THE NATURE OF MULTICULTURALISM WITHIN THE CIVICS TEXTBOOKS OF SRI LANKA

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Introduction to Multiculturalism in Sri Lanka

Multiculturalism is commonly understood as the cohabitation of people with multiple or diverse identities in a single nation state (Kymlicka, 1995, 2012). This article explains the nature of the multiculturalism that is portrayed in civics education textbooks in Sri Lanka, texts which were implemented during the 30-year civil war in an attempt to improve social cohesion in the future.

While in Western liberal democracies there are several arguments concerning approaches to multiculturalism, the assimilation of immigrant minority groups, or the prioritisation of indigenous rights and tolerance of the needs of immigrant minorities (including the right to self-determination and political dissent), the theoretical understanding of multiculturalism in Sri Lanka is different. For example, Western democratic nations that were created through colonising native peoples, such as Canada, Australia, the US, and New Zealand, operate a multicultural policy (with varying degrees of success) that works towards mitigating social and educational inequalities amongst native peoples (Spolskya, 1989; Lourie, 2011). Western liberal democracies sometimes implement a multicultural policy in response to a growing number of diverse citizens who have immigrated (Kymlicka, 1995; Banks, 1999, 2008). In contrast, Sri Lanka has always been comprised of multiple cultures dating back to (and from) 500 BC; therefore, it does not have an official multicultural policy similar to Western liberal democracies. This paper investigates the dominant understanding of multiculturalism in Sri Lanka as portrayed through the education system by analysing the civics education textbooks printed during the civil war between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

The population of Sri Lanka is currently over 20 million and is 75% Sinhalese and over 76% Buddhist, followed by 11% Tamil, 9% Muslim, and 5% Eurasian or other (Government of Sri Lanka, 2012). Sri Lanka has two national languages: Sinhalese and Tamil, while English is used as a compulsory link language (Silva & Hettige, 2010; Goodhand, Klem, & Korf, 2009; Orjuela, 2003). The understanding of the right to self-determination is a point of difference between the dominant understanding of multiculturalism and the type of multiculturalism that is promoted in Sri Lanka. For example, Sri Lankan academic Wickramasinghe (2006) promotes national assimilation by stating:

> if one accepts that all identities are forms of identification and that a social agent must be conceived not as a unitary subject but as the articulation of an ensemble of subject positions, the formation of ethnic enclaves is troubling. (p. 68)

While Wickramasinghe articulates a valid point that social agents do not represent all the people of a particular identity, Sri Lanka has failed to negotiate peacefully the political difference and dissent associated with historic identity-based grievances of minorities, and this failure plays a significant role in the formation of separatism within these enclaves (Höglund & Svensson, 2008; Höglund & Svensson, 2009).

The 30-year civil war in Sri Lanka can be attributed to the colonial British divide-and-rule policies that segregated Tamil, Muslim, and Sinhala people according to race and social class (Silva & Hettige, 2010). While the separatist policies offered incentives for the elite sector of society (who were granted education in the English medium and given social incentives to convert to Christianity), they linguistically and vocationally disenfranchised the working-class Sinhala Buddhist majority. Decolonisation followed a revival of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism, and in 1956 the "Sinhala Only Bill" pronounced Sinhala as the official language of Sri Lanka and Buddhism as the official religion. While the exclusive, identity-based legislation was intended to protect the educational rights of Sinhala Buddhists, it retrospectively precluded the Sinhalese from learning Tamil as schools were linguistically segregated. Further, Muslim public schools were run separately in all geographic regions, and opportunities were limited for integrated learning with mainstream Tamil and Sinhala mediums (Colenso, 2005; Singh & Nissanka, 2014).

The segregated schooling system further perpetuated divisions along ethnic lines in Sri Lanka (Bastian, 1999; Colenso, 2005). Colenso states that from the data collected before 2005, less than 1% of schools were bilingual (teaching in both Sinhalese and Tamil), with few mixed extracurricular activities and teacher training was primarily segregated (2005, p. 423). Furthermore, Tamil public schools located in the (formerly LTTE occupied) North East region were deprived of resources, training, and incentives to integrate values of peace and morality into educational activities (Colenso, 2005). Segregated schooling systems are common in divided societies and play a role in further perpetuating societal divisions through exclusion (Niens, 2009). In Sri Lanka, this is confirmed by a survey conducted by the World Bank in 2004, where 18% of students claimed to have little or no opportunity to learn a second language, and this figure rises to 61% in the North-Eastern province (World Bank, 2005, p. 88). As the civil war ended in a military victory by the Government of Sri Lanka in May 2009, the question of how Sri Lankans treat and perceive multiculturalism remains most pertinent.

The historical relationship between the nationalist Sinhalese Buddhists and the minority groups of Tamils and Muslims is rooted in a double-minority complex (Goodhand, 2006),[1] that as the population diversifies in an age of globalisation, the

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1   The double-minority complex referred to by Goodhand (2006) is a situation where the majority identity Sinhala Buddhists (comprising over 70% of the population) feel like they are a global minority, even though Muslim and Tamil identities are a national minority.

Sinhalese are a threatened community. While defining a context-specific prescriptive approach to multiculturalism would be challenging, the normative premise of multiculturalism in Western liberal democracies is to respect and acknowledge the diverse cultures, faiths, and practices of various identities while working towards mitigating structural barriers such as systematic oppression, poverty, and inequality (May & Sleeter, 2010).

During the latter stages of the civil war, multicultural education through the civics education curriculum was one of the efforts directed towards social cohesion by the Government of Sri Lanka in collaboration with international development partners, such as DFID, UNICEF, and Save the Children amongst others (Ministry of Education, 2008; Save the Children, 2010). The education reforms included revising textbooks, eliminating bias, and including national minorities as legitimate citizens of Sri Lanka (Perera, Wijetunge, & Balasooriya, 2004; Colenso, 2005). According to international standards of bias detection, the textbooks were revised to ensure identity-based biases were identified and eliminated, while examples of Sinhalese and Tamil people working in collaboration were highlighted in the humanities (Perera *et al.*, 2004; Colenso, 2005). Eliminating bias in textbooks and promoting positive aspects of multiculturalism are pathways towards peace and reconciliation in ethnically divided, fragile states.

The Role of Education in Fragile States

A fragile state can be defined as an unstable country with weak state-building capacity, legitimacy issues, and democratic systems that hinder human and economic development. In these conditions, the resources required for successful nation-building are usurped by the country's participation in an inter-state or intra-state conflict, increasing peoples' dependence on emergency and humanitarian aid. Fragile states are often in different stages of vulnerability and can be subjected to several critical variables which may lead to a deterioration in the situation (causing a prolonged phase of crisis) or an improvement in it as a result of strengthening governance structures or political transition.

Tawil and Harley (2004) identify education's primary role in building nations, stating that as the relationship between violence and the construction of a state shifts, so does the relationship between schooling and violent conflict. Education paves the way for a specific national identity to be formed but can also reproduce existing social inequalities by avoiding voicing or discussing the prejudice which occurs at a structural or direct level. Therefore, the narratives related to multiculturalism within the civics curriculum are particularly important in the socialisation of students as most public schools (including Muslim schools) are linguistically segregated into Tamil or Sinhalese mediums (Weinstein, Freedman, & Hughson, 2007; Singh & Nissanka, 2014).

Evaluating the nature of multiculturalism within civics textbooks provides an indication of the dominant understanding of a nation's approach towards multiculturalism. Similar studies have been conducted, such as the multi-nation civics textbook analysis conducted by Quaynor (2012). This study revealed assimilation-oriented discourse in Cyprus, Argentina, Rwanda (post-genocide), China, South Africa,

and Mozambique, while ethnic nationalism and prejudice were prevalent in textbooks from Bosnia-Herzegovina and in history textbooks from North Korea, China, Romania, Serbia, Croatia, and Ukraine to name a few (Quaynor, 2012; Korostelina, 2012). An increasing number of empirical studies have been investigating the hidden curriculum taught in post-conflict nations and regions of protracted conflict, such as the Middle East (Bekerman & Horenczyk, 2004), Northern Ireland (Leonard, 2007; Bekerman, Zembylas, & McGlynn, 2009), and post-apartheid South Africa (Soudien, 1994).

The empirical education-based research conducted in Sri Lanka concludes that identity-based inequalities were most apparent during the civil war, especially as the war-torn North lacked the means to distribute textbooks or teaching resources in a timely way (Sørensen, 2008), disadvantaging Tamil students. While the importance of reforming education to integrate peace education and multicultural education in the curriculum was highlighted by Perera *et al.* (2004) and Lewin and Little (2011), Davis (2015) identified ideological barriers to implementing a bilingual policy (to bridge the linguistic segregation gap), with language and ethnic identity creating a barrier that emphasises inequalities.

While there is a significant lacuna in textbook research conducted in Sri Lanka, Nissan and Stirrat (1990) noted biases in post-independence history textbooks, while recent studies carried out by Gaul (2014) indicated that minority identities were hardly mentioned in the latest editions of history textbooks, implying that minorities played an insignificant role in the construction of Sri Lankan culture. According to Nissan and Stirrat (1990), post-independence textbooks suggest that stereotyping and bias, portraying the Tamil population as invaders, may have contributed to identity-based nationalistic policies and discrimination, which escalated during the 30-year civil war (Nissan & Stirrat, 1990; Davies, 2004).

The Theory and Practice of Multiculturalism in Citizenship Education

Citizenship education offers a way to cultivate the civic value of social cohesion and is often based upon the normative values of multicultural education. Multicultural education is one component of a country's multicultural policy, which in Western liberal democracies is sometimes introduced in response to a growing number of diverse citizens who have immigrated (Kymlicka, 1995; Banks, 1999, 2008). It is also used as a means of reconciling indigenous rights that were violated through colonialism (Spolskya, 1989; Lourie, 2011), or as a means of attaining social cohesion in violent societies with a history of identity-based conflict (Bekerman & Horenczyk, 2004).

Multicultural education is a process based on the liberal foundations of freedom, justice, and equality (Grant & Sleeter, 2006), comprising various approaches to education, including curriculum reform, teaching and learning reform, student achievement, prejudice reduction (Banks, 2008), and identity development (Bennett, 2001). As Banks (1999, 2008) and McGee Banks and Banks (1995) assert, the key role of multicultural education is to promote a national macro-culture while respecting

the values of the micro-cultures. However, at this point, there is a tension between the aims of various educational paradigms and the depth in which they choose to operate. The Sri Lankan Civics curriculum aims to maintain cultural unity by promoting a unified national culture (Ministry of Education, 2008), through a liberal approach to multiculturalism. However, if the unified national culture is oppressing minority groups within their national boundaries (or outside of its boundaries through the nation's international or domestic policies), this will inevitably cause conflict and tension between the oppressed and the oppressor.

While social and pedagogical equity is a common aim, multiculturalism is implemented in education to varying degrees and through various approaches. According to the literature on multicultural textbook research, multiculturalism can broadly be categorised into three types (the liberal, plural, and critical approaches), which often overlap. The liberal approach only focuses on the value of diversity, while pluralism explicitly values difference as a point of cultural capital and highlights examples of common goals (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998). The critical approach to multiculturalism fosters critical thinking and specifically emphasises social justice issues, including inequalities (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998; May, 2009; May & Sleeter, 2010).

While the liberal and plural approaches respect diversity and cultural differences, much like a "Heroes and Holidays" approach (McGee Banks & Banks, 1995), they fail to expose the unique challenges minorities face due to structural or societal discrimination. Therefore, the liberal and plural forms either overtly or covertly encourage a kind of assimilation of the dominant culture by maintaining the status quo of a nation. Critical multiculturalism, in contrast, exposes the injustices that occur through differentiated citizenship, and the injustice that most marginalised minorities face (May, 2009; Grant & Sleeter, 2006). However, implementing a critical approach to multiculturalism in education and in national multicultural policies will have several context-specific challenges, especially in post-conflict countries, where, like Sri Lanka, the government often has complete control of the national curriculum and the printing of textbooks.

Methodology

This article examines the question: which type of multiculturalism is found in the citizenship education textbooks of Sri Lanka? This research question raises further questions: what kind of civic values are promoted during a civil war, and what is not discussed? Further, what are the implications of promoting particular issues and silencing others?

Empirical research that recommends prescriptive models for evaluating multiculturalism in textbooks is relatively common (Pingel, 2009), but few studies provide instructions for conducting a systematic analysis. For this research, the nature of multiculturalism is analysed by utilising a mixed methods approach using content analysis.

Content analysis is a research technique used to make inferences by systematically identifying specified characteristics within the text (Krippendorff & Bock, 2009). Thematic categories were derived from a combination of objective coding (based on word frequencies) and the researcher's subjective interpretation of the meaning behind one or more words (a narrative analysis) that relate to a particular theme. A directive approach to content analysis is utilised, which is guided by coding the text according to the concepts listed in the Theoretical Framework below. The directive approach uses existing theory or prior research as a precedent before identifying key concepts, themes, or variables as coding categories (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999).

The theoretical framework below categorises various components of the liberal, plural, and critical approaches to multiculturalism that have been identified in prior educational research in multiculturalism conducted by Kincheloe and Steinberg (1998) and textbook research carried out by Pingel (2009) and Cho and Park (2016). Table 1 provides the indicator that has been adopted from prior research, with the corresponding methods and theoretical references. Table 1 also includes references to tables where the results are presented in an aggregated form.

The civics curriculum in Sri Lanka is taught from Grades 6 to 11 in Sinhalese, Tamil, and English. To be consistent with the methodology and to address issues surrounding accessibility and trilingual interpretation, the English versions of the textbooks (from Grade 6 to 11) were exclusively analysed.[2]

Findings: The Representation of Multiculturalism

This section answers the main research question and investigates the nature of the multiculturalism that is depicted in the textbooks by analysing the frequency of identity-based representations and the narratives that describe the multicultural history of Sri Lanka.

Table 2 presents the frequency of identity-based coding. Various identities and prominent individuals are coded according to ethnicity and gender, and the frequency with which they appear is recorded. The frequency of pictorial representations is shown on the left of the table, while the frequency of narrative representations is set out on the right by grade.

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2   The author recognises the limitation of analysing the English versions of the textbooks when the Sinhala and Tamil textbooks may contain native cultural nuances that the translated versions may not have articulated. The editions published in 2006/07 by the Sri Lankan Ministry of Education are used for this analysis.

Table 1. The theoretical framework, methods, and references.

The liberal approach to multiculturalism			
Indicator	*Methods*	*Theoretical reference*	*Table reference*
Recognises diverse identities	Frequency-based coding	Kincheloe & Steinberg (1998), Pingel (2009), Cho & Park (2016)	Table 2
Promotes diversity in a positive manner, avoiding bias	Directive narrative content analysis	Kincheloe & Steinberg (1998), Pingel (2009), Cho & Park (2016)	Table 3
Promotes equitable representation	Directive narrative content analysis	Kincheloe & Steinberg (1998) Pingel (2009), Cho & Park (2016)	Table 3
The plural approach to multiculturalism			
Indicator or qualifying factor	*Methods*	*Theoretical reference*	*Table reference*
Values diversity and promotes multicultural events in a positive light	Directive narrative content analysis	Kincheloe & Steinberg (1998)	Table 3
Highlights examples where diverse identities have worked together to reach a common goal	Directive narrative content analysis	Kincheloe & Steinberg (1998)	Table 3
Provides examples of interdependence of various identities at a national and global level	Directive narrative content analysis	Kincheloe & Steinberg (1998)	Table 3
The critical approach to multiculturalism			
Indicator or qualifying factor	*Methods*	*Theoretical reference*	*Table reference*
Raises awareness of discrimination and socio-cultural-, economic-, and gender-based inequalities at a national and an international level	Directive narrative content analysis	Kincheloe & Steinberg (1998), Pingel (2009), Cho & Park (2016)	Table 3
Fosters multiple perspectives on debatable topics	Directive narrative content analysis	Pingel (2009)	Table 3
Promotes a critical outlook on historical events and discusses their implications for today	Directive narrative content analysis	Pingel (2009)	Table 3

Table 2. Frequency of representation of various identities (Grades 6-11).

		Frequency of pictorial representations of identities	Prominent individuals by culture and gender (frequency of representation)					
		Frequency	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11
Tamil	Male	9		1	1	1		
	Female	9				1		
	Family							
Muslim	Male	3						
	Female	2						
	Family							
Burger[3]	Male	2				1		
	Female	1						
	Family							
Waddah[4]	Male	1						
	Female							
	Family							
Sinhala	Male	24		10	5	15	1	
	Female	18			1			
	Family	20						
Western	Male			7	9	26	15	
	Female			1		4		
	Family							
Undefined	Male	110		1	5	5		
	Female	39						
	Family	22						

Table 2 indicates a significant, disproportionate representation of male identities over female; however, occupationally, most males are depicted as farm workers, while there is a more balanced representation of females, ranging from doctors, teachers, and office workers to mothers. The pictorial representation of the Sinhala identity dominates the others, while the frequency of representation of the Tamil identity is slightly higher than that of the Muslim identity. The Grade 9 textbook discusses world leaders and prominent international personalities at great length, which is why the frequency of "Western male" is extraordinarily high.

The textbooks fail to portray prominent women of Tamil, Sinhala, and Muslim descent who have worked in the humanities, sciences, arts, and politics. Even with regard to the representation of international figures, the contribution of women is significantly under-represented.

While a "Heroes and Holidays" approach (Banks, 1999, 2008) is common in all the textbooks, recognising diversity through pictorial representations of Muslim, Tamil, and Sinhala citizens in traditional dress and ornamentation, only the Grade 10 textbook attempts to provide a historical explanation of multiculturalism in Sri Lanka. The book explains the history of multiculturalism in Sri Lanka mainly through the "infiltration" of Hinduism which began with the arrival of South Indian royalty and Islam through Arabian traders, while the discourse surrounding the introduction of Christianity is resentful due to its colonial past. The era of colonialism is described as a time of cultural dominance, where "the strong culture superimposes its characteristics by force on the subdued culture" (Educational Publications [Grade 10], 2007e, p. 51), especially concerning the introduction of Christianity. As Silva and Hettige (2010) claim, the arrival of Christianity with the missionaries is collectively remembered and represented as an act of force rather than voluntary conversion. However, multiculturalism is commonly depicted as "a spontaneous process, and it only enriches one culture by the influence of other cultures" (Educational Publications, 2007e, p. 52).

Table 3 (over page) classifies the narratives in the textbooks into the various approaches to multiculturalism – namely, the liberal approach that recognises diversity, the plural approach that highlights common goals within diverse populations (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998), and the critical approach to multiculturalism that focuses on aspects of social justice (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998; May & Sleeter, 2010).

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3   People with mixed British, Dutch, or Portuguese identity.

4   A native race which is now extinct as most converted to Buddhism and abandoned their original "nature-based" way of life.

Table 3. Chapter analysis of approaches to multiculturalism (Grades 6-11).[5]

	Approaches to multiculturalism (identity and diversity)		
Grade and age	Liberal	Plural	Critical
Grade 6 (ages 10-11)	2/7	1/7	0/7
Grade 7 (ages 11-12)	6/8	2/8	0/8
Grade 8 (ages 12-13)	2/9	1/9	1/9
Grade 9 (ages 13-14)	1/10	1/10	0/10
Grade 10 (ages 14-15)	2/5	0/5	1/5
Grade 11 (ages 15-16)	1/5	0/5	1/5

Table 3 indicates that every grade discusses or pictorially portrays the concepts of multiculturalism, identity, and diversity, predominantly in a liberal fashion. Liberalism focuses on assimilation into a common civic identity by promoting commonalities amongst diverse cultures. For example, as the Grade 10 textbook observes, "common ownership of different cultures could be seen in the dress and ornaments of the Sri Lankan people… in our national teams of various sports, players from all ethnic groups can be seen" (Educational Publications, 2007e, p. 57). Examples of pluralism are mostly limited to how Tamil and Sinhalese people collaborated to promote the independence movement in the era of decolonisation; for example, the Grade 7 textbook notes, "To gain independence for Sri Lanka, leaders of Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities worked in unison" (Educational Publications, 2007b, p. 146). Pluralism promotes common goals amongst diverse identities while failing to recognise social inequalities. The critical approach in multicultural education focuses on issues related to social justice, such as the racism, bias, and historical and present-day discrimination that minorities often face. The textbooks for Grades 8, 10, and 11 include outward examples (i.e. ones directed at the West) of a critical approach to multiculturalism, but they do not critique structural oppression within Sri Lanka. For example, the Grade 10 textbook says, "Today there are instances where American Presidents not only declare war without the ratification of the Congress but also conduct war" (Educational Publications, 2007e, p. 33). Reflective critique of the government or forms of authority is an important component in the critical school of thought (Apple, 1993; Freire, 2000; May & Sleeter, 2010). However, in the textbooks, this is not done in respect to domestic national or foreign policies.

While the textbooks highlight the unbiased premise of human rights, they fail to apply a critical approach to the local context and to critique local laws in relation to concepts of equality. For example, the Grade 11 textbook says that "no human should

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5   The unit of analysis is the total number of chapters devoted to a theme.

be harassed or degraded" and "no person should be discriminated [against for reasons of] sex, religion, politics or place of birth" (Educational Publications, 2007f, p. 83), yet it specifies Sinhalese, Tamil, and Muslim customary laws related to land, marriage, and divorce (developed during the period of Portuguese and British colonisation) which are still practiced today in traditional social circles. The gender-discriminatory nature of the Thesawalamiai (Tamil) and the Mohammedan (Muslim) law, which gives the husband sole authority to decide legal matters relating to property and divorce, is not mentioned in the text. In post-conflict nations, education plays a key role in forming and transmitting "collective identity, memory, and a sense of citizenship and shared identity" (Tawil & Harley, 2004, p. 6). Therefore, the messages conveyed through (or silenced in) education are particularly important in fragile states (Korostelina, 2012).

As depicted in Table 3 and unlike the geography and civics textbooks of the UK, the US, Hong Kong, and Australia, the Sri Lankan textbooks make no reference to racism, injustice, discrimination, and oppression. Yet these problems are widespread in Sri Lanka, especially in regard to employment (Little & Hettige, 2011), identity-based hate crimes (BBC, 2013), and the land rights of the displaced, who are mostly Tamil people and Muslims (Singh & Nissanka, 2014). Even as the textbooks were being printed during the civil war in 2006/07, these issues in part galvanised the violent conflict. The only instance where a text is critical of the current legal system in Sri Lanka is when one refers to the time it takes to administer a case, costing people excessive amounts of money, time, and energy. The text recognises that due to the inefficiency of the system, the "law gives rise to lawlessness," which contributes to the "escalation of various crimes and corrupt practices, denigration of equality and equity," and forces people to resort to "irregular ways of seeking judicial redress" (Educational Publications, 2007f, p. 35).

The consistency or inconsistency in elucidating or silencing particular issues or identities (across the curriculum) conveys a clear message about the voice that is heard. In this instance, in these textbooks published by the Government, the dominant voice is that of the State, and it conveys the civic values that the nation-state aims to propagate (Apple, 1993).

The Implications of Culturally Cohesive Values in a Multicultural Nation

As in other warring or post-conflict nations, promoting a unified national identity is a key means of creating social cohesion. The findings indicate that all the textbooks promote collectivist values, while the Grade 7 to 11 texts contain examples of patriotic discourse. For example, the Grade 7 textbook urges, "It is very important for the people who belong to different cultures to live united and peacefully…. It will assist one to understand a culture positively" (Educational Publications, 2007b, p. 145). Research conducted on Asian textbooks by Cho and Park (2016) and Chan (2006) similarly finds that collectivism in serving the nation is a dominant value in Asian civics curriculums.

Educational reforms aimed at improving inter-identity social cohesion during the civil war included examples of interdependence amongst Tamil and Sinhalese people. As well as highlighting what all cultures in Sri Lanka share (illustrated through the plural

approach to multiculturalism), textbooks included examples of Tamil and Sinhalese people working together to achieve common goals. In order to promote inter-identity cooperation, they often refer to respect for all religions and to interfaith activities which emphasise the commonalities between the Buddhist and Hindu cultures. For example, the Grade 8 textbook says, "we notice a union between Buddhism and Hinduism in association with Buddhist places of worship," and "Sinhalese Buddhists also believe in Hindu Gods and deities" (Educational Publications, 2007c, pp. 40, 41). The textbooks of Grades 8 to 10 provide the same historical example of Tamil and Sinhalese leaders working together during the independence struggle:

> The leaders who represented all the nationalities have contributed tremendously to gain independence to [*sic*] the Motherland. A large number of similar instances can be traced throughout our long history. This shows that we have acted as one nation in the past. In recent times, outstanding success could be achieved by groups of people, belonging to different cultures working together in our country. (Educational Publications, 2007e, p. 56)

The use of the patriotic terms "motherland" and "our long history" inculcates a maternal bond to the land of birth and a sense of civil duty collectively to serve the nation. There are four references to the Sri Lankan independence movement throughout the curriculum, and Sir Ponnanbalam Ramanathan is the only Tamil person individually mentioned in the context of prominent minorities who contributed to the independence movement.

The textbooks fail to critique the pitfalls and negative repercussions of the nationalistic policies of the post-independence period, such as the 1956 "Sinhala only policy" that vocationally and educationally marginalised countless Tamil people. While the history textbooks contain extensive details of the post-colonial period, the civics curriculum fails to mention State-sanctioned discrimination against the minority Tamil and Muslim populations, a failure which can be interpreted as an attempt to camouflage the realities of history (Korostelina 2012).

According to Kymlicka (2012), a country's approach to multiculturalism is dependent upon, amongst other things, the policies it employs to promote the constitutional or legislative affirmation of multiculturalism and to fund multicultural and bilingual education and the degree to which it supports affirmative action for disadvantaged groups. This latter point implies that a country recognises social inequality and accepts a level of responsibility towards alleviating the social conditions that perpetuate inequalities amongst the marginalised or disadvantaged. However, the textbooks do not provide a voice for the marginalised or disadvantaged but rather promote a collective identity that fosters a sense of national unity. According to David and Bar-Tal (2009), a collective identity is formed when people are aware they share a common identity (cognitively, emotionally, and motivationally), and a nation is given meaning by a common territory, culture, language, and collective memory and common societal beliefs. In post-war nations then, multicultural education must address the question: how are collective memories and dominant cultural understandings of the past being communicated in schools? Educational texts play a crucial role in presenting iconography and are symbolic expressions of nationality.

Conclusion

Education can be used as a tool to promote multicultural equality or to promote separatism through stereotyping and bias (Korostelina, 2012; Bush & Saltarelli, 2000), which may lead to conflict (Davies, 2004). Government or state approved textbooks are a political educational tool (Apple, 1993), which can be utilised for cultural socialisation through the education system (Heyneman & Todoric-Bebic, 2000; Apple, 1993). As national priorities change over time, so the civic values fostered in education are reformed to impart revised knowledge that is beneficial for the development of the nation-state. For example, the Rwandan government controlled how the genocide should be taught (Freedman, Weinstein, Murphy, & Longman, 2008; Quaynor, 2012), while researchers in South Africa and Mozambique emphasised the importance of national independence over peace-making (Quaynor, 2012). Similarly, the narratives in Sri Lankan textbooks changed from those taught in the post-colonial years to adapt to the new socio-political environment.

The findings indicate that the nature of multiculturalism evident in these textbooks is liberal to plural rather than a critical form that mentions historical and current social inequalities. To varying degrees, all the textbooks provide examples of goal inter-dependencies and similarities between various cultures, merging with the pluralist approach. While the discourse in the textbooks is respectful towards all religious and ethnic identities within Sri Lanka, these products of the Educational Publications Department contain a significant amount of patriotic discourse designed to instil in readers the primary mission of citizens: to serve the nation. The Grade 8 textbook, for example, states, "All ethnic groups of Sri Lanka are recognized as citizens of the Democratic Socialist Republic and they recognize their motherland as a unitary state. The national aim of all these groups is to work towards the advancement of their Motherland" (2007c, p. 40). By preserving their cultural traditions, students will develop the skills required in order to become proud citizens protecting their national identity as Sri Lankans (2007b, p. 135). They are instructed to respect authority: "To develop abilities: Respect and obey the clergy, parents, elders, and teachers. Listen to religious advice" (2007a, p. 3); "Show due respect when the National Flag is hoisted, and school or National Anthem is played" (2007b, p. 36).

The civic values promoted within a liberal democratic society, such as independence and freedom of expression and speech, are entirely different from the collectivist, nationalist civic values promoted in Sri Lanka and in East Asian curriculums in general (Cho & Park, 2016; Chan, 2006). Given Sri Lanka's post-conflict history, its current direction in advancing multicultural education is driven by a national need to develop a united, patriotic, collective national identity as Sri Lankans. In the long-run, however, a lack of reflexivity regarding historical and current societal injustices may be counter-productive to the aim of cultivating a united civic ethos.

The Grade 10 textbook alludes to the fact that conflicts occur in a multicultural society, particularly when a dominant culture oppresses minorities. However, it fails to apply this critical statement to concrete examples in Sri Lanka, avoiding any critical analysis of Sri Lankan society. While identity in Sri Lanka is officially determined in the census by gender, ethnicity, and religion, socio-economic differences, class, and

sometimes caste (in the villages) play a significant role in employment discrimination (Uyangoda, 2007; Sørensen, 2008; Singh & Nissanka, 2014). While the textbooks fail to engage the reader critically by providing examples of contested issues of multiculturalism during the civil war (the textbooks were printed in 2006/07), the Government's approach in limiting the discourse to a non-controversial, safe, liberal approach is a conventional practice in post-conflict nations to avoid exacerbating tensions (Quaynor, 2012). Further, empirical research conducted in Northern Ireland by McGlynn indicates that both teachers and students felt uncomfortable discussing "the troubles" (2007, 2009).

Developing a unified national identity (during a civil war or in a post-conflict state) does not mean that all identities are equal, especially when minority characters (as prominent individuals) are significantly under-represented. However, while the introduction of the civics curriculum as a means to bridge ethnic divides requires greater reflexive writing and equitable representation, the attempt is a positive step in this direction.

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