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Multiculturalism and Human Rights in Civic Education: The Case of British Columbia, Canada

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Abstract

Background: This paper considers how textbooks resolve the tension between contradictory goals of promoting a cohesive national identity while teaching respect and equality among diverse social groups in British Columbia (B.C.), Canada.

Purpose: The article presents preliminary results of a larger study examining the content of required civic education textbooks in Canada to examine whether and how notions of national identity incorporate the principles of human rights and multiculturalism.

Sample: The study draws on curricular material for required high school social science courses in B.C. The sample includes textbooks starting the first year of high school (Grade 8) and covers each year through high school graduation (Grade 12). The central analyses examine the content of seventeen core textbooks approved by the provincial government for these courses.

Design and methods: This research systematically examines the content of currently-approved textbooks for high school social science courses in B.C. A questionnaire designed using the principles of content

analysis measures textbook emphases on content relevant to human rights, multiculturalism, and national identity.

Results: This study finds that traditional notions of national identity are reshaped in response to the rise of emphases on human rights and multiculturalism. Rather than depicting national identity as stemming from a common race, ethnicity, language, or history, the government pursues four main strategies to simultaneously promote human rights, multiculturalism, and a shared national identity: (1) framing human rights and multiculturalism as part of national identity, (2) using pedagogical approaches that promote multiple perspectives, (3) celebrating social and scientific figures and accomplishments as a main source of national pride, and (4) drawing on exogenous sources to affirm state legitimacy.

Conclusion: In a context that values diversity and human rights, contemporary sources of national identity can stem from facets of society that can transcend many cultures and emphasize organizational aspects of the nation-state. A main implication is that the inclusion of principles of human rights and multiculturalism into civic education is changing traditional conceptions of national identity.

Keywords: national identity; civic education; human rights; multiculturalism; diversity; textbooks

Multiculturalism and Human Rights in Civic Education: The Case of British Columbia, Canada

Historically, mass schooling emerged to transmit a dominant social, cultural and political system to young people, with the goal of creating a cohesive nation-state. Today, however, in addition to seeking to promote a unified national identity, education systems increasingly emphasize human rights and diversity. This paper aims to consider how textbooks resolve the tension between contradictory goals of promoting a cohesive national identity while teaching respect and equality among diverse social groups in a globalized world. It focuses on a case where this conflict is particularly extreme – British Columbia (B.C.), Canada. B.C. has one of the highest proportions of foreign born residents in the developed world; in 2006 more than one quarter of the overall population (27.5%) was born outside the country (B.C. Statistics 2006). Canada was the first country to adopt official multicultural policies in the 1970s, and indigenous groups have self-government rights and protections found in few other countries in the world. At the same time, students in B.C. can graduate from high school without taking a course in Canadian History. In such a complex social context, the question of what it means to be “Canadian” and how to balance diversity with national unity is one of increasing concern for citizens, scholars, educators, and policy-makers. And in a global context of increasing migration and globalization, the parallel question is rapidly becoming relevant for countries worldwide.

In order to consider the issue of promoting a national identity while simultaneously advancing universal principles of human rights and multiculturalism, this study conducts a systematic content analysis of seventeen textbooks used in required high school social science courses in B.C. Textbook analysis provides a lens through which a nation’s intended curriculum can be examined, providing insight into the envisioned relationship between the student, other citizens, and the state. Textbooks serve as a vehicle for disseminating and reinforcing dominant cultural norms by conveying an understanding “of the rules of society as well as norms of living with other people” (Schissler 1989, p. 81).

Mass school systems emerged as a key mechanism for creating solidarity with one’s nation-state (cf. Dewey 1966; Bendix 1964; Tyack 1974). Traditional civic education was designed to create a homogenous group of citizens participating in, and loyal to, a polity with distinct national boundaries (Fitzgerald 1979; Anderson 1991; Moreau 2004). In other words, conventional civic education courses are intended to foster two main principles: first, that members of ‘the nation’ share a common history,

ethno-cultural tradition, and territory; and second, that these shared characteristics make the national citizens of one country sharply, inherently distinct from the citizens of other states.

Recent scholarship, however, provides evidence that the role of education in constructing national citizens is changing (Torney-Purta et al 1999, 2001; McDonough and Feinberg 2003; Schissler and Soysal 2005; Keating et al 2009). Studies show the emergence of a model of civics education that extends notions of citizenship beyond the boundaries of the nation-state to particular regions (see, for example, Soysal 2002 and the collection of papers on European citizenship education in the 2009 special issue of the *Journal of Curriculum Studies*) and globally (e.g. Osler and Starkey 2003; Ong 2004). Others emphasize the incorporation of notions of diversity into civic education (e.g. Torres 1998; Banks 2004; Stevick and Levison 2006). In a cross-national study that provides the foundation for this case of B.C., Meyer et al (2010) examine 465 social science textbooks from 69 countries and find an increase in human rights discourse in the period since 1970. These new facets of civic education are often referred to variously as global, cosmopolitan, multicultural, supra-, or post- national models of citizenship.¹ These models share an emphasis on the celebration of equality between individuals and diverse groups regardless of national membership. Changes are often attributed to rapid advances in information technology that drive economic and political globalization (Torres 1998) and to the emergence of social and cultural globalization (Robertson 1992; Meyer et al 1992; Meyer et al 1997).

While the above studies indicate the incorporation of diversity and human rights into civic education, very little research explicitly addresses the interaction between these new principles and traditional notions of national identity. The theoretical argument advanced here is that rather than a linear transition from traditional national citizenship (celebrating homogeneity within borders and distinctiveness between countries) to global or multicultural citizenship (celebrating equality of all individuals and diverse groups), or a simple layering of new ideas on top of old, there is a complex interaction between old and new. The ‘nationalization’ of principles of human rights and multiculturalism leads to some translation of ideas of human rights and multiculturalism, making them less universal and more rooted in the organizational structure of the state (Philippou et al 2009). At the same time, the conception of national citizenship is not disappearing, but being reshaped by the contemporary context (Keating 2009). I seek to contribute to this nascent body of literature that illustrates the blurring of boundaries between notions of national identity, diversity, and human rights.

¹ Kymlicka and Norman (1994) provide an excellent discussion of the political theory underlying conventional and multicultural models of citizenship.

Before proceeding, it is necessary to clarify some key terms used loosely above. I use the words “multicultural” and “diversity” interchangeably to refer to the broad idea of providing public support and recognition for (often marginalized) groups, including national minorities, indigenous peoples, and newer immigrant groups, to express and maintain distinct identities and practices. “Multicultural” is the preferred vocabulary in Canada. It appears frequently in textbooks and policy documents, and is used virtually synonymously with “diversity”, which also appears regularly. Terms like “promoting diversity” or “protecting cultural minorities” are also commonly used by international organizations to capture the ideas of multiculturalism (Kymlicka 2007). Canadian books rarely use the word “intercultural”, which is more commonly found in European discourse. The next section of the paper discusses the data and methods in more depth and provides an overview of social science education in B.C.

Data and Methods

Data collection took place in the School of Education Library at the University of British Columbia. A total of 80 Canadian textbooks were analyzed by the author and three research assistants, and seventeen are used in the analysis presented here.² These seventeen books represent all but two of the approved core textbooks that are currently being used for all required social science courses in B.C. high schools.³

Each textbook was analyzed using questionnaire (available from the author) designed to systematically capture content related to human rights, diversity, and national identity. The coding procedures closely follow guidelines in Krippendorff (2004) and draw on his definition of content analysis as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (p. 18). Much of the questionnaire was originally developed for a cross-national and longitudinal project that examined over 450 textbooks from more than 65 countries (Bromley 2009; Bromley et al 2009; Meyer et al 2010; Bromley and Russell 2010). Questions in the original coding document were adjusted to address issues related specifically to Canada, such as discussions of French-speaking groups. It took approximately one to one and a half hours to analyze each book. A check of

² The 63 books excluded from this study are partial samples of approved books in other Canadian provinces and from earlier time periods (back to the late 1800s). Given the gaps in the sample of textbooks from other provinces and over time, they are not considered here, but it is a goal to include these texts in future research through additional rounds of data collection.

³ Librarians were unable to locate one textbook for Social Studies 11 and the core textbook for First Nations 12 during the data collection period. In the case of First Nations 12, however, the entire teacher’s guide with textbook excerpts is available on-line and the author was able to draw some material for discussion and comparison. The B.C. First Nations 12 Teacher’s Guide is available on-line at: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/resdocs/bcfns.htm>. Accessed on July 27, 2010.

inter-rater reliability, where the same book was coded by the author and a research assistant, showed an overall level of agreement of 82%.

The structure of social science education in B.C. and the process for evaluating and approving textbooks is clearly laid out in publicly available documents. Textbooks are aligned with the provincial standards for each grade level and, to ensure approved books fall within the established framework, they go through a rigorous evaluation process detailed on-line (B.C. Ministry of Education 2002). Currently approved textbooks meet standards developed in 1997 and 2005, which are laid out in documents called “Integrated Resource Packages”. The provincial Ministry of Education also provides an overview of the formal process used to develop the curricular frameworks (B.C. Ministry of Education 2008). High school begins in grade 8 and students must take a course called “Social Studies” each year through grade 10. In their final two years, in order to graduate students must take one social science course from a choice of three options, “Social Studies 11”, “Civics 11”, or “First Nations 12”, and must pass a provincial exam in the course. Initial descriptive analyses showed a notable difference in the level of relevant discourse in books for grades 8-10 versus those for grade 11, and a distinction is made between lower grades (8-10) and upper level courses (grade 11) in the findings reported below.

Findings

In this section I argue four main areas that facilitate the integration of principles of human rights and multiculturalism with conceptions of a shared national identity: (1) framing human rights and multiculturalism as part of national identity, (2) using pedagogical approaches that promote multiple perspectives, (3) celebrating social and scientific figures and accomplishments as the source of national pride, and (4) drawing on exogenous sources to affirm state legitimacy.

Human Rights and Multiculturalism as National Identity

Human rights are discussed in all of the core textbooks for grade 11, and one quarter of those for grades 8 to 10. In the majority of cases, human rights are framed as a component of contemporary Canadian national society. Fifty-three percent of the books sampled (i.e. 9 textbooks) discuss human rights as stemming from Canadian law or social tradition. Five of these also indicate international law as integral to human rights, but the other four textbooks emphasize a solely national view. For example, a Social Studies 11 textbook with a national view of human rights states:

Human Rights

Rights that are so basic that they belong to all human beings are called human rights. In Canada, these rights are described and protected by two pieces of federal legislation, the Canadian Bill of Rights, 1960, and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982. (Smith et al 1996, p. 271)

In other words, human rights belong to “all human beings”, but the national government has legal authority over extending these rights to Canadian citizens. Similarly, in a social studies textbook for grade 11 students are asked to complete a set of questions describing how the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects human rights (Cranny and Moles 2001, p. 299). The most recent edition of this book also contains a section entitled “Federal and Provincial Human Rights Legislation” that provides students with extensive details on national human rights. It first discusses the federal Canadian Human Rights Act and Canadian Human Rights Commission and then discusses B.C.:

The British Columbia Human Rights Code

Most human rights complaints in British Columbia fall under the British Columbia Human Rights Code. The Code protects citizens against discrimination on the grounds of age (19 to 65), ancestry, colour, family or marital status, physical or mental disability, place of origin, political belief, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation. (Cranny 2010, p. 335)

The example above nationalizes human rights into the Canadian context entirely and, interestingly, explicitly states the B.C. Human Rights Code protects “citizens” (rather than universalistic notions of protecting all people). In this case, the line between citizenship rights and human rights is extremely blurred. Clearly, human rights are incorporated into civic education as a national issue. This strategy requires striking a careful balance between national and international aspects of human rights, a task this textbook takes on by also including discussions of the global dimensions of human rights. Focusing too much on national formulations can detract from the universal character of human rights; whereas focusing solely on international aspects can make human rights seem like a distant and unenforceable set of values with little direct relevance to students and no connection to national character.

Like human rights, multiculturalism is similarly emphasized as an integral element of Canadian national values. For instance, roughly 80% of books for grade 11 discuss the rights of indigenous groups, French-speakers, and other racial or ethnic minorities, and about 40% of the books for grades 8-10 have similar discussions. Considered alone, the textbook discussions about human rights tend to convey only a thin form of multiculturalism, indicating membership in the state, but lacking in emotive dimensions of the relationship between diverse groups and the ‘nation’, akin to the thin forms of cosmopolitan citizenship in

Nussbaum (1996) and Kymlicka (2001). But multicultural emphases in B.C. also extend far beyond the lens of “rights”. For example, when asked to characterize the relationship between national identity and ethnicity, over three-quarters of the time (for 13 out of 17 books) researchers selected the following option: “national ethnicities are discussed, and there are more than two (e.g. Anglo-Saxon, French, other European, Indigenous, Indian, Chinese cultures are all considered vital part of Canadian national identity and Canadian culture).”

The textbooks also tend to emphasize Canada’s official multiculturalism policy as a valued part of national society. This finding reiterates a trend documented in existing research on Canadian civic education (Esses and Gardner 1996; Joshee 2004), including the results of Canada’s participation in Phase I of the IEA Civic Education Project (Sears et al 1999). For example, a grade 11 text defines multiculturalism as “a policy of encouraging the expression of cultures of many ethnic groups that make up a country’s population” and states:

In 1971, an official policy of multiculturalism was introduced by Prime Minister Trudeau. The policy would...“support and encourage the various cultures and ethnic groups that give structure and vitality to our society. They will be encouraged to share their cultural expressions and values with other Canadians and so contribute to a richer life for us all.” –House of Commons (Cranny and Moles 2001, p. 204-205)

In a slightly different example, the broad principle of multiculturalism is still celebrated as part of national identity, but there is recognition of a tension between minority and majority cultures. The 2010 version of a grade 11 textbook describes a controversial case where a religious practice, carrying a Sikh ceremonial dagger, came into conflict with safety regulations in a Montreal high school (shown in Figure 1). The text describes an extensive legal battle ending in the Supreme Court of Canada. The conclusion, and the lesson for students, is that religious freedom is a central value of Canadian society. It tells the story this way:



Religious Freedom in a Multicultural Society

In 2001, when he was 12, Gurbaj Singh Multani’s ceremonial dagger, his kirpan, fell out of its cloth holder in the schoolyard. The school board in Montréal banned Gurbaj from bringing his kirpan to school because it was considered a weapon. Gurbaj argued that it was not a weapon but a religious symbol, which he as an orthodox Sikh was required to wear at all times. After numerous court cases, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled unanimously that the ban on kirpans was a violation of Gurbaj’s religious freedom as guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. “Religious tolerance is a very important value of Canadian society,” wrote Justice Louise Charron. The decision, however, does allow school boards to impose restrictions on how kirpans can be worn to protect the safety of students.

Figure 1: Upholding religious rights of minority groups

Source: Social Studies 11. Cranny 2010, p. 332

The example of carrying a ceremonial dagger in schools illustrates that the incorporation of human rights and diversity as an element of national identity is not depicted as entirely unproblematic or conflict-free. Numerous textbooks examine the tensions between majority and minority cultures. But the central point is that textbooks repeatedly frame multiculturalism as a national value, despite these controversies.

Promoting Multiple Perspectives

In the examples described above, the substantive content of textbooks explicitly links human rights and multiculturalism to Canadian national identity. Another way of supporting this integration is through pedagogical practices that implicitly foster principles of multiculturalism and human rights while promoting nation-building.

If a single historical narrative is presented as the nation’s “true” story then the experiences and contributions of diverse minority cultural groups are often excluded. In contrast, if the story of the past or social events is told through the eyes of different people and students are taught to weigh evidence about historical narratives with a critical eye, then diverse experiences are legitimated as part of the national experience. In response to a question asking researchers to distinguish between these two visions of knowledge, not a single book in this study could be characterized as having a traditional historical

narrative where students are presented with unproblematic facts that they are expected to learn and remember. Instead, contemporary textbooks emphasize teaching students to respect the opinions of others, form their own opinions about historical events, and contain many open-ended questions where there is no clear right or wrong answer. This trend towards an emphasis on student-centered pedagogies both supports and is deepened by emphases on human rights and diversity. It also has a long history related to the rise of progressive pedagogy and is increasing in textbooks from countries around the world (Bromley et al 2009).

An example of the student-centered pedagogies that promote multiple interpretations of historical events is found in a grade 11 social studies text. It has an entire chapter on historical inquiry and urges students even more strongly to view history as socially constructed:

Like most people, you probably accept the history you read as fact – a true representation of what happened in the past. However, history is not just a series of facts; it is also a story. The version of history you read in this text might not be accepted by everyone who reads it... The drawback to a national story is that it may not be everyone's story. This is especially true in a country like Canada, with its many groups of people and points of view. (Fielding and Evans 2001, p. 11)

Endowing students with the authority to make decisions about historical knowledge and emphasizing multiple perspectives empowers individuals and gives legitimacy to diversity. In this way, national stories rest more in the hands of 'regular' people and diverse cultures than a dominant group of ethno-cultural elites.

Celebrating Social and Scientific Figures and Accomplishments as the Source of National Pride

The focus on multiple perspectives described above has important implications for the types of individuals and actions celebrated as national heroes or figures. Rather than emphasizing the narratives of official government leaders or a particular ethno-cultural story, Canadian national cohesiveness is built around stories of the accomplishments of 'regular' people and aspects of national progress that can span multiple cultures, such as science and sports. 'Regular' people who actively participate in national society are held up as exemplary Canadian citizens in textbooks. For example, one textbook defines "good citizens" as ordinary people who work hard to improve their community. It uses an elaborate story about an elderly man named Ron Fox who helped others in his neighborhood. Students are encouraged to seek out the "Ron Fox" of their community using certain criteria and give them a "Good Citizens"

Award”. Suggested criteria for evaluating ‘good citizenship’, include “this person encourages multiculturalism” and “promotes good relations in the community.”

The Good Citizen’s Award

[Ron Fox] is an ordinary citizen who has made a special effort to help someone else. Many people like Ron Fox are never recognized and honoured. Every community has ordinary people who have helped others or made a special contribution. Do some detective work to find the good citizens in your community. (Cruxton and Walker 1993, p. 34)

It is easy to imagine a similar activity where students would be asked to select a great political or military leader to receive a citizenship award, but the emphasis here is on regular individuals working in their community. Along these lines, ‘regular’ Canadians appear in textbooks with stories celebrating their civic accomplishments. One figure commonly depicted as a Canadian hero is Terry Fox, a man with one leg who tried to run across Canada to raise money for cancer, described by a Social Studies 11 textbook in Figure 3. Numerous books contain discussions and photos of Fox, as well as other social figures such as Craig Kielburger, a young boy who started a non-governmental organization to fight child labor.



In 1978, 21-year-old Terry Fox, who had lost a leg to cancer, decided to run across Canada. The goal of his run, which he called the Marathon of Hope, was to raise money for cancer research. Terry started his run by dipping his leg into the Atlantic Ocean in St. John’s, Newfoundland, on April 12, 1980. He intended to run all the way to the Pacific Ocean on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Terry set himself a grueling pace—42 kilometres per day. By the time Terry reached Southern Ontario, crowds of people were lining his route cheering him on. When Terry was approaching Thunder Bay, he was forced to stop his run due to pains in his chest. He went to the hospital where doctors discovered that the cancer had spread to his lungs. He died in 1981, and was mourned across the country. Canadians honour Terry Fox with annual Terry Fox runs and have donated hundreds of millions of dollars to the cause he championed. He is considered one of Canada’s heroes.

Figure 2: Terry Fox as a national hero

Source: Social Studies 11. Cranny 2010, p. 249

Alongside social heroes as a source of national pride, emphases on scientific achievements rank high. Some texts describe Canada’s first astronaut, Marc Garneau, and others tell the story of Julie Payette, a female astronaut, and of the Canadarm (a Canadian-developed 15 meter long arm used to work on the

outside of the international space station). Discussing Julie Payette, textbook for grade 10 describes how these technological developments are associated with national pride and a Canadian identity:

When asked what she felt were the best parts of her trip, Payette said the first was a chance to see the Earth from above. The second was to operate the Canadarm. *This is something I've grown up with as a Canadian. It's part of our heritage. This technology has performed so well since the beginning of the Space Shuttle program.* (Deir and Fielding 2000, p. 353, emphasis in original)

In contrast to recognizing these social heroes as national figures, a more traditional approach might focus on glorifying military figures and a willingness to fight for one's country. For example, a Social Studies 11 textbook describes Canadian participation in the Boer War. It says:

Four Canadians were awarded the Victoria Cross. One man, Private R. R. Thompson of the Royal Canadian Regiment, was decorated with the Queen's Scarf, an honor so rare that only four men had ever received it. (Fielding and Evans, p. 31)

Relative to social and scientific heroes, however, military figures are rarely emphasized as national icons in contemporary books. Stories of heroism and progress remain central to national citizenship narratives, but these are framed as social and athletic accomplishments, rather than older national myths related to territorial expansion and ethno-cultural superiority. Thus, symbols of national pride are not rooted in the actions of political and/or military elite. Instead, they focus on shared symbols of national identity and pride rooted in community involvement and science.

Exogenous Affirmation of State Legitimacy

An additional source of national pride and identity stems from the relationship of Canada and Canadians to the international community. The textbooks have large sections emphasizing Canada's accomplishments in the world, serving both a source of pride and as a source of legitimacy for the country. For example, one book states:

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the UN in December 1948. John Humphrey, a professor of law at McGill University in Montreal, was one of the authors of the original draft of this document. The Declaration was the inspiration for Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which itself is now a model for other countries. (Fielding and Evans 2001, p. 274)

This excerpt points to Canadian involvement in creating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the fact that other countries use the Canadian constitution as a model as sources of national pride, and draws on the Declaration as an external source legitimating Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This bidirectional pattern of demonstrating pride in contributing to the international community and also drawing legitimacy from conforming to world principles is found in other cases as well. For instance, another text focuses on Canada's role in drafting the UN Charter and the work of Canadian peacekeepers:

Canada and the United Nations

In October 1945, delegates from 51 countries signed a charter that established the United Nations (UN). It was based on the idea of collective security, as the League of Nations had been before it. Canada played an important part in drafting its Charter.... Canada has been a strong supporter of the United Nations since its creation and has aided refugees from war or natural disasters and worked on development projects—such as building schools, dams, and roads—in various countries. Canadian peacekeepers have been involved in almost every UN operation since the start of these missions in 1956. (Cranny 2010, p. 198)

Textbooks routinely depict international involvement through peacekeeping and aid as simultaneously a characteristic of national identity and a source of standing in the international community. One text states:

Canada and Canadians have international respect. Canadians believe that human rights are a basic requirement for all people, not just for those living in Canada. Despite its small population and limited resources Canadian troops and peacekeepers are sent to all parts of the world by such organizations as the United Nations to maintain and preserve peace in countries that are troubled by violence and bloodshed. Aid in the form of food, money, equipment, and other basic services are part of Canada's contribution to people facing crisis and trouble. This continues to illustrate the image that Canadians are a generous and caring people. These efforts have earned Canada the admiration and respect of those living in other countries. (Bolotta 2000, p. xi)

Overall, these findings illustrate that human rights and multiculturalism are a central component of national civic education in B.C. and reveal four interconnected ways that conceptions of national identity, promoting diversity, and human rights are blending. First, human rights and diversity are explicitly celebrated as an aspect of national identity. Second, pedagogical approaches that emphasize multiple perspectives validate the stories of a diverse range of groups as part of national history. Related, the main celebrated heroes of national culture are regular people and social or scientific figures rather than military and political figures. Lastly, the country's legitimacy as a sovereign actor is depicted as stemming the

international community rather than the construction of an imagined community bounded by “natural” ethno-cultural divisions.

Discussion and Conclusion

The case of B.C. illustrates that in contemporary textbooks human rights and diversity are incorporated into the meaning of national identity. Even in this case, however, there are clear areas for improvement. The relatively low emphasis on human rights and diversity in grades 8-10 is surprising, especially as the curricular standards for social studies 8-10 states a main goal is for students to “demonstrate respect for human equality and cultural diversity” (B.C. Ministry of Education 1997, p. 1). Many books also include strong language delineating between “us” and “them”. Externally, the United States is commonly depicted as an economic and cultural threat. A grade 11 book asks students “Has it [Canada] become a colony of the United States instead of a colony of Britain?” (Fielding and Evans 2001, p. 456). Another book says, “most Canadians see themselves emphatically as ‘distinctly not Americans’” (Bolotta 2000, p. 374). Some books describe minority groups inside Canada as “un-Canadian”. A striking example is found in discussing a Supreme Court decision to allow Sikh officers in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to wear turbans and beards as part of the uniform.

Research suggests that many White Canadians are uncomfortable when immigrants continue to speak their own language, wear their traditional dress, and practice their “un-Canadian” ways. Journalist Diane Francis greeted the RCMP dress code decision with these remarks: “To me, allowing a mounted policeman to wear a turban is equivalent to letting someone change the words of our anthem or fly our flag with a fleur de lis or stars and stripes in the corner.” (Fielding and Evans 2001, p. 458-459)

In conclusion, this research shows that while there are ongoing tensions between the construction of national identity and emphases on human rights and multiculturalism, the boundaries between these ideas are blurring. There remains much room for improvement in incorporating emphases on human rights and diversity in lower grade levels and limiting the continued presence of creating internal and external ‘others’ in the discourse. Furthermore, research suggests that principles of multiculturalism and human rights are not always fully embraced in practice (Joshee 2004). But the main contribution of this study is to show that textbooks in B.C. provide an example of how human rights and multiculturalism are becoming integrated into the construction of a national character. Human rights and diversity are celebrated as part of the ‘national’, and pedagogical techniques to promote multiple perspectives and empower individual citizens are a main focus. At the same time, ethno-cultural discussions that focus on

a single group are generally avoided and areas of national pride focus on social and scientific accomplishments that are relatively free of deep cultural associations. As an additional source of legitimacy, textbooks in B.C. strongly emphasize Canada's contributions in the international arena and the country draws validation from international participation. These findings illustrate that rather than a transition from an older, national model of civic education to a new, global model, there is a blending and integration of conceptions of national identity, multiculturalism, and human rights.

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