one’s heritage. But one must not do it blindly. It is equally important to be critical about it. ... Many things in our traditional society are bad, and these must be changed, if we are to progress and have a democratic society.”⁶² One such criticism is directed towards the caste system: “Now there is nothing good of such a system. And this kind of inequality is entirely unjustifiable. ... Worst of all was the system called untouchability. ... It was a shameful and inhuman aspect of our old society. ... But to abolish a system that has gone on for hundreds of years is not easy. Those who benefit from the system – the upper castes ... would not sometimes like the system to go.”⁶³

The moral qualifications and appeals in these texts appear helpless in view of the fact that all governmental efforts and constitutional provisions have not yet been able to achieve the goal of equality. Additionally, the opponent, as defined in quotations, is the upper-caste Hindu sticking to his or her positions, not the member of lower castes who is politicizing the distinction.

One book in the series defines “casteism”, a term often used in the books, but not frequently explained: “Casteism is the exploitation of caste consciousness for narrow political gains. A casteist conceives India basically as a federation of *jatis* [professional group castes] and not of states or free and equal citizens.”⁶⁴ We again see a moral qualification at work here.

In the year XII sociology book, the author points to the links between caste and class: “Harijans may not be doing today what they were forced to do a couple of decades ago, but they remain under the economic and social hegemony of the upper castes and the landed interests.”⁶⁵ Caste and class are also defined in relation to violence when authors claim that, “[a]s such, it is a class war behind the apparent caste riots. ... Those people were killed not only because they were Harijans, but also because they were working as agricultural labourers and share-croppers for the rich and dominant landlords.”⁶⁶

Political science books from the third series handle the topic differently. They discuss caste and class discrimination in the general context of diversity, stereotypes, and discrimination, and in the context of equality and dignity. They mention the Dalit movement, constitutional provisions, and governmental programs such as midday meals at schools, prepared by Dalit women but eaten by all children regardless of caste.⁶⁷ And they hint that governmental and legal action is often a reaction to pressure from below:⁶⁸ “As we can see, the existence of a right or a law or even a policy on paper does not mean that it exists in reality. People have had to constantly work on or to make efforts to translate these into principles that guide the action of their fellow citizens or even their leaders. ... [E]ven in a democratic society, similar processes of struggle, writing, negotiation and organising need to continue (NCERT 3/VIII).”⁶⁹ The books of the third NCERT series do not deplore today’s caste discrimination in general terms, but exemplify, contextualize, and explain.⁷⁰ Further, they question the issues. For example, the reservation policy, a policy of affirmative action for disadvantaged groups, which otherwise is just presented as a governmental strategy, is discussed with arguments for and against.⁷¹ The books focus on the role of social movements⁷² as agents of change and present societal developments as political processes, not as processes of moral reorientation of the individual.⁷³

According to the state board and first NCERT series books, caste and “untouchability” are evils that have to be wiped out. In this context, the books from Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra focus strongly on the Dalit aspect. The second NCERT series does not take an overtly contrary position, but dilutes the seriousness of the problem by scope and semantics, thus reflecting the Hindu-nationalist background without contravening the standards of the Indian constitution. The third NCERT series links the topic to the broader social issues of discrimination and the struggle for equality.

Communalism

The religious heterogeneity of India, whose population includes Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, and Zoroastrians, is mentioned by all textbook series. To accommodate this diversity, the Indian constitution defines the country as a secular state, where all denominations are free to express their faith openly and have the right to their own educational institutions. The books regard participation in the festivals of the other communities mutually as a basis for communal harmony and Indian unity.⁷⁴

Yet the relationship between Hindus and Muslims in particular is not without antagonism, and its treatment differs among the textbook series. Three historical protagonists demonstrate this: Mahmud of Ghazni, who

invaded India in the eleventh century; and the Moghul emperors Akbar, who applied a tolerant and syncretistic religious policy, and Aurangzeb, who returned to an orthodox Islamic position. Mahmud is (in)famous for raiding and destroying temples.⁷⁵ Whereas the Maharashtra text-book simply states the event,⁷⁶ the book from Tamil Nadu refers to the religious background of the adversaries.⁷⁷ The far more detailed first series of NCERT books sees the raids in an economic light and marginalizes religious motives.⁷⁸ The act of plundering temples for the attainment of religious merits, which was felt as blasphemy by the Hindus, play a role in the second series, which uses quite strong words.⁷⁹ But the third series points to the policy of destroying temples as carried out by Hindu or Buddhist rulers.⁸⁰ In this way, the Hindu-Muslim antagonism is resolved by treating the issue as a political demonstration of power.

The treatment of the religious policies of the Moghuls, especially by Akbar and Aurangzeb, gives further insight into historical interpretations. The tolerant attitude of Akbar towards all religions is highlighted in all the books covering the period. The treatment of his foundation of a new syncretic religion, *din-i-Ilahi*, illustrates the difference between the books; whereas the Maharashtra book emphasizes tolerance,⁸¹ the Tamil Nadu book points out that “Akbar made an attempt to bring Unity in Diversity through his own religion,”⁸² linking history to present-day slogans.

The books of the first NCERT series had, however, urged caution against the acceptance of this narrative, pointing out that the “*tauhid-i-Ilahi*” was not intended to be a religion but “really an order of the Sufistic type.”⁸³ One book adds that, “Akbar’s great dream was that India should be united as one country. People should forget their differences of region and religion and think of themselves only as the people of India.”⁸⁴ In this way, history as mediated through these textbooks directly supports the message of today’s Indian national policy.

The second series NCERT book backtracks to a religious and philosophical focus. In a somewhat denigrating tone, it stresses that *din-i-illahi* “had no well-defined theology or philosophy. The basic purpose behind the formulation of *Din-i-Ilahi* was ... universal harmony,” as Akbar, after long philosophical discussions with exponents of the different faiths, had come to the conclusion that “no single religion could claim the monopoly of truth.”⁸⁵

Not mentioning *din-i-Ilahi*, but instead the idea of “universal peace,” the third NCERT series again links theology and religious policy.⁸⁶ If it is depicted as not claiming to be a religion of its own, Akbar’s concept is less likely to be opposed by today’s religious communities and the message of harmony more easily acceptable to believers. In an exercise, the book also relates history to the present, but without mixing them up: “Like the Mughal Empire, India today is also made up of many social and cultural units. Does this pose a challenge to national integration?”⁸⁷

The space allotted to the topic varies, with a few lines in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and the second NCERT series; several pages in the first NCERT series; and one and a half in the third; likewise, there are variations in the degree to which history is linked to present-day issues, a point which is left aside in Maharashtra and the NCERT book of the second series.

On the other hand, the policies of Aurangzeb, who reversed the tolerant religious politics of his predecessors, are negatively characterized, where they are referred to,⁸⁸ and partly made responsible for the subsequent decline of Mughal power, as he infuriated the other groups.

One book in the first NCERT series for the higher secondary stage does not blame Aurangzeb personally for his religious policy, but instead cites two different trends at the Mughal court, an orthodox and a more liberal one, and the power plays in the court.⁸⁹ In the texts from the second generation of NCERT books, however, Aurangzeb personally is the villain. Additionally, the book refers only to the Hindu-Muslim relationship, describing Aurangzeb as anti-Hindu,⁹⁰ whereas elsewhere⁹¹ it is made clear that the other non-Islamic denominations were also affected. Whereas the first-series book introduces arguments of social history and power, trying to avoid communalist interpretations, the cited second-generation NCERT book seems to reflect a communalist position. Thus aspects of medieval history are quite sensitive in the context of present-day discourse on communalism and are used as arguments by all parties.⁹²

Present-day communalism is mentioned or made the topic of discussion in all social science textbook series, though with differences in scope. In the state board books it is covered only briefly; the most space is given to the issue in the first NCERT series. "Communalism" is described in moral terms, as in Tamil Nadu: "In our country communities are formed on the basis of religions. Communalism refers to [a] selfish aggressive attitude of one community towards another. This feeling sometimes lead[s] to communal riots" (TN 1/VIII).⁹³ A Maharashtra book, which also makes very brief reference to the issue, relates it to politics: "Communalism means abusing religion for political gains. Communalism creates enmity among people living together in harmony. In order to maintain our unity, our Constitution has upheld secularism" (M/VII).⁹⁴ NCERT addresses the nation as an argument: "There is no harm of having so many religions. But to think of the interest of one's religious community first and the nation afterwards, will definitely harm the country's unity and integrity" (NCERT 1/VIII).⁹⁵ Or, as a year XII book phrases it, "communalism is a political strategy opposed to nationalism as a process of integration of multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-lingual communities."⁹⁶

In the first series, communalism is not only attributed to Muslims, but also to Hindu positions.⁹⁷ It is not only mentioned that Gandhi was killed by a religious (Hindu) communalist, but also that "some people want India to be a Hindu state, because they are in a majority. But this is

obviously and terribly wrong."⁹⁸ The book cites as an argument the composite Indian culture to which all communities have contributed. A year XII book claims with Nehru that "while all communalism is bad, we must remember that minority communalism is born out of fear, while majority communalism takes the form of political reaction."⁹⁹

The rise of communalism is seen in relation to socioeconomic developments under the British, in the course of which "Muslims had lagged behind the Hindus," in addition to the British policy of "divide and rule." Hindu and Muslim organizations (the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League are named) "indulged in spreading communal hatred in their respective communities against each other," resulting in communal clashes.¹⁰⁰ Explanations are mostly socioeconomic and on a highly general level.

The second generation of NCERT books holds the British directly responsible for the emergence of communal attitudes because of their divide-and-rule policy. The freedom struggle is depicted as having united all Indians, which might lead us to ask how partition then came about. According to the books, after independence, communalism combined with terrorism (which they relate especially to Muslims and Sikhs)¹⁰¹ and endangers Indian unity, as "aggressive communalism, if unchecked, at a certain stage leads to a separatist tendency".¹⁰² The Hindu majority is implicitly excluded from allegations related to communalism.¹⁰³

The third series of NCERT widens the scope once again. While it criticizes the view that today's communalism is part of the long, direct line of Hindu-Muslim conflict stretching back into medieval times,¹⁰⁴ it acknowledges that "religious, cultural, regional or ethnic conflict ... can be found in almost every phase of our history" and that "colonialism did not invent inter-community conflicts" and cannot be blamed for today's strife. But, the book adds, "We should not forget that we also have a long tradition of religious pluralism, ranging from peaceful co-existence to actual inter-mixing or syncretism."¹⁰⁵

The most disturbing feature of communalism is the violence connected with it. The textbooks treat communal riots in a variety of ways. Tamil Nadu books simply mention their occurrence in a general, abstract way: "Thousands of innocent people die during these Communal riots."¹⁰⁶ The riots in connection with partition, omitted in the older series, are mentioned in one sentence in the newer books: "The announcement about the partition led to riots in many places."¹⁰⁷ Maharashtra mentions the riots of 1922 and 1946;¹⁰⁸ it states that in 1947, "[t]he people of India were grieved because of partition of the country and the terrible violence."¹⁰⁹ In civics books or sections of books, more recent outbreaks of violence are not mentioned.

The first NCERT series discusses riots in a broader way in history than in civics or political studies books: "Many innocent people die in commu-

nal riots."¹¹⁰ After partition, "[g]hastly communal riots broke out. *Lakhs* [hundreds of thousands] of people were killed or injured and millions lost their homes and jobs. ... Even after independence there have been communal riots at different places. There have been riots between the Hindus and the Muslims, between the Shia and the Sunni sects of the Muslims. Such riots create an atmosphere of distrust, lead to loss of life and property. They disrupt social life, affect the production of the country and bring the democratic machinery of the country to a standstill."¹¹¹

In 1946, "[t]he Hindu and Muslim communalists blamed each other for starting the heinous killings and competed with each other in cruelty."¹¹² The broader discussion of the riots and their background in the year XII history book remains on a general level, full of emotionally charged adjectives such as "nasty," "senseless," and "barbaric," and are depicted as ultimately incomprehensible: "even at the very moment of freedom a communal orgy, accompanied by indescribable brutalities, was consuming thousands of lives in both India and Pakistan."¹¹³

The books from the second NCERT series keep the discussion on a low level. Referring to the "terrible communal riots" in the pre-independence era, the partition riots are either not mentioned,¹¹⁴ or losses are deplored: "Thousands of innocent lives were lost. Families displaced from their homes became refugees. This communal carnage made children orphans and women widows."¹¹⁵ Modern communal violence is linked to terrorism¹¹⁶ carried out by minority groups, and otherwise discussed only in a very abstract way¹¹⁷ or masked through euphemistic phrases like "the communal problem raises its head from time to time."¹¹⁸

Only the third series of NCERT books addresses historical and recent riots in a more accessible way. Whereas the year VIII history book includes a section on "Life in the Time of Partition," which uses the example of Delhi and refers rather briefly but pointedly to the 1946 and postindependence riots,¹¹⁹ the year XII book assigns a chapter to "Understanding Partition," starting with and focusing largely on the experience of violence, not only in general terms, but also on a personal level. Difficult topics are included, such as the role of gender during the riots: "Dishonouring women of a community was seen as dishonouring the community itself, and a mode of taking revenge."¹²⁰ Also the role of the security service personnel is qualified, as in the quotation, "In many places did the policemen help their co-religionists but they also attacked members of other communities."¹²¹ Here, unlike in other books, not only the British are blamed for the lack of security in the months leading up to independence.

Political science includes the issue of the riots in the form of a story as part of its very first lesson about "understanding diversity." Even if "unity in diversity" is the main focus of this unit, prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination are the issues that follow.¹²² Later, a general discussion about communalism refers to "large scale communal violence" during partition

and postindependence.¹²³ The books for higher secondary education are more specific.¹²⁴ In the book for year XII, the Sikh and the Gujarat riots are set into context and broadly discussed: The “Gujarat riots show that the governmental machinery becomes susceptible to sectarian passions. Instances, like in Gujarat, alert us to the dangers involved in using religious sentiments for political purposes. This poses a threat to democratic politics.”¹²⁵ Even if the topic is highly emotional, the language of the new textbooks keeps a reflective tone, trying to make a very sensitive issue discussable.

Discussing communalism, the textbooks reflect two types of conflict, between different communalist groups, and between a communalist and a “national”, integrative, or “secular” outlook. The second NCERT series refers to secularism as a feature of the constitution only *en passant*.¹²⁶ Tamil Nadu and Maharashtrian books describe it briefly among the other objectives of the constitution.¹²⁷

The first and third NCERT series strongly reflect secular positions and highlight secularism as a fundamental principle and remedy to communalism. There are appeals “to keep religious matters separate from politics” and that “people of different religions should learn to live together and keep religion away from politics.”¹²⁸ There is also the somewhat defensive assertion that secularism is not against religion,¹²⁹ and the assertion that “[o]ur culture and our secular state would be destroyed if all people belonging to different religions are not treated equally.”¹³⁰ This is obviously directed against the claims of a Hindu majority culture. Describing communalism and other issues as threats to a secular polity, secularism is on the other hand presented as “one of the major instruments for building a modern polity.” Distinguishing between a polity that keeps “multiple religious communalism ... in balance by state power” to achieve “national reconciliation,” but which does not diminish communalism, and a strategy promoting “civic-secular rational ideology,” the author regards both approaches as necessary in the Indian case.¹³¹

The third NCERT series supplies ample discussion of the question “Why is it important to separate religion from [the] state?”¹³² It refers not only to the protection of the minority from the majority, but also of the individual from the community. “Indian secularism” as laid down in the constitution does not mean laicism placing religion in the private sphere, but instead means the maintenance of equal distance from all religions, accompanied by the power to intervene in religiously sanctioned social issues such as untouchability, for example.¹³³ One book cites Nehru, who regarded secularism as “complete opposition to communalism of all kinds” and “the only guarantee of the unity and integrity of India.”¹³⁴

The state board books and the second NCERT series mention secularism as a directive principle of the constitution and condemn communalism in a general way.¹³⁵ The second series takes up a Hindu majority

position and sees the fault as lying mostly with the minorities, without arguing openly against a secular framework, while the first and the third NCERT series advocate a secular position, the first series mostly through appeals and in a partisan tone, the third in an argumentative and factual way. Here it is necessary to mention that lively debates about “real” and “pseudo-secularism” have taken place outside textbooks, especially via the media.¹³⁶ The third NCERT series reflects these arguments.

Linguistic Diversity and Regionalism

All the analyzed series mention or cover the linguistic diversity of India, often presented as a rich cultural heritage. In several cases, this diversity is, however, problematized. A year XII NCERT sociology book from the first series refers to the controversies about the language policy regarding the use of Hindi, English, and the regional languages as “national” or “official languages” as being “hurdles for national integration”: “When the Hindi protagonists agitate against the use of English and other languages or when the Tamilians demonstrate against the use of Hindi, we certainly are witnessing the passions of communalism and a threat to the nation.”¹³⁷ A book for younger pupils warns that, “[b]ut love of one’s mother-tongue should not breed narrow-mindedness and hatred for the language of others. There should be no conflict between people of different states and regions on the grounds of language and culture. One should not forget that the variety and richness of different languages make our country great” (NCERT 1/VIII).¹³⁸

In this context, the formation of Indian states becomes an issue.¹³⁹ Statehood is sometimes depicted as a practical matter, “for administrative convenience and efficiency, India is divided into different states and the states are further divided into districts.”¹⁴⁰ But statehood is not only regarded as a matter of convenience, as, for example, a Tamil Nadu textbook describes: “In 1956 India was divided into many states on the basis of languages, these states are called Linguistic States. In general people of India have great love for their mother tongue. Sometimes they develop [a] narrow-minded approach towards other languages and hate them. Therefore we must show respect to other languages which helps to unite the people who speak different languages” (TN 1/VIII).¹⁴¹ An extensive discussion of the issue is presented in the recent (third) series of NCERT textbooks, now as a chapter of history: “The Kannada speakers, Malayalam speakers, the Marathi speakers, had all looked forward to having their own state. The strongest protests, however, came from the Telugu-speaking districts of what was the Madras Presidency. ... The protests were so widespread and intense that the central government was forced to give in to the demand” (NCERT 3/VIII).¹⁴² Despite, or because of, the

high conflict potential around language that is alive in Indian politics and may also be observed in the neighboring states of Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, the book concludes: "India has managed to survive as a single nation, in part because the many regional languages were given freedom to flourish. ... Once the fear of one's language being suppressed has gone, the different linguistic groups have been content to live as part of the larger nation called India" (NCERT 3/VIII).¹⁴³

Threats and solutions are sometimes differently defined from a central perspective than from a regional one. This is exemplified by the Maharashtra textbooks, where we find a warning: "In India, States have been organized on the basis of language and our State are [*sic*] close to our heart, we should not forget that we are Indian first. We should overcome our narrow-mindedness and accept a broader Indian identity" (M/VII).¹⁴⁴ Nonetheless, the books celebrate the formation of Maharashtra according to linguistic criteria. The *History of Maharashtra* (M/XI) portrays the movement for separate statehood in independent India as a struggle for independence of its own, adding a list of "Martyrs of [the] Sanyukta Maharashtra Movement" (Movement for Unified Maharashtra).¹⁴⁵ Additionally, the "Marathwada Freedom Struggle" is traced back long into history¹⁴⁶ and the history section of the year IV book is completely dedicated to Shivachhatrapati, the Maharaja who established the independent Marathi rule against the Mughals.¹⁴⁷ He is a leading figure in the memory politics of the Shiv Sena party, but also venerated by a much broader part of the population. As "A Living Source of Inspiration," he stands for the desire that the "Marathi language, and the Hindu religion would acquire their due place of honour. He toiled all his life for the prosperity of his language, his religion and his country and succeeded in the end. He was proud of the Marathi language" (M/IV).¹⁴⁸ The double strategy of pushing language-based identity formation at the state level by fostering a sense of being "proud" on the one hand, and warning against the dangers of linguistic pride on the other, appears contradictory and difficult to reconcile. In the case of Maharashtra, the notion that "India comes first" becomes lost in all the pages with a Marathi focus.

Tamil Nadu has a comparable outlook; the history chapters for years VI to VIII cover solely Tamil Nadu. Only the books for years IX and X relate to India as a whole, and these express a strong self-esteem on several occasions, such as here: "The state of Tamil Nadu is one of the best states of the Indian Union."¹⁴⁹

The language issue is a major, but not the only, aspect of the more general issue of regionalism, which is described in Maharashtra, for example, as "the narrow-minded attitude of thinking only in terms of one's own region,"¹⁵⁰ but discussed only in linguistic terms. Nevertheless, regionalism is mostly a discussion pursued by the center, that is, the NCERT books, especially for the secondary level. Neither the existence of regions and subre-

gions, nor people's love for their own region is regarded as the problem,¹⁵¹ but rather regionalism as "a feeling of hatred against others simply because they do not belong to that region."¹⁵² The book continues: "To say that a region must have development, and the central or the state government should not neglect its growth is quite all right. But if this leads people to say that a particular region is only for its own inhabitants, then this becomes a seriously wrong approach" (NCERT 1/IX-X).¹⁵³ Taking up the issue in the context of "citizenship," a third NCERT series book specifies that "[r]esistance could even take the form of organized violence against 'outsiders'. Almost every region of India has experienced such movements." It then asks: "Are such movements ever justified?" (NCERT 3/XI).¹⁵⁴

These statements contain references to various issues, such as the relationships between states in the federal framework and between the state and the center, also in the context of new state formation; the unequal development of states and regions;¹⁵⁵ and the immigration of outsiders in some areas, which is opposed by parties like Shiv Sena in Maharashtra or movements in tribal areas in Northeastern India. The quotations above refer particularly to this last aspect, the only attitudinal one which education might be able to influence.

How much regionalism endangers national integration and consolidation?¹⁵⁶ Specific developments that are regarded as threats, especially separatist movements, are discussed under the headings of "violence" and "terrorism."¹⁵⁷ Alongside "caste wars" and "inter-communal riots," or "violence by ultra-left insurrectionary elements" (*Naxalites*), the first NCERT series discusses "political violence" and that of "terrorist gangs," a term which is used to cover separatist movements such as that in the Punjab during the 1980s: "No communal politics in India ... had reached such levels of self-righteous bigotry and open invitations to murder, loot[ing] and arson, and call[s] to violent separatism and demands for secession, in the name of religion, as the Punjab terrorists have been indulging in. It is shocking that rank criminals have been proclaimed as martyrs, and traitors to the nation as heroes of the faith" (NCERT 1/XII).¹⁵⁸ Instead of arguments or analysis, the series condemns the acts with emotions.

Likewise, the second series of the NCERT books discusses ethnic insurgency and separatist movements as in the Punjab, here branded "communal terrorism":¹⁵⁹ "For their various demands including secession, the insurgents have resorted to blasts, killings, kidnappings and other violent means. It has disturbed the law and order and shattered the economy of the concerned states. In this way, insurgency in the North East has advanced on the path of terrorism" (NCERT 2/VIII).¹⁶⁰

Books from the third NCERT series frame the issue differently. Under the title "Regional Aspirations," they place violence in a broader context.¹⁶¹ The Punjab and the Northeast are presented as case studies, including the history of the conflicts and their "negotiated settlement." Power

sharing, economic development, and the flexibility of the constitution for different solutions are described as helping to reach agreements: “Thus, politics in India has succeeded in accepting regionalism as part and parcel of democratic politics.”¹⁶²

Thus the books of the center (less so the third NCERT series) assess regional movements as threats to national integration,¹⁶³ partly inter-linking regional with communal frontlines. The state board books do not contradict this rhetoric explicitly, but try to foster a strong regional consciousness.

Educational Aspects of the Books

Textbooks are often analyzed as representations of social discourses. But they are developed primarily as educational media, related to educational discourses and employing specific transfer methods by which they try to transmit socially approved knowledge to the next generation. These aims are reflected in the teaching methods and basic educational concepts underlying them, and also in the ways the specific topics have been related to attitudinal and behavioral teaching objectives that define the place of the individual (pupil) in society. Here, educational considerations or their implications may thwart the intentions of identity politics.

Apart from the third NCERT series, all series analyzed are similar insofar as they try to impart knowledge and to some extent attitudes and behavioral patterns by presenting texts written by the textbook authors that have to be memorized by the pupil. Exercises mainly ask pupils to reproduce content. Yet the books differ in their presentations. The books from Tamil Nadu in particular restrict themselves to simple, mostly unrelated events. On earlier versions, Swarna Rajagopalan remarked, “Given how poor the books are, it is hard to imagine that even if they should have an integrative or disintegrative agenda, pupils would be able to grasp that clearly and live by it,”¹⁶⁴ and “The textbooks discussed here are so bad that they do not seem capable of inciting conflict or integration.”¹⁶⁵ This observation might also be applied to the series analyzed, although the second Tamil Nadu series improved by adding text that made the topics more understandable. The books from Maharashtra follow comparable didactics, but the text is somewhat more concise.

Unlike the state board books, the first NCERT series, fully in line with its “model textbook” character, argues and contextualizes, establishing links between events and presenting “correct” interpretations. The second series attempts to reduce the curriculum load, implementing the suggestions of the Yashpal committee of 1993.¹⁶⁶ To that effect, history, geography, civics, sociology, and economics were brought under the umbrella of “integrated social science” up until the secondary stage.¹⁶⁷ An attempt

was made to make textbooks attractive by using more and multicolored illustrations and adding a glossary. Exercises were geared more towards activities or projects, although the transfer of knowledge remained at the center of the books' purpose.

The state boards are required to remain within the National Curriculum frameworks, with scope for adding regional topics.¹⁶⁸ Thus the books from Maharashtra refer in their preface to the NCERT National Curriculum Framework as a basis for their own curricula. Here, with changing frameworks in the center, asynchronies can occur, with new books based on frameworks that are no longer valid.¹⁶⁹ Proving such an influence of up-to-date or outdated central positions in the state board books is nonetheless difficult. The process of transfer from the framework into state curricula and from there into textbooks, if it takes place, provides many points at which such influences can take hold. Innovative approaches at the NCERT level that could give evidence for such an impact were not found in the books from the state boards of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

Beside the "knowledge" aspect, attitudes and behavior are also addressed by the books, especially when they refer to solutions to the issues of communalism, casteism, or regionalism, which had been our concerns in this article. For example, all textbooks of the first series from Tamil Nadu write on their title page: "Untouchability is a sin, untouchability is a crime, untouchability is inhuman."¹⁷⁰ Here, the issue is put as a moral one: "So, the Indian citizens should develop the spirit of religious tolerance and feeling of oneness."¹⁷¹ "Should" and "must" become the most-read words in these contexts. The onus is on the individual to change his or her behavior in the appropriate way.¹⁷² The textbooks state that, "United we live, divided we fall is the spirit with which the Indians live and safeguard National Integration."¹⁷³ Educational intervention of this kind in and outside school is regarded as the appropriate means to fight societal evils: "Education is the best way to eradicate communalism. Education creates a feeling of brotherhood among the people and fosters nationalism. ... The government is trying to spread national integration through television and other mass media" (TN 1/X).¹⁷⁴

Governmental as well as individual changes are referenced in the books; for example, Tamil Nadu books list laws to improve the status of women and to eradicate child labor and poverty, and refer to provisions of the constitution such as the abolition of untouchability, freedom of religion, the protection of the languages and cultures of minorities, and the reservation policy.¹⁷⁵ In the other books, too, the role of government and the provisions of the constitution are always mentioned. The books of the second NCERT series follow the course, listing legal provisions.¹⁷⁶

The first NCERT series paints a more complex picture: "State action alone cannot ensure social change."¹⁷⁷ Thus "arenas" and measures "to combat communalism" are listed in a chapter entitled "Secular Polity:

The Challenges of Casteism, Communalism, Separatism and Violence.” Arenas include state and government, administration, political parties, media, and educational institutions, but also individual citizens; measures mentioned are “de-recognition of parties promoting communalism, punishment of police personnel and local officers acting against their duty.” The text continues:

A major factor in fighting casteism and communalism is the need to give a committed secular and rational orientation to our textbooks, reading material, teaching methods and national media. This has to be supported by active work in community centres, work-places, schools, colleges, universities and other centres of learning for projecting the values of national fraternity, of composite culture, of equality of men, women and groups, of mutual appreciation of cultures, traditions and customs, and a firm recognition and affirmation of humanist principles of co-existence of all segments – religious, caste, linguistic, cultural, regional, etc. as a hallmark of India’s plural society and variegated civilization. (NCERT I/XII)¹⁷⁸

A better proof in a textbook itself can barely be expected that textbooks are regarded as instruments of identity politics that transmit specific versions of identity.

In many aspects, the third NCERT series is different from the aforementioned ones. Following the National Curriculum Framework of 2005,¹⁷⁹ the books of this series are not intended to be used for rote learning but rather to structure a thinking process and discussions.¹⁸⁰ More than before, they include visual sources and for the first time also cartoons and written sources that the pupils themselves are asked to interpret. The authors are not afraid to tackle controversial issues, and make them debatable topics without pointing the moral finger as the first series appears to do. In this kind of treatment, whose aim is not to impart a specific political and attitudinal position but to stimulate thinking and debate, the third series is outstanding. That this approach is not understood by all is exemplified by the cartoon controversy mentioned above.

Even when these books refer to attitudes, they do not specify the ways the pupils should think and behave, but instead ask for their ideas on the topic, their reflections, and their arguments, and for discussion and empathy, although from a Western perspective some of these requests might look like leading questions: “In your opinion is it a fair situation that some children get to go to school and others not?” “How do you think a person who is discriminated against might feel?” “Discuss the ways in which persons with special needs might be subject to discrimination”¹⁸¹ “Recall some stories of Partition you may have heard. Think of the way these have shaped your conception about different communities. Try and imagine how the same stories would be narrated by different communities.”¹⁸²

Though social movements are sometimes referred to in the other series,¹⁸³ mostly in a pre-independence context,¹⁸⁴ the third NCERT series puts a stronger focus on their role than before,¹⁸⁵ especially in the chapters “Popular Struggles and Movements” and the “Rise of Popular Movements.”¹⁸⁶ One passage reads: “Three decades after Independence, the people were beginning to get impatient. ... In the 1970s, diverse social groups like women, students, Dalits and farmers felt that democratic politics did not address their needs and demands. Therefore, they came together under the banner of various social organisations to voice their demands” (NCERT 3/XII).¹⁸⁷

“Each of the rights now enjoyed by citizens has been won after struggle.”¹⁸⁸

The books advocate the position that despite all the talk about “unity in diversity,” conflicting interests occur: “A basic principle of democracy is that such disputes should be settled by negotiation and discussion rather than force.”¹⁸⁹ Conflict is regarded as an inherent aspect of social change. Agency is seen to lie with all the different levels involved, including the deprived: “In any case, no social group howsoever weak or oppressed is only a victim. Human beings are always capable of organizing and acting on their own – often against very heavy odds – to struggle for justice and dignity” (NCERT 3/XII).¹⁹⁰

Reflection and deconstruction do not spare even national icons and symbols like Bharat Mata (Mother India).¹⁹¹ This touches the center of identity politics and challenges the role of textbooks as means of their promotion, at least as far as essentialist group identities are concerned. The argumentative, democratic Indian is the model these books foster.

Conclusion

This article has discussed three areas of societal conflict in India as presented in Indian textbooks—casteism, communalism, and regionalism—that are not independent spheres of conflict, but interwoven. The various positions on these issues and how they are framed vary according to the dimensions mentioned above: secular versus communal, and central versus regional. Communalism is an issue especially from the secular point of view. But from a communal viewpoint, it is only the communalism of the others, where it affects the community in question, that is regarded as a problem (often as “terrorism”). Language-based regionalism, especially in the context of agitating movements, is a main issue for the center, as it is able to undermine its legitimacy and governmental powers.¹⁹² But here, too, different regionalisms find themselves competing for territorial control and domination.¹⁹³ Developments have shown that regionalism sometimes takes on communalist arguments where they serve their cause.¹⁹⁴

Casteism and untouchability are primarily related to Hinduism, their critics thus especially to secular, reformist, or non-Hindu positions. But as both are also associated with regional disparities and regionally based movements, they are additionally linked to the central-regional dimension (or north-south opposition). These linkages and also these differentiations find their ways into the representations of these issues in textbooks.

For identity politics, these issues are relevant topics as they touch the center of the Indian social fabric. In the analysis, the position between the secular and the Hindu national dimension is especially represented by the various series of NCERT books. The broad scope the topics, especially communalism, find in the first series reflects this relevance. From the secular point of view, the communalist has to be regarded as the “internal other” who endangers the structure and prospects of the country. Combating communalism is therefore a crucial issue. Keeping the peace on the religious front by not evoking religious emotions serves to reduce any negative perception of communalities, especially those of minorities, and normalizes peaceful coexistence on the base of the Indian definition of secularism. Casteism and untouchability are socioeconomic issues, but they also have their roots in specific Hindu practices and thus can serve as arguments against those claiming to build on a glorious Hindu past. Reflecting as it does the opposite discourse, a Hindu-national position, it is no surprise that the second NCERT series plays down Hindu communalism as well as casteism. Minority communalism is linked to terrorism and the books remain silent on the secular standpoint. The third series takes up a secular stand again. But its reflective attitude is a profound difference from the first series, and all of the other books analyzed. This difference includes the framing of the issues, which focuses less on national integration than on differences, stereotypes, and social injustice.

The second dimension discussed, the center versus the region, is marked by two different aspects. On one hand, communalism and untouchability play a somewhat different role in state board books from Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu than in those of the center; on the other hand regionalism itself becomes a topic. Communalism and casteism, as factors hampering national integration, play a more limited role in the state board books than in the NCERT ones. From the perspective of the center, this is a major aspect; for the states there remains some ambivalence, for “national integration” (as understood by the center) might be perceived as a threat. Additionally, the topic of untouchability seems gradually to take up a larger role than communalism, which appears to be in line with their respective weight as social issues in these states. In Tamil Nadu in particular, state politics has for decades been dominated by regional (Dravidian) parties for which the battle against untouchability has played a major role. The opposition between the secular and the communal is here of secondary importance only.

Regionalism, disapproved of theoretically by the state board books, represents a key contrast between books from the center and those from the states. Whereas the center concentrates on national identity, the state boards promote regional (“subnational”) identities to an extent that might be seen as contradicting the “India first” slogan. Yet the state board books do not argue against the national discourse; they simply overwhelm it with state-centered ones, “reusing”, in Mitra’s phraseology, the former subnational movement before it had reached its stage of “banalization.”¹⁹⁵ In this process, identity politics as “subaltern” counter-discourses in the battle against dominating official politics is transformed into an official discourse. The history of movements with their “martyrs”, depicted as a prehistory of the (more or less) harmonious present, is canonized and used as a means against monopolizing national aspirations as well as against new “subaltern” impertinences. The fact that the different regional narratives might also contradict the narratives in existence in other states will generally become obvious only to children who move to another region.¹⁹⁶ This conflict potential is the result of the instrumental use of history or social sciences for identity politics, which ignores modern, self-reflective approaches to the subject.

Coming to pedagogical discourses and their influences on textbooks, we found NCERT books reflect such reasoning with a dramatic change in the pedagogical approach in the diachronic perspective. Thus, the decision of the first series not to disturb young learners by referring to conflictual content was (also) pedagogically motivated as was the reduction of the “load of school bags,” the National Curriculum Framework of 2000 attempted. The new curriculum of 2005 put forward a new strategy for addressing conflicts and new teaching approaches.¹⁹⁷ Thus, along with a political shift, the third NCERT series reflects a shift in educational theory, approaches, and epistemology: the series follows a discursive, constructivist approach toward the topics it engages with, and deconstructs, for example, national icons and symbols. This approach, put into practice, acts as checks and balances on attempts to implement essentialist identity politics of all shades, leftist, secular, or Hindu nationalist, as well as subnational discourses. Counteracting the usual identity patterns, it argues for an inclusive, pluralistic, democratic understanding of “Indianness”.

In this article, we focused on the influence of various identity discourses and educational considerations. But is the outcome a relatively stable, socially accepted, and dominant body of knowledge, as Thomas Höhne implies?¹⁹⁸ The changes in discourses we have witnessed in our diachronic analysis and the differences between the states and the center point to the ephemerality and exchangeability of knowledge. What does this mean for the “cultural memory” of Indian society? All the discourses we have detailed, even where they are contradictory, are interrelated and are part of one discursive field with a decades-long history. Exchanges

or replacements occur only within this field and among the same set of possibilities that “cultural memory” is encompassing.

Despite apparent differences, all textbooks we analyzed transmit basic patterns that underlie these divisions. In their political practice and in their identity politics, none of the parties is able to refrain from dividing society. Nevertheless, textbooks are called upon to promote “harmony” and “unity”, which are sometimes presented as a real, albeit endangered state of affairs, but mostly as an aim to be achieved. “Harmony” is disturbed by “the other”, not by one’s own actions; thus this notion helps to deepen the divide between the opponents. The “other” is an enemy endangering the state, not a democratic competitor for power. Only the last generation of NCERT books, when addressing the democratic process, puts the quest for harmony in perspective.

After analyzing textbooks issued by NCERT and the states of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, we conclude that, although there is a uniform effort on the center and state levels to inculcate “peace and harmony” among pupils through educational frameworks, textbooks, and teaching, these attempts are problematized by a stronger undercurrent of divergent identity politics, vote bank politics, and other priorities, notwithstanding the educational issues related to these tendencies.

Given the instrumentality of social divisions to securing power positions, an appeal for “harmony” and “tolerance” will not help to overcome the disastrous effects of these divides; neither will ideological combat.¹⁹⁹ The exploitation of these divisions will cease only when they no longer “sell”.²⁰⁰ The question remains whether education in India will contribute to preventing political polarization by fostering reflective attitudes, avoiding dichotomization, and questioning basic assumptions made by conventional bodies of “knowledge”.²⁰¹

List of textbooks quoted

Maharashtra

III

Suresh Ramchandra Jog et al., *Geography Standard III, Pune District* (2008; repr. Pune: Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, 2010)

Raja Dixit, *The Story of Man (History and Civics), Standard Three* (2008; repr. Pune: Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, 2011)

IV

Suresh Ramchandra Jog et al., *Geography Standard IV* (2009; repr. Pune: Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, 2012)

Jayasingrao Pawar et al., *Shivachhatrapati (History and Civics), Standard Four* (2009; repr. Pune: Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, 2010)

V

Suresh Ramchandra Jog et al., *Geography Standard V* (2006; repr. Pune: Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, 2012)

Dattatray Wagh and Sadhana Kulkarni, *Our Freedom Struggle (History and Civics), Standard Five* (2006; repr. Pune: Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, 2010)

VI

Suresh Ramchandra Jog et al., *Geography Standard VI* (2007; repr. Pune: Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, 2012)

Bharati Joshi, *History of Ancient India, Standard Six* (2007; repr. Pune: Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, 2009)

Sadhana Kulkarni, *Our Local Government Bodies (Civics and Administration), Standard Six* (2007; repr. Pune: Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, 2010)

VII

Suresh Ramchandra Jog et al., *Geography Standard VII* (2008; repr. Pune: Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, 2012)

Lahu Gaikwad and Dilavarkhan Pathan, *History of Medieval India, Standard Seven* (2008; repr. Pune: Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, 2011)

Chaitra Redkar, *Our Constitution (Civics and Administration), Standard Seven* (2008; repr. Pune: Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, 2010)

VIII

Suresh Ramchandra Jog et al., *Geography Standard VIII* (2009; repr. Pune: Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, 2012)

Jaswandi Bamburkar-Utgikar and Dattotray Wagh, *History of Modern India, Standard Eight* (2009; repr. Pune: Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, 2011)

Sanjyot Apte, *India and the World (Civics and Administration), Standard Eight* (2009; repr. Pune: Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, 2010)

IX

Anna Dnyandev Garad et al., *Social Science Part 2, Geography and Economics, Standard IX* (Pune: Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, 2012)

Amol Shankarrao Vidyasagar et al., *Social Science Part I: History and Political Science, Standard IX* (Pune: Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, 2012)

X

Jaykumar Magar et al., *India: Human Environment, Geography Standard X* (2007; repr. Pune: Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, 2011)

XI

Hanamant Yashwant Karande et al., *Geography, World Geography Physical, Standard XI* (Pune: Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, 2012)

Kavita Gagarani et al., *History of Maharashtra, Standard XI* (Pune: Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, 2012)

XII

P. N. Padey and M. R. Fernandes, *Principles of Human Geography, Standard XII*, 8th ed. (Pune: Nirali Prakashan, 2012)

M. B. Purandare et al., *History Standard XII*, 6th ed. (Pune: Nirali Prakashan, 2011)

Tamil Nadu

1st series

VI

Thiru D. S. Rajaram et al., *Social Science 6* (2003; repr. Chennai: Tamil Nadu Textbook Corporation, 2005)

VII

K. Murugesan et al., *Social Science (History – Civics – Geography), Standard VII* (2004; repr. Chennai: Tamil Nadu Textbook Corporation, 2005)

VIII

P. C. Bhanumathi et al., *Social Science Standard VIII* (2005; repr. Chennai: Tamil Nadu Textbook Corporation, 2007)

IX

Tmt. S. Vasantha et al., *Social Science (History – Civics – Geography), Standard IX* (2003; repr. Chennai: Tamil Nadu Textbook Corporation, 2005)

X

Tmt. S. Vasantha et al., *Social Science (History – Civics – Geography), Standard X* (2004; repr. Chennai: Tamil Nadu Textbook Corporation, 2005)

Tmt. V. Meenakshi et al., *Geography and Economics, Matriculation 10* (2006; repr. Chennai: Tamil Nadu Textbook Corporation, 2008)

Smt. Uma Maheswari and Smt. Saly Verghese, *History and Civics, Matriculation 10* (2006; repr. Chennai: Tamil Nadu Textbook Corporation, 2008)

2nd series

III

T. Murugavel et al., *Social Science III–Standard* (Chennai: Department of School Education, 2011)

IV

Sujatha Arun et al., *Social Science IV–Standard* (Chennai: Department of School Education, 2011)

V

Tmt. Kannammal et al., *Social Science V–Standard* (Chennai: Department of School Education, 2011)

VI

N. N., *Social Science VI–Standard* (Chennai: Department of School Education, 2010)

VII

Thiru J. Arul George Peter et al., *Social Science VII–Standard* (Chennai: Department of School Education, 2011)

VIII

Glorina Ravindrakumar et al., *Social Science VIII–Standard* (Chennai: Department of School Education, 2011)

IX

Tmt. Baby et al., *Social Science IX–Standard* (Chennai: Department of School Education, 2011)

X

A. Subramanian et al., *Social Science X–Standard* (Chennai: Department of School Education, 2011)

XI

M. Murali et al., *Political Science, Higher Secondary – First Year* (2004; repr. Chennai: Tamilnadu Textbook Corporation, 2005)

XII

K. Palanisamy et al., *Political Science, Higher Secondary – Second Year* (Chennai: Tamilnadu Textbook Corporation, 2005)

NCERT

Ist series

VI

Romila Thapar, *Ancient India, History Textbook for Class VI* (1987; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 1996)

VII

Romila Thapar, *Medieval India, History Textbook for Class VII* (1988; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 1996)

D. S. Muley, A. C. Sharma, and Supta Das, *How We Govern Ourselves: A Textbook of Civics for Class VII* (1988; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 1996)

VIII

D. P. Gupta and S. Sinha, *Lands and Peoples, Part III: A Geography Textbook for Class VIII* (1989; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 1996)

G. L. Adhya and Arjun Dev, *Modern India: A Textbook of History for Middle Schools [VIII]* (1973; repr. New Delhi: NCERT 1976)

D. S. Muley, Supta Das, Ramesh Chandra, and Manju Rani, *Our Country Today, Problems and Challenges: A Textbook in Civics for Class VIII* (1989; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 1996)

IX/X

Sudipto Kaviraj, *Our Government – How It Functions: A Textbook in Civics for Class IX–X* (1989; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 1996)

X

B. S. Parakh, *India - Economic Geography: A Textbook for Class X* (1990; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 1996)

XI

Ram Sharan Sharma, *Ancient India: A History Textbook for Class XI* (1990; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 1995)

Satish Chandra, *Medieval India: A History Textbook for Class XI* (1990; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 1994)

S. N. Jha, *Society, State and Government: A Textbook for Class XI* (1993; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 1996)

Iqbal Narain, *Organs of Government: A Textbook for Class XI* (1989; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 1996)

K. S. Gill, *Evolution of the Indian Economy: A Textbook in Economics for Class XI* (1993; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 1996)

XII

Moonis Raza and Abazuddin Ahmad, *India General Geography: A Textbook for Class XII* (1990; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 1996)

M. H. Qureshi, *India, Resources and Regional Development: A Textbook in Geography for Class XII* (1990; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 1996)

Bipan Chandra, *Modern India: A History Textbook for Class XII* (1990; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 1996)

Rasheeduddin Khan, *Democracy in India: A Textbook in Political Science for Class XII* (New Delhi: NCERT, 1995)

V. R. Mehta, *Major Concepts of Political Science: A Textbook for Class XII* (1990; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 1995)

K. L. Sharma, *Indian Society: A Textbook of Sociology for Class XII* (1987; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 1996)

2nd series

VI

Makkhan Lal et al., *India and the World: Social Sciences Textbook for Class VI* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2002)

VII

Sima Yadav et al., *India and the World: A Social Science Textbook for Class VII* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2003)

VIII

Savita Sinha et al., *India and the World: Textbook in Social Science for Class VIII* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2004)

IX

Hari Om, Supta Das, Savita Sinha, and Neera Rashmi, *Contemporary India: Textbook in Social Sciences for Class IX* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2002)

X

B. M. Pande et al., *Contemporary India: A Social Science Textbook for Class X* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2003)

XI

Noor Mohammad, *India Physical Environment: Textbook of Geography for Class XI* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2002)

Bhupendra K. Nagla and Sheo Bahal Singh, *Introducing Sociology: Textbook for Class XI* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2002)

XII

Hira Lal Yadav and Savita Sinha, *Fundamentals of Human Geography: A Textbook for Class XII (Semester III)* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2003)

A. K. Sharma, *Structure of Indian Society: A Sociology Textbook for Class XII* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2003)

3rd series

VI

Social Science, The Earth: Our Habitat, Textbook in Geography for Class VI (New Delhi: NCERT, 2006)

Social Science, Our Pasts – I: Textbook in History for Class VI (2006; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2007)

Social Science, Social and Political Life – I: Textbook for Class VI (New Delhi: NCERT, 2006)

VII

Social Science, Our Environment: Textbook in Geography for Class VII (2007; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2010)

Social Science, Our Pasts – II: Textbook in History for Class VII (2007; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2012)

Social Science, Social and Political Life – II: Textbook for Class VII (New Delhi: NCERT, 2007)

VIII

Social Science, Resources and Development: Textbook in Geography for Class VIII (2008; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2010)

Social Science, Our Pasts – III, Part 1: Textbook in History for Class VIII (New Delhi: NCERT, 2008)

Social Science, Our Pasts – III, Part 2: Textbook in History for Class VIII (New Delhi: NCERT, 2008)

Social Science, Social and Political Life – III: Textbook for Class VIII (New Delhi: NCERT, 2008)

IX

Social Science, Contemporary India – I: Textbook in Geography for Class IX (2006; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2012)

Social Science, India and the Contemporary World – I: Textbook in History for Class IX (2006; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2007)

Social Science, Democratic Politics – I: Textbook in Political Science for Class IX (2006; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2012)

X

Social Science, Contemporary India – II: Textbook in Geography for Class X (2006; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2012)

Social Science, India and the Contemporary World – II: Textbook in History for Class X (2007; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2008)

Social Science, Democratic Politics – II: Textbook in Political Science for Class X (2007; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2008)

XI

India, Physical Environment: Textbook in Geography for Class XI (New Delhi: NCERT, 2006)

Indian Constitution at Work: Textbook in Political Science for Class XI (2006; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2007)

Political Theory: Textbook for Class XI (2006; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2007)

Introducing Sociology: Textbook for Class XI (2006; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2012)

Understanding Society: Textbook for Class XI (2006; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2011)

XII

Fundamentals of Human Geography: Textbook for Class XII (New Delhi: NCERT, 2007)

- India, People and Economy: Textbook in Geography for Class XII* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2007)
- Themes in Indian History Part I: Textbook in History for Class XII* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2007)
- Themes in Indian History Part II: Textbook in History for Class XII* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2007)
- Themes in Indian History Part III: Textbook in History for Class XII* (2007; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2009)
- Politics in India since Independence: Textbook in Political Science for Class XII* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2007)
- Contemporary World Politics: Textbook in Political Science for Class XII* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2007)
- Indian Society: Textbook in Sociology for Class XII* (2007; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2010)
- Social Change and Development in India: Textbook in Sociology for Class XII* (2007; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2011)

Acknowledgements

This article is one of the collaborative outcomes of research projects on South Asian school textbooks in the context of conflict. The collaboration was funded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in the context of its TransCoop program. The authors acknowledge this support with gratitude.

Notes

1. See E. Annamalai, "Politics of Language in India," in *Routledge Handbook of South Asian Politics*, ed. Paul Brass (London, New York: Routledge, 2010), 213–214.
2. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, rev. ed. (London, New York: Verso, 2006), 135–140.
3. Subrata Mitra, "Sub-national Movements, Cultural Flow, the Modern State and the Malleability of Political Space: From Rational Choice to Transcultural Perspective and Back Again," *Transcultural Studies*, no. 2 (2012): 8–47.
4. Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995).
5. Mitra, "Sub-national Movements." Mitra argues that as secessionist movements, such groupings might rise from a subnational to a national level when they achieve independent statehood.
6. Vibha Pingle and Ashutosh Varshney, "India's Identity Politics: Then and Now," in *Managing Globalization: Lessons From China and India*, ed. David A. Kelley, Ramkishan S. Rajan, and Gillian H. L. Goh (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2006), 367, 380.
7. Bipan Chandra, "The Making of the Indian Nation," in *The Writings of Bipan Chandra: The Making of Modern India, From Marx to Gandhi* (2004; repr. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2012), 235.
8. *Ibid.*, 239.

9. *Ibid.*, 242.
10. For the context of communalism, see Bipan Chandra et al., *India's Struggle for Independence* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1989), 398–401.
11. Chandra et al., *India's Struggle*, 398–442; for the role of textbooks especially, 411–412. Paul R. Brass, *The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India* (Seattle, London: University of Washington Press, 2003), follows a comparable interpretation, even if he points to other positions, citing a longer tradition of Hindu-Muslim conflict (see especially 25–26).
12. The area in Northern India where vernaculars are spoken as major languages that were subsumed under the label “Hindi” during the colonial period; the means of communication in the bazaar and the army (*khari boli*) had been differentiated into Hindi and Urdu, associated with Hindus and Muslims respectively, and related vernacular languages of Northern India subsumed under the “Hindi” label; see Annamalai, “Politics of Language,” 213–215; for the interrelations between religion and language divides see Krishna Kumar, *Politics of Education in Colonial India* (London, New York, New Delhi: Routledge, 2014), 140–166.
13. See Pingle and Varshney, “India’s Identity Politics.”
14. Lloyd Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, “Cultural Policy, the Textbook Controversy and Indian Identity,” in *The States of South Asia: Problems of National Integration*, ed. A. Wilson and D. Dalton (1982; repr. London: C. Hurst & Co, 1989); Michael Gottlob, “Changing Concepts of Identity in the Indian Textbook Controversy,” *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 29 (2007): 341–354; Michael Gottlob, *History and Politics in Post-colonial India* (New Delhi: Oxford, 2011); Sylvie Guichard, *The Construction of History and Nationalism in India: Textbooks, Controversies and Politics* (London, New York: Routledge, 2010); Basabi Khan Banerjee, “West Bengal History Textbooks and the Indian Textbook Controversy,” *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 29 (2007): 355–374; Deepa Nair, “Contending ‘Historical’ Identities in India,” *JEMMS* 1 (2009): 145–164.
15. See Steven J. Wilkinson, “Communal and Caste Politics and Conflicts in India,” in *Routledge Handbook of South Asian Politics* (London, New York: Routledge, 2010), 264; Annamalai, “Politics of Language,” 221–224. It might be added that such opposition was not restricted to the southern states. Likewise, in West Bengal, profoundly affected by partition, there was strong resistance to the language policy of the center, even if the state had already matched the criteria of language based delimitation; see Sunil Kumar Guha, *Freedom and After*, trans. Rabindra Nath Khan (Calcutta: Sahitya Kendra, 1962); the book was proscribed in the sensitive political climate of the 1960s because of its strongly critical tone.
16. Swarna Rajagopalan, *State and Nation in South Asia* (New Delhi: Viva Books, 2006), 136–141, 151–157, 164–167. See Paul R. Brass, *The Politics of India since Independence*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 89–91, 131–132.
17. Thomas Blom Hansen, “BJP and the Politics of Hindutva in Maharashtra,” in *The BJP and the Compulsions of Politics in India*, ed. Christophe Jaffrelot and Thomas Blom Hansen (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998) [reprinted

- in omnibus in *Hindu Nationalism and Indian Politics* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004)], 121–162; see Brass, *Politics of India*, 94, 126–127.
18. A counterdiscourse from a Muslim perspective that finds its way into textbooks can be found in Pakistan; see Martin Sökefeld, “Nation and Islam in Pakistan,” *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 18, no. 3 (1996): 289–306; Elisa Giunchi, “Rewriting the Past: Political Imperatives and Curricular Reform in Pakistan,” *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 29, no. 4 (2007): 375–388. See also the article by M. Ayaz Naseem in this volume. This said, books for use in Indian madrasas also reproduce(d) a Muslim communalist perspective; see National Steering Committee on Textbook Evaluation, *Recommendations and Report*, I (New Delhi: NCERT, 1993), 71–87.
 19. See Kothari Commission, *Education and National Development: Report of the Education Commission 1964–66* (1966; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 1971); Ministry of Human Resource Development, *National Policy on Education – 1986* (New Delhi: Government of India, 1986 [modified 1992]); *National Curriculum for Elementary and Secondary Education: A Framework* (New Delhi: NCERT, 1988); NCERT, *National Curriculum Framework for School Education* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2000).
 20. Krishna Kumar, *Learning from Conflict* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1996).
 21. Earlier versions of the state board books were not available for analysis. Earlier books from Tamil Nadu were analyzed by Rajagopalan in *State and Nation*, which offers additional opportunities for comparison, despite the different focus of the analysis.
 22. The findings will relate to the books analyzed and to the patterns they reveal. They should not be taken to stand for India in general. Further research is needed to broaden the spectrum.
 23. See Nikita Desai and Neha Singhania, “Curriculum, Examinations and Textbooks in Maharashtra. Who Decides What?” Internship papers (New Delhi: Centre for Civil Society, 2005), http://ccs.in/internship_papers/2005/11.%20CET%20Policy%20in%20Maharashtra.pdf.
 24. For the development of NCERT history textbooks see Guichard, *Construction of History*, 44–52.
 25. See, for example, *The Saffron Agenda in Education: An Exposé* (New Delhi: SAHMAT, 2001); *Against Communalisation of Education* (New Delhi: SAHMAT, 2002); *Communalisation of Education: The Assault on History* (New Delhi: SAHMAT 2002); *Saffronised and Substandard: A Critique of the New NCERT Textbooks* (New Delhi: SAHMAT, 2002); *Plagiarised and Communalised: More on the NCERT Textbooks* (New Delhi: SAHMAT, 2003); Irfan Habib, Suvira Jaiswal, and Aditya Mukherjee, *History in the New NCERT Text Books: A Report and an Index of Errors* (Kolkata: Indian History Congress, 2003); and the responses by Meenakshi Jain, *Flawed Narratives: History in the Old NCERT Textbooks, A Random Survey of Satish Chandra’s Medieval India* (New Delhi: Delhi Historians Forum, 2003); Makkhan Lal, *History: An Unending Debate* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2004); Makkhan Lal, Meenakshi Jain, and Hari Om, *History in the New NCERT Textbooks: Fallacies in the IHC Report* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2003).
 26. Glorina Ravindrakumar et al., *Social Science VII–Standard* (Chennai: Department of School Education, 2011), 137.
 27. Bipan Chandra, *Modern India: A History Textbook for Class XII* (1990; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 1996), 29.

28. Romila Thapar, *Ancient India: History Textbook for Class VI* (1987; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 1996), 41.
29. The then minister for human resource development, Joshi, argued in an interview, "If a normal Hindu family believes that eating beef is wrong and you teach that this was done (many centuries ago) when actually this is a matter of debate, this will create a conflict in the mind of a small child. If there are some unpalatable historical facts, let children learn them when they are mature. Anything that creates a bias, hatred or suspicion should not be there." Sultan Shahin, "India Sanitizing Its Past," *Asia Times*, 8 December 2001, <http://atimes.com/ind-pak/CL08Df01.html>.
30. *Social Science, Our Pasts – I: Textbook in History for Class VI* (2006; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2007), describes the Varna system in the later Vedic age (55–56) and the Gupta age (118–119), including the "untouchables." *Social Science, Our Pasts – II: Textbook in History for Class VII* (2007; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2012), 8, 91–101, discusses system changes (*jatis*) and tribes in a dedicated chapter; the impact of colonization on tribes is a topic in *Social Science, Our Pasts – III, Part 1: Textbook in History for Class VIII* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2008), 38–50. *Social Science, India and the Contemporary World – I: Textbook in History for Class IX* (2006; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2007), 168, describes caste-related dress codes. *Themes in Indian History Part I: Textbook in History for Class XII* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2007), 61–71, discusses "Social differences within and beyond the framework of caste" during the period 600 BCE to 600 CE; *Themes in Indian History Part II: Textbook in History for Class XII* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2007), 124–125, 145, deals with castes from an Arab point of view and Bhakti positions.
31. G. L. Adhya and Arjun Dev, *Modern India: A Textbook of History for Middle Schools [VIII]* (1973; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 1976), 122–130, 225–242.
32. Chandra, *Modern India XII*, 186, 187.
33. Savita Sinha et al., *India and the World: Textbook in Social Science for Class VIII* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2004), 65.
34. *Social Science, Our Pasts – III, Part 2: Textbook in History for Class VIII* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2008), 119. "Despite constitutional guarantees, the Untouchables or, as they are now referred to, the Dalits, face violence and discrimination. In many parts of rural India they are not allowed access to water sources, temples, parks and other public places." *Ibid.*, 171.
35. Jaswandi Bamburkar-Utgikar and Dattotray Wagh, *History of Modern India Standard Eight* (2009; repr. Pune: Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, 2011), 115–118.
36. Tmt. Baby et al., *Social Science IX–Standard* (Chennai: Department of School Education, 2011), 204. Also: "Untouchability in India is worse than slavery and 'Apartheid'. ... [Untouchables] were not only untouchables but also unsee[a]bles, unapproachables, and they had no right to education, to residence in general villages and towns, to use public path[s] and watersheds, to enter into temples, to own land, to do official work or to seek justice in the court of laws. Their women were not even allowed to cover their upper parts of the bodies, they should not wear sandals, use umbrellas, and [were] not [allowed] to have civilised names." *Ibid.*, 208. The formulations are based especially on South Indian experiences.
37. *Ibid.*, 204–205

38. Ibid., 206–207.
39. B. M. Pande et al., *Contemporary India: A Social Science Textbook for Class X* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2003), 147.
40. Kavita Gagarani et al., *History of Maharashtra Standard XI* (Pune: Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, 2012), 76.
41. Chandra, *Modern India XII*, 85, 89: “All these official reforms touched no more than the fringes of the Indian social system and did not affect the life of the vast majority of the people. It was perhaps not possible for a foreign government to do more.” Ibid., 89.
42. Ibid., 187.
43. Adhya and Dev, *Modern India VIII*, 128.
44. *Our Pasts III, VIII*, 100, 110.
45. Tmt. S. Vasantha et al., *Social Science (History – Civics – Geography) Standard IX* (2003; repr. Chennai: Tamil Nadu Textbook Corporation, 2005), 178; Tmt. S. Vasantha et al., *Social Science (History – Civics – Geography) Standard X* (2004; repr. Chennai: Tamil Nadu Textbook Corporation, 2005), 102. Likewise in Maharashtra: Chaitra Redkar, *Our Constitution (Civics and Administration) Standard Seven* (2008; repr. Pune: Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, 2010), 11.
46. Sima Yadav et al., *India and the World: A Social Science Textbook for Class VII* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2003), 191, 194.
47. Sinha et al., *India and the World VIII*, 118. Hari Om, Supta Das, Savita Sinha, and Neera Rashmi, *Contemporary India: Textbook in Social Sciences for Class IX* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2002), 71, mentions Ambedkar, and also that “30 members from scheduled castes” were members of the Constituent Assembly.
48. Guichard, *Construction of History*, 134–137; in order to become acceptable to lower castes and to get rid of upper-caste, anti-Dalit undertones, the Hindu nationalist discourse conveyed positive connotations upon Ambedkar. On the other hand, his Buddhism did not conform to the image of a model Hindu.
49. Bamburkar-Utgikar and Wagh, *History of Modern India VIII*, 116.
50. *Social Science, Social and Political Life – I: Textbook for Class VI* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2006), 18–23.
51. *Social Science, India and the Contemporary World – II: Textbook in History for Class X* (2007; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2008), 68.
52. For sources and statements by Gandhi and Ambedkar regarding separate electorates for Dalits, see *Themes in Indian History Part III: Textbook in History for Class XII* (2007; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2009), 360–361. The different positions of both protagonists are also discussed in the context of the drafting of the constitution in *Social Science, Democratic Politics – I: Textbook in Political Science for Class IX* (2006; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2012), 47–49.
53. *Social Science, Our Pasts – III, VIII*, 163; *Themes in Indian History – III, XII*, 421–422.
54. *Indian Constitution at Work: Textbook in Political Science for Class XI* (2006; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2007), 18, shows the slow process of constitution drafting: Ambedkar riding a snail and Nehru with a whip trying to speed up the process. Critics interpreted the image as being of Nehru whipping Ambedkar; see Georg Stöber and Basabi Khan Banerjee, “New Textbook Controversy in India,” edumeres.net, 8 June 2012, <http://www.edumeres.net/en/information/home/post/article/neuer-schulbuchstreit-in-indien.html>; Alex

- M. George, "Illustrating Social Studies in School Textbooks," *Contemporary Education Dialogue* 10, no. 1 (2013): 147–153.
55. Pande et al., *Contemporary India X*, 147. One-third of a page covers the description of the challenge of casteism. Here, Dalits are not mentioned, only the four *varnas*. Om et al., *Contemporary India IX*, 91, however, acknowledge on a very general level, which one might read as obscuring the specific issue, that "[i]n our society, various kinds of inequalities still exist. You must have noticed how people become victims of unequal treatment."
 56. See Pingle and Varshney, "India's Identity Politics," 366–367. We find a similar distinction, albeit with different connotations, in books of the first and the third series, which state that the ritual importance of caste (not discrimination!) declined, but "at political and economic levels" "it emerged." K. L. Sharma, *Indian Society: A Textbook of Sociology for Class XII* (1987; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 1996), 99. *Social Change and Development in India: Textbook in Sociology for Class XII* (2007; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2011), 32, points to a "secularization" of caste: "Belief systems of purity and pollution were central to its practice. Today it functions as political pressure groups."
 57. A. K. Sharma, *Structure of Indian Society: A Sociology Textbook for Class XII* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2003), 35–45, 119–133, 37.
 58. *Ibid.*, 121.
 59. *Ibid.*, 38.
 60. D. S. Muley, Supta Das, Ramesh Chandra, and Manju Rani, *Our Country Today, Problems and Challenges: A Textbook in Civics for Class VIII* (1989; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 1996), 25. The paragraph contains an exercise asking pupils to write a short piece on cases of caste discrimination in their locality. In this book, two chapters cover "the caste system" and "untouchability."
 61. Muley et al., *Our Country Today VIII*, 30.
 62. Sudipto Kaviraj, *Our Government – How It Functions: A Textbook in Civics for Class IX–X* (1989; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 1996), 104.
 63. Kaviraj, *Our Government IX/X*, 104, 105.
 64. Rasheeduddin Khan, *Democracy in India: A Textbook in Political Science for Class XII* (1995; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 1996), 142.
 65. Sharma, *Indian Society XII*, 104.
 66. *Ibid.*, 105, 106.
 67. *Social Science, Social and Political Life – I, VI*, 18–23; *Social Science, Social and Political Life – II: Textbook for Class VII* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2007), 7–12.
 68. *Social Science, Social and Political Life – III: Textbook for Class VIII* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2008), 94–103.
 69. *Ibid.*, 99, 102.
 70. *Social Science, Social and Political Life – I, VI*, 18–21; *Social Science, Democratic Politics – I, IX*, 103.
 71. *Social Science, Democratic Politics – I, IX*, 80–82, 102. See also *Political Theory: Textbook for Class XI* (2006; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2007), 47–49. Reservations in elections for local bodies are mentioned in *Indian Constitution at Work XI*, 184, 190.
 72. *Social Change and Development XII*, 152–155; *Indian Society: Textbook in Sociology for Class XII* (2007; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2010), 93–97; *Politics in India since Independence: Textbook in Political Science for Class XII* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2007), 132–134.

73. Class distinction, for instance, now presents itself as educational distinction, as higher classes are now the educated ones. *Social Science, Democratic Politics – II: Textbook in Political Science for Class X* (2007; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2008), 51.
74. In Tamil Nadu, for instance, “[p]upils may be asked to debate on Unity promoted by Religions and Religious Festivals.” Vasantha et al., *Social Science IX*, 152.
75. One outstanding example is the temple of Somnath. For a detailed discussion of the Somnath raid and the sources see Romila Thapar, *Somnatha: The Many Voices of a History* (London, New York: Verso, 2005). The destruction figures prominently especially in Hindu nationalist discourses of history; see Khan Banerjee, “West Bengal History Textbooks,” 358, 362.
76. Lahu Gaikwad and Dilavarkhan Pathan, *History of Medieval India Standard Seven* (2008; repr. Pune: Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, 2011), 20.
77. Attesting to Mahmud “a great love for his religion,” the book suggests religious causes for the raid. Vasantha et al., *Social Science IX*, 87.
78. Romila Thapar, *Medieval India: History Textbook for Class VII* (1988; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 1996), 25–26, stresses Mahmud’s desire for booty, reinvested in the beautification of his capital Ghazna and in patronizing arts, and regards his religious motivation as a “destroyer of images” as a desirable, legitimating side-effect. Satish Chandra, *Medieval India: A History Textbook for Class XI* (New Delhi: NCERT, [1990] 1994), 36–37, points to the wars he waged against Muslim rulers in India before he focused on looting temples.
79. “In each of his campaigns he plundered the wealth of temples, destroyed them and broke the idols of the deities to claim religious merits.” Yadav et al., *India and the World VII*, 97–98.
80. “In the political culture of the Middle Ages most rulers displayed their political might and military success by attacking and looting the places of worship of defeated rulers.” *Social Science, Our Past – II, VII*, 65–66.
81. For example, by stating that “Akbar did not compel anyone to adopt Din-i-Ilahi,” which was “based on humanism, monotheism and universal brotherhood.” Gaikwad and Pathan, *History of Medieval India VII*, 41.
82. Vasantha et al., *Social Science IX*, 130.
83. Chandra, *Medieval India XI*, 170–171.
84. Thapar, *Medieval India VII*, 94.
85. Yadav et al., *India and the World VII*, 142.
86. “Akbar’s interaction with people of different faiths made him realise that religious scholars who emphasised ritual and dogma were often bigots. Their teaching created divisions and disharmony amongst his subjects. This eventually led Akbar to the idea of sulh-i-kul or ‘universal peace’. This idea of tolerance did not discriminate between people of different religions in his realm. Instead it focused on a system of ethics – honesty, justice, peace – that is universally applicable.” *Social Science, Our Past – II, VII*, 54–55.
87. *Ibid.*, 59.
88. Thus, with their different structures focused on specific themes, the third NCERT series textbooks do not cover the religious politics of Aurangzeb.
89. Chandra, *Medieval India XI*, 224; see also Thapar, *Medieval India VII*, 108–109.
90. Yadav et al., *India and the World VII*, 142–143.

91. Vasantha et al., *Social Science IX*, 133.
92. A year XII NCERT book from the first series argues: "Communalism is also an attempt to generate inter-communal enmity by ranking up events and episodes of the medieval past. The communalists seek to use the past as a continuum of the present, for promoting inter-communal discord." Khan, *Democracy in India XII*, 146.
93. P. C. Bhanumathi et al., *Social Science Standard VIII* (2005 ; repr. Chennai: Tamil Nadu Textbook Corporation, 2007), 102.
94. Redkar, *Our Constitution VII*, 25.
95. Muley et al., *Our Country Today VIII*, 75.
96. Khan, *Democracy in India XII*, 144.
97. Chandra, *Modern India XII*, 203. See also *Social Science, Democratic Politics – II*, X, 47. Chandra distinguishes between different grades of communalism: the belief that the followers of a religion have as a consequence also common secular interests, that the interests of one group are dissimilar from the interests of the other groups, and that those interests are antagonistic and mutually incompatible. We also find Chandra's distinction in his academic publications; see Chandra et al., *India's Struggle*, 398–401.
98. Kaviraj, *Our Government IX–X*, 101.
99. Khan, *Democracy in India XII*, 145.
100. Sharma, *Indian Society XII*, 49. Likewise, the class XII history textbook discusses the rise of communalism in more detail, following a comparable line, yet adding a perspective on Indian history, which was classified into Hindu, Muslim, and British periods, naturalizing the communal outlook and the uses of Hindu and Muslim history and symbolism made by the various (nationalist) protagonists herein. Chandra, *Modern India XII*, 203–212.
101. "Communal terrorism", discussed in the second NCERT series, is only related to Sikhs (Punjab) and Muslims (Jammu and Kashmir). Sinha et al., *India and the World VIII*, 248–249. Pande et al., *Contemporary India X*, 155, does not refer to both together in one category, but labels them "Terrorism in Punjab" and "Terrorism in Kashmir."
102. Pande et al., *Contemporary India X*, 147.
103. A book from Tamil Nadu highlights in bold letters that "Hinduism is catholic in spirit and cultivated the capacity of toleration. It had never encouraged bloody religious wars, excepting minor persecutions." Vasantha et al., *Social Science IX*, 152.
104. *Themes in Indian History Part III, XII*, 383.
105. *Indian Society XII*, 134–135.
106. An example is Bhanumathi et al., *Social Science VIII*, 102–103; Ravindrakumar et al., *Social Science VIII*, 137.
107. A. Subramanian et al., *Social Science X–Standard* (Chennai: Department of School Education, 2011), 81. Here, a few lines were added compared with the first series.
108. M. B. Purandare et al., *History Standard XII*, 6th ed. (Pune: Nirali Prakashan, 2011), 8, 27–28. Bamburkar-Utgikar and Wagh name Muslims as responsible for violence that occurred during the Direct Action Day of 1946: "The followers of the Muslim League resorted to violent ways. There were Hindu-Muslim riots all over the country. There were massacres in the Noakhali region in the province of Bengal. In order to put a stop to this violence,

- Gandhiji went there without giving a thought to his own life. He strove hard to establish peace there." *History of Modern India VIII*, 122.
109. Bamburkar-Utgikar and Wagh, *History of Modern India VIII*, 126. Here, too, Gandhi "strove to maintain peace and communal harmony in Bengal. ... [He] strove day and night to preserve Hindu-Muslim unity and laid down his life in the same cause."
110. Muley et al., *Our Country Today VIII*, 7.
111. *Ibid.*, 38.
112. Chandra, *Modern India XII*, 268.
113. *Ibid.*, 271.
114. Sinha et al., *India and the World VIII*, 119.
115. Pande et al., *Contemporary India X*, 147.
116. Pratab Bhanu Mehta, "Identity Politics in an Era of Globalization," in Kelley, Rajan, and Goh, *Managing Globalization*, 387–411, 403–404, emphasizes that *Hindutva* builds its politics on anxiety and on events that create fear, such as terrorism. The focus in the textbooks of the second NCERT series is therefore in line with this outlook. See also Christophe Jaffrelot, *Communal Riots in Gujarat: The State at Risk? Heidelberg Papers in South Asian and Comparative Politics*, Working Paper no. 17 (Heidelberg: South Asia Institute, 2003), 11–14.
117. Pande et al., *Contemporary India X*, 147. See also Sinha et al., *India and the World VIII*, 248–249; Bhupendra K. Nagla and Sheo Bahal Singh, *Introducing Sociology: Textbook for Class XI* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2002), 97.
118. Sharma, *Structure of Indian Society XII*, 4.
119. *Social Science, Our Pasts – III, VIII*, 72, see also 158.
120. *Themes in Indian History III, XII*, 397.
121. *Ibid.*, 392–393.
122. *Social Science, Social and Political Life – I, VI*, 5.
123. *Social Science, Democratic Politics – II, X*, 48.
124. "Nearly four thousand Sikhs were massacred in Delhi and many other parts of the country in 1984. The families of the victims feel that the guilty were not punished." *Political Theory XI*, 112. In addition, the book refers to the Gujarat riots of 2002 and the eviction of Kashmiri *pandits*.
125. *Politics in India XII*, 158–161, 184–189, 189.
126. Om et al., *Contemporary India IX*, 75.
127. However, the texts define secularism differently, with such definitions including: "All religions in our country have the same status and support from the state" (Thiru J. Arul George Peter et al., *Social Science VII – Standard* (Chennai: Department of School Education, 2011), 132–133); "[secularism means] that no religion or sect should interfere in the affairs of our country" (Redkar, *Our Constitution VII*, 8); and "Government treats all religious beliefs and practices with equal respect" (Amol Shankarrao Vidyasagar et al., *Social Science Part I: History and Political Science Standard IX* (Pune: Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, 2012), 72). A very similar statement is also to be found in D. S. Muley, A. C. Sharma, and Supta Das, *How We Govern Ourselves: A Textbook for Class VII* (1988; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 1996), 9, from the first NCERT series.
128. Muley et al., *Our Country Today VIII*, 7, 38.
129. Kaviraj, *Our Government IX–X*, 36.

130. Ibid., 101–102.
131. Khan, *Democracy in India XII*, 141, 149–151.
132. *Social Science, Social and Political Life – III, VIII*, 20–27. When discussing the constitution, *Social Science, Democratic Politics – I, IX*, 106, and *Indian Constitution at Work XI*, 229–231, also refer to and explain secularism. There is a broad discussion of counterarguments in *Political Theory XI*, 111–126.
133. *Indian Constitution at Work XI*, 229–231; also with reference to “inter-communal strife.”
134. *Political Theory XI*, 117.
135. The claim that the principle of secularism has been violated has served as an argument in the struggle for the prerogative of interpretation in school education between “leftist” and “Hindu nationalist” protagonists. An appeal against the National Curriculum Framework 2000 was rejected by the Supreme Court; see *Supreme Court of India Judgement (12 September, 2002), In the matter of The National Curriculum Framework For School Education, 2000* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2002).
136. See Mehta, “Identity Politics,” 400, 404–405.
137. Sharma, *Indian Society XII*, 190, 193. The term “communalism” here has a wider meaning than in most textbook contexts and refers not only to religious communities.
138. Muley et al., *Our Country Today VIII*, 76.
139. Thus, under the heading “Federal-Nation Building: The Problem of Regionalism and National Integration,” in Khan, *Democracy in India XII*, 153–156.
140. Yadav et al., *India and the World VII*, 206.
141. Bhanumati et al., *Social Science VIII*, 103.
142. *Social Science, Our Pasts III*, 165–166.
143. Ibid., 171.
144. Redkar, *Our Constitution VII*, 25, 26.
145. Gagarani et al., *History of Maharashtra XI*, 89–100.
146. Ibid., 103–117.
147. It might be added that this aspect can be interpreted not only in a regionalist but also in a communalist sense. As Hansen pointed out, “The Shiv Sena’s rhetoric [...] transformed the Sangh Parivar’s rhetoric of ‘Ram versus Babar’ into a direct communal and historic metaphor of the battles between Shivaji and the Moghul emperor Aurangzeb.” Hansen, “BJP and the Politics,” 132.
148. Jayasingrao Pawar et al., *Shivachhatrapati (History and Civics), Standard Four* (2009; repr. Pune: Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, 2010), 104, 106.
149. Vasantha et al., *Social Studies IX*, 234.
150. Redkar, *Our Constitution VII*, 25.
151. “Expression of regional issues is not an aberration or an abnormal phenomenon” (*Politics in India XII*, 167); also Khan, *Democracy in India XII*, 154.
152. Kaviraj, *Our Government IX–X*, 104.
153. Ibid., 103.
154. *Political Theory XI*, 84.
155. “Economic disparity” and “[r]egional imbalances” are attributed to “the lack of the natural and cultural resources.” Ravindrakumar et al., *Social Science VIII*, 137.
156. An example is Sharma, *Indian Society XII*, 190–192.

157. A book from Maharashtra refers in a general way to "terrorism": "When violence is used to obtain political objectives, it gives rise to terrorism. Terrorist activities result in the loss of innocent lives. They lead to the destruction of public property and financial losses. Normal life is disrupted. People feel threatened. Effectively checking this kind of terrorism is a major challenge before Indian democracy." A text box on the "role of the citizens" calls upon them to "inform the police," "be alert and vigilant all the time," and "not resort to violence while making their demands," but instead to "always use peaceful and parliamentary means." (Redkar, *Our Constitution VII*, 25, 28).
158. Khan, *Democracy in India XII*, 148.
159. Sinha et al., *India and the World III*, 247–248; Pande et al., *Contemporary India X*, 154–155.
160. Sinha et al., *India and the World III*, 248.
161. *Politics in India XII*, 149–169.
162. *Ibid.*, 168.
163. This quest for integration is questioned by Benedict Anderson, "The New World Disorder," *New Left Review* 193 (1992): 3–13, especially 5; Anderson points to the violence often connected with it and the viability of smaller states. In Anderson's view, it is mainly the interest of central power groups that makes "integration" an objective and prerequisite of national prosperity.
164. Rajagopalan, *State and Nation*, 120.
165. *Ibid.*, 131. National Steering Committee on Textbook Evaluation, *Recommendations and Report*, II (New Delhi: NCERT, 1994), 4–5, summarizes: "The Committee is appalled at the extremely poor quality of almost every aspect of these textbooks [issued by the Tamil Nadu Textbook Society]. ... There is nothing in these books in terms of historical accuracy, language and style, editing and proof reading, and production which can justify their use as educational material. The only variation in their quality is that some are worse than others and some abound in incomprehensible statements. ... The Committee recommends that all these books should be replaced at the earliest [opportunity]."
166. Ministry of Human Resource Development, *Learning without Burden: Report of the National Advisory Committee, Appointed by the Ministry of Human Resource Development* (New Delhi: Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Education, 1993).
167. See NCERT, *National Curriculum Framework for School Education* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2000). Whether the scopes of one or the other topic discussed in this article were reduced with the sole intention of "reducing the burden" is debatable.
168. Rajagopalan, *State and Nation*, 117, 129, refers to the adaptation of the NCERT syllabi's content by Tamil Nadu. The books, which contain no prefaces, do not give any further hint of such an influence.
169. Thus, the 2007 preface to Bharati Joshi, *History of Ancient India*, VI (2007; repr. Pune: Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, 2009) refers only to the National Curriculum Framework 2000. In the 2008 edition of Gaikwad and Pathan, *History of Medieval India*, VII, a mention of the 2005 framework was added to the 2000 one.
170. The second series writes "Untouchability, Inhuman – Crime," omitting "sin" with its religious connotations.

171. Bhanumathi et al., *Social Science VIII*, 103.
172. “[A]ll these require a change in the mindset of the people. Fraternal feelings should replace cast[e] consciousness.” Baby, *Social Science IX*, 207. This book refers also to the role of NGOs, which are viewed as important because “[their] workers do not belong to the government department, they are more acceptable to the people as these people had an aversion towards government officials.” *Ibid.*, 210.
173. Subramanian et al., *Social Science X*, 226. Tmt. V. Meenakshi et al. remark, “People forget their religious and linguistic differences and stand together when there is a crisis. The best examples are [the] Kargil invasion and occurrence of floods and Tsunami, etc.” *Geography and Economics Matriculation 10* (2006; repr. Chennai: Tamil Nadu Textbook Corporation, 2008), 7.
174. Smt. Uma Maheswari and Smt. Saly Verghese, *History and Civics Matriculation 10* (2006; repr. Chennai: Tamil Nadu Textbook Corporation, 2008), 189–190.
175. Examples are Bhanumathi et al., *Social Science VIII*, 113–121; Baby et al., *Social Science IX*, 204–213.
176. An example is in Pande et al., *Contemporary India X*, 148–150, in the chapter entitled “Challenges of Communalism and Casteism”; also Yadav et al., *India and the World VII*, 210, under the heading of “Administration and Development in India”; Sharma, *Structure of Indian Society XII*, 119–131, in the chapter “Deprived Groups.”
177. *Indian Society XII*, 95.
178. Khan, *Democracy in India XII*, 141–152; here 147, 149.
179. NCERT, *National Curriculum Framework 2005* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2005).
180. See Alex M. George and Amman Madan, *Teaching Social Science in Schools: NCERT’s New Textbook Initiative* (New Delhi, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2009). The booklet is intended as a manual for parents, teachers, pupils, and educationists to help them to understand and apply the new concepts. This was held necessary because of the break with long-established practices.
181. *Social Science, Social and Political Life – I*, VI, 6, 19, 21.
182. *Themes in Indian History – III*, XII, 382.
183. An example is the reference in Maheswari and Verghese, *History and Civics X*, 191.
184. Thus the accounts are rarely linked to more recent developments or present-day life. At the end of a chapter titled “The Struggle for Social Equality,” a Maharashtrian book summarizes: “The contribution of all these movements to the Indian freedom struggle is valuable.” Bampurkar-Utgikar and Wagh, *History of Modern India VIII*, 118.
185. “Equality is a value that we have to keep striving for and not something which will happen automatically. People’s struggle and positive actions by the government are necessary to make this a reality for all Indians.” *Social Science, Social and Political Life – I*, VI, 23.
186. *Social Science, Democratic Politics – II*, X, 57–70; *Politics in India XII*, 128–147. Geography textbooks, which are otherwise without mention of conflicts, now refer to them to some extent, in the context of dams and water sharing; an example is *Social Science, Contemporary India – II: Textbook in Geography for Class X* (2006; repr. New Delhi: NCERT, 2012), 27.
187. *Politics in India XII*, 128.

188. *Political Theory XI*, 81.
189. *Ibid.*, 86.
190. *Indian Society XII*, 95.
191. Under the topic "The Sense of Collective Belonging," *India and the Contemporary World – II, X*, 70–73.
192. However, relativizing the integration discourse of the center, Mitra argues, "Far from being its antithesis, region has actually emerged as the nursery of the nation." "Sub-national Movements," 31.
193. There are several examples of this situation, one of which is the movement for the formation of a new state of Telangana and the process of this formation (see Mitra, "Sub-national Movements," 8–47; V. Janardhan and P. Raghavendra, "Telangana: History and Political Sociology of a Movement," *Social Change* 43, no. 4 (2013): 551–564). The activities of movements or parties such as Shiv Sena, whose aims clash with the aspirations of other, especially immigrant, groups, can serve as another instance (for a vivid account see Suketu Mehta, *Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found*, 3rd ed. (New Delhi: Penguin, 2012) 46–121).
194. The anti-Muslim direction taken by Shiv Sena from 1984 onward is just one example; see Hansen, "BJP and the Politics of Hindutva," in Jaffrelot and Hansen, *BJP and the Compulsions of Politics*, 127.
195. Mitra, "Sub-national Movements," 9–12.
196. One example: Maharashtra celebrates the conquests of Marathi kings against the Mughals and other Indian territories. In opposition, a Bengali narrative describes this as Bengal's loss of its independence and connotes the Marathi conquest negatively. Even if this reading stems from a Bangladeshi book (Mamtauddin Patwari et al., *Bangladesh and Global Studies for Class VIII* (Dhaka: National Curriculum and Textbook Board, 2012), 3), it demonstrates the possibility of contradicting assessments in different regional contexts where an event is seen from a purely regional perspective and used for sub-national identity politics.
197. NCERT, *National Curriculum Framework 2005* (New Delhi: NCERT, 2005).
198. Thomas Höhne, *Schulbuchwissen: Umriss einer Wissens- und Medientheorie des Schulbuches* (Frankfurt am Main: Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, 2003).
199. As Hansen remarked, "As the Hindu nationalist mobilization in India has demonstrated, education was historically never the road to eradication of communal stereotypes and promotion of secular values, as the Nehruvian creed went, but rather the site of their production and perpetuation." Hansen, *Saffron Wave*, 216.
200. An increase in the number of players and the necessity to form coalition governments have been mentioned as factors decreasing the incidence of riots. Wilkinson, "Communal and Caste Politics," 269–270. In this context we must also take into account the effects of reservation politics, seen as "positive discrimination," in perpetuating boundaries. These divisions "sell" not only in party politics, but often also economically to the individual.
201. As an attempt at public enlightenment, see Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny* (London: Allen Lane, 2006).