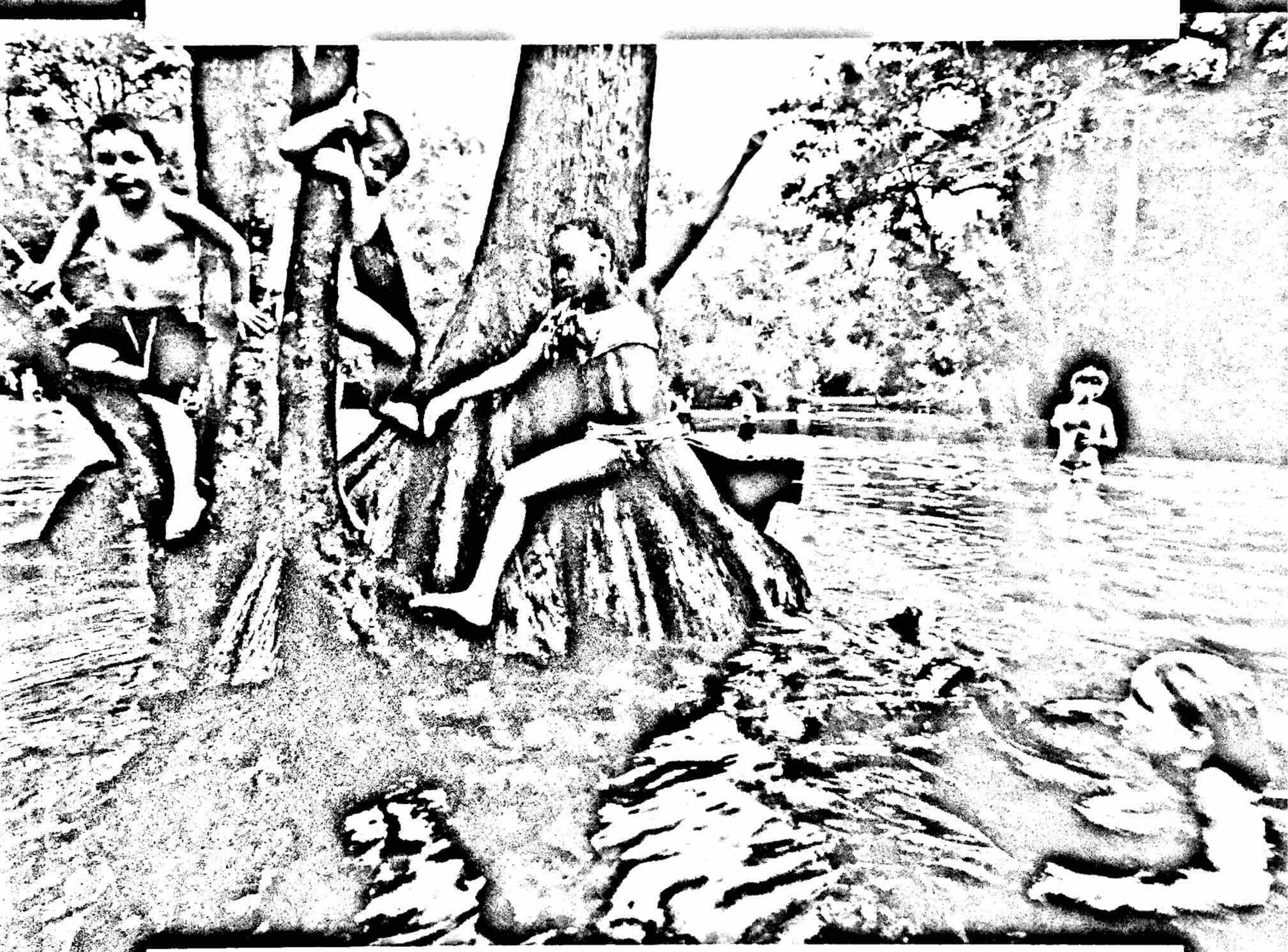
(Re)Constructing Memory: Textbooks, Identity, Nation, and State

James H. Williams and
Wendy D. Bokhorst-Heng (Eds.)



Sense Publishers

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FOREWORD TO THE SERIES

(RE)CONSTRUCTING MEMORY

School Textbooks, Identity, and the Pedagogies and Politics of Imagining Community

Official school textbooks provide a rich source of material for those seeking to understand the greater social effects of schooling and the larger social and political contexts of education. Textbooks provide official knowledge a society wants its children to acquire—facts, figures, dates, seminal events. Textbooks also frame the facts, figures, dates, and events in a larger, though generally implicit, narrative that describes how things were, what happened, and how they came to be the way they are now. A group's representation of its past is often intimately connected with its identity—who "we" are (and who we are not) as well as who "they" are.

Analysis of textbooks provides a lens through which to examine what might be called a nation's deeper or hidden social and political curriculum. Comparative and longitudinal analyses provide a better understanding of variations and continuities in these "curricula" over time and across national contexts. Moreover, analysis of the implicit "pedagogy" of teaching and learning in textbooks provides insight into the relationship envisioned between the student and history. Is history presented as an interpretation of events that are socially understood, constructed, and contested, and in which the individual has both individual and social agency, or as a set of fixed, unitary, and unassailable historical and social facts to be memorized? Do students have a role in constructing history, or is it external to them? How is history presented when that history is recent and contested?

These volumes propose a series of comparative investigations of the deeper social and political "curricula" of school textbooks, in contexts where

- The identity or legitimacy of the state has become problematic
- Membership or the relationship among members of the state has been challenged
- Conflict, or some aspect of conflict, remains unresolved

Throughout, the books seek to better understand the processes by which the implicit social and historical lessons in textbooks are taught and learned, or ignored.

Ultimately, the books are intended to promote a culture of mutual understanding and peace. To do this in a context of complex, often conflicting identities and ways of seeing the world requires a sophisticated understanding of the actual social and political uses and functions of textbooks. In particular, we highlight for further

SARAH CORONA BERKIN

2. ARE MEXICO'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE MEXICAN?

The Exclusion of Diversity from Official Textbooks in Mexico

The story of the Mexican nation, like that of many modern nations, involves the development of a national identity based on a manufactured ethnicity. A national community is produced when individuals project themselves onto, and recognize themselves in, a common national narrative that appears to be a legacy from time immemorial in spite of having been fabricated in the recent past. To be "national," a population should make the tale of common ethnicity its own, representing itself as if it were a natural community with primordial origins, a homogenous culture, and shared group needs. For the sake of inclusiveness and unity, Mexico presents itself as a community with common origins, culture, and interests that transcend individuals and social conditions. This imagined collective national identity is captured in the notion of *mexicanidad*, a concept that stems from 19th-century independence movements.

Mexicanidad is a deliberate attempt to produce a uniquely Mexican identity different from the Spanish identity associated with colonial power. It can be defined as the synthesis of indigenous and Spanish cultures, and it comprises symbols, designed to bolster Mexican nationalism, constructed during the 19th and 20th centuries. The Mexican government, especially the Ministry of Public Education (Secretaría de Educación Pública, or SEP), has played a central role in unifying the nation around *mexicanidad*. It has done this by developing specific policies and creating associated symbols, particularly around notions of a common national language and the portrayal of a common race. These two methods function together to "naturalize" the nation's origins.

But although *mexicanidad* was constructed in contrast to Spanish colonial identity and presented as a more authentic national identity, the indigenous peoples often do not subscribe to this concept of what it is to be Mexican. Wixárika (Huichol) Professor Carlos Salvador noted that the Wixáritari people were on the land now called Mexico well before the "Mexicans," who are defined by the national state as *mestizos*—a collective term that attempts to include those of mixed Aztec and Spanish heritage. Wixáritari Indians do not share this national history; their past is neither Spanish nor Aztec (the community's elders, in fact, point out that the Aztecs were their enemies), nor is Spanish their mother tongue. Of interest to me in this chapter is the nation-state and the place of indigenous peoples in this "fictitious

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ethnicity" (Balibar, 1996) of *mexicanidad*. Looking at textbooks published by SEP that are required reading for all Mexican children, I asked: What place is given to contemporary indigenous peoples within the nation's story? How do they appear in the words of the text, ethnically and linguistically, in the building of *mexicanidad*? And what does an indigenous person look like in the photos and illustrations in these Mexican textbooks?

CONTEXT

Mexico has 110 million inhabitants, 10% of whom speak one of the country's 64 existing indigenous languages.[1] The majority Mexican population is defined as *mestizo*. The principle of a racially mixed Mexico began to spread officially in the 19th century and was most definitively formulated following the Mexican Revolution. National independence was achieved in 1821, brought about by the *criollos*, who were born on American soil and had fewer rights during the colonial era than did the *peninsulares*, those born in Spain. Upon gaining independence, and wishing to distance themselves even more from Spain, the *criollos* adopted a new view of the population. The new Mexicans with rights over Mexican lands would from then on be *mestizos*, defined by the richness of the two cultures present on national soil, Aztec and Spanish.

Some historical understanding of the idea of *mestizos* as a cultural group might be helpful. The term *mestizaje* describes the result of a violent encounter of different races and cultures when the Spanish arrived in the Americas, imposing their culture upon the indigenous peoples they sought to dominate and marginalizing indigenous cultures. Though this was a painful encounter, both Spanish and indigenous cultures influenced each other, generating *mestizaje*, a mixture, a new race and culture.

By the end of the 1910 revolution, the state had begun to institutionalize the *mestizaje* concept. The objective was to serve the modernizing policies of the 20th century, which included efforts to "modernize" the indigenous peoples. The various governments in Mexico have always regarded the indigenous people as "a problem" in building national identity and spurring economic development. Indigenous peoples are not modern, are not productive in the capitalist way, fight for their territories, and keep their own culture, rituals, religions, and languages. They had been regarded as the most "backward" segment of the population, with social forms that were communal and retrogressive. Thus, educating them as *mestizos* and teaching them to become literate in Spanish—trying to get them to forget their languages and traditions and to integrate them into the imagined *mestizo* nation—was seen as a solution. At the same time, it has also been useful to the imagining of the nation to include the indigenous antique culture as heritage, to transform their culture into a mythical past.

During the post-revolutionary period, many prominent thinkers argued that Mexican culture did not need to imitate European culture to become universal. Instead, Mexican culture should explore the constants of humanity from a *mestizo*

perspective. This vision deeply influenced arts, literature, and education, rapidly becoming the state's cultural project. José Vasconcelos, Secretary of Education from 1922 to 1924 and a proponent of these ideas, dubbed Mexico's *mestizo* race a "cosmic" or "bronze" race that could bridge both cultures, and he even argued that the *mestizos* were the race of the future. However, indigenous peoples were left out or made invisible in this nation-building project. De la Peña (2011) explained their situation in Mexico:

> The nineteenth-century liberal project proposed that Mexican identity was incompatible with an Indian identity. The revolutionary nationalist project accepted compatibility as long as indigenous culture was incorporated into the strong current of mestizaje, defined ideally as a seamless unity. But both projects were questioned by ethnic movements, and since the 1970s, by anthropologists following Marxist and multilinear evolutionist schools. (pp. 92–93)

The liberal vision that advocated republican equality, social justice, acculturation, and integration was superimposed on multicultural diversity. In large measure, *mestizaje* as biocultural ideology was promoted by homogeneous nationalistic education for all Mexicans since 1921.

While the Constitution, national literature, and cultural and media production are also means for constructing the notion of nation, public education policies are a particularly advantageous "place" in which to study the nation's two primary ethnic components, race and language. Textbooks are especially revealing. Since 1959, under a program called *Libros de Texto Gratuitos*, the Ministry of Education has distributed free textbooks to all Mexican children. It is the only program of its kind in the world. The textbooks are all the same and are required to be used by all Mexican children from first through sixth grades. In 2009, Mexico celebrated the 50th anniversary of the program. Since its inception, the program has published and distributed 5 billion free textbooks in Mexico. The widespread dissemination and use of these textbooks is significant, as they embody the interests of leadership in building a homogeneous Mexican nation, starting from the concept of what it is to be Mexican.

While the textbook distribution program can certainly be applauded for providing free books to children of all strata of society, it is also the case that, for the indigenous populations, these books represent a form of linguistic and cultural imposition. Despite this program, the country's indigenous people have remained substantially unincorporated, unhomogenized in relation to the Mexican *mestizo* culture, and illiterate. Furthermore, there has been no attempt by policy makers or editors of these textbooks to incorporate indigenous voices and perspectives in any meaningful way.

The title of this chapter asks the question "Are Mexico's indigenous people Mexican?"—a question first posed by Alfonso Caso, the father of Mexican philosophy. In 1958, Caso argued that indigenous people had not been integrated

into the nation because they lacked the opportunities enjoyed by the majority *mestizo* population. According to Caso, and in line with the *indigenista* principles of his day, the state was committing a grave mistake by not integrating the Indians into the nation and making them Mexican. His question, like my work, sought to spark debate about indigenous groups that have been excluded by the nation-state. However, my concern is not with the lack of integration of indigenous people into the Mexican nation. Instead, I examine the history of the SEP's textbooks in order to inquire how Mexico's diversity, characterized by 64 linguistic and cultural groups, is made visible. In other words, I ask if indigenous people are present and considered Mexican in their diversity in Mexican textbooks, or if they are excluded and not considered Mexican if they don't comply with *mestizo* culture.

METHODOLOGY

My interest is in the "place" that indigenous people have occupied in the large official literature for children over the past century. The literature referred to here comprises 635 physically extant books that form part of the SEP "catalogue of books for children," out of approximately 5,000 titles registered in multiple libraries and archives as well as official documents and reports. This research is part of a wider investigation, aimed at assembling a complete list of existing children's publications, which includes a review and analysis of policy statements, state education annual reports, SEP book catalogues, newspaper editorials, and children's textbooks in public and private archives (Corona Berkin & de Santiago, 2011). My analysis here consists of two parts: (1) an analysis that attempts to situate the portrayal of indigenous peoples in children's books in sociohistorical context; and (2) a shorter analysis of SEP books from a specific recent period.

In the first part, I provide a historical overview of education and textbook policies from 1921 to 2006, categorized by the tenures of Mexican presidents (see Table 1). This overview includes a discussion of SEP educational publishing policies aimed at teaching Spanish language and culture to indigenous people.

In the second part, I provide a more intensive review of images of indigenous peoples in a sampling of free textbooks that circulated from 2000 to 2006.[2] This analysis includes all textbooks for first and second grades of primary school. Photographs were examined in 19 SEP books: 16 textbooks for first and second grades required in all the country's primary schools; two for first and second grades in the Huichol indigenous language; and one from the parallel bilingual and intercultural program.[3] Also considered are history and geography books for the states of Jalisco, Nayarit, and Durango, where the Huicholes live. First- and second-grade books were selected because of their formative importance at the beginning of compulsory schooling. Books for younger children contain more illustrations than text, thus visually introducing the young learner to what his or her community's culture should be. In this context, it is important to ascertain which images of indigenous life children are being shown. Through both analyses, I aim to show how

books produced by the state over the course of more than 90 years have defined the place of indigenous people in its account of a *mestizo* nation.

Table 1. Presidents of Mexico, 1924 to present

President	*Dates*
Plutarco Elias Calles	1924–1928
Emilio Portes Gil	1928–1930
Pascual Ortiz Rubio	1930–1932
Abelardo L. Rodríguez	1932–1934
Lázaro Cárdenas del Río	1934–1940
Manuel Ávila Camacho	1940–1946
Miguel Alemán Valdés	1946–1952
Adolfo Ruiz Cortines	1952–1958
Adolfo López Mateos	1958–1964
Gustavo Díaz Ordaz	1964–1970
Luis Echeverría	1970–1976
José López Portillo	1976–1982
Miguel de la Madrid	1982–1988
Carlos Salinas de Gortari	1988–1994
Ernesto Zedillo	1994–2000
Vicente Fox	2000–2006
Felipe Calderón	2006–2012
Enrique Peña Nieto	2012–

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS, 1921–2006

The Beginning: 1920s

As first minister of education in the post-revolutionary nation, José Vasconcelos developed an intensive plan to promote his educational federalization project. In *El Desastre* (The Disaster), Vasconcelos (1952) stated, "The most patriotic act is when those who know how to read, teach those who don't" (p. 1326). But with the revolution just ending, the publishing field was in a desperate condition. All bookstores and publishers were Spanish. Mexico had yet to produce books or a reading public. In spite of these daunting challenges, Vasconcelos, as rector of the National Autonomous University, began to create libraries, translate essential texts, and select the best for a massive publication of the classics. His program sought to integrate the majority of the population into the nation as a whole through access to literature and literacy. Vasconcelos was one of the shapers of education in the

post-revolutionary era, placing education directly within nation-building policy. His educational strategies continued to imbue the policies of governments that followed. Starting with him, all subsequent governments and SEP officials assumed the obligation of educating the Mexican people and building a Mexican culture through schools.

In discussing the best way to educate indigenous peoples, José Vasconcelos held very definite positions. For example, he was adamantly opposed to the creation of segregated schools:

> I have always been against this measure because it leads fatally to the so-called "reservation" system, which divides people into castes and skin colors, and we wish to educate Indians in order to completely assimilate them into our nationality, not put them off to one side. In reality I believe that in educating the Indian the method to follow is the venerable one of the great Spanish educators like Las Casas, Vasco de Quiroga, and Motolinía, who adapted the Indian to European civilization, thereby creating new countries and new races, instead of extinguishing or reducing the naturals to isolation. (Vasconcelos, 1923, p. 7)

From these homogenizing ideas was formulated a language policy that saw teaching in Spanish as the best vehicle for national assimilation and unification. Rather than preserving indigenous cultures, the policy sought to merge indigenous people into the country's rural population through homogenous language and education policies. From 1924 to 1928, when Plutarco Elías Calles was president, adopting the Spanish language was defended as the only means of educating indigenous peoples.

The government made massive print runs of primary schools texts. SEP distributed approximately 1 million free copies of the national reading-writing book, the *Libro Nacional de Lecto-Escritura*, and produced frequent successive editions. One noteworthy publication was Justo Sierra's *Historia General* and *Historia Patria*, whose first editions dated from the 19th century. After the revolutionary struggle, Sierra's career and view of history were revived, and not a trace of indigenous history remained in the plans for the post-revolutionary nation.

From this perspective, the official educational policy of "teaching Indians to live" would not work if the Indians did not speak the national language. During these early years of the republic, there were no books for indigenous children in their mother tongues. Rural schools were tasked with teaching the indigenous communities Spanish and incorporating them into the modern state. Moisés Sáenz, organizer of rural schooling and an advocate of incorporating indigenous people into "civilization," confessed later in life to the fiasco that this approach had provoked:

> Life was taking shape in old molds. The weak reflection of the school was lost in the shadow of the subconscious. Teachers kept teaching. Governments kept paying for schools. Time and money would be lost, as if dropped into a bottomless pit, until there was a more complete educational program, one of greater scope and with a social philosophy that required the school to clearly project itself into the community ... The rural school, intrepid and spirited as it is, cannot do the job alone. (quoted in Meneses Morales, 1986, p. 462)

Images in textbooks circulating at this time were of a mythical Indian, the founder of Tenochtitlán and the nation's distant origins. Common images included majestic Aztec and Mayan architectural sites. *Fermín, Libro de Lectura Mexicana* (Fermin, A Mexican Reader) appeared in 1928, illustrated by Diego Rivera, a prominent Mexican painter known especially for his murals. It is significant that while Indians are central to his murals, they are idealistic representations of the Indians of preconquest Mexico, as *mestizo campesinos* (rural agricultural workers). His art depicted a *mestizo* ideology that needed the Indians, as distinct cultural indigenous groups, to disappear. The nation's story could benefit from the ancient Aztec and idealistic representations of the Mayan cultures to create a *mestizo* country, but could not promote diversity, much less autonomous cultural values. As such, live, contemporary Indians were not found in the textbooks of this period; only "dead" (preconquest) Indians were presented. It is therefore significant that *Fermin*'s cover showed an Indian turned into a *campesino*. Education aimed at serving the rural sector had transformed multiple indigenous peoples into a homogeneous farmworker with rustic white clothing and a straw hat. The *campesino* would show up in future books. Distinct indigenous groups, each with their own customs, rituals, clothing, and language, disappeared into the figure of the field worker.

Socialist Education and Bilingualism: 1930s

The *Maximato* period[4] (1928–1934) was marked by varying positions on the education of indigenous communities. While monolingual teaching continued, there were differences in ideology and intent. For example, Aarón Sáenz, the secretary of education in 1930, saw among indigenous peoples the persistence of primitive ways of life that he believed had to be integrated with civilization.

By comparison, Narciso Bassols, who was secretary of education from 1931 to 1934 and a close collaborator of Mexican president Plutarco Elías Calles, proposed a different approach. Bassols promoted socialism and argued for amending Article III of the 1917 Constitution to mandate socialist education.[5] He also promoted school cooperatives to encourage schools to teach students practical knowledge and skills that would improve their economic situation through the school. As well, he stressed the importance of biological and economic education to improve health habits and relieve misery in the indigenous population.

What Secretary of Education Sáenz saw in the Mexican population, with 14 million *mestizo* Indians and only 1.5 million white *mestizos*, was the persistence among indigenous peoples of primitive ways of life that had to be integrated with civilization. Bassols' response to indigenous diversity was a synthesis of the two

cultures, isolating what he saw as indigenous values that would support his vision of the nation (rather than any suggestion that public education would actually support indigenous culture):

> If we are to triumph, it will be because we have managed to preserve the indigenous spiritual structure, while at the same time giving them indispensable scientific-technical assistance ... But we shall take care to save in the indigenous soul all those virtues that inarguably surpass the moral tenets of contemporary capitalism. Thinking of a synthesized culture like the one we mean to create gives us an optimistic vision of the indigenous peoples' future destiny, because we will map out a social organization to preserve the strong values of discipline, cooperation, harmony and hard-workingness characteristic of indigenous communities; which allow them to form sturdier, more valuable human collectives than those which have arisen from the secular fight between unbounded egotism and our needs for unification and social organization. (quoted in Labra, 1985, p. 48)

Textbooks distributed to students during this era aimed to strengthen Mexico's rural farmworking image. Everyday indigenous life, which had now become that of the field worker, appeared under the euphemism of "domestic industry," more in accord with the new socialist perspective that characterized the era. The content was similar from one title to the next, duplicating what had already been distributed in pamphlets, readers, and school newsletters: the benefits of a life that was healthy, simple, and hygienic, with useful advice for farmworkers and the exaltation of work and values such as generosity, cooperation, honesty, and diligence. But the publications also had a new feature. Through poems, stories, short readings, fables, and legends, books began to highlight differences of class and causes of popular misery and to identify guilty parties—the exploitation of workers by those who did nothing, by the bosses who owned the fruits of others' labors. The books advised *campesinos* to form cooperatives to protect themselves against unscrupulous merchants and profiteers and counseled day laborers to unionize and defend themselves from bosses.

In illustrations from these books, the growing of maize becomes an ancient celebration, the "planting of the race," while "the rural teacher, new priest in a religion of equality and justice, day by day, within his or her little school, pays homage to work and pledges to help the campesino" (Becerra Celis, 1939, p. 149). Wheat replaces tortillas, and its scientific breeding is promoted. It is fertilized with machine-made chemicals and planted, threshed, and ground by machine. Machines that stir, knead, and bake bread, as well as machines such as the tractor, made the *campesino's* life easier (List Arzubide, 1939, p. 78).

Notably, indigenous individuals are nearly nonexistent in the books for rural schools. The only mention is of Benito Juárez.[6] The remaining characters are *campesinos*, agrarian activists, and members of farm collectives. There are no Indians.

During the 1934 to 1940 period, when Lázaro Cárdenas was president, what stood out in education for indigenous communities was the advocacy of bilingualism:

> Linguists from the Summer Institute of Linguistics joined professionals from Mexican institutions in traveling among Indian groups and carrying out studies of thirty vernacular languages, shaping an alphabet based upon phonetics and phonemes, developing grammars, dictionaries and vocabulary lists, and instructing teachers in the techniques of bilingual education. (Heath, 1986, p. 171)

Some time passed before these activities manifested themselves in indigenous language publications. The beginning of a massive literacy campaign in Michoacán did, however, represent a change. Twenty young Tarascans, trained by Mauricio Swadesh, a U.S. linguist and professor at the National School of Anthropology and History, prepared texts and materials to be used by Tarascan children and adults. The Tarascan Project was a success and validated the method of developing literacy in the indigenous language first, introducing Spanish only after students had learned to read and write in their own languages. Thus, the Cardenist period laid the groundwork for publications for indigenous children in their own languages.

Civics and Love of Country: 1940s

With Manuel Ávila Camacho at the country's helm, and with Mexico's entry into the Second World War, it was time to reinforce love of country. An official version of the national anthem, for example, was published by SEP in 1942. Love of country manifested itself in the formulation of a history wrought by heroes and a unified, hegemonic view of the nation. In the words of Torres Bodet (1946):[7]

> Our school will be Mexican not by being an imitation of itself or the mechanisms of the past, but because it will impel those who study here to feel Mexico, understand Mexico and imagine the existence of Mexico as a force for creating the future. (p. 51)

In this context, there was acute awareness of the challenges presented by indigenous integration. Torres Bodet (1946) observed:

> If not knowing the meaning of the region constitutes an aesthetic—and also a political—error, underestimating particularities of the indigenous centers would be equivalent to condemning them to a limited, contingent, awkward and unjust assimilation. What retention might the teacher of a Yaqui, Tarascan or Otomí child hope for, when proposing a life of mexicanidad—if bound by the borders of an abstract world, far from the student's own worries and problems, with creatures and landscapes that he's never had occasion to see? (p. 13)

With the goal of nationalist unification, a number of changes were made. First, primers were prepared in six indigenous languages: Tarahumara, Maya, Tarascan, Otomí, the Náhuatl spoken in Puebla, and the Náhuatl of Morelos state. These consisted of national civics lessons illustrated with the flora and fauna of each region. Signs and symbols known by indigenous peoples, such as characters from national history, Mexican animals, and heroic Indians, were adopted to communicate the meanings of *mexicanidad* and national unity and thus assure an entryway to modernity. The Indian acquired a mythic halo, be he Benito Juárez or the stoic Tarahumara, who exemplified perseverance. The intent was to use familiar symbols and glorified Indians to make indigenous children identify with the books and, as a result, become literate in Spanish and identify with *mexicanidad*.

National Development: Late 1940s to Late 1950s

During President Miguel Alemán's 6-year term, schools espoused the idea that progress explains cultural development, whereby culture becomes a subsidiary of the economy, oriented by the needs of economic development. Throughout Alemán's presidential term, there was considerable development of an extensive agricultural infrastructure; as a result, various indigenous communities had to relocate. Education in general, and technical education specifically, were the means toward economic production. These were the days of the productive school, of learning in order to train *homo faber*. The only publications for indigenous students during this period were 75 copies of the *First Popoloca Primer*, printed in collaboration with the Summer Institute of Linguistics.

Under this governmental regime, the image of the Indian was once again limited to historical mysticism, evident in photographs of ancient Mayan and Aztec temples and images of indigenous people who were portrayed as eccentric marketplace characters, such as a clown or puppeteer, rather than real people in the context of their everyday lives. The characters called Mexicans in the children's books were barely recognizable as *mestizos*, instead looking more racially white. People in the street market were called "poor people" or "servants."

From 1952 to 1958, education was guided by *mexicanidad*, "an educational doctrine which is authentically Mexican in unsuspected ways: not by demeaning universal values, but just the opposite, by encouraging them to flourish on Mexican ground, in a happy balance of universal and national" (Ceniceros, 1958, p. 175). In the process, the Mexican republic constructed a common history for a mass of individuals that it considered homogeneous. In this imagining, the *patria* or homeland was no longer a local place where diverse peoples actually lived, with their own languages, cultures, living histories, shared ethnic groups, and traditions, but was instead dominated by the hegemonic image of *mexicanidad*.

Free Textbooks: Late 1950s to 1970

From 1958 to 1964, young people throughout Mexico were given millions of free textbooks as a mandatory part of their primary schooling. The textbook initiative was a long time developing, from José Vasconcelos' programs to the massive distribution of free books under Lázaro Cárdenas and other governments, but it was during the time of López Mateos that the free textbooks program was institutionalized and homogenized. Beginning in 1961, a single cover was used for all of these textbooks. The cover featured the work of artist Jorge González Camarena, "a painting representing the Mexican nation as it is impelled by history and the threefold inspiration—cultural, agricultural, industrial—given to it by the people." This image is popularly associated with titles such as the *Libros de la Patria*, books of the homeland. With them, "there now exists, legally and practically, an instrument for standardizing the formation of the Mexican people, which will lead to our much sought-after national unity" (Vázquez de Knauth, 1975, p. 278). The emergence of free textbooks thus became a powerful instrument to transmit nationalist ideology. The textbooks' contents were homogenous, and they were distributed across the country to all social classes.

Conservatives in Mexico opposed the distribution of a textbook that taught children to link Mexican national identity with the *priísta* ideology of the government in power. Writer José Agustín (1991), who read these texts in his childhood, made the following critique:

> The books ... reinforced the PRI [Institutional Revolutionary Party] concept of life, harped on the ritualization of national myths, venerated Hidalgo, Morelos and Juárez, and insisted upon canonizing Carranza, Obregón, Calles, Cárdenas, et al., not to mention Zapata and, with more grudging hypocrisy, Villa. Otherwise, the free text tried to be up-to-date, with more contemporary knowledge and disciplines, and to be an accessible product, relatively objective in parts and idyllic in others, so to promote the child's identification with country and government, and his or her acritical subordination to a socio-political system that was then going through a clear rigidizing process. In reality, a project like that of the free textbooks was a perfect consequence of the nature of the Mexican regime, and if it elicited so much opposition from conservatives (at the end of the eighties, said opposition continued) it was because this represented an excellent means of their exerting pressure. (pp. 189, 191)

Indicators of educational inequality during the period from 1964 to 1970 reflected the general educational situation. While half of the students who began primary school in urban settings completed their studies, only seven out of every 100 who were enrolled in rural primary schools finished. Also, just one-sixth of rural schools—there were 31,000 in the republic—offered all six grades. Still more serious

was the situation of indigenous education: "Of 3,220,595 monolingual indigenous youth between 6 and 14 years old, SEP's Directorate General for Indigenous Affairs and the National Indigenist Institute reached only 23,248" (Meneses Morales, 1991, pp. 31, 35).

Still, during this same period, the Directorate General of Primary and Indigenous Boarding School Education printed more than 100,000 booklets in the Otomí language of the Mezquital valley, the Mixtec of Oaxaca's coast and high plains, Mayan from the Yucatan, and Mexica from the northern Puebla mountains and Veracruz' Huasteca region, as well as booklets on behalf of the National Indigenist Institute for the Tarahumara, Mazateca, Tarascan, and Tzetzalt-Zotzil regions, created in collaboration with the Summer Institute of Linguistics (Meneses Morales, 1991, p. 177). These booklets were called *cartillas* (primers, or first readers), and their purpose was to teach indigenous people literacy in their own language so that they could then learn Spanish more easily. They contained very simple words and phrases to provide basic literacy.

The New Free Textbooks: 1970s

With Luis Echeverría in the presidency, preparation of new primary and secondary textbooks became a high priority of SEP's work. However, despite this focus, through collaboration between SEP and the Summer Institute of Linguistics, only five works were produced for the indigenous population. These bilingual books (Spanish and the language of the given community) consisted of stories from the Choles and Chinantecos or explanations of how to count money or tell time. The primary goal of bilingualism was to establish Spanish as the common *lingua franca* of the nation: "Conscious of never becoming a unified nation until all Mexicans speak the same language, in January of 1974 the national program for teaching Spanish began" (Bravo Ahuja, 1976, p. 120).

At the end of the presidential term, SEP reported that while only 72 indigenous children graduated from primary school in 1971, the number had risen to 7,300 by 1975. With their education based on bilingual methods with bicultural content, 300,000 children attended first through sixth grades in the indigenous regions.

More Books for Indigenous Students: Late 1970s to Late 1980s

In spite of earlier efforts to develop universal literacy in Spanish, there were an estimated 6 million illiterate adults in the country, including 1 million indigenous adults who did not speak Spanish, when José López Portillo assumed the presidency in 1976. The absolute number of illiterate Mexicans had remained constant over 50 years. And so, beginning in 1978, SEP organized its activities around five objectives: (1) to offer basic education to all Mexicans, especially children; (2) to link terminal education with jobs; (3) to raise the quality of education; (4) to enrich the country's cultural environment; and (5) to increase the administrative system's

efficiency. To achieve these objectives, 53 programs were initiated, with 12 given highest priority. Among these were teaching Spanish to indigenous peoples and offering them bilingual primary learning opportunities. Four more indigenous language installments were added to the *Colibrí* series (Maya, Náhuatl, Otomí, and Purépecha), published jointly with the Directorate General for Indigenous Education. In addition, the Indigenous Oral Tradition Series organized six bilingual books presenting literature from the Náhuatl, Huichol, and Tzetzal cultures, including stories, songs, legends, myths, and celebratory lore. As well, the didactic guide for teaching reading and writing was published in 35 indigenous languages, and more than 250,000 copies of the Spanish-as-a-second-language text were printed. The literacy primer was translated into eight languages: Otomí, Purépecha, Náhuatl, Tzeltal, Mayan, Mazahua, Triqui, and Mixtec. Editions of stories appeared in 20 indigenous languages.

This period also marked the end of SEP's collaboration with the Summer Institute of Linguistics, which had started back in the *Maximato* with Narciso Bassols. Deficiencies were found in the Summer Institute's primers, and the institute's work was criticized by various sectors. Anthropologist Nolasco (1978) commented on the primers:

> It is worth pondering the problems of an indigenous education that is doomed to failure because of inefficiency. If to that we add other aspects, such as scanty and inappropriate didactic material, we'll have a view of this inefficient educational system that produces only educational failures. As just some examples of didactic material we might mention the bilingual primers which not only lack a method, but any logic or common sense, and handle languages (Spanish and/or indigenous languages) with a complete ignorance of their actual structures, frequently even using English as a basis for analogies. (p. 2)

With Jesús Reyes Heroles directing SEP during Miguel de la Madrid's presidency, materials were produced in several indigenous languages. Nearly 50 textbook titles were printed by the Directorate General for Indigenous Education, as well as new titles in the Indigenous Oral Tradition Series.

As demonstrated above, the indigenous presence in SEP-produced books for Mexican children had been defined only by indigenous oral traditions, folklore, ancient history, and archaeological gems, as well as a continual interest in literacy. During the 1982–1988 presidential term, a collection of books featuring contemporary indigenous people was published for the first time. Also for the first time, a few textbooks began to recognize the present-day existence of indigenous people by including contemporary photographs, but this was not the norm.

Modernization of the Nation: Late 1980s to 1990s

As the 1988–1994 presidential term began, Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1989a) presented the 1989–1994 National Development Plan and noted: "We must change

in order to maintain the essence of the Nation... Modernizing the State is crucial. But modernizing Mexico is fundamental." Education was given an important role in achieving this goal. The objectives of the national development plan were to improve the quality of the educational system, raise the population's overall levels of schooling, decentralize education, and strengthen society's participation in the educational mandate. The priorities were to strengthen national language and mathematics achievement levels and to reform the teaching of history to equip the nation for globalization. For indigenous peoples, the only efforts made were to translate books for rural communities into indigenous languages.

On February 13, 1988, the National Free Textbook Commission celebrated 30 years of existence, during which time it had published close to 2 million books for elementary education students and teachers. The significance of this was described by Salinas de Gortari (1989b) as follows: "It will thus have contributed to shaping [the minds of] all Mexicans below 35 years of age, that is to say, three-quarters of the country's total population. These facts make it the largest educational enterprise in our history" (p. 5). Despite these millions of copies, indigenous portrayal in the books was excluded. Instead, compensatory books were created where their own voices were reduced to testimony or mere legend, with no consistency or continuity and with text that was barely of interest to indigenous people in learning to read and write in Spanish.

President Ernesto Zedillo's government recognized the need to define its priorities. Within the context of political confrontation and economic crisis (a devaluation from 3.30 to 6 pesos per dollar in February 1995), the government was willing to negotiate with indigenous groups that had been in rebellion since January 1, 1994. It is worth noting that, as reported in its June 1998 to November 2000 Management Report, the Dirección General de Educación Indígena (DGEI) estimated that there were more than 10 million indigenous people in Mexico, distributed principally in 24 states. This population represented 62 ethnic groups and spoke at least 80 languages and variant dialects. Zedillo's representatives signed the so-called San Andrés accords—although they were not subsequently ratified—and his administration outlined social policy for indigenous affairs. In the debate over school dropout rates in indigenous regions, what was at stake was acceptance of diversity. Advancements in developing and making school texts more widely available in indigenous languages reflected progress in educational policy. There was greater understanding of some diverse ethnic groups' needs, although there were no concrete plans for their engagement in educational decision-making, nor were there educational policies designed for a truly pluriethnic Mexico.

With criticism of the living conditions of the large and diverse indigenous population came ongoing condemnation of the education the government offered them. Some specialists were unequivocal in their criticism: "Indigenous education continues to hope that good intentions might translate into results. Investment ... for the state of Chiapas had more of a political strain than an educational one"

(Observatorio Ciudadano de la Educación, 2000). For its part, the DGEI recognized irregularities and limitations in the distribution of its educational services and admitted that its pedagogic approach had been inadequate. It thus proposed its *General Guidelines for Bilingual Intercultural Education for Indigenous Girls and Boys,* in which it noted:

> Intercultural education is deemed to be that which recognizes and addresses cultural and linguistic diversity and promotes respect for differences, while aiming to shape national unity by supporting and strengthening local, regional and national identity, as well as developing attitudes and practices that seek liberty and justice for all. (Subsecretaría de Educación Básica y Normal, 1999, p. 11)

In the 10 years from 1988 to 1998, the government managed to increase the number of schools in indigenous regions by 41%—a number still insufficient, the DGEI recognized, for combating dropouts or dealing with dispersal of the population, marginalization, or continual emigration of families in search of a livelihood.

Other Data on Government Actions: Late 1990s to Present

In 1997, 1 million copies of books were published in 33 indigenous languages and 19 dialects for distribution to 1,054,000 indigenous children attending bilingual schools. This was 130,000 more than in 1994 (Zedillo Ponce de León, 1997). In his report on educational goals for 1995 to 2000, Education Minister Limón Rojas (2000) observed that the SEP would continue to provide textbooks in indigenous languages, and that production had increased in the year 2000:

> Because of 34 titles existing in 1994, we were able to provide another 153 in 55 dialects of 33 indigenous languages. Of these, 15 were modified titles, incorporating exercises to promote the young student's participation in various aspects of inquiry, creativity and communication. (p. 23)

Still, while books were published in an increasing variety of languages for different ethnic groups, their content, structure, and illustrations remained the same—mostly depicting historical and mythical images of the Indian, used to develop images of *mexicanidad.*

In the hotly debated campaign for president of the republic in 2000, the theme of educational deficiencies was central. The Institutional Revolutionary Party[8] proposed doubling the length of the school day and providing computers and English classes in all primary schools. The Party of the Democratic Revolution defended cost-free education and supported an increase in educational spending, as did the National Action Party, which took power in 2000. Education Minister Reyes Tamez Guerra, who belonged to the National Action Party, recognized that too many policy changes made implementation difficult. His goal was to focus on the outcomes of educational processes. Towards the end of 2000, the number of illiterate Mexicans

stood at 6.6 million, and 11.2 million had not completed primary school. More than half of these were younger than 40. In the 2001–2002 school year, 18.3 million children were estimated to have matriculated in preschool and primary school. About 2,147,000 children and youth between 5 and 14 years of age did not attend school. The minister recognized that it would not be possible to educate all 32 million Mexicans who were seriously uneducated.

From that point, interest grew in educating the most marginalized, with the indigenous population considered to be a high priority among vulnerable groups. In San Cristóbal de las Casas, President Vicente Fox (2000–2006) announced the creation of a new general coordinator of bilingual intercultural education (Latapí Sarre, 2000). This act was significant as it showed the government's willingness to confront the marginalization of indigenous people and to recognize indigenous peoples' demands for educational materials. The bilingual intercultural program adopted principles of respect and encouragement for the country's diverse cultures. However, the program did not incorporate that respect into an intercultural project in which indigenous communities could themselves make use of their own educational tools and their own voices. Intercultural textbooks were created with no participation of indigenous people. These new textbooks excluded them as authors, designers, or education experts.

As we have seen, throughout the period following the Revolution, education and textbooks in particular were seen as a way to prepare citizens as Mexicans, whether the assimilated indigenous *mestizos* and rural *campesinos* of the early years or the more diverse linguistic populations of later years. Throughout the entire eight decades, indigenous people were marginalized. Even when their languages were used, their voices were not heard, and their presence and ways of life were marginal at best and often invisible in the books, even to those who lived them.

In many ways, SEP defines what the country reads. In their lifetimes, many Mexicans will read only what SEP gives them to read in childhood. In this way, the topics, authors, genres, and publishing policies defined during each governmental period become quite important in shaping the thinking of Mexican people. In the current presidential term, reference and science books have found a new place in school libraries, but other developments remain to be seen. Indigenous voices are still not heard in books for indigenous or nonindigenous readers.

INDIGENOUS IMAGES IN SEP BOOKS, 2000–2006

Having spent considerable time tracing developments in the education system, we look more intensively in this section at images of indigenous peoples in all 19 titles for first and second grades published during a specific period, 2000 to 2006. Illustrating the scale of effort, more than 3,000,000 copies were printed of each free textbook edition for these grades. Printings of state monograph editions ranged from 22,000 to 174,000, depending upon the size of the state. DGEI produced

4,300 copies of bilingual intercultural books and 3,200 for the Huichol language. Each book contains 150 to 200 pages. Table 2 shows the number of photos of indigenous people.

It is clear that indigenous people are practically nonexistent in the general free textbooks for first and second grades. Among the books most Mexican children study in the first and second years of primary school, there are only four photographs of indigenous people. In contrast, books directed at Huichol children (first- and second-grade Huichol language) are profusely illustrated with photographs of indigenous people. The photos in these books were requested from the teachers who translated the books because of a lack of archival photos.[9] The state-specific history and geography books show a pattern similar to that of the free textbooks for the overall population.

Table 2. Photographs of indigenous people per textbook

Grade	*Textbooks*	*Images of indigenous people*
1	Mathematics	0
	Mathematics workbook, tear-out pages	0
	Spanish	0
	Spanishworkbook, tear-out pages	0
	Integrated text	2
	Integrated workbook, tear-out pages	0
2	Mathematics	0
	Mathematics workbook, tear-out pages	0
	Spanish	0
	Spanish workbook, tear-out pages	0
	Spanishreadings	0
	Integrated text	2
	Integrated workbook, tear-out pages	0
Bilingual intercultural education		
1 and 2	Wixárika (one book for both grades)	0
1	For Jalisco, Nayarit, and Durango	99
2	For Jalisco, Nayarit, and Durango	35
	History and geography by state	
	Jalisco	3
	Nayarit	5
	Durango	3

Textbooks for the General Population

The four images of indigenous people that do appear in the first- and second-grade textbooks are part of collages. The photos have been extracted from their original location and applied to a new composition. The collages contain photos of various objects. For example, when there is an emphasis on the indigenous person going to school, the collage contains rulers, pencils, erasers, and the Constitution. When the emphasis is on President Benito Juárez, the collage includes the presidential chair, flag, and reform laws. Indigenous subjects do not face the camera. One might conclude that they have been objectified as testimony to the diversity of the nation. But little attention is paid to this diversity. The clothing is characterized as generically indigenous, which does not even allow the viewer to determine which of the country's 64 ethnic groups it comes from. Such figures are common where the collage emphasizes the patriotic and ornamental meaning of indigenous people. The "correct" Indian is the one who honors the Mexican flag and goes to the national *mestizo* school.

The texts that "anchor" or reinforce the meaning of the image carry little of the illustrations' indigenousness. Photos of Benito Juárez appear in honor of his birth date to emphasize his fight for national laws and liberty. In no case are his indigenous origins made explicit ("he was born into a humble family" says the text). The caption of a photograph entitled "Diversity in Mexico" mentions that there are different natural riches, ways of life, and opinions, but the collage simply shows two indigenous groups (seemingly from the same ethnic family) out of context and unconnected to any of the other people in the collage.

The state history and geography books opt for layouts that mix photography with other art forms. The Jalisco and Nayarit books take the opportunity to publish at least one photo of Huicholes with the flag and another of Huicholes at school. Again, the educational discourse characterizes Indians as Mexicans who go to school, with no reference to their indigenous heritage or identity. A different example can be found in the book for Durango. This is a professional photograph of a contemporary family in a "studio pose" shot against a black background. It was previously published in the magazine *Saber ver lo Contemporáneo del Arte* ("Knowing and Seeing the Contemporary in Art"). The photo's dark backdrop allows one to focus on the clothing of the Huicholes and on the father's enigmatic expression.

Textbooks for Indigenous Children

The photographs published in books for indigenous children are amateur shots, almost always taken by the author of the book, a Huichol teacher. Unlike the photographs taken in the national free textbooks, these are photos of everyday life—daily activities, such as grinding grain, cooking, planting, and embroidering, as well as ceremonies and communal and ritual practices. Their inclusion signals that these activities are worthy

of being photographed. One photograph, for example, accompanies the lesson "Who makes the tamales," and shows a full-length image of a girl working at her grinding stone in the kitchen. Photographs in these textbooks show context: people in front of their house, for example, where the photographer has captured the end of an adobe or stone wall to allow a view of the natural surroundings. Most of the photographs are wide angle. The few close-ups simply resulted from the editors of the book cropping the photos to feature details they considered important.

In these photographs, the context seems to be more important than the persons portrayed. In a lesson called "José Carrillo," one photograph does not portray José Carrillo (the text's subject), but instead shows that the story occurred in San Andrés Cohamiata. In photos of Huicholes, the subjects commonly stand at a reasonable distance, facing forward, with a serious and respectful visage. Standing upright, with a direct gaze and strict posture, is the corporal arrangement that reflects the socially appropriate ways of their communities.

CONCLUSIONS

One constant theme emerges from this examination of how indigenous peoples are portrayed in books published by SEP during the various governmental periods since the 1910 Revolution. That is, indigenous people are portrayed through ancient objects (pyramids, feather headdresses, calendars, pots, embroidery, as well as myths and legends) while their contemporary existence and political participation are denied. This double standard materializes in almost all images accompanying Mexican children's texts for the general population.

The over 60 indigenous peoples were initially made invisible and converted en masse into *campesinos*. Standard costumes for the 20th-century indigenous-people-turned-country-folk consisted of white muslin pants and shirts, with straw hats for men and *rebozos* or shawls for women. Missing in these books was any sign of contemporary indigenous people. Mayan and Aztec constructions were reclaimed to represent Mexico's mythic and glorious origins. Ancient architectural and artistic objects replaced those cultures' living indigenous people. Nor did any other ethnic groups seem to inhabit Mexican territory. A parallel policy was present in indigenous education, which offered ethnic recipients materials in their own images and languages, with complementary and compensatory education promoting instruction in Spanish via literacy in their own language. Illustrations of mythic indigenous figures, the earliest ancestors of the Mexican nation, appeared with *mestizo* racial and cultural features.

Not until the 1982 to 1988 presidential term did indigenous people appear in ways that reflected the present. Even then, the forms of visibility they (several ethnic individuals, not their communities) acquired was determined by SEP editorial policies. Today the free textbooks policy continues its tendency to enclose Indians within the mythic founding of the Mexican nation but exclude them from public

participation. The double standard for publishing policy remains, with indigenous participation (though not autonomy) circumscribed upon the books directed at their population. Textbook content and pedagogic and ideological methods for all Mexican children have been modified over the past 85 years, but they continue to deny indigenous peoples their faces, languages, and knowledge, their needs and political practices.

Books as vehicles for Mexican state education present the ideal of an ethnically *mestizo* Mexican, literate in Spanish. The visual images in books geared toward the general population fail to recognize indigenous peoples, and their representation is decontextualized. Books aimed at indigenous peoples, in their own languages, show photographs that may help them identify themselves as taking the first steps toward literacy and Mexicanization. There appear to be two types of textbooks corresponding to two educational strategies. Huicholes may learn to read and speak in their language and in these books may see themselves portrayed by themselves. Amid their community, they may actively participate in their own language and representation, but not when they leave it. In books that are distributed nationally, Huicholes (and all indigenous groups) are meant to learn to decipher the hegemonic language but not to use it as their own. Those who actually possess language and voice in these books are *mestizos*, legitimized by the Free Textbook Commission as Mexicans.

NOTES

1 Figures from the 2010 census explain that indigenous inhabitants comprise speakers of an indigenous language over 5 years of age.

2 This "generation" of books was in use from 2000 to 2012. In 2014 they were moderately revised. New books are planned for 2017–2018.

3 In indigenous regions, the packet of free textbooks includes the book corresponding to their own language as well as the bilingual book, in their language and Spanish.

4 The governmental period known as the *Maximato* (1928–1934) was a time when three successive presidents were under the control of Plutarco Elías Calles, the "Jefe Máximo."

5 In 1934, the Constitution was reformed to state: "The education the State imparts will be socialist, and along with excluding any religious doctrine will combat fanaticism and prejudices; therefore the school will organize its teachings and activities in a way that allows for creating in youth a rational and accurate concept of the universe and of life in society" *(Enciclopedia de México,* 1987, volume 4, p. 2424).

6 Benito Juárez, of Zapotec indigenous background, was president of the republic from 1858 to 1872 and is one of the central heroes in the national narrative.

7 Torres Bodet was a Mexican poet, writer, and educator who served as minister of public education from 1943 to 1946 and from 1958 to 1964.

8 The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) was in power without interruption from 1921 until 2000. The opposition parties, National Action Party (PAN) (right wing) and Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) (leftist), fought to gain the presidency in 2000, and the PAN won.

9 This information is based on oral communication with Xitákame teacher Julio Ramírez de la Cruz, author of the official Huichol language textbook for first grade.

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3. THE STRUGGLE TO BE SEEN

Changing Views of American Indians in U.S. High School History Textbooks

In 1937, *The Growth of the American Republic* (Morrison & Commager, 1937) opened with a reference to the "wild Indians" and "savages." Beyond portraying the American natives as obstructions to progress, the authors never mentioned them again. Samuel Eliot Morrison and Henry Steele Commager were award-winning historians who set the standard for the portrayal of American history for generations. Though later editions softened the negative language, the American Indian remained largely invisible in these seminal works. Official histories written by university professors and research scholars form the foundation of the content for high school American history textbooks. These official histories create the knowledge of American history that many Americans carry with them for a lifetime (Lerner, Nagai, & Rothman, 1993).

Since the 1970s, American Indians have been increasingly included in American history textbooks—largely as a result of tribes' activism and the consequent raising of awareness; however, this study's close examination of 65 years of high school U.S. history textbooks revealed that representation of American Indians is often limited to violent encounters and stories about the same few colorful heroes. Because U.S. history textbooks are written by a group of selected academics, the little visibility American Indians do have is limited to these academics' perspective. The information presented in high school U.S. history textbooks continues to be based on secondary sources with a Euro-American historical perspective. The limited picture of the American Indian in these history classes has been formed without the voices of the American Indians.

CONTEXT: U.S. HISTORY TEXTBOOKS AS OFFICIAL KNOWLEDGE

U.S. history textbooks and supplemental curricula likely form the foundation of what most Americans know of the history of their country and the groups who populate it (Fitzgerald, 1979; Lerner et al., 1993; Moreau, 2004). While knowledge of different cultural groups may be available to students who live in diverse communities or attend diverse schools, without personal exposure to various groups, textbooks become a major source of information. Exposure to American Indians is particularly

J. H. Williams & W. D. Bokhorst-Heng (Eds.), (Re)Constructing Memory: Textbooks, Identity, Nation, and State, 49–72.

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(Re)Constructing Memory: Textbooks, Identity, Nation, and State

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This book engages readers in thirteen conversations presented by authors from around the world regarding the role that textbooks play in helping readers imagine membership in the nation. Authors' voices come from a variety of contexts – some historical, some contemporary, some providing analyses over time. But they all consider the changing portrayal of diversity, belonging and exclusion in multiethnic and diverse societies where silenced, invisible, marginalized members have struggled to make their voices heard and to have their identities incorporated into the national narrative. The authors discuss portrayals of past exclusions around religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, as they look at the shifting boundaries of insider and outsider. This book is thus about "who we are" not only demographically, but also in terms of the past, especially how and whether we teach discredited pasts through textbooks. The concluding chapters provides ways forward in thinking about what can be done to promote curricula that are more inclusive, critical and positively bonding, in increasingly larger and more inclusive contexts.

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