

MIGRATION, XENOPHOBIA AND SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

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Migration, xenophobia, schools

Migration is one of the key issues in the contemporary world that spills over national boundaries. It simultaneously challenges and creates problems for nation-states as it represents and raises questions about the implications of the growing interconnectedness and diversity of political communities straddling national boundaries. In this context, a growing number of writers have counterposed notions of cosmopolitan democracy and citizenship with traditional conceptualisations of the nation and its subjects.² The 'nation' is conceived as by definition creating non-nationals, non-citizens and subjects, who become the object of xenophobia and exclusion within the boundaries of the nation-state.³

Nation-states have always rigorously sought to define what their national cultures are, and have promulgated it through schools, the media, national celebrations, and so on.⁴ South Africa's transition to democracy at the same moment as migration patterns have begun to change raises questions about what kinds and how new forms of citizenship are being created through its public institutions.⁵ New forms of South African citizenship are officially based on recognition of the diversity of identities contained within its borders. But what is the nature of these processes of citizenship-construction in public institutions, how are they mediating difference not only between black and white in South Africa, but also between those defined as South African citizens and those defined as the new migrants? And to what extent are distinctively cosmopolitan commitment(s) represented in these efforts?

¹ This paper does not represent the views of the HSRC.

² See for example D. Held, 'Globalization, Cosmopolitanism and Democracy: An Interview with David Held', *Constellations*, Volume 8, No. 4 (2001): 428-441, p. 429; D. Held, 'Cosmopolitanism : Globalisation Tamed?' *Review of International Studies*, 29 (2003), 465-480; A. K. Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (London, 2006) and A. Sen, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny* (London, 2006), Passim.

³ See, for example I. Chipkin, *Do South Africans Exist?: Nationalism, Democracy and the Identity of 'the People'* (Johannesburg, 2007).

⁴ Held, 'Globalization, Cosmopolitanism and Democracy', 433.

⁵ See, for example, C. Bundy, 'New Nation, New History: Constructing the Past in post-apartheid South Africa' in H. Stolten (Ed) *History Making and Present Day Politics: The Meaning of Collective Memory in South Africa* (Stockholm & Uppsala, 2007).

Migration is not a new phenomenon in southern Africa; it predates colonialism and industrialisation, when such movements became associated primarily with labour migration to South Africa's farms and mines. During the twentieth century, patterns of migration, their control and regulation, were integral to the particularist, racial state and notions of citizenship that emerged at this time. The migrant worker, from Mozambique, Malawi or the hinterland of South Africa, came to South Africa to work. The settled, white, urban, enfranchised insider to whom rights and benefits accrued was constructed as part of the political community in contrast to the migrant, black, rural, disenfranchised outsider whose 'rights' were to be exercised outside the community of citizens, in reserves and then bantustans. Borders were shifting, fixed and elasticized according to when who was defined as insider and outsider to the political community. Extruded and excluded from citizenship, the migrant worker was the body on which South Africa's racial democracy was most clearly imprinted.

Since 1994, South Africa has become a destination for new streams of migrants and refugees from West, Central and East Africa. Recent research has shown that patterns of migration have changed significantly since 1994.⁶ Crush and Peberdy have shown that, as in the past, migrants are mainly from South Africa's immediate neighbours (Mozambique, Lesotho, Swaziland, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Botswana.) There is also increasing migration from the rest of Africa, Europe, North America, Asia and the Indian subcontinent. Nigerians and Congolese began arriving in the late 1970s and early 1980s.⁷ Patterns of migration of men and women, skilled and unskilled, types of migration, as well as the reasons for migration, have all changed. The vast majority of migrants come to urban provinces. Gauteng is a focal point of such migration, although both official statistics and university-based research centres agree that numbers of foreign migrants or refugees are in fact extremely small, around two percent of the total population.⁸ Concentrated in certain areas of Johannesburg, foreign-born migrants constitute about half the population in inner-city Johannesburg areas such as Yeoville, Berea, Yeoville, Bez Valley and Bertrams (47%).⁹ Congolese, Angolans, Ethiopians, Somalians, and

⁶ Since 1990, South Africa has become the destination and transit for migrants from the rest of Africa, for whom there is little if any state support. Undocumented or unauthorized migration has, as McDonald (2000) Crush (2003) and others have pointed out, been part of South African history for decades, but the 'scale, scope and impact of undocumented migration appears to have changed considerably'. D. McDonald, *On Borders: Perspectives on Cross-Border Migration in Southern Africa* (New York, 2000); J. Crush, 'South Africa. New Nation', New Migration Policy, 2003, www.migrationinformation.org/Profiles/display.cfm?ID=31; J. Crush and S. Peberdy, 'Criminal Tendencies: Immigrants and Illegality in South Africa: Migration Policy Brief No 10' (Kingston and Cape Town, South African Migration Project (SAMP), n.d. 2002?); J. Crush, 'Migration and Development in post-Apartheid South Africa', in A. Saskia (ed) *Population, Environment and the Challenge of Development* (New Delhi, 2003), 201-26; J. Crush, 'Forgotten Movements: Cross-Border Migration in Southern Africa', in P. Poddar and D. Johnson (Eds) *A Historical Companion to Post-Colonial Thought in English* (Edinburgh, 2005).

⁷ J. Crush and S. Peberdy, 'Criminal Tendencies: Immigrants and Illegality in South Africa', Migration Policy Brief No 10 (Kingston and Cape Town, n.d. 2002?); A. Morris, *Bleakness and Light: Inner-City Transition in Hillbrow* (Johannesburg, 1999).

⁸ Statistics SA, *Census 2001: Census in Brief* (Pretoria, Stats SA, 2003), 20-27 and L. Landau, 'Migration, urbanisation and sustainable livelihoods in SA', SAMP Migration Policy Brief (15), 2005, 3

⁹ Forced Migration Studies Programme, 'Human Displacement, Survival and the Politics of Space: Final Survey Results' (Johannesburg, 19 June 2003).

Burundians live side-by-side with South Africans. In 2003, these migrants were typically male, below the age of 30, in possession of secondary education with some higher education, able to speak a variety of languages including English and did not have children. Conversely, there were small numbers of women, above the age of 30 with children. This would imply that there are few migrant children.

Migrated children are a significant albeit small part of the Gauteng school population, although numbers of those who have migrated to Gauteng from inside South Africa are much larger than those from outside. Thus thousands of children are recorded as having entered Gauteng schools from Limpopo, KZN, Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga in 2006.¹⁰ Only about 5,959 were reported as coming from outside the borders of South Africa, compared with 15,058 from Limpopo. Nonetheless, the large majority of foreign-born children in South Africa are in Johannesburg East (1,337) and Johannesburg South (1,116). Given the problems with estimating the numbers of migrants, and especially given the problems facing undocumented and unauthorized migrants, these figures are probably an undercount and also exclude those who have not been able to gain access to school because of being illegal, fees being too high or inability to speak the dominant language. Although the Constitution guarantees all children (including foreign children) the right to education, and the South African Schools Act also includes provisions to protect rights of refugee children, these rights exist more in the breach than the observance. The question arises as to what messages such children, who have gained entry, receive about their belonging in South Africa in schools, and whether these are xenophobic or cosmopolitan democratic messages. This will tell one something about the way in which the nation is currently being constructed in and through schools. School textbooks and history textbooks are an important place to look, although they will be only one set of messages within the overall school context and will be mediated through various other practices, discourses and experiences.

Much of the literature and research has shown that far from being a nation of cosmopolitans, South Africans are strongly xenophobic. Stereotypes of foreigners, who are seen as responsible for the post-1994 crime-wave, abound.¹¹ A survey conducted in 2001-2 in the five Southern African states showed that such attitudes are common across the region: citizens see non-citizens in their countries as a 'problem', who pose a significant threat to jobs, and require tough action to be taken against them.¹² Three public opinion surveys conducted by the Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) in 1997 showed that South Africans 'as a whole are not tolerant of outsiders living in the country,' that the majority favour 'forceful efforts' to control immigration, that there is a

¹⁰ Information provided by Gauteng Department of Education: 15,058 from Limpopo, 12,245 from KZN, 11,842 from Eastern Cape and 8,528 from Mpumalanga.

¹¹ J. Crush and S. Peberdy, 'Criminal Tendencies: Immigrants and Illegality in South Africa' Migration Policy Brief No 10. South African Migration Project, (SAMP, Kingston and Cape Town, n.d.), 1; for an analysis of the role of the media in fuelling such perceptions, see also R. Danso and D. McDonald 'Writing Xenophobia: Immigration and the Print-Media in Post-Apartheid South Africa', *Africa Today*, Special Issue, 48 (2002), 115-138; ; J. Crush, 'The Dark Side of Democracy: Migration, Human Rights and Xenophobia in South Africa', *International Migration*, 34 (2000), 1-19; see also D. McDonald and S. Jacobs, '(Re) writing Xenophobia: Understanding Press Coverage of Cross-Border Migration in Southern Africa', *Journal of Contemporary Southern African Studies*. 23 (2006), 205-325.

¹² J. Crush and W. Pendleton, 'Regionalizing Xenophobia? Citizen Attitudes to Immigration and Refugee Policy in Southern Africa' (Kingston and Cape Town, 2004).

consistent pattern of support of temporary migrant workers, but extremely limited (15%) support for rights to be extended to unauthorized migrants.¹³

These findings contrast strongly with approaches which have argued that xenophobia can be understood as 'defensive rhetoric' that bears little relation to actual relationships and treatment,¹⁴ that contrary to dominant narratives of xenophobia the experience of exile and support of the anti-apartheid struggle has predisposed South Africans to sympathetic reception of African foreigners; that there are possibilities of sources of support for foreigners in local communities such as the church, Islam, traditional authorities and 'comrades';¹⁵ that schools themselves may be more migrant-friendly than expected,¹⁶ and that as important as South African nativist discourses of exclusion may be, so important are the counter-narratives of themselves as constructed by foreigners.¹⁷ Nonetheless, despite these positive constructions, the picture is one of 'the new apartheid of xenophobia'¹⁸ – an apartheid that constructs clear boundaries between citizens and non-citizens, boundaries that create and recreate the national rather than the cosmopolitan citizen.

Are these attitudes and notions of citizenship and identity the pattern of the future or of the past? Does the South African Constitution, to which many of these attitudes run counter, provide a counter-ballast? Examining whether and how South African schools may be preparing cosmopolitan citizens or new nationalists is not a simple question. It requires an examination of schools from the outside in and from the inside out, of young migrants and their families interacting with South Africans in particular schools and neighbourhoods. It requires consideration of their experience of the South African state as well as its citizens.¹⁹ The school habitus and climate can be explored through the school curriculum, textbooks and teachers as well as relationships between teachers and students and students themselves within schools. In addition, however, youths are subject to social influences within the neighbourhood and community, family and broader society and these contexts also need exploration. It is likely that there are tensions and contradictions between official constructions and lived contexts and realities and that meanings are made in the interstices of these. All this needs analysis, but given the constraints on space and time, this paper will focus on one dimension – the official

¹³ SAMP, 'Immigration, Xenophobia and Human Rights in South Africa', Southern African Migration Policy Series No 22 (Kingston and Cape Town, 2001) pp 1-6.

¹⁴ Centre for Development Enterprise, 'Immigrants in South Africa: Perceptions and Reality in Witbank, a medium-sized industrial town', in *CDE*, 9 (May 2006).

¹⁵ P. Kaarsholm, 'Youth and Migration: History, Ambiguities and Agendas for Research', Paper presented at HSRC and Wits Forced Migration Studies Programme Colloquium, Studying Youth Migration: Towards a Research Agenda, held at University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 27 and 28 February 2007.

¹⁶ D. Francis and C. Hemson, 'Fresh Grounds. Issues in researching young migrants', Paper presented at HSRC and Wits Forced Migration Studies Programme Colloquium, Studying Youth Migration: Towards a Research Agenda, held at University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 27 and 28 February 2007.

¹⁷ L. Landau, 'Transplants and Transients: Nativism, Nationalism and Migration in Inner-City Johannesburg', *African Studies Review* (2005).

¹⁸ Editorial Note, SAMP Migration Policy Series, 22 (2001).

¹⁹ *Human Rights Watch*, amongst others, provides considerable insight into the difficulties of the process of achieving refugee, temporary resident and resident status. See for example *Human Rights Watch*, vol. 18, no 6 (A) (July 2006) and vol. 17, No. 15 (A) (November 2005).

constructions of citizenship within the school history curriculum and textbooks and the degree to which they militate against xenophobic discourses. The official curriculum represents the ideal vision of the kind of citizen the state wishes to create. And textbooks and teachers play an important role in enacting that vision. Historically the history curriculum and textbooks played a critical role in legitimating and constructing dominant notions of citizenship.²⁰ What role they might play now, in school contexts where young migrants find themselves, would be important to consider. The paper focuses on history textbooks, both nationally distributed and in use in schools in two neighbourhoods with substantial migrant populations in the south and east of Johannesburg.

The literature on citizenship and xenophobia in South African education is extremely limited. On the whole, the literature is concerned with race, racial discrimination, inclusion and exclusion. The dominant discourse is concerned with the constitution of the South African nation internal to itself.²¹ Studies of South African education concerned with racism typically speak about desegregation and integration in so far as black and white South Africans are concerned, and reserve the last few pages for accounts either of ethnic conflict or xenophobia.²² As Soudien, Carrim and Sayed point out, new inclusions can and often do always produce new exclusions as boundaries are redrawn simply to exclude newly-defined Others.²³ As concern focuses on hitherto excluded black South Africans within a new South African nation, new outsiders are created, those not defined as citizens, but as foreigners. An examination of contemporary history textbooks from the point of view of xenophobia may tell us as much about who is being included and excluded as the new nation is being constructed, as it does about the limits and borders of the new nation. In such an examination, it will be important to explore essentialising characterisations.²⁴

There are different ways of analysing how citizenship and identity is constructed in history textbooks. Analysis of history textbooks has long been implicated in 'imaginings of the nation,' and have reflected the 'heavy freight' of this imagining with "the burden of race."²⁵ Auerbach's early study of apartheid textbooks developed an assessment scale of bias and applied this to three topics in history textbooks. From this concern with prejudice in the 1960s, the emphasis shifted in the 1970s to analysis of how history textbooks operated ideologically, and in the 1980s to master narratives and

²⁰ See for example E. Dean, P. Hartmann and M. Katzen, *History in Black and White: An Analysis of South African School History Textbooks* (Paris, 1983).

²¹ See for example F. Auerbach's classic study 'An enquiry into history textbooks and syllabuses in Transvaal high schools' (Unpublished M Ed Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1963); F.E. Auerbach, *The Power of Prejudice in South African Education*. (Balkema, 1965).

²² See for example the otherwise very important study by S. Vally and Y. Dalamba, 'Racism, Racial Integration' and Desegregation in South African public secondary schools' (A report on a study by the South African Human Rights Commission, Johannesburg, 1999) which has the virtue of at least dealing with the issue. This is rare.

²³ See for example C. Soudien, N. Carrim, and Y. Sayed, 'School Inclusion and Exclusion in South Africa: Some Theoretical and Methodological Considerations' in M. Nkomo, C. McKinney, and L. Chisholm (Eds) *Reflections on School Integration: Colloquium Proceedings* (Pretoria, 2004).

²⁴ Thanks to Carolyn Hamilton for drawing my attention to this point.

²⁵ C. Bundy, 'New Nation, New History?' 79.

symbols in textbooks.²⁶ More recent studies, albeit not of history textbooks, have examined representations of diversity and whether representations should represent ideal or real worlds.²⁷ This work takes an approach to textbook analysis that sees its content as being as much involved in the socialization of children as in 'in legitimating what counts as cultural norms and officially sanctioned values and knowledge.'²⁸ In this view, also taken in this paper, textbooks always present a 'selection from culture'; to understand the way in which processes of legitimation work, textbook analysis requires identification of what is privileged and authorised within this culture within the textbooks.²⁹

The problem with approaches that focus on ideology, discourses, symbols, or representations alone, important though they undoubtedly are, is that they are not an examination of what is in use and what is in practice being transmitted, conveyed, understood, assimilated, contested or rejected. As late as 2003, almost 10 years after the democratic election of 1994, Bekker et al found in their survey of history textbooks and learning support materials at South African state secondary schools that 'old era texts, in all three (secondary) grades, continue to be used more often in more history classes than new era texts,' that this is more so the case in rural, former homeland than in urban schools and that the institutional culture within which many teachers operate 'is not only backward looking but also devalues the subject itself.'³⁰

Whatever the case may be at present, which textbooks are used and how they are used, may have important implications for constructions of citizenship in those schools where teaching and learning are the norm. The habitus of schools is an important condition for the import of such constructions. Textbooks may have an impact in schools where teaching and learning does take place, but the fact that teaching is limited to an average of 3.2 hours a day in the majority of schools, and rarely occurs on Fridays, not to mention the frequently cited non-delivery of textbooks to schools, suggest that the overall impact of textbook constructions may be limited.³¹ This is even more so the case given that history forms a small part of the overall time-table. Anti-xenophobic teaching will only be successful in such contexts if teachers make a conscious effort to address it, if it is part of a broader, cross-curricular approach related to how migration and citizenship is dealt

²⁶ L. Chisholm (1981) 'History, Ideology and Legitimation of the Status Quo in South African History Textbooks,' *Perspectives in Education*, vol. 5, no. 3 (1981); S. Polakow-Suransky, 'Historical Amnesia? The Politics of Textbooks in Post-Apartheid South Africa' (Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational research Association, New Orleans, LA, April 1-5, 2002).

²⁷ C. McKinney, 'Textbooks for Diverse Learners: A Critical Analysis of Learning Materials Used in South African Schools (Cape Town, 2005).

²⁸ McKinney, 'Textbooks for Diverse Learners', 5.

²⁹ She is drawing here on M. Apple, 'The political economy of text publishing', in A. de Castell, A. Luke, and C. Luke (Eds) *Language, Authority and Criticism: readings on the School Textbook* (Barcombe, 1989) and Lewes and A Luke, *Literacy, Textbooks and Ideology: Postwar Literacy Instruction and the Mythology of Dick and Jane* (London & New York, 1989).

³⁰ S. Bekker, R. Mongwe, G. Muller and K. Myburgh, 'History Textbooks and Learning Support Materials at South African State Secondary Schools – An Analysis' (Conducted for the South African History Project, Stellenbosch, 2003).

³¹ L. Chisholm, U. Hoadley and J. Kivilu, 'Educator Workload in South Africa (Cape Town/Pretoria, 2005).

with, and if textbooks are supplemented by additional materials. In order to address the question of use, however, the paper examines representations within a number of officially distributed history textbooks, and contrasts these with those in use in selected schools.

This paper will focus on the new narratives that give credence to or deny notions of an inclusive or cosmopolitan citizenship, as well as their essentialising potential and silences. Here the focus is on new national narratives and the extent to which they permit anti-xenophobic constructions of citizenship, identity and knowledge. Before examining history textbooks, it is necessary to provide a brief account of the curriculum context within which new textbooks have been created.

The curriculum

History was paradoxically not at the centre of the first wave of curriculum reform in the immediate aftermath of 1994. South Africa's school history curriculum was not seriously revised until some years after the elections. The impetus for the revision of the school history curriculum after 1994 came from a variety of sources linked to the democratisation of South Africa, and the existence of a powerful history lobby rooted in the emergence of radical political economy, and social and labour history in parts of the academy in the 1980s. New notions of citizenship demanded new history curricula and school books. For the first few years, the emphasis of the incipient new government fell on what could be done visibly and across the board: removing the racist and sexist elements from existing syllabi. Thereafter, the definition, elaboration and setting in place of a new philosophy of education, to replace the Christian National Education of the apartheid era, became the priority. Whereas 'peoples education' had framed the oppositional discourses of the 1980s, 'outcomes-based education' framed the curriculum discourses that emerged in the late 1990s. In the late 1990s there was considerable dissatisfaction with the limited revisions effected to history in 1995, and with the new outcomes-based curriculum,³² although some schools flourished under conditions of uncertainty and tried 'to figure out 'for themselves how history should be taught.'³³ Pressures for such a more fully and comprehensively South African curriculum began building up towards the end of the 1990s.

Under Minister Asmal a curriculum revision process was initiated in 2000 that intended to change this. He gave special attention to history, seeing it as important for a number of reasons, including that of nation-building.³⁴ In 2000, he appointed a committee of inquiry into history teaching in schools,³⁵ and in due course a South African History Project,

³² L. Samarbaksh-Liberge (2002) 'Truth and History' in the Post-Apartheid South African Context. In *Quest: An African Journal of Philosophy*, XVI, 1-2.

³³ S. Dryden (1999) *Mirror of a Nation in Transition: History Teachers and Students in Cape Town Schools*. MPhil, University of Cape Town.

³⁴ This section draws from L. Chisholm, 'The history curriculum in the (revised) national curriculum statement: an introduction', in S. Jeppie (ed) *Towards 'New' Histories for South Africa: On the Place of the Past in our Present* (Cape Town, 2004) .

³⁵ Department of Education, Report of the History/Archaeology Panel to the Minister of Education (Pretoria, 2000).

comprised of South Africa's leading historians. The stance towards the revision of the curriculum, taken in 2000 in the *History and Archaeology Report*,³⁶ was neither celebratory nor nationalist in tone and content, recognising instead the provisional nature of knowledge. It was oppositional to official histories, histories of victors, of great men and of grand narratives.³⁷ The continuing presence of a virulently hostile and strong lobby in the national and provincial departments of education and the South African Democratic Teachers' Union against the inclusion of history in the Grades R-9 school curriculum meant that history was incorporated in a subject called Social Sciences, and was henceforth to be taught alongside geography.³⁸

The *National Curriculum Statement*, approved in 2002, and informed by the *History and Archaeology Report* gave strong expression to anti-xenophobic values. Thus, it stated that:

When working with History and Geography within Social Sciences, various issues should be explored – race, gender, class, xenophobia, genocide and the impact these have had in the past and the present.... The Social Sciences learning area statement has been designed to give space to the silent voices of history and to marginalized communities... to develop a sense of agency in learners.... [t]o provide learners with knowledge, understanding and skills....(p. 6)

But how does the curriculum give effect to these goals? The curriculum expresses the intention that learners will be made familiar with, amongst other things, their own family and local history, with stories from the past and present in South Africa and the wider world about respect for and violation of children's rights; with the history of transport, major world religions, early civilizations, including African kingdoms early southern African societies, provincial histories; with the history of representations of Africa, medicine, democracy in South Africa, human evolution, early trading systems, the French Revolution, industrialization, colonialism, history of science and technology; with human rights issues during and after WWII, apartheid, the struggle for freedom in South Africa, local and oral history; the Cold War; and with contemporary human rights issues. This narrative provides, in Foner's words, 'an intellectually plausible account of the nation's triumph',³⁹ but it also implicitly challenges xenophobia.

These content areas are not, however, the focal point of the curriculum. Giving students the tools to learn about how knowledge and history are socially constructed are also emphasised. For example, in Grade 7, when the focus will be on human evolution, early trading systems, moving frontiers and systems of democracy, learners are expected to:

understand how and why some events in the past have been interpreted differently, [to] recognise that accounts written some time after the event may

³⁶ DoE, 2000.

³⁷ DoE, 2000, 6.

³⁸ For further discussion of the conflicts around the history curriculum, see L. Chisholm, 'History curriculum in the revised national curriculum statement', and Bundy, 'New Nation? New History?'.
³⁹ E. Foner, *Who Owns History? Rethinking the Past in a Changing World* (New York, 2002).

differ from contemporary accounts.... [T]hat different value systems and traditions may influence interpretation.... [T]hat archaeologists work with material remains of the past and make deductions from selected material remains of the past and be able to explain the ways in which people remember events in the past.

That students are expected to learn source interpretation, and how to recognise influences on interpretation and representation of the past suggests that the history curriculum was written in such a way as to create the conditions for 'mediating cultural difference' and creating new political communities and citizens.

To all intents and purposes the official curriculum and history curriculum promote a cosmopolitan citizenship. The values of the Constitution, recognition of the diversity of affiliations and identities provide the space for the teaching of values antithetical to xenophobia. A curriculum, however, is after all only the paper it is written on, and its practice as enacted through textbooks and teachers deserves closer scrutiny. An 'anti-xenophobic curriculum' would include not only a curriculum, but also textbooks, materials and teachers that consciously address xenophobia through an overarching approach that recognises migration as an integral part of history and social identity; enables understanding of differences between those constructed by citizenship or language as 'South African' and 'foreign', and shows how to recognise xenophobia and how to act on it.

Textbooks

In a comprehensive overview of the relationship between professional history, academic historians, and the post-apartheid curriculum, Colin Bundy examines the ongoing interests of professional historians in history textbooks.⁴⁰ He shows how the decline of the study of history in universities coincided with a period from 1994-1999 in which the post-apartheid government constructed an outcomes-based curriculum which to all intents and purposes denied history. He also explores in some depth the influence at different times from 1990 of debates amongst historians about what kind of history should prevail in the curriculum. He periodises the nature of their interventions and their approaches to what history textbooks should look like. Between 1992 and 1994, when there was 'a swirl of activity' involving academics, teachers, publishers and civil servants, three approaches emerged to new textbook writing: a conservative pluralist, nation-building pluralist and a new model textbook approach. The latter he described as 'concerned with the content and interpretation of South African history, its main emphasis being that history should "reflect advances in the discipline of history":

That is: school texts should reflect recent and current debates about the past; the approach to the past should be inclusive and democratic; the approach to historical knowledge should be analytical and explanatory; skills and content should be inseparable so that the curriculum conveys a sense of how knowledge is produced and history not presented as a set of given facts. Historical education

⁴⁰ Bundy, 'New Nation, New History?', 73-98.

should develop “empathetic understanding, emotional and moral commitment with the past” and an awareness of the constant interrelationship of the past and the present. South African history should reflect the diversity of its population, while also accounting for processes that have created a single society; and should locate the country’s history within regional, continental and global events and processes.⁴¹

Between 1994 and 1999, as the history-blind curriculum began to take shape, professional historians with an interest in schools and textbooks, mobilised and produced a statement, documented in the *South African Historical Journal*.⁴² When Minister of Kader Asmal put history back on the curriculum agenda in 1999, historians were actively drawn into and involved in curriculum policy and creation processes. Asmal’s appointment of a History/Archaeology Committee, in which a new generation of professional historians played a critical role, set the agenda for curriculum rewriting. They essentially took on board the third ‘new model textbook’ approach that Bundy identifies and this became embodied in the reform of the curriculum between 2000 and 2002.

A number of textbooks are available for interpretation. What matters, however, as mentioned above, is not which textbooks exist; what matters is which ones are used and how. If textbooks are not used, then their discourses of race and xenophobia are neither here nor there. To explore this further, this paper distinguishes between those textbooks that have been officially distributed, semi-official, online resources and textbooks in use in Johannesburg schools with migrant populations.

Representations in official, departmentally-distributed textbooks

Textbooks of old are commonly said to have represented history and South Africa as belonging to Afrikaners who through a century of struggle and hardship against Boer and Brit managed to carve out a role for themselves. This history represented the supremacy of whites in the value given to whites and denigration of Africans. It celebrated narrow ethnic identities constructed around race, culture and language. The grand narrative of the apartheid textbooks was one of the forward and onward march of ‘white civilisation’. As two historians describe it:

For generations history teachers in South African classrooms have been forced to trot out Afrikaner Nationalist ideology, presented as the story of South Africa’s past. The story is familiar to us all – South African history is dominated by 1652 when Jan van Riebeeck landed at the Cape to build a refreshment station. It then proceeded inexorably through a litany of succeeding Cape governments, slogs through a few frontier wars and reaches a high point with that heroic epic – the

⁴¹ Bundy, ‘New Nation, New History?’, 92.

⁴² See R. Sieborger, ‘Reconceptualising South African history textbooks’, in *South African Historical Journal*, vol. 30 (1994), 98-108; R. Sieborger and J. Reid, ‘Textbooks and the School History Curriculum’, *South African Historical Journal*, vol. 33 (1995), 169-177; South African Historical Society, Statement on the Implications of Curriculum 2005 for History Teaching in the Schools, *South African Historical Journal*, vol. 38 (1998), 200-04.

Great Trek. Thence the story winds gently down through the Afrikaner republics, the Anglo-Boer War, Union, Pact, various gevaar (danger) elections and the inevitable Nationalist victory in 1948. Many pupils abandon the history classroom as fast as their legs will carry them at the first available exit point – Standard Seven.⁴³

But what do curriculum textbooks look like now? Which approach do they exemplify? New officially-distributed textbooks appear to be more directly aimed at replacing this narrative with another – one which situates South African identity within a broader, pan-African identity and values marked by inclusivity rather than exclusivity. In its more sophisticated versions, it lends itself towards cosmopolitan democratic interpretations; in its more simplistic versions, it veers towards the more nationalistic celebrations of great men, empires and traditions.

Two of the more sophisticated of such texts are the UNESCO *General History of Africa* Series⁴⁴ and the *Turning Points in History* series, a publication series produced by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. The Department of Education distributed both to all schools together with a package of maps, posters and a history of South Africa published by the HSRC, *Every Step of the Way*.⁴⁵ Together these represent the official approach to national citizenship. Officially, South African identity is part of a broader African identity and in principle at least is anti-xenophobic in its reference to the common history of man and the subsuming of South African history within a broader African history. Although the content given to 'African' can in some contexts be reduced to the biological, this does not appear to be the spirit and intent of either series.

The UNESCO *General History of Africa* series was a thirty year undertaking, representing the high point of African nationalism. Written by mainly African historians writing from an Africanist perspective, the series celebrates Africa's political, social and cultural history and achievements from its prehistory and ancient civilizations to its colonial control and domination followed by national liberation and processes of state formation and nation-building. The eight volumes tracing this history give expression to a pan-African vision of a common history and wish for a united future. Although not a single South Africa-based historian participated in this venture, the South African Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, distributed it to all South African schools in 2004 together with a guide for teachers on how it could be used as part of the new curriculum

⁴³ C. Kros and S. Greybe (1997) *The Rainbow Nation versus Healing Old Wounds – an investigation into Teacher and Pupil Attitudes to Standard three History.* The History Curriculum Research Project, Cambridge University Press and the History Workshop, University of the Witwatersrand, Report, No. 2. (University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1997), 6 as cited by Lydia Samarbaksh-Liberge, op cit. 2002, 154.

⁴⁴ UNESCO, *General History of Africa, Vols. I – VIII* (Paris, 1993 and 1999) and J. Bam and C. Dyer (Eds) *Educator's Guide to the UNESCO General History of Africa for the FET Curriculum* (Pretoria, 2004) and Y. Seleti (Ed) *Africa since 1990* (Pretoria, 2004); M. Morris, *Every Step of the Way* (Cape Town, 2004).

⁴⁵ Institute for Justice and Reconciliation and DoE, *Every Step of the Way* (Pretoria, 2004). *Turning Points in History Books 1-6* (Johannesburg). According to an Address by the Deputy Minister of Education, Mr Enver Surty, MP, at the launch of the series, *Turning Points in History*, Naspers, Cape Town, 29 March 2007, the Department undertook the dissemination of 70,000 copies of the first edition to 7,500 schools nationwide, 4.

and a volume that addresses political and cultural issues in Africa since 1990. While the Educator's Guide urges its South African readers not to dismiss the series 'on the ground that they are outdated'⁴⁶, it appears that they have simply not been opened in the majority in schools.

Asmal's preface, reproduced in each of the series, associates South African citizenship with a broader pan-African one, while inflecting it with self-consciously South African identity concerns: '... our future, as Luthuli insisted, must be seen as an African future.... As we recover our African history, we all have the opportunity to work out our own understanding of what it means to be African.'⁴⁷ The notion of citizenship and identity here is open and universal, rather than narrowly nationalist. As such, it is capable of being given both cosmopolitan and chauvinistic content. Lofty though the ideals and broad though the history, it may be significant that none of the teachers I interviewed for this study had heard of the series. 'It may have been dumped in the lobby, where they put all donations for teachers to look through,' said one of the history teachers I interviewed, 'but I didn't see it.'

The *Turning Points* series is aimed at Grade 10-12 learners and covers important turning points in South African history. It is now being updated. The *Turning Points* series was commissioned by the second Minister of Education who was responsible for revision of the curriculum and distributed to more than 7,000 schools and teachers who were trained in its use. Committed to nation-building and the vision of building a broad, inclusive South African identity through its curriculum and history, the *Turning Points* series is an example of the new narrative constructed for the new South African citizen by its professional new generation historians. Its key narrative elements are that South Africa's history is a proud and ancient one, of a piece with world history and African history that culminates in the miracle of a negotiated transition, the Constitution and unfinished business: it constructs South Africans as strugglers for freedom and justice, negotiators and reconcilers. This is a history that gives a sense of dignity and pride to South Africans, a sense of nationhood through a common history resulting in a triumphant present. The key 'turning points' constructing a new narrative from the old white one emphasises the longuee duree of African civilization in Africa and global trade; depredations of slavery and colonialism; processes of African state formation, the mineral revolution and imperialism; industrialization and the rise of African and Afrikaner nationalism; and resistance to apartheid, culminating in the transition. This is a story in part of oppression and the long arduous path taken towards 'the fruits of freedom' - a democratic political framework, reconciliation and nationbuilding, equity and social justice, economic transformation – and the unfinished business of the future: socio-economic and political transformation in which there is 'respect for the rule of law, confidence in the newly-created institutions and a credible leadership, (and) a viable human rights culture' (Book 6: 60) Crime and racism are identified, as are the 'biggest challenges' of 'poverty and inequality', education and HIV/AIDS.

⁴⁶ J. Bam and C. Dyer (Eds) *Educator's Guide to the UNESCO General History of Africa for the FET Curriculum* (Pretoria, 2004), xiii.

⁴⁷ UNESCO, *General History of Africa Series*, p. vii in each volume.

As in the UNESCO series, a Foreword by Kader Asmal explicitly links a new history to a South African identity: 'What makes us South Africans? Is it the land? Is it the sky? Is it our family, our roots, our heritage? Being South African is a question of identity, a matter of knowing who we are'. Citing Mbeki's 'I am an African' speech on the occasion of the adoption of the Constitution, he articulates a vision of a South African identity that embraces all South Africans 'from every conceivable background, this expansive vision of African identity defines an inclusive, diverse understanding of what it means to be South African' (4).

How does all this relate to xenophobia? On the one hand, the priority in these new official constructions seems to be on constructing nationhood through a shared history of diverse peoples; in the process, 'South African' is constructed in terms of 'Africanness' and 'inclusivity.' Recognition of Others and mediation of cultural differences are constructed as central to this identity. Although created in an earlier age, and when shorn of its racial exclusivism and unproblematised commitments to science, there are echoes here of the 'South Africanism' described by Dubow that was constructed in the early part of the twentieth century and consisted of 'a common internationalist-minded South African identity that was consciously non-sectarian and capable of transcending imperial and nationalist extremes'.⁴⁸ However, the ambiguity of what or who an African is can lend such texts to either essentialising or universalizing interpretations. Historically and contemporaneously, Africanism has had both exclusive and inclusive tendencies; both are at work here too. In addition, the strong identity of South Africanness created here can by definition diminish Others who are not created in its image - the implication for foreign learners being that they should assimilate into this 'superior' democratic identity rather than have their own much more difficult and conflictual histories and realities recognized as valid. The main challenge for both these series is that they do not cover the whole curriculum, and teachers teach to the matric exam, and so we need to look at what is being taught and used in schools.

South African History Online representations

An important, comprehensive resource for teachers that does cover the whole curriculum is the semi-official online www.sahistory.org.za which provides lessons on particular topics for particular grades for teachers. South African History Online (SAHO) describes itself as 'a non-partisan people's history project'. It was established in 1999 by the partner of a senior Department of Education official, 'as a not-for-profit organisation, to promote research; to popularise South African history and to address the biased way in which the history and cultural heritage of Black South Africans has been represented in our educational and heritage institutions.'⁴⁹ It is funded by the Ford Foundation, Department of Education, National Lottery, Bateman, and Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. According to the website manager, SA History Online receives approximately 16,000 hits per month. The classroom counter 'is not as accurate, but we get approximately 2,000 hits per month.'⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Saul Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge* (Oxford, 2006), p. 164.

⁴⁹ <http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/mainframe.htm> as at 2007/03/20

⁵⁰ Joni Light, SA History Online, personal email communication, 2007/04/02, 8.28 am.

The lessons are closely geared to the curriculum requirements, provide teacher resources, sources to be used in the classroom, a glossary of new words and exercises. An interesting example here is how democracy is treated. It shows how, in the process of translation from high principle to practice, curriculum is re-interpreted into possibly something narrower than the original intentions. General lessons on democracy, for example, are framed within a conceptualization of democracy as liberal, representative democracy. The lesson on Democracy in Grade 7 examines definitions and systems of democracy and different models of democracy, focusing on the American Revolution and American Democracy, the United Kingdom model, Botswana and South Africa.⁵¹ Democracy in South Africa is framed in terms of liberal democratic rights to vote, freedom of speech and justice. A lesson on The Move to Democracy in Grade 12 repeats the founding myth of South Africa's new democracy: 'The move to democracy while not smooth was nothing short of a miracle in ensuring a peaceful settlement to the country's problems.'⁵²

Official resources thus exist that encourage a new national South African identity in which citizenship is defined in terms of liberal democracy and in which the new narrative and founding myths of the democracy are defined along the lines of a broader 'South Africanism' which has deep historical roots.⁵³

School textbook selection processes and representations in teacher selections and use

There is both an official and an unofficial process of school selection and teacher use. Schools select textbooks from provincial lists, but teachers may nonetheless draw on textbooks and resources to teach that they do not necessarily share with students. Students on the other hand may use textbooks or construct their own that are different from those of teachers.⁵⁴ This is an essentially decentralized process. But what actually happens in schools? I visited a number of schools to find out.

⁵¹ <http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/classroom/pages/projects/grade7/lesson4/lesson-fe...> as at 2007/03/20

⁵² <http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/classroom/pages/projects/grade12/lesson11/lesson-...> as at 2007/03/20

⁵³ See Saul Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge* (Oxford, 2006).

⁵⁴ In 2000, a Departmental Committee established to review Curriculum 2005 mounted a critique of the quality, availability and use of textbooks associated with the new curriculum. At the time two systems of textbook selection were in existence: an open list and an approved selection process. The Western Cape and Gauteng operated an open list, while the other provinces established screening committees to select a list from which teachers would then choose their textbooks. The latter system was often open to corruption. But in practice, in both systems, teachers selected books on the basis of word of mouth rather than what publishers or provinces promoted. Book selected in this way were not necessarily, in the view of teachers, the best available, but they selected them nonetheless. A mix of these systems still prevails, although provincial screening committees now exist in all provinces. There is a central, national state screening mechanism for textbooks for Grades 11 and 12. Books that are approved for these grades are placed on a list and schools may select from this list. For the other grades there is generally an 'open system' in the provinces, with varying levels of provincial screening. What this means is that there is potentially a large variety of textbooks in use in the system, although the 'word of mouth' process does mean that in history, for example, some texts may be more widely used in a district than others. The MacMillan *Looking into the Past* and Oxford University Press *Social Sciences* texts, for example, are widely but unevenly used. The province, Limpopo, bought 17 600 copies of the Grade 10 *Looking into the Past Learner's Book* and 13 300 of the Grade 11 *Learner's Book*. Far fewer were sold in the Western Cape, although 3200 of the one

In summary, it seems that teachers in senior grades are not using the officially distributed texts, and those in junior grades are using a diversity of textbooks that are extremely variable in quality. Although these textbooks and the notes that teachers distribute all, in one way or another, include the new dominant narrative, as well as the emphasis on critical source interpretation, chronological development is poor, information is often presented in a child-like manner especially at the primary grades, and the information that is provided is often very limited. Exposure is not deep enough and stereotypes are often dealt with simplistically. If there is only superficial understanding of key international and national historical developments, what is the impact on what is internalized imaginatively? This analysis is illustrated with specific cases below.

A study of history textbooks in use in secondary school Grades 10-12 in a Hillbrow school showed that history teachers at senior level were not using textbooks, but preparing their own notes on the basis of textbooks with which they were familiar. The history teacher for a secondary school in Hillbrow, in inner-city Johannesburg for the senior grades, had never seen or heard of the departmentally-distributed textbooks and did not make use of South African History Online. He said that the school did not use textbooks; these were being withheld at the instruction of the principal. The reason for this was partly because the school was stretched for resources. He was frank that his teaching was mainly 'talk and chalk'. He found current textbooks 'too shallow and limited'; he himself relied on an old Zimbabwean textbook for Grade 10 and an old South African grade 12 textbook for Grade 11. He used these to produce photocopies for the learners; each child received one of these which were supplemented by his own teaching talk in class. He showed me student notebooks. These consisted of lessons divided into a photocopy stuck onto the page followed by notes.⁵⁵

This was not unusual. Grade 11 pupils in a leafy suburb were also not using textbooks. Here the teacher said that School Governing Body had 'withheld' textbooks because any one textbook did not provide enough information and so teachers were required to draw information from a wide range of books and make notes. The teacher herself did not consider existing textbooks to be comprehensive enough, and so she prepared notes and gave these to the class. Her lessons, which students enjoyed, consisted of the teacher's introduction to the theme, handing out of notes, students' reading of the notes, discussion of issues arising and final recapitulation on an overhead projector.⁵⁶ The teacher used pictures and cartoons from the period, used the BBC History Channel, and enriched her teaching by drawing on her own knowledge and experience of many of the places which she taught. 'I would say she is a qualified teacher,' said my interviewee.

A Grade 11 teacher in Fordsburg⁵⁷ made the same points: she considered texts distributed by the department during training on the new curriculum as 'superficial,' and made and

and 1 900 of the other indicated some spread. Most of its books were distributed in the rural provinces of Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Eastern Cape.

⁵⁵ Interview with senior history teacher, History teacher, Hillbrow, 19/03/2007.

⁵⁶ Interview with pupil in Greenside, 19/03/2007.

⁵⁷ Telephonic interview with author, 24th March 2007.

distributed her own notes and worksheets. The school, she said, had not invested in new textbooks because of curriculum uncertainty, and she too had never heard of the UNESCO or Turning Points series. She used a number of textbooks to construct her notes, but mainly *Moments in History*.

The school in Hillbrow used the Oxford University Press *Successful Social Sciences* series in Grade 8. Chronology is a problem here, but the dominant narrative in its sophisticated version is intact. Apart from the peculiarity of treating colonialism AFTER resistance to colonialism, and the paucity of dates, the text has an engaging mix of content knowledge, activities focused on source analysis, historical photographs and cartoons, *Did you Know?* Boxes talking heads' discussion points and assignments based on sources. In the chapter on the Industrial Revolution in South Africa, the text notes that migrant workers came from 'all over Southern Africa to find work',⁵⁸ and includes a poem by Mozambican miner, Gouveia de Lemos, as a source for discussion.⁵⁹ The arrival of indentured labour, role of trade unions, resistance to colonialism, the effect of the South African War on peoples' lives (black and white), the role of subsequent historical interpretations, the links between the industrial revolution and colonial expansion, are all dealt with. Significantly, Zimbabwean resistance to colonialism is included. The chapter on WWI deals with the causes of the war, nature of trench war, impact on women, and on South Africa. The textbook situates South Africa at the centre of all major international and continental developments and examines the implications of these for South Africa. The Teacher's Book provides hints and tips on how to teach the class and assess it. These are, indeed, 'intellectually plausible accounts of the nation's triumph.'⁶⁰

History textbooks in use in the primary school studied were more remarkable for the limited and often superficial information they provided, as well as simplistic approach to stereotypes. This seemed to be linked to an implicit assumption amongst textbook writers that learner-centred and activity-based education literally required teaching learners like children. Or, as a university-based teacher educator suggested, textbook writers write to a constructed image of their audience as barely literate; attempting to write in a popular vein to meet the needs of this population results in a child-like text. The teacher I visited in the school in Rosettenville was using a book she had found when she arrived: *Shuter's Social Sciences Grade 6*.⁶¹ She said this was one of many that she used, and the school had several in the library, but it was good that learners used one only.⁶² There was no shortage of these textbooks, which were kept in the classroom, and she happily let me leave the school with a copy, with only a promise to return it the next day. *Shuter's Grade 6 Learner's Book* consists of 140 pages, 60 of which are devoted to history. Out of 10 units, only 4 are history units: on ancient kingdoms, finding new lands, finding out about the history of medicine and democracy in South Africa. The units attempt to convey information as well as enable skills development and values formation through,

⁵⁸ J. Bottaro, P. Visser, L. Dilley and S. Cohen, *Oxford Successful Social Sciences Learner's Book Grade 8*. (Cape Town, 2006).

⁵⁹ Bottaro et al, 'Oxford Successful Social Sciences', 111.

⁶⁰ Foner, *Who Owns History?*

⁶¹ D. Dalton, T. Middlebrook, N. Nkosi, G. Prinsloo, Di Smith, *Shuters Social Sciences: Grade 6 Learner's Book* (Pietermaritzburg, Cape Town & Randburg, 2006).

⁶² Interview with Grade 6 Social Sciences teacher, Rosettenville, 23 March 2007.

for example, discussion of racial stereotypes relating to Africa's ancient past. But they lend themselves to teachers teaching and communicating small chunks of information and thus losing a sense of the bigger picture.

Shuter's Social Sciences tells a story of historical encounters between Europe and Africa as one between predatory and prejudiced Europeans and passive Africans. The Unit on Ancient Kingdoms introduces learners to Great Zimbabwe (called Great Zimbabwe Ruins) and a debate about who built it followed by evidence that Africans did; Thylamela and Mapungubwe. Pupils are encouraged to compare the kingdoms. Early explorers include European and Chinese exploration, historical map work, imaginative exercises, information about explorers and navigation instruments, the nature of ships and first encounters between Europeans and the KhoiKhoi. The text provides an activity-play in which learners take the parts of KhoiKhoi and Europeans, remembering that language was not shared. Despite such innovative methods, what is striking about this Grade 6 Learner's Book is the literally limited exposure to history: much fewer pages are devoted to history than geography and the historical knowledge dealt with is accordingly also limited in scope.

Another book in use is *Grade 5: My Clever Social Sciences through Issues: Learner's Book*.⁶³ There is a better balance of history and geography, there is more information, the text is less child-like but still full of activities and assignments and the main focus is on early civilizations in the Middle East, Africa and Europe, Asia and the Americas. It begins with early hunter-gatherers and farmers in South Africa. Thus from the very early grades the earlier apartheid fiction that there were no black people on the land until whites came is effectively put to rest. The new narratives is there, almost repetitively so in textbooks from primary to secondary grades. How teachers teach them and how these narratives intersect with their classroom practices in relation to migrated youth is the next key question to examine alongside the way in which new inclusions may create new exclusions.

In conclusion, it is clear that the 'new model history textbook,' linked to a compromise-history curriculum, is light years away from its predecessors. Although it literally includes much that has been called for by the new historians for several decades, there is much more that remains to be done for history textbooks to be a good classroom resource. History textbooks have both anti-xenophobic and nation-building content. They promote a broader South African identity which has an internationalist content. But their use in classrooms raises further questions about how meaningful this content and discourse is in the context of the piecemeal and fragmented nature of the way in which textbooks provide information. On the one hand, history needs more time in the curriculum than it currently has; and textbook writers and curriculum policy makers need to provide for this. On the other, the challenge of coherence, content and progression outlined in the Curriculum 2005 Review Committee Report of 2000 has not been fully realized. And whether new history textbook writers are all equally linked to new debates in the academy about the discipline is open to question.

⁶³ JW de Klerk, G Mare and KM van Niekerk, 2004. *Grade 5 My Clever Social Sciences through Issues: learner's Book for the Revised National Curriculum Statement* (RNCS) (Pretoria, 2004).

Conclusion

This paper proceeded from the assumption that a sense of diversity is important to cosmopolitan citizenship and that history, as the prime subject constructing the nation, has historically and will probably continue to participate in inculcating in young people either broader, more complex forms of citizenship, or narrower nationalisms and xenophobia. Increasing migration and the presence of non-South African born children in schools raises questions about forms of citizenship being promoted in schools and textbooks. The paper argues that constructions of citizenship in texts need to be understood in contexts, and that contexts, experiences, meaning-making and official constructions of citizenship are probably contradictory. The sense that teachers make of textbooks and how they use them in classrooms is vitally important.

An examination of the curriculum showed that anti-xenophobic discourses were present at its making and found expression in the history curriculum. Investigation of history textbooks distributed but not apparently used in schools showed that these discourses promoted by historians in the 1990s have by and large taken textbook-form, but are open to different uses. Textbooks in use both represent 'a plausible account of the nation's triumph,' in Eric Foner's words, and promote critical thinking. New narratives celebrate the emergence of the new nation. 'South Africans' are seen as possessed of singular qualities that include internationalism, diversity and reconciliation. Such conceptions are deeply rooted in historical constructions that have both exclusivist and inclusivist dimensions and continue to do so, but in different ways from before. But the textbooks are generally chronologically weak, often superficial, and extremely information-poor. How new debates in the academy are to be filtered through to textbook writers in a context where textbook selection and use is so variable and dependent on official processes from which historians appear to be once again more removed, is a moot point.

From the point of view of whether textbooks available challenge the xenophobia prevalent in the society, it is clear that they have the capability to do so, but whether they do or not depends crucially on what sense teachers make of them, the extent to which these issues are dealt with consciously across the curriculum, and the extent to which additional materials are used to support such anti-xenophobic messages. About this, we still know very little.