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Shifting lenses

Multiperspectivity and narratives of the Dutch past in secondary history education

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Chapter 7

Conclusion and Discussion

GENERAL REMARKS

In this thesis, I investigated the multiperspectivity and narratives of the Dutch past in secondary history education. Multiperspectivity is a key concept because of the inherent interpretative character of each historical representation. Multiple perspectives originate in choices regarding historical agency, geographical scale, and historical dimensions when constructing a historical narrative (Grever, 2020; Grever & Van Boxtel, 2014; Stradling, 2003). Perspectives are context-bound and change over time (Bergmann, 2000; Carretero et al., 2012; Grever & Adriaansen, 2019; Körber, 2018; Wansink et al., 2018).

The other key concept is narrative because it is through narrative that the past becomes history since there is no direct access to that past. In a narrative, the agency of actors is forged into a whole in a chronological context in which metaphors help to frame the plot. Previous research has indicated that in many countries, narratives of the national past tend to respond to a nationalistic master narrative (Carretero, 2011; Lopez et al., 2014; Van Alphen & Carretero, 2015; Van Havere et al., 2015; Wertsch, 2004). In these master narratives, there is little room for different or alternative perspectives. Thus far, little is known about the extent to which the narratives that are presented and constructed in the context of Dutch upper secondary history education contain multiple perspectives.

In the previous chapters, I investigated what kind of narratives about the Dutch past are presented in school textbooks used in upper secondary history education and to what extent these textbooks include multiple perspectives. Moreover, I analyzed what kind of perspectives teachers incorporated in their history lessons. I also looked at how students (in secondary education and after finishing secondary education) represented the past of the Netherlands. In these studies, the focus was on two important periods in Dutch history: the Dutch Revolt

and the Netherlands during WW II. The main research question of this thesis was: How and to what extent are multiple perspectives expressed in the narrative representations of the Dutch past in history textbooks, and by history teachers and students in upper secondary education?

In this concluding chapter I will present the overall conclusions after I have summarized the findings of the individual studies. The conclusions will be followed by a discussion of the theoretical implications, the limitations of the research and recommendations for future research. Finally, I will make remarks about possible practical consequences for history education, teacher training and history textbook writing.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

“SMALL COUNTRY, GREAT AMBITIONS.” PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS’ NARRATIVES AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT DUTCH HISTORY (CHAPTER 2)

Which narratives of the national past do students construct after finishing secondary education? Students who were freshmen enrolled in history teacher training were asked to write an essay about the main lines of Dutch history after 1500 AD. After analyzing the essays of the participants ($N = 26$), two features stood out in students’ narratives and possible underlying templates. First, students’ representations of the Dutch past seemed to emphasize the Dutch Revolt in the 16th century, the economic growth and prosperity in the 17th century, parliamentary democracy in the 19th century, the origins of the Dutch welfare state, and the German occupation of the Netherlands during WW II. In this respect, the students’ narratives are consistent with the views of historians who also consider these episodes central moments in Dutch history (see Jonker, 2006). However, a topic that historians also mentioned as a characteristic feature of Dutch history, the consultation culture as a result of the fight against the water, trade and religious plurality, was not an element in the essays of the students.

A second common feature of the students’ narratives was that most students did not tell a nationalistic story. A nationalistic tone was absent in most essays since students did, for example, not include national heroes and did not use the first-person plural “we.” The students,

however, volunteered positive episodes in Dutch history. Most students apparently did not consider topics wherein negative experiences are expressed and that are part of the curriculum and textbooks – for example, the Dutch role in the trans-Atlantic slave trade – significant enough to include them in their essays. There were only a few small parts in the essays that included minority groups, slavery, migration, and a more or less neutral stance toward the moral implications of WW II and the years of occupation and deportation.

Grever (2006) suggested the existence of a narrative template wherein “a small country [is] bravely fighting for its freedoms.” Although the students did not place much emphasis on fighting for freedom, the “greatness” of the Netherlands came to the fore in positively labelled episodes such as the Golden Age. The title that one of the students used to label his narrative, “Small country, great ambitions” may better fit students’ narratives than the template that Grever (2006) suggested.

NARRATIVES AND MULTIPERSPECTIVITY IN DUTCH SECONDARY SCHOOL HISTORY TEXTBOOKS (CHAPTER 3)

What are the distinguishing features of the narrative of the Dutch Revolt in secondary school history textbooks from the Netherlands and Flanders, and to what extent is multiperspectivity part of these narratives of the Dutch Revolt? Two Dutch textbooks were compared with each other and with two Flemish textbooks. Both Dutch textbooks presented a narrative of the Dutch Revolt in which the events and developments of the first ten years of the Revolt formed the emplotment of the narrative, which was strictly confined to the Low Countries. The two Flemish textbooks situated the narrative in a broader framework that surpassed the chronological boundaries of the Dutch Revolt. Between the Dutch textbooks, there was no difference in their general interpretation: the plots followed the same configuration and presented the conflict in terms of the successful “rise to independence” of the Netherlands, a configuration framed by an implicit, overarching metaphor of “rise, bloom, and decay” (Meinhardt, 1998). In contrast, the plots of the Flemish textbooks could be labeled stories of “loss and failure” as part of a broader narrative of the process of political independence.

The Dutch textbooks were characterized by a low level of

multiperspectivity. The Flemish textbooks, in contrast, contained elements that contributed to a more multiperspectival approach, for instance the socioeconomic dimension of the conflict that was highlighted next to the political dimension. Regarding historical agency, the Dutch textbooks presented the acts and motives of a small number of individuals or groups. The geographical scale was limited to the territory of the modern Dutch nation-state. In terms of plots, the Dutch textbooks concentrated on the political dimensions of the first ten years of the Revolt as an episode that irrevocably led to the birth of the Dutch Republic. The metaphorical language that was used supported and framed the narrative of the Dutch Revolt. Although framing expressions such as “revolt,” “revolution,” “war,” and “civil strife” were used in all four textbooks, in none of them were these concepts discussed as historiographical concepts that are both descriptive and interpretative in nature.

MULTIPERSPECTIVITY IN THE HISTORY CLASSROOM: THE ROLE OF NARRATIVE AND METAPHORS (CHAPTER 4)

To what extent were the narratives of the Netherlands during World War II presented in a multiperspectival way in the history classroom, and what were the features of metaphorical language in the perspectives of these narratives? To answer this question, a case study was conducted on two history lessons about the Netherlands during WW II of one teacher and her class of twenty-two havo students. The lessons, the textbook and other learning materials that were used were analyzed. Additionally, the students’ narratives that they produced in their final assignment were analyzed. The analysis of the textbook showed that the dominant narrative in the textbook was based on a strict moral dichotomy between “right” and “wrong.” The employment of the narratives in the texts could be characterized as representing the fate of rather passive Dutch citizens victimized by the occupying Germans. Words metaphorically related to warfare and persecution framed this narrative, with the overarching metaphor of occupation denoting the plot. The employment of the narrative was confined to the territory of the Netherlands, complicating contextualization and comparison of the developments in the Netherlands with developments elsewhere in Europe and overseas. In

summary, the texts presented a “closed” narrative that does not seem to reflect a high degree of multiperspectivity. In contrast, the teacher offered in her lessons several other perspectives. For example, she focused on the perspectives of children of collaborators and on those of descendants of German occupiers. However, the analysis of students’ work showed that the students gave little to no attention to the offered alternative perspectives in their narratives. The students reproduced the “closed” narrative, wherein they presented a perspective that accentuated Germans as occupiers and Dutch Jews and adult Dutch men as victims. The metaphor-related words used by students framed the narrative into a narrative between perpetrators and victims.

MULTIPERSPECTIVITY IN LESSON DESIGNS OF HISTORY TEACHERS (CHAPTER 5)

To what extent do teachers include multiple perspectives in their lesson designs based upon a text that includes multiple perspectives compared to a schoolbook history text containing fewer perspectives and what are considerations of teachers for the lessons they designed? Eighteen teachers were asked to make a lesson design based upon a provided text, either a text rich in different perspectives (text HP) or a text with few perspectives (text LP). The lesson designs were analyzed on aims, instruction, additional materials and learning activities and the level of multiperspectivity regarding agents, scales, dimensions, historiography and students’ perspectives. We also analyzed the teachers’ considerations on their lesson designs based upon an interview with each of them. The results showed that most teachers included different perspectives of historical agents. Furthermore, the results showed that the teachers who used the text HP designed lessons reflecting more multiperspectivity with respect to aims and instruction, and a higher level of multiperspectivity regarding dimensions, scale and historiography, than the teachers who used Text LP.

The second question regarded the considerations of teachers for their designed lessons. The findings underpinned the role of teachers’ beliefs about the objectives of history education (Wansink et al., 2016; Yilmaz, 2008). When participants were asked to justify their preference for the text with high or low multiperspectivity it appeared that two considerations played an important role in their preferences. First, the

interpretation of the exam program – either a focus on learning historical reasoning or acquiring a chronological overview of knowledge – seemed to influence the preference for one of the texts. The teachers who focused primarily on teaching historical thinking and reasoning preferred text HP and incorporated more perspectives in their lesson designs irrespective of the text that was made available to them. Second, the teachers considered the level and preconceptions of their students and common areas of conceptual difficulty for their students.

Overall, both texts elicited lesson designs that reflected a high level of multiperspectivity and lesson designs that reflected a low level of multiperspectivity, depending on teachers' beliefs about the objectives of history education.

THE INFLUENCE OF MULTIPERSPECTIVITY IN HISTORY TEXTS ON STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIONS OF A HISTORICAL EVENT (CHAPTER 6)

In this experimental study we investigated the degree of multiperspectivity in students' representations of the Dutch Revolt when students are engaged in text processing assignments based upon a history textbook text containing multiple perspectives (text HP) compared to that in students' representations when they are engaged in text processing assignments based upon a text that contained fewer perspectives (text LP). Students in 10th grade havo ($N = 104$) were randomly assigned within their class to a text with a high or low degree of multiperspectivity and received three text processing assignments: to underline important information in the text, to summarize the text and to make a poster. To test our hypothesis that the degree of multiperspectivity in students' representation of the Dutch Revolt would be higher in the condition with a text HP than in the condition with a text LP, students' products were analyzed on the degree of multiperspectivity with respect to actors, aspects of scale, dimensions and historiography.

With respect to actors, the students who used the text LP saw William of Orange more often as the main actor than students who used text HP. The latter more often presented Philip II as the main actor. Significant differences were found between the two conditions in aspects of scale, both in the underlined texts and in the summaries, but not in the posters. With respect to dimensions there were significant differences between

the two conditions for all three assignments. The students who used text HP included significantly more dimensions than did the students who used text LP, although in both conditions the political-military dimension dominated. Only a small group of students in the condition text HP incorporated historiographical elements in their assignments. References to historians mentioned in the text were mostly overlooked and their interpretations presented as fact.

The outcomes suggest that when students use history textbook texts that offer a high degree of multiperspectivity, these students are more inclined to incorporate more perspectives in their representations of the past.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

In this thesis, I sought an answer to the following question: How and to what extent are multiple perspectives expressed in the narrative representations of the Dutch past in history textbooks, and by history teachers and students in upper secondary education? First, I will discuss how narratives and multiperspectivity were presented in textbooks, next how teachers expressed multiperspectivity and third how students presented multiple perspectives in their representations of the Dutch past.

LENS ON TEXTBOOKS

From the analyses of the textbooks on the topics of the Dutch Revolt (chapter 3) and the Netherlands during WW II (chapter 4), the following three conclusions can be drawn. First, in these studies we found that the Dutch textbooks did not contain a substantial variety of perspectives on the level of actors, scale and dimensions, and presented a more conventional narrative of “the rise to independence” (Dutch Revolt) and of Dutch citizens victimized by the occupying Germans (WW II). The political dimension was dominant in the textbooks. The scale of the topics of the Dutch Revolt and the Netherlands during WW II was defined by the current geographical boundaries of the Netherlands. Agency was primarily restricted to a select company of white male

individuals in the representation of the Dutch Revolt, less so of the Netherlands during WW II wherein agency was more attributed to collectivities.

Second, the substantive concepts, metaphorical language and narrative time shaped the texts in such a way that they offered a rather simple and “closed” narrative representation of the past. Although the first-person plural was almost absent in the texts, the used language supported in other aspects a specific narrative template in which the agency of certain persons or collectivities was positively accentuated. These two outcomes narrowed down the possibilities to present other perspectives in support of a more “open” narrative. The “closed” narratives we found seem to resemble a master narrative with an emplotment of the narratives in terms of rise to (regained) independence. The drawback of such narratives is that multiperspectivity and therefore the interpretative character of history becomes strained.

Third, from the analyses it appeared that historiographical issues or possible alternative interpretations or plots were not brought into debate in the schoolbook texts. At most, these aspects were referred to indirectly, if at all. It is not made clear in the textbooks that there is an ongoing debate about the interpretation of these episodes in the Dutch past, in either the world of academic historians or in society. From this perspective, the textbooks hardly seemed to do justice to the complexity of the history of the Dutch Revolt and the history of the Netherlands during WW II. In none of the analyzed chapters was the author’s voice made explicit, which could indicate to students that the presented narrative is an interpretation of the past.

These findings are partly consistent with the findings of other studies on narratives in history textbooks. The Dutch history textbooks about Dutch history, similarly to textbooks in other countries (e.g., Spain, Greece and the USA), contained features of master narratives, emphasized the political dimension, focused on a narrow geographical scale and did not include historiographic discussions or the author’s voice (Carretero, 2011; Foster, 2006; Kasvikis, 2016). In these respects Dutch textbooks presented a “closed” narrative. However, we did not find patriotism and nationalism such as scholars have identified in some other countries. For example, Merry (2009) argued that most textbooks in the USA present a closed narrative that sustains an “uncritical patriotic” viewpoint. In this respect Dutch textbooks present a more open

narrative. The findings also add to recent research in the Netherlands. Huijgen et al. (2017), for example, analyzed the same textbooks that are analyzed in this thesis. They found that in general, the topics were presented from a European perspective. However, we found that in chapters that mainly focused on Dutch history, this European perspective was absent. This aspect might be related to Van der Vlies's (2019) finding that from the early nineties onwards, a "re-nationalization process" took place in the production of textbooks with the exception of some topics, such as colonialism and the Dutch role in the international slave trade that stayed open to the influence of academic history. Before this period, Van der Vlies argued that textbook narratives were more open to the input of social sciences and were situated in a European framework. With respect to the representation of the Holocaust in Dutch and German textbooks in the period 1960 – 2010, Van Berkel (2017) concluded that textbooks in the Netherlands present a narrative of perpetrators and victims. Our findings about textbooks that were published after 2010 confirmed his findings related to the narratives about the German occupation of the Netherlands. Both Van der Vlies and Van Berkel analyzed the accompanying workbooks next to the textbooks. They found that in some instances the presented narratives were critically questioned in the workbooks. Although workbooks were not analyzed in this thesis, we found that teachers added perspectives to the textbook texts in their lessons or lesson designs (chapters 4 and 5). Future studies regarding workbooks or teachers who add other (also contrasting) perspectives to those in the textbook would be worthwhile.

Our findings can also be viewed in light of the requirements formulated in the Dutch history examination program. Because positionality and history as interpretation are prominent in the examination program, one might expect that these aspects would stimulate the presence of multiperspectivity in history textbooks in terms of attention toward different interpretations in both the discipline of history and in society. Our findings show that this is not the case. A possible explanation could be that the emphasis on acquiring historical overview knowledge may have contributed to the perpetuation of the solidified narratives that were found. A critical discussion of the historical developments that are part of the ten era framework, by including multiple perspectives and interpretations does not seem to be primary goals of the text. Perhaps textbook authors give priority to

presenting a teachable frame of reference, as the final central exam also expects students to be able to link new examples to typical aspects of the ten eras. Another explanation could be that it is difficult to do justice to the complexity of historical phenomena, different interpretations and multiple perspectives in a relatively short text and to keep a narrative comprehensible and easy to follow for students. On the other hand our research showed that it is possible to write a text that contains more perspectives.

Another question is whether it is possible to compose a history text that is not based upon some sort of master narrative. Even if one focuses on multiple perspectives on the level of actors, dimensions and historical interpretations, there will always be a narrative in which emphasis is placed on certain aspects through the emplotment of the narrative (Grever, 2020). The latter in itself is not a problem, provided what choices have been made by the author is clear. Therefore, it is important to more explicitly include the author's voice in textbooks. More research is needed to explore what the features and effects would be of textbooks wherein the author's voice and multiperspectivity are more manifestly present and how such texts – in combination with learning activities – can support historical thinking and reasoning. For example, Paxton (2002) and Lee (2013) showed that the presence of explicit authors' voices had a positive influence on students' capacities in historical reasoning and problem solving. A promising finding of our research was, that teachers were able to design lessons using such a text, and that students were able to understand and summarize it.

LENS ON TEACHERS

In this section, the lens is turned on how multiple perspectives were mediated by teachers in terms of lessons and lesson designs as described in the studies in chapter 4 and 5. Both chapters showed that the positionality of individual historical actors was the most common form of perspectivity that teachers incorporated in their lessons and lesson designs. For example, the positionality of the high noblemen King Philip II and Prince William of Orange was discussed by most teachers with respect to their political incentives based upon their differing religious backgrounds. That teachers addressed this form of multiperspectivity

might have been related to the important place of understanding of positionality in the examination program. The study presented in chapter 4 showed that the teacher introduced, in addition to the perspectives of individual actors, the perspectives of collectivities such as Dutch collaborators, victims of the Holocaust, citizens on strike, and ordinary people who accommodated to the situation. In the lesson designs about the Dutch Revolt described in chapter 5, these other forms of agency such as the agency of collectivities or corporate bodies or the perspectives of individuals belonging to lower social strata were hardly included. For example, the introduction in the texts of study 4 of the personage of Catrijn van Leemput offered the possibility of teaching and thinking about the perspective of ordinary men and women in a period of civil strife. This opportunity, however, was disregarded in the lesson designs by most teachers. With respect to perspectives related to different dimensions and elements of scale, the teachers' mediated representations of the past mainly stayed within the political and military dimension and within the territorial boundaries of the nation state. Neither was historiographical debate a common feature of the lessons and lesson designs, although some of the teachers in the study presented in chapter 5 made the choice to incorporate such issues in their aims and instruction independent of the provided history text. With respect to students' perspectives, a minority of the teachers included activities in which students were asked to verbalize their perspective.

Our findings support previous research showing that teachers' beliefs about the objectives of history education play an important role with regard to including multiple perspectives and teaching thinking and reasoning about multiperspectivity (Wansink et al., 2016; Yilmaz, 2008). Teachers who believed that history education revolves around historical reasoning and interpretation of the past, explicitly taught multiperspectivity and historiographical issues. They did so irrespective of the text they were provided with (high or low in multiperspectivity). Most of these teachers added their own materials. For that matter, our findings also nuances the authoritative status of textbooks, as argued by Foster (2011), Stoddard (2010) and Wansink et al. (2016). The findings are more consistent with the results of the research of Girard et al. (2020) with secondary history teachers in the United States, which indicated that although curriculum standards play an important role in curriculum decisions of teachers, more than 50% of the participants

hardly relied in their decisions on the content of textbooks.

Overall, we found that most teachers presented a restricted degree of perspectives in their lessons and lesson designs. Teachers' beliefs seem to play an important role in incorporating multiperspectivity in their teaching.

LENS ON STUDENTS

In this section the lens is turned on three studies wherein students' representations of the Dutch past were analyzed, using essays (chapter 2), assignments (chapter 4) and the representations of a text read by the students (chapter 6). The narrative representations of both the students who finished secondary school (chapter 2) and the secondary school students in the studies described in chapters 4 and 6 generally did not show much multiperspectivity. The representations of the freshmen did not seem to fit into the characteristics of a nationalistic master narrative (Carretero, 2011), because a nationalistic tone, representations of national heroes and the use of the first-person plural "we" were absent. Some of the students paid attention to minority groups, the trans-Atlantic slave trade or migration. Nevertheless, most students' representations were restricted to only positive labeled episodes in the Dutch past, therefore reproducing a more "closed" narrative in which other perspectives are not discussed or remained underexposed.

The study in chapter 4 showed that 11th grade students' work about the Netherlands during WW II reflected a "closed" narrative with little room for different perspectives. Thus, they followed the texts that were offered to them and ignored alternative perspectives offered by the teacher.

Also students in chapter 6 followed the text offered to them. When this text did not offer multiple perspectives, then students' representations also contained few different perspectives. If the available text was rich in perspectivity, then students' representations showed more and different perspectives. In both conditions, in the representations of the students, the agency of individual actors was central and embedded in a political narrative. However, it was unclear whether students were conscious of the fact that they included multiple perspectives. Further research could address this issue.

It can thus be concluded that the narrative representations of the students did not show much multiperspectivity. Several reasons can be advanced to explain this lack. First, it might be related to how we measured. Both the freshmen (chapter 2) and the students who participated in the case study (chapter 4), were asked to write a letter to a student in another country in which they described the main lines of Dutch history after 1500 AD (chapter 2) or the Netherlands during WW II (chapter 4). They were not asked to make an analysis (e.g., to provide explanations). Further research should investigate the influence of the type of assignment on students' narrative representations and the inclusion of different perspectives. Second, our experimental study showed that students were inclined to present more perspectives if the text contained multiple perspectives. Freshmen (chapter 2) and students in 11th grade (chapter 4) may have used textbooks presenting rather closed narratives without much multiperspectivity. It is noteworthy, however, that the teacher in the case study (chapter 4) did offer students other perspectives but that the students did not include these perspectives in their representations. This omission raises the question of what is most influential on students' representations: the textbook, the teacher or other sources. Britt and Aglinskias (2002) showed that students are inclined to value the information in textbooks more than the information stemming from other historical sources. Further research needs to examine in more detail the links between the textbooks, teachers and other sources, and students' representations of the past. Third, the lack of multiperspectivity in students' narrative representations might be related to their epistemological beliefs. Stoel et al. (2017) found in their research about epistemological beliefs of Dutch students in upper secondary education, that these reflected objectivist ideas (e.g., "all history professors will probably give the same answer to questions about the past" and "historians will give roughly the same explanation for an event, if they study the same sources"). This relation implies that students need to be taught about the interpretative nature of historical knowledge and how narratives can be analyzed conform criteria of plausibility (Körber, 2016).

Overall, we sought to provide an answer to the following question: How and to what extent are multiple perspectives expressed in the narrative

representations of the Dutch past in history textbooks, and by history teachers and students in upper secondary education? We found that the textbooks contained few different perspectives, mostly on the level of actors. Second, we found that most teachers presented a restricted degree of perspectives in their lessons and lesson designs, but some teachers included multiple perspectives in their lessons based upon their beliefs of what history education is about. Third, most of the narrative representations of the students did not show much multiperspectivity, but if a text contained multiple perspectives students tended to include multiple perspectives in their representations.

DISCUSSION

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF MULTIPERSPECTIVITY

Multiperspectivity as a means to understand the interpretative character of narrative representations of the past has been described by scholars in various ways. First, multiple perspectives can be understood along the lines of how several kinds of perspectives are presented, such as agency, scale and historiographical dimensions (Grever, 2020; Grever & Van Boxtel, 2014; Stradling, 2003). With regard to historical agents, Bergman (2000) pointed out that multiperspectivity could be promoted if societal differences of the historical agents were considered, such as their socioeconomic, religious, and ethnic backgrounds and age and gender. Multiperspectivity can also be expressed by introducing different perspectives of scale such as a national, local or transnational perspective. Another element for understanding multiperspectivity originated in how diverse dimensions of historiography were represented (e.g., political, social, economic, cultural, military, and religious history) (Grever, 2020; Grever & Van Boxtel, 2014; Stradling, 2003). The abovementioned elements that contribute to the inclusion of multiperspectivity, take shape so to speak “horizontally” in the same time layer of the past (Grever, 2020). In itself, this conceptualization is dynamic, as the focus on different social strata, gender or religion not only develops over time but also is bound in place.

Second, whereas several kinds of perspectives could be present in a

narrative, some researchers have pointed out that these perspectives themselves are bound in time (Körber, 2018; Wansink, 2017). This aspect is a more “vertical” conceptualization with different perspectives through time from past to present. Wansink (2017) distinguished three temporal layers that defined forms of perspectivity – perspectives stemming from “(1) subjects positioned ‘in the past’ (the time of the event, phenomenon or figure); (2) subjects positioned ‘between past and present’; and (3) subjects positioned ‘in the present’” (Wansink, 2017, p.110). In this temporal-layered distinction of perspectives, historiography itself is historicized and placed, as it were, between past and present. Wansink (2017) argued that this middle layer brought attention to historiography and the role of historians as a means of understanding history as an interpretation of the past. However, analyzing the representations of the past with different categories, made us more aware of the dynamic interaction between these vertical and horizontal types of multiperspectivity. After all, a particular era or historical development can be interpreted using different dimensions, metaphors and plots, but current questions and issues in society and history education also determine which historiography and which past is under consideration. In this thesis the emphasis was on analyzing the “horizontal” mode of multiperspectivity. The “vertical” mode was addressed in the analysis of the presence of historiographical perspectives. We found few explicit references to historiographical perspectives nor did we find examples of interpretations by historians that changed over time. In future operationalizations of the complex construct of multiperspectivity, it might be helpful to combine the “vertical” and “horizontal” modes.

Both modes of thinking about multiperspectivity could play a more prominent role in models of historical thinking and reasoning. For that matter, multiperspectivity is, for example, only implicitly part of the model of Van Boxtel and Van Drie (2018), which focused on historical reasoning and less on historical narrative. The model identifies resources whereupon students construct their reasoning, such as content knowledge, understanding of metahistorical concepts (cause and consequence, (dis)continuity, positionality), epistemological beliefs, and historical interest. It is argued that students’ reasoning is influenced by both historical representations from historians and mediators of public history. Multiperspectivity might be integrated in the conceptualization of historical reasoning components. For some components this is already

the case such as component of asking historical questions. These questions are also subject to choice and perspective. Another component of historical reasoning is providing arguments pro and contra for claims about, for example, causes and consequences and continuity and change, based upon (a selection of) historical sources that may provide different perspectives (Van Boxtel & Van Drie, 2018). These components create the possibility to formulate alternative perspectives and interpretations. In the description of the component “using historical facts, concepts and chronology”, however, more attention could be paid to how the selection of persons and events shape a particular perspective. In the model of Seixas and Morton (2012) one of their “big six” concepts of historical thinking is about historical perspectives. However, this concept is delimited by the understanding of historical agents in the past and their positionality. Each of the five other “big” concepts – historical significance, evidence, continuity and change, cause and consequence, and the ethical dimension – in the model of Seixas and Morton (2012) is amenable to selection and choice and therefore to perspectivity. However, the latter is not explicitly discussed with respect to the consequences for possible alternative historical interpretations. In Germany a conceptualization of historical thinking was developed based upon the works of the historian and philosopher Rüsen, wherein historical thinking was fundamentally defined as narrative competence (Trautwein et al., 2017). Crucial in this conceptualization is the ability to reconstruct and deconstruct any narrative representation of the past. This ability presupposes the existence of a variety of interpretations and accompanying perspectives. In this model, three levels of perspectivity were discerned comparable to the distinction in temporal layers by Wansink (2017). The first form is situated on the level of sources situated in the past and bound by the positionality of the author of the source. The second form of perspectivity stems from any historical representations about the past. The third form of perspectivity is situated in the perspectives of the current recipients. Multiple perspectives are constituted in each of these three levels. As with the other two models of historical thinking, less attention is given to multiperspectivity derived from different historical dimensions. Further research should consider how multiperspectivity can be more explicitly included in these models.

An important addition to existing research on multiperspectivity is that in the different studies we investigated both different types of

multiperspectivity and multiperspectivity in a variety of products, such as textbooks, lessons and students' products. Thus far, most researchers have focused on one aspect of multiperspectivity or one type of data, mainly textbooks or other educational materials. For example, Weiner (2014, 2018) investigated how race and the agency of immigrants are represented in Dutch history textbooks in primary education. Huijgen et al. (2017) focused on one aspect of scale, specifically the occurrence of the European perspective in textbooks. De Bruijn (2014) made multiperspectivity a key issue in his research on Dutch heritage educational resources. He addressed not only different forms of agency but also the presence of historiographical debate, and students' perspectives. In most research, textbook analyses are rarely related to the analysis of teachers' lessons, and the representations of the past made by students. Combining different resources (as we did in the case study in chapter 4) may do more justice to the multiple perspectives presented to students in the history classroom.

We also added the use of metaphorical language to our analysis (chapters 3 and 4) and showed how these metaphors contributed to closed narratives that exclude other perspectives. In earlier studies on multiperspectivity and textbooks, there was no explicit analysis of the use of metaphorical language.

LIMITATIONS

One of the restrictions of this thesis is that the research focuses primarily on one topic, the Dutch Revolt, and to a lesser extent on the Netherlands during WW II (chapter 4). It might be that in other topics more multiperspectivity would be present, for example with respect to other historical dimensions than the political dimension. It could also be that topics that are more contested and sensitive in public debate such as decolonization, slavery, the Holocaust, or the conflicts in the Middle East elicit more multiperspectivity. More work needs to be done to establish to what extent and how multiperspectivity is topic dependent.

Research is also needed to determine how these topics fit the broader historical narrative of the Dutch nation-state and whether these topics comply with the characteristics of a master narrative and accompanying metaphors. This research could also clarify to what extent the Dutch past

in history education is still imprisoned in a 19th century frame of thinking about the Dutch nation-state, as argued by Huistra (2019). In an interview, Grever (criticist of the Dutch canon) and Kennedy (chairperson of the revised Dutch canon in 2020) also sustained the argument of Huistra that the historical narrative of the Dutch nation-state is still framed by a 19th century way of thinking (Funnekotter, 2020).

The third limitation of this thesis is found in the focus on texts in history textbooks, which we defined as texts written by one or more authors and comprising chronologically presented events and developments, biographical vignettes and motivational opening stories. The images (paintings, geographic graphics and maps) that were part of the textbooks were not included in the analysis. Further research might explore what kind of non-text-based representations of the past and what kind of workbook materials could support students' thinking about multiperspectivity. Workbook materials or accompanying tasks and questions were also left out of the analyses, with the exception of the worksheet used by the students participating in the study described in chapter 4. An analysis of these materials could help determine whether they add perspectives to those presented in the textbooks which was done in this direction by Van der Vlies (2019) and Van Berkel (2017) in their respective research on textbooks and additional materials.

An additional limitation regards the reliability of the coding of multiperspectivity in the last two studies. Although we were able to establish sufficient interrater reliability, for some aspects, it was more difficult to reach agreement than for other aspects. This difficulty pertained particularly to the perspectives on the level of historical agents. For example, with respect to the agency of historical actors, we coded which different actors are brought up as actors. However, this approach raised the question of which different perspectives on a given event those actors contributed. The agency of the actor was included when the actor was the subject of the sentence, or the (in)direct object. The sheer mentioning of the name of a historical agent however, does not automatically contribute to the perspectives in the text.

The last limitation is found in the background of the students. In this thesis, we did not analyze the influence of their respective backgrounds on what narratives they construed about the Dutch past. After all, there is reason to assume that such influence could exist. From research in

Canada and the USA, it is known that the ethnic background of students plays a role in how they attribute significance to agency and developments in national histories (Epstein, 1998; Peck, 2010). From other research, gender differences clearly have an impact on what boys and girls find relevant in history (Grever et al., 2008). To make the results more robust and relevant with respect to the background of students, further research is needed on the diversity of narratives of the national past that might be constructed in a more ethnically heterogeneous and gender-balanced group of students. It is therefore important to investigate the extent to which and how teachers can explicitly discuss different perspectives and allow students to present their own perspectives. We only focused on this form of multiperspectivity in the study on teachers' lesson designs (chapter 5), where we analyzed whether teachers included questions about their students' perspectives and interpretations.

IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

Our research has several implications for educational practice. Authors of Dutch history textbooks in secondary education could play a major role in this by offering rich representations of the past that do justice to different kinds of agency, experiences, and interpretations that stimulate thinking about multiple perspectives. First, authors could make the interpretational nature of historical narratives more visible by incorporating multiple perspectives on the level of historical agents, scale and dimensions. Second, textbook authors should take note of and process the most up-to-date historiography on the subject they are writing about. For example, with respect to the Dutch Revolt, it would be useful to take Pollmann's article (2009) as a starting point. In this article she gives an overview of the historiographical state of affairs about the Dutch Revolt. The template advocated by Brusse and Mijnhardt (2011) might also be a source of inspiration. In this template a balance is sought between "city and countryside." Alternatively, if the developments in the Low Countries in the 16th century were embedded more in the context of changing views on religion and politics in Europe, then the narrative of the Dutch Revolt would become less unique and more open to alternative narratives (Janssen, 2014; Te Velde, 2010; Woltjer, 2011). Third,

textbook authors could systematically introduce historians as spokespersons and historiographical issues in the main text to emphasize the interpretational character of these texts, as Lee (2013) already suggested. Fourth, to date, Dutch history textbooks are produced by rather anonymous collectivities of authors. Nevertheless, individual authors are responsible for the texts in the diverse chapters. It would be a small but helpful step if they would make themselves more visible as authors of these specific texts (Paxton, 2002) – for example, just by starting to introduce themselves by name at the beginning of a new chapter. Fifth, in worksheets and other additional materials in assignments and source materials historiographic issues related to the topic can be systematically discussed.

Furthermore, multiperspectivity and recognizing particular perspectives could be strengthened when textbook authors and teachers become more aware of the metaphorical language they use and how this language frames the interpretations given, accentuates some perspectives or weakens others. In the classroom, this awareness could be increased by discussing conceptual metaphors. The best-known metaphor related to the topic of the Dutch Revolt is that of the Beeldenstorm or Iconoclasm of 1566. One could show in the classroom that this metaphor, on the one hand, clarifies aspects of a phenomenon but, on the other hand, also makes things less/not come to the fore. A teacher could let students explore the boundaries of a concept by varying the metaphor. For example, making variations on “storm” such as “breeze,” disproves the intensity which is applicable to those situations in which the Protestants took over power, but the churches were handed over to them in an orderly fashion. One could also have the students search for more positive or negative metaphors depending on the perspective (Protestant or Catholic), for example, “church cleaners” versus “church hooligans” (see also Pollmann, 2016). By exploring such metaphoric language, teachers could help students create a more nuanced picture of history. The closed character of the historical narrative in textbooks would become less self-evident and other perspectives would likely be more discussed.

Above, I have argued that teaching and reasoning with and about multiperspectivity should have a more prominent place in history lessons and that it is important to consider different historiographical perspectives to clarify to students that historians could offer several

different and nevertheless plausible interpretations. In this respect, Houwen et al. (2020) developed a promising approach wherein Dutch students analyzed and compared two different textbooks on the same topic. It appeared that students understood that these texts each presented a different interpretation of the same topic (Houwen et al., 2020). Additionally, the arguments of Lee (2013) to explicitly discuss in the classroom the author's voice in textbooks are commendable for this matter. Last, a quick way to make it clear to students that there are different narratives with different perspectives on the Dutch Revolt is the use of back cover texts, in which publishers like to enlarge the authors' position. Students could compare these texts with each other and with the textbook. For example, the back cover of Parker's *Imprudent king. A new life of Philip II* (2014) could be compared with the back cover of *William of Orange. The opportunistic Father of the Fatherland* [original title: Willem van Oranje, De opportunistische Vader des Vaderlands] (Brouwer & Wouters, 2017).

Finally, teacher educators play an important role preparing future teachers for teaching about multiperspectivity and narratives. Teacher educators could discuss with their students how and to what extent multiperspectivity is part of history textbooks, what kind of narrative is presented and how metaphorical language frames these narratives. They could also discuss and elaborate how historiographical issues could be incorporated in lessons. In this manner, they could stimulate prospective teachers to have a firm theoretical and practical understanding of what teaching multiperspectivity and narratives is about in light of a growing diversity in the student population and in society in general.