

# Individual and Collective Social Justice Education: Comparing Emphases on Human Rights and Social Movements in Textbooks Worldwide

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Strategies for promoting social justice include both individualistic approaches, rooted in the universalistic philosophy of human rights, and collectivist approaches, such as group- or issue-specific rights advocated by various social movements. The expansion of human rights education is well documented, but less attention has been given to education for or about other social movements. Drawing on a content analysis of 556 secondary school textbooks from 80 countries between 1950 and 2011, we compare and contrast the rise of emphases on social movements and human rights. Our analyses reveal a marginalized emphasis on social movements in secondary school civics and social studies curricula, while history books are more likely to include discussions of social movements. An implication of these findings is that in formal structures of education, such as textbooks, emphases on social movements may be relegated to matters of historical record, rather than treated as part of contemporary, active citizenship.

## Introduction

In the wake of World War II, the principles of human rights formed the foundation for international organizing aimed at preventing violations of each individual's basic dignity. While the institutionalization of human rights norms began with legal reforms, it since expanded to become an educational enterprise that is routinely incorporated into national school curricula, policies, educational materials, and teaching practices (Ramirez et al. 2007; Kennelly and Llwellyn 2011; Bourn 2014). But human rights, a concept rooted in individualistic philosophies of equality and action, is only one part of a larger trend toward emphases on justice. While increased references to human rights could mean that the texts encourage more rights-based active citizenship, textbooks have been found to avoid concrete references to controversial historical events and discuss citizenship in abstract and nationalistic terms, especially in conflict-affected countries (Russell and Tiplic 2014). In this article, we compare the rise of discourse about human rights with trends in a related, but more collective, vision of justice: namely, discourse about group- and issue-specific social movements. Discussions of human rights may

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be framed as abstract and individualistic, whereas discussions of social movements are likely to be linked to collective action and more concrete events, often with some element of conflict. This article compares emphases on human rights and social movements in textbooks, particularly examining whether social movement discussions are emphasized less in subjects aimed at contemporary citizenship training (i.e., civics and social studies) and more in history where they can be historicized and depoliticized.

Drawing on a content analysis of 556 secondary school textbooks from 80 countries between 1950 and 2011, we find evidence that discussions of human rights appear in the curricula in a strikingly different pattern than discussions of social movements about women, labor/workers, national independence, civic/civil rights, and race/ethnicity. Social movements are significantly more emphasized in history textbooks than in civics and social studies textbooks; by contrast, human rights are emphasized more in civics and social studies textbooks. One exception is the environmental movement, which we discuss later. Although emphases on both social movements and human rights increase over time, the more collectivist approaches (social movements) and the more individualistic approaches (human rights) have heterogeneous diffusion patterns.

Our findings make several contributions to knowledge about human rights, social movements, and education. First, empirically we provide the first cross-national, longitudinal analysis of the extent to which a range of social movements are discussed in textbooks. Despite the global importance of social movements in shaping societies and the existence of a large field of social movement scholarship, there has been little work examining the extent to which movements are incorporated into formal education. Curricular materials, such as textbooks, serve as a legitimated form of knowledge in schools, and debates over what to include are heavily contested (Apple and Christian-Smith 1991; Sleeter and Grant 1991). As such, textbooks are often resistant to change. For example, research has shown that in the United States the treatment of diversity has not improved in textbooks, even after efforts to “multiculturalize” textbooks in the 1960s and the 1970s (Sleeter and Grant 1991).

Second, we provide evidence that when social movements are covered, the discussions are significantly more often found in history textbooks. A possible explanation of our findings is that social movements are historicized in an effort to depoliticize their influence on future citizens because social movements are often key challengers of state authority. Due to the legitimacy afforded textbooks, studies have also shown textbook content can support teachers’ authority in teaching human rights norms and allow them to intervene in situations of abuse (Bajaj 2011b). For educators seeking to strengthen emphases on social justice, the findings reveal an important area for expansion: discussions of collective action via social movements are largely excluded

from the subjects aimed at building contemporary citizenship skills—the very areas where they might provide the most impact.

### **Background**

Widespread atrocities during World War II led to international negotiations to create standards to define and govern the protection of human rights. These expanding legal and political reforms signaled an emphasis on respect for equality among individuals (Elliott 2007) and protections for diverse groups. In addition to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), dozens of regional and international treaties related to the protection of human rights and the rights of diverse groups were adopted. Often these conventions called for legal, political, and social changes within countries, such as the establishment of national human rights institutions (Koo and Ramirez 2009).

The globalization and expansion of rights to a range of historically marginalized groups stem from multiple, overlapping influences. Perhaps most dramatically, World War II established a precedent of intervention in cases of egregious human rights violations into the sovereign affairs of another nation, elevating rights to a matter of international rather than solely national concern (Donnelly 1992; Levy and Sznajder 2004). At the start of the modern era, rights were seen as originating from membership in a national community. These rights and responsibilities were incorporated through national citizenship. After World War II, rights became at once more abstract and more universal as they became intrinsically linked to the human condition. Additionally, nationalism, which was thought to have contributed to the war, was largely delegitimized (Kaplan 2006) and weakened the idea of the absolute sovereignty of the nation-state. Yet, while the nation-state retained great authority, it often became rooted in administrative capabilities (Evans et al. 1985) rather than primordial attachment linked to bloodline ethnicity (Brubaker 1999) and territory (Sassen 2008). However, recent events worldwide have stoked a debate over whether the current authority of the nation-state is changing once again toward an increase in ethnonationalism and more authoritarian states (Merkel 2010; Dupuy et al. 2016; Bonikowski 2017). We examine emphases on individual human rights and more collective action to protect and expand the rights of many groups and interests through social movements in history, civics, and social studies textbooks over time.

### **Hypotheses**

Over time education became recognized as a front to support efforts to enshrine human rights principles and protect historically marginalized groups. Attention in education turned to the role of textbooks in promoting

intolerance and hypernationalism (He 2009; Russell and Bajaj 2015). For example, UNESCO organized multiple textbook conferences and meetings geared at preventing atrocities, leading to documents such as the 1975 “Recommendations for History and Geography Textbooks in the Federal Republic of Germany and the People’s Republic of Poland” (Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research 2018).

As the conviction that schools could be sites for peace and tolerance grew, related new methods and pedagogical approaches proliferated (Bajaj 2017). Human rights education (HRE) evolved into three main models. These models include: (1) education about human rights, (2) education through human rights, and (3) transformative human rights education (Tibbitts 2002, 2017). The first of the three models, education about human rights, often focuses on ideas of global citizenship (Bajaj 2011a). The primary focus of this model is on information, and a connection with social change is somewhat weak (Tibbitts 2002). This model, referred to by Felisa Tibbitts as the Values and Awareness Model, may be noncritical toward its own society and power structures (Tibbitts 2017). The second model, education through human rights, seeks to strengthen the link between HRE and social change by introducing practice and accountability for those who have the opportunity to enforce or enact human rights protections. This model seeks to reduce human rights abuses by providing education and training to individuals who have the potential to make change through their professional roles (Tibbitts 2017). The third model, transformative human rights education, explicitly focuses on power dynamics and engages with critical pedagogy. The goal of the transformative model is that the student, the educator, and the larger community develop a critical consciousness about human rights abuses and commit to their prevention (Tibbitts 2002; Bajaj 2011a). This model is specifically focused on social change and activism (Tibbitts 2017).

Both scholars and practitioners recognize that these three models of HRE may not be equally accessible to mass education. Transformative human rights education challenges educators to implement a pedagogy critical of traditional structures while teaching in a traditional classroom and school structure. While many educators express a desire in engaging with critical pedagogy, they struggle with how to implement a transformational human rights pedagogy in existing school settings (Suárez 2007), even when they have sufficient content knowledge (Bickmore 2014). The incorporation of HRE into mass education systems is not universally achieved (Suárez 2007; Coysh 2014), and this may be especially true for transformational HRE. Nonetheless, HRE is widely seen as a critical component of promoting human rights and preventing abuses today (Russell and Suárez 2017).

Unlike HRE, which expanded with a great deal of cooperation from governments and intergovernment organizations, the history of social movement education has a more conflicted relationship stemming from the general

“contentious politics” approach of many movements (Tarrow 2011). The first large-scale movements to systematically advocate for using education as a tool for radical social change were led by activists facing oppressive dictatorial regimes. Initially, these social movements advocated by eminent figures, such as Antonio Gramsci and Paulo Freire, focused on informal education.<sup>1</sup> These early activists shunned public education systems as an arm of the oppressive state and focused on developing popular education initiatives outside of formal systems (Tarlau 2015).

Over time, social activism has expanded from a narrow range of marginalized groups working outside established institutions into more mainstream activities, including the efforts around human rights described above. Movements have become more professionalized (McCarthy and Zald 1973; Bartley 2007). Professionalization tames the contentious nature of movement politics to some degree, making it more feasible to pursue movement goals within established entities such as foundations or formal education institutions (Minkoff 1999). For example, in the United States the radical black power movement transformed into black studies programs in universities (Rojas 2007). The expansion and transformation of social movement activity in wider society helps facilitate its inclusion into formal schooling.

Overall, our arguments emerge from a theoretical position that posits education systems shift to reflect broader world cultural trends of increasing emphases on the rights of individuals and marginalized groups (Meyer et al. 1997). A number of prior studies support our argument that the traditional model of civic education is changing in response to world cultural trends that focus attention on human equality and diversity (Schissler and Soysal 2005; Bromley and Lerch 2018). There has been an evolving framework from rights as obligations that are granted to citizens of the state to an idea that people are global citizens, whose rights come from their individual human status (Ramirez 1997; Moon and Koo 2011; Buckner and Russell 2013). Other research shows the emergence of new forms of civic education that emphasizes social movements, rights discourse, and critical thinking (Mintrop 2003; Torney-Purta et al. 2001). Given the empirical rise in these trends and the linkage associated with the decline of the nation-state and relative empowerment of individuals and minority groups posited by world society theory, we hypothesize this leads to an increased likelihood of both social movements and human rights being discussed in textbooks over time, and a correlation with each other. Stated formally:

**H1a:** Discussions of human rights and other social movements in textbooks will increase over time.

<sup>1</sup> Finger (1989); Holford (1995); O’Cadiz et al. (1998); Holst (2002).

**H1b:** Discussions of human rights will be associated with discussions of social movements, and discussions of social movements will be associated with discussions of human rights.

Our second set of arguments then shifts to consider variation, where we are likely to find emphases on human rights and social movements in textbooks. Human rights and social movements share a number of features: they have become central components of contemporary world society, they represent a shift away from traditional ideas of rights as embedded in a relationship between citizens and states, and they empower individuals and historically marginalized groups. But they have fundamental differences as well. Human rights assert a universal equality for all persons that can coexist with proper government behavior, while social movements emphasize the collective rights of diverse groups and are linked to coordinating action that is often at odds with visions of a cohesive nation-state or even clashes with the government. These core differences in conceptions of social justice between human rights and other movements may shape their emergence in national curricula.

The tension between the rights of individuals and the rights of groups is evident in the earliest days of an international human rights movement. In a detailed history of human rights, Micheline Ishay comes to the definition that human rights are “rights held by individuals simply because they are part of the human species . . . . They are universal in content” (2008, 3). Under this frame, there are no specific protections imagined for any particular marginalized group. Neither the UN Charter nor the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) contain special provisions for the protection of minorities. An initial draft of the UDHR included an article emphasizing minority rights, but it was intentionally excluded from the final document (Morsink 1999). Subsequent treaties related to the rights of special groups emerged later but were created as independent entities.

Political theorists also wrestle with elemental differences between individual and collective principles of social justice, explaining how “existing human rights standards are simply unable to resolve the most important and controversial questions relating to cultural minorities” (Kymlicka 1995, 18). Many real-world controversies illustrate the tensions between collective rights and individual rights that unfold in schools. In France there are recurring tensions of the issue of whether students should be able to wear visible religious symbols such as head scarfs. In the United States there are controversies over whether students should be obligated to learn theories of evolution. Tensions and debates occur about whether taxpayer-funded education in their own language should be provided to ethnic minorities or immigrants in many countries. In these cases, the principles of human rights do not offer clear answers to how nation-states should resolve questions about collective group rights.

Given a universalistic nature of human rights, proper governments can uphold themselves as advocates of human rights as part of general citizenship rights (Stacy 2009). Human rights curricula can encourage students to be active and responsible citizens through their individual actions (Kennelly and Llwellyn 2011; Bryan 2014). Social movements are potentially more contentious. Movements are collective actions to push for the rights of specific groups, which is often in direct conflict with the state and/or other groups or issues in society. A movement to explicitly support a particular identity or issue groups can easily exacerbate political tensions and generate backlash or opposition.

One way to depoliticize or tame the potentially problematic elements of social movements is to depict them as part of a historical memory rather than discussing collective action as a contemporary goal of good citizens. By framing social movements as historical events that have ended, and the challenges overcome, the state may discourage further investigation of current injustices related to ethnoracial divisions, gender, labor, or the environment. In studies of US history, the inclusion of the farmworkers movement and the civil rights movement is “incorporated into the narrative arc as historical agents and organizations that helped solve ethnoracial and labor conflicts . . . . It is a history of success, seldom if at all struggle or failure . . . absorbing animosity, conflict, and struggle into a story of progress in achieving American ideals” (VanSledright 2008, 114). Ongoing struggles over labor rights, or the current actions of movements such as Black Lives Matter, can be ignored in these historical accounts of progress.

Another example of the historical taming of social movements can be seen in a Canadian textbook (Garrad et al. 1980) seen in figure 1. In this history text, students are presented with a vision of the Canadian women’s movement as inclusive, where through suffrage, progress was achieved, and women were incorporated into membership of the nation-state. There is no discussion linking the historical description of the women’s movement to contemporary biases, or a call for future action for increased equality.

We suggest that human rights can be framed as part of contemporary citizenship in partnership with the nation-state because of its general focus on encouraging students to be active and globally responsible citizens, within which all individuals have equal rights, powers, and responsibilities (Ramirez et al. 2007; Meyer et al. 2010; Kennelly and Llwellyn 2011). In contrast, social movements may be more politically contentious. Thus, human rights may be more likely to appear in civics and social studies texts focused on present and future citizenship, while social movements may be emphasized more in history textbooks than in civics or social studies.

**H2a:** Curricular discussions of social movements will appear more in history textbooks (relative to civics/social studies textbooks).

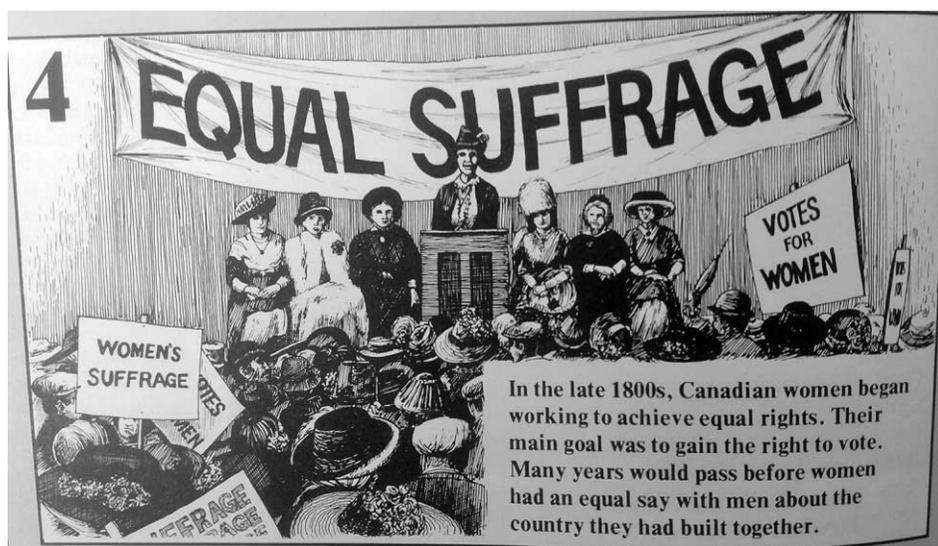


FIG. 1.—Example of social movement as a historical event. SOURCE.—Garrad et al. 1980, 246.

**H2b:** Curricular discussions of human rights will appear less in history textbooks (relative to civics/social studies textbooks).

As a third argument, we further explore the issue of depoliticization by considering the pedagogical style of the book. The adoption of student-centered pedagogy is a central tenet in activist theories of how both human rights and social movements will achieve their goals through education. Freire critiques traditional, passive pedagogy, and argues for pedagogy that treats learners as cocreators of knowledge (2000). Critical pedagogical styles have been found to be more effective at engaging learners and promoting understanding of human rights issues (Tibbitts 2017) and is a key component in the transformative model of education. Figure 2 provides an example of a moderately student-centered discussion of social movements from a social studies textbook from the United States (Armento et al. 1991). This textbook describes a local movement, makes connections between social movements and civil rights, and asks students to think analytically or critically about the text. However, even in this instance the textbook falls short of fully engaging with a critical pedagogy as the critical thinking question asks only about opportunities that minorities have today and does not question the ongoing difficulties that minorities and workers experience.

An important caveat to our argument is that we expect an association with progressive pedagogy only to hold in a world where HRE and social movement education are being used to promote social change. It is also plausible

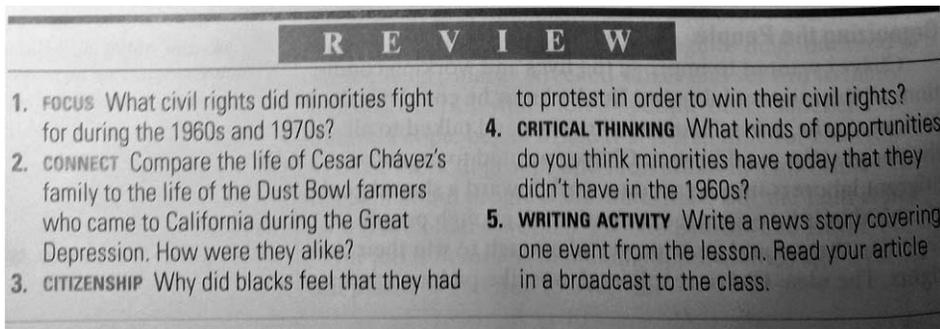


FIG. 2.—Example of a moderately student-centered pedagogy for teaching social movements. SOURCE.—Armento et al. 1991, 274.

that textbooks emphasize education “about” human rights and social movements more than education “for” transformative social justice. A more critical view would argue that human rights is a sensitive subject and using an active and empowering pedagogical style may provoke challenges that educators and leaders would prefer to avoid.

HRE has become highly professionalized (Suárez 2007), and textbook discussions of human rights are often stylized and abstract (Meyer et al. 2010). While embracing the idea of critical pedagogy, human rights professionals themselves have expressed difficulties with implementing large-scale transformational pedagogy (Suárez 2007; Cassidy et al. 2014). Although HRE and social movement education have the potential to be used “as a tool of resistance to challenge systematic inequality and injustice and reconstruct social relations” (Coysh 2014, 90), it is also possible to depict them as historical and/or abstract concepts without directly helping students link the principles to local or national struggles—for example, by pointing to abuses in other countries (Alexander 2009). As a concrete example, a textbook from Malaŵi shows how human rights can be taught using an abstract and nonstudent-centered approach. The text states “human rights were largely ignored in Malaŵi for many years. Since 1994, however, and the arrival of the multi-party system, there has been a resurgence of interest in the subject. The Constitution of 1994 was very progressive in the Bill of Rights it contained. In order to safeguard these rights two institutions were set up by the Constitution: the position of the Ombudsman and Human Rights Commission. There are also a number of nongovernmental organizations which are active in promoting awareness of and respect for human rights” (Fabiano and Maganga 2002, 91). The text vaguely describes how human rights were “ignored” and then experienced a “resurgence of interest,” but there is no direct guidance for students about the nature of violations and/or what citizens

did or could do. Instead, the language conveys a rather unproblematic and legalistic conformity to the global trend of adopting national human rights institutions (Koo and Ramirez 2009). Furthermore, it does so using highly passive language that can be a tool for glossing over difficult pasts (Jiménez 2016; Gross and Terra 2018).

Despite the caveat, both HRE advocates and social movement activists argue that if we are to achieve social justice, education needs to foster critical thinking and action through an empowering pedagogical style. Given textbooks could avoid such discussions entirely, we expect that if social movements and human rights are discussed, they will likely be associated with the preferred student-centered pedagogy. Both discussions of human rights and social movements should be more likely to occur in texts that use an active and empowering pedagogical style.

**H3:** Social movements and human rights are more likely to appear in textbooks that use a more student-centered pedagogical style.

## Data and Methods

### *Data Collection and Analyses*

We use data consisting of 556 secondary school textbooks from 80 countries published between 1950 and 2011. Textbooks are broadly distributed across countries, such that no country makes up more than five percent of the sample. The data were collected as part of a multiyear study of global changes in textbook content over time. Studies related to the project have analyzed global shifts in textbook content over time in a range of topics, including human rights (Meyer et al. 2010), environmentalism (Bromley et al. 2011a), globalization (Buckner and Russell 2013), and individual agency (Lerch et al. 2017).

The coding protocol was developed to examine changes in rights emphases over time, rather than to focus on social movements. It would be useful to have a more comprehensive list of social movements (e.g., peace movement, the anti-nuclear movement, the anti-free trade movements, student movements). However, the measures selected here encompass all that are available from the existing data. Given the extensive resources required to gather such a data set, it is not plausible to collect additional textbook level indicators. At a minimum, the consistency of our results provides compelling evidence to stimulate future data collection efforts and research related to social movement education at the secondary level.

Textbooks provide a relevant tool for understanding how human rights education and social movements are legitimated in formal education systems. They represent a highly institutionalized and legitimated form of school knowledge, and as dominant instructional media, they reflect how educational emphases of human rights and social movements change over time. Naturally,

there will be great variation in practice. Textbooks may sit unused, despite containing excellent social justice material; or conservative books may be ignored by progressive teachers. Nonetheless, formal textbook content is important because it provides teachers with support. They are core features of the intended curriculum and are particularly useful for our purposes because students and their families often defer to the authority and legitimacy of the material contained in printed textbooks (Bajaj 2011b). Several studies have found that teachers are not confident in teaching human rights (Howe et al. 2010; Cassidy et al. 2014). Beyond supporting teachers, the combined legitimacy of teacher and textbook authority can result in substantial changes not only to student thinking but even to their parents and wider community.

The majority of the textbooks were coded from the collection at the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in Braunschweig, Germany. This library includes more than 70,000 history, social science, and geography textbooks from 158 countries worldwide. Additional textbooks were coded from the libraries at Stanford University and from participating researchers around the world.<sup>2</sup>

The difficulty of acquiring textbooks cross-nationally limits our sample. It is not a representative sample from all countries, nor is it necessarily representative of the most widely used textbooks within countries. In most countries, there is little information about textbooks used decades ago. We also have a varied number of books in each country over time, and a varied distribution of books within country across important features such as subject; thus, we use regression models to hold constant relevant features and use models where the estimated error accounts for unevenness in the sample. More details on the distribution of the sample is available by request from the authors. We do not claim to generalize to countries or time periods not represented in the data set. Nevertheless, the remarkably patterned findings in this data set are striking and, at a minimum, they indicate promising directions for future research going in depth for specific countries.

Coding procedures followed a standardized protocol developed by a research group. All coders were trained to ensure interrater reliability, and attempts were made to use native speaking coders whenever possible. As a result of adapting the coding process to obtain reliability across coders, the questions call for little to no interpretation on the coders' part. Consequently, our measures underestimate the full extent of education about human rights and social movements in textbooks, giving us only a baseline sense of the

<sup>2</sup> At Stanford, textbooks were gathered from the Hanna collection at the Hoover Institute, which houses approximately 1,000 textbooks from around the world. Textbooks were also culled from the Cubberley Education Library's collection and the Stanford Teachers Education Program Library (STEP).

extent to which education about and/or for human rights and social movements are incorporated as a feature of mass schooling.

Because textbooks are nested within countries in our data, we employ two-level mixed effects logistic regression models that account for the variation at both the country level and the textbook level (Raudenbush and Bryk 2002). Our two outcome variables are binary indicators for each textbook capturing whether they mention any social movement and whether they mention human rights; the items are not mutually exclusive, textbooks can mention both items or neither (the correlation between the two outcomes is 0.21). In our main analyses, the log odds of the outcomes are modeled as a linear combination of the predictor variables when data are clustered or there are both fixed and random effects. We include a random-intercept to control for the combined effects of all omitted time-invariant country-level variables.

#### *Dependent Variables*

Our social movement outcome is a dichotomous indicator that captures whether any of the following six movements are mentioned: (1) women's movement; (2) labor movement; (3) civil rights movements; (4) environmental movement; (5) racial, ethnic, or religious movements; and (6) national independence movements. The textbook had to use the exact phrase of "movement" to be counted in order to ensure interrater reliability. A textbook that mentions all six social movements and one that mentions just one movement both get a score of "1" on our dependent variable. As a robustness check, we also created a continuous index of the sum of these six items (a range of 0 to 6 and a mean of 1.44), but the results were similar and for ease of comparison (with a dichotomous indicator for human rights) we report the findings for the binary outcome for social movement emphases. Coders were asked to only count a "discussion" as including a paragraph or more.

The human rights outcome is measured using a dichotomous indicator for whether human rights are discussed in at least a paragraph or not. The textbook had to use the exact phrase "human rights" to be coded as discussing human rights to ensure interrater reliability. We thus likely underestimate the full amount of discussion in textbooks if left to individual interpretation and provide a conservative focus on discourse. As a robustness check, we compare our findings with an alternative continuous index used in prior research (Meyer et al. 2010). The index consists of four indicators of explicit human rights discourse, which included: (1) the amount of explicit discussion of human rights (0–5 scale), (2) the number of international human rights documents mentioned, (3) a reference to any national human rights documents or national governmental bodies, or (4) a discussion of any major human rights disaster (e.g., the Holocaust) conceived in human rights terms

(Meyer et al. 2010). Results were similar using the index or dichotomous indicator. The human rights outcome and social movement outcome are not mutually exclusive, and texts were coded for both human rights and social movements if both outcomes occurred.

#### *Independent and Control Variables*

Our models include variables that capture the properties of both textbooks and countries. We begin with an indicator for the year a book was published, using dichotomous variables for each decade rather than linear year. This measure is used as an initial assessment of our first hypothesis. We also include it in subsequent models as a control in case an increase might be due to an increase in movements available to mention as time goes on.

Our second argument is that social movements appear less in subjects focused on contemporary citizenship (i.e., civics and social studies) and are instead included as part of a historical narrative (i.e., history). The key indicator we use to measure this is whether a textbook is a history text (versus a civics or social studies text).

The next indicator is a measure of how student-centered the book's pedagogical style is; we use this to assess our third hypothesis arguing that a progressive pedagogical style will be positively associated with discussions of social movements and human rights. This indicator is a composite of variables that reflect the degree to which the textbook uses a pedagogical approach that appeals to students' interests, capacities, and choices. Our measure is similar to one constructed for prior research (Bromley et al. 2011b) and includes the following eight items: (1) presence of learner-friendly pictures, (2) presence and extent of open-ended questions, (3) presence and extent of role-playing exercises, (4) extent to which the text includes multiple perspectives, (5) extent to which the text encourages students to use strategies in making conclusions about historical events or social issues, (6) whether the text suggests ways for students to get involved (e.g., join a political party, volunteering), (7) the extent to which children are discussed as marginalized or victims, and (8) whether children are discussed as having rights. These items have a Cronbach's alpha of 0.67 and a factor analysis identifies just one factor with an Eigenvalue above 1.0. We use regression scoring on the rotated factor matrix to create a continuous index.

At the textbook-level we include controls for geography textbooks, grade level, and book length (number of pages logged). At the country-level, we retain a measure of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (logged) (World Bank Group 2008), and control for political democracy from the Polity IV database that ranges from  $-10$  (strongly autocratic) to  $+10$  (strongly democratic) (Marshall and Jaggers 2010). Finally, we retain a measure for geographic region. A table showing descriptive statistics for all indicators is available upon request.

### Findings and Discussion

Descriptively, we see an increase in discussions of movements and human rights over time, as shown in figure 3. The increase in human rights occurs mainly since the 1990s, a finding that replicates results of a cross-national study of textbooks, which used a different sample (Meyer et al. 2010). Ours is the first large-scale, quantitative assessment of the extent to which social movements appear in textbooks. Results show an increase, which is consistent with our first hypothesis that there is an increased likelihood of social movements and human rights being covered in textbooks over the time period.

A closer analysis of the type of social movement discussed shows that the early increase is driven by a handful of movements, as shown in figure 4. The environmental movement is mentioned far less frequently than other movements, perhaps due to a relative newness. Additionally, national independence movements are the most discussed, which provides descriptive evidence that social movements may be focused on discussions of a nation-state's shared historical narrative, as argued in hypothesis 2. By focusing on instances of collective action that are historical accounts of national independence instead of the present-day activities of a variety of movements, the texts may relegate social movements as being part of the historical past instead of contemporary citizenship and future social change.

We now consider which textbooks are more likely to mention human rights and social movements and examine whether the descriptive trends above hold up after accounting for other relevant factors. Table 1 presents the results of logistic regression models for our two outcomes; models 1 through

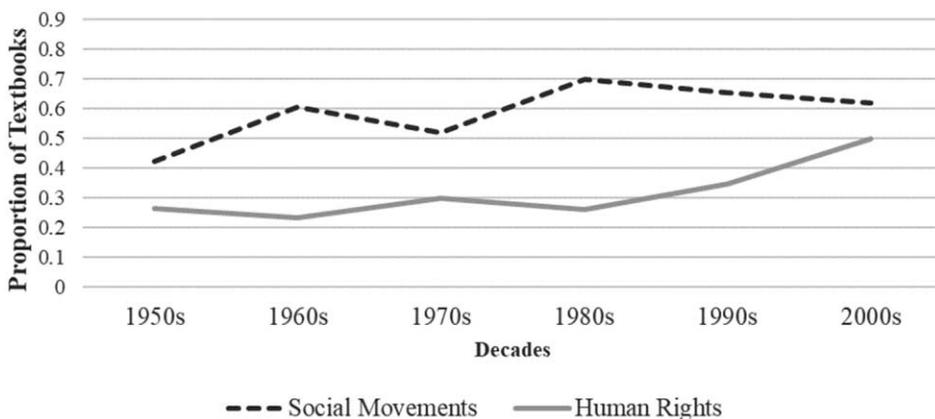


FIG. 3.—Proportion of textbooks that mention social movements and human rights over time. NOTE.—Sample sizes are 1950s ( $n = 57$ ), 1960s ( $n = 86$ ), 1970s ( $n = 104$ ), 1980s ( $n = 103$ ), 1990s ( $n = 118$ ), 2000s ( $n = 174$ ).

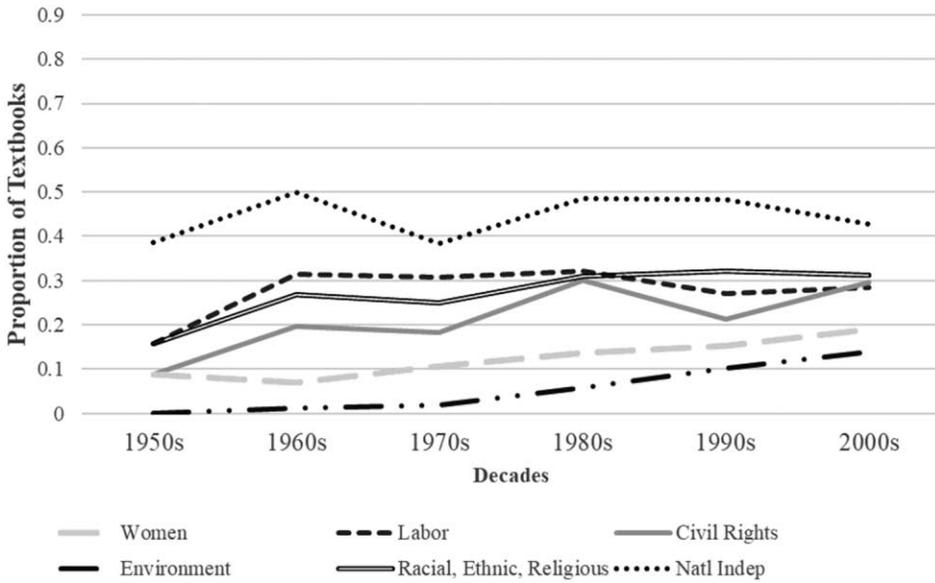


FIG. 4.—Proportion of textbooks mentioning each type of social movement over time. NOTE.—Sample sizes in each decade are 1950s ( $n = 57$ ), 1960s ( $n = 86$ ), 1970s ( $n = 104$ ), 1980s ( $n = 103$ ), 1990s ( $n = 118$ ), 2000s ( $n = 174$ ).

3 examine the likelihood of mentioning any social movement and models 4 through 6 present findings for mentions of human rights. We controlled for several important textbook and country features. Geography textbooks are less likely to discuss social movements and human rights than history, civics, or social studies textbooks. Grade level and book length are at times significant for mentioning human rights and social movements.<sup>3</sup> At the country level, national wealth (measured by GDP per capita) did not influence the likelihood of mentioning human rights or social movements, while more democratic countries are more likely to mention human rights, in line with an earlier study (Meyer et al. 2010). Regionally, East Asia is significantly more likely than the west to mention human rights and social movements and Sub-Saharan Africa is more likely to mention human rights. This finding is in line with earlier research (see also Moon and Koo [2011] for a detailed analysis of related emphases in South Korean textbooks). We return to the issue of regional variation in our discussion of robustness checks.

Shifting to consider hypothesis 1a, which argued both social movements and human rights increase over time, we find support across the models. After

<sup>3</sup> Base models with just the set of control variables are available upon request; the results are in the same direction and of similar statistical significance as the results presented here.

INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATION

TABLE 1  
LOGISTIC REGRESSION PREDICTING MENTIONS OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS  
AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN TEXTBOOKS ( $n = 556$ )

	Social Movements (1)	Social Movements (2)	Social Movements (3)	Human Rights (4)	Human Rights (5)	Human Rights (6)
1970s	.485 (.374)	.740 <sup>+</sup> (.397)	.710 <sup>+</sup> (.399)	.562 (.388)	.453 (.402)	.351 (.413)
1980s	1.160** (.378)	1.291** (.407)	1.242** (.410)	.201 (.377)	.257 (.390)	.113 (.402)
1990s	1.014** (.378)	1.188** (.404)	1.088** (.416)	.518 (.372)	.562 (.384)	.248 (.409)
2000s	.750* (.374)	1.032** (.400)	.899* (.420)	1.167** (.362)	1.102** (.376)	.693 <sup>+</sup> (.409)
Human rights	.359 (.260)	.779** (.286)	.744** (.288)			
Social movements				.395 (.258)	.805** (.283)	.802** (.292)
Civics		-1.023** (.373)	-.987** (.376)		1.195** (.371)	1.305*** (.383)
History		1.292*** (.335)	1.342*** (.340)		-.434 (.299)	-.335 (.309)
Student-centered			.279 (.270)			.787** (.273)
Latin America	.089 (.607)	-.177 (.605)	-.227 (.611)	1.029 <sup>+</sup> (.535)	1.307* (.549)	1.158 <sup>+</sup> (.594)
East Asia	2.686** (1.032)	2.154* (1.018)	2.114* (1.021)	2.888** (.892)	3.199*** (.900)	3.126** (.973)
Central Europe	.402 (.552)	-.065 (.552)	-.070 (.555)	.645 (.485)	.948 <sup>+</sup> (.498)	.951 <sup>+</sup> (.538)
Sub-Saharan Africa	.252 (.762)	-.453 (.768)	-.508 (.773)	1.816** (.670)	2.257** (.690)	2.127** (.743)
Middle East	.114 (.685)	-.395 (.691)	-.423 (.695)	.565 (.604)	.929 (.616)	.843 (.666)
Geography	-2.608*** (.327)	-2.090*** (.388)	-2.033*** (.393)	-2.585*** (.440)	-3.383*** (.493)	-2.273*** (.507)
Book length	1.187*** (.290)	.619* (.303)	.647* (.306)	.064 (.258)	.440 (.281)	.537 <sup>+</sup> (.292)
Grade level	.415 (.259)	.448 (.274)	.503 <sup>+</sup> (.280)	.477 <sup>+</sup> (.247)	.436 <sup>+</sup> (.255)	.553* (.265)
GDP per capita	-.044 (.178)	-.136 (.181)	-.143 (.182)	.281 <sup>+</sup> (.164)	.335* (.167)	.304 <sup>+</sup> (.177)
Political democracy	.002 (2.144)	.008 (2.199)	.003 (2.223)	.074** (1.846)	.068* (2.040)	.056 <sup>+</sup> (2.167)
Constant	-5.995** (2.144)	-2.592 (2.199)	-2.858 (2.223)	-4.961** (1.846)	-7.939*** (2.040)	-8.720*** (2.167)
Chi-squared	91.26	112.59	111.95	80.62	92.56	93.37

NOTE.—Standard errors in parentheses.

<sup>+</sup>  $P < .1$ .

\*  $P < .05$ .

\*\*  $P < .01$ .

\*\*\*  $P < .001$ .

controlling for relevant textbook and country level factors, the models indicate a positive association between time and discussions. There is a rather steady increase for social movements in each decade relative to the earliest published books in our sample, while discussions of human rights see an increase only in

recent years. Conceptually, our argument of increases over time are rooted in the assumption that both human rights and social movement emphases are part of the construction of a broader world culture that asserts expanded human capabilities in general (Meyer 2010) leading to some inconsistencies and tensions (such as the contradictions that can arise between individual and collective rights; see Kymlicka 1995).

As additional support for hypothesis 1b, we see that textbooks that mention social movements are significantly more likely to mention human rights and textbooks that mention human rights are significantly more likely to mention social movements. We posit that both sorts of emphases are related to the emergence of a globalized liberal world culture that has expanded over time (Meyer et al. 1997). An interesting area for future research, although beyond the scope of our arguments here, would be to examine whether there is convergence or divergence in social movement and human rights discourse over time.

Moving past the broad similarity of worldwide expansion of these two types of discourses over time, a strikingly divergent pattern emerges when we turn to models 2 and 4, comparing history, civics, and social studies texts (in the models, social studies texts are the reference for comparison). In line with hypothesis 2a, social movements appear significantly more often in history textbooks and are significantly less likely to be discussed in social studies and civics textbooks. This is in contrast to human rights, which (as argued in hypothesis 2b) appear significantly most often in civics textbooks. As a school subject, history appeared earlier than civics or social studies in the evolution of schooling and was intended to convey a shared story of the nation-state as part of the political socialization process. In contrast, social studies was initially conceived as a general social science curriculum encompassing multiple topics (Hertzberg 1981). From the outset social studies was concerned with developing active citizens (Atwood 1982; Jorgensen 2014), and is thus oriented more toward the present and future. We argue that emphases on social movements appear more often in history textbooks versus civics or social studies because relegating them to a historical past renders acts of collective action more distant to students.

To illustrate the contrast between the two outcomes, figure 5 shows the proportion of books that mention social movements and human rights by subject. We speculated that social movements are relegated to historical discussions because of their potentially destabilizing effects for society and the government. Given the conservative nature of textbooks as an instructional technology, instances of collective action that challenge society on a large-scale can thus be tamed through framing them as a past, historical event rather than a contemporary and future strategy for being an active citizen and promoting social change. An example of historical framing can be seen in this Mexican textbook. The text states “the governments that followed that of

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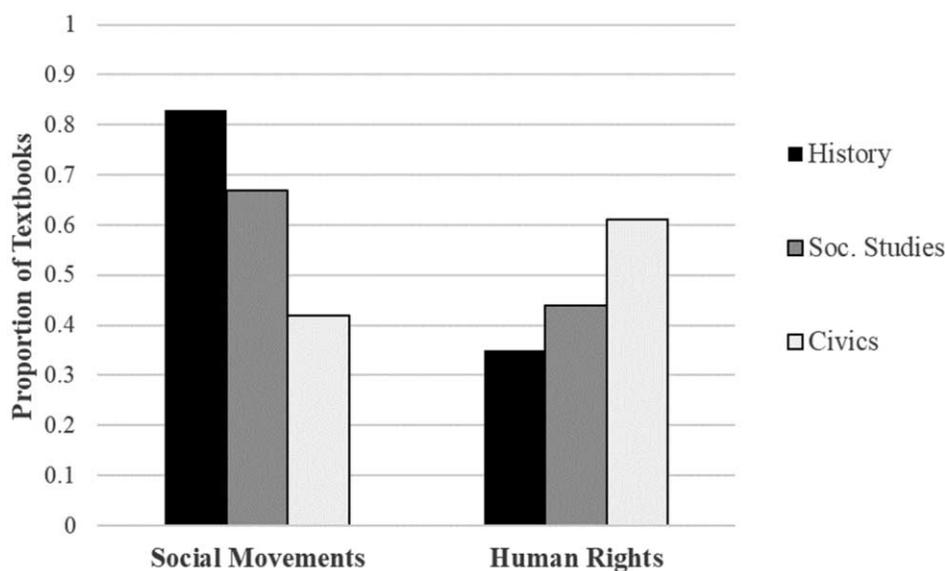


FIG. 5.—Proportion of history, civics, and social studies books mentioning social movements and human rights ( $n = 557$ ).

Lázaro Cárdenas intended to suppress the reforms of the peasant and labor groups during the years after the revolution. Those governments promoted a development project based on the political control of the State Party and the official trade unions. Various political, social and trade union movements demonstrated against the project” (López et al. 2007, 278).<sup>4</sup> This example treats the social movements as a list of historical events, which challenged previous political regimes, but were not linked to the current society.

Our third hypothesis argued that both social movements and human rights would appear in textbooks that are pedagogically more student-centered, with the caveat that this should only be expected if HRE and social movement education was working optimally to promote social justice. While human rights are discussed more often in books that use a more student-centered approach, we do not see a significant association for social movements. Given there is no positive association between student-centered pedagogy and social movements, one implication is that it may point to an important area for growth if education about social movements is intended to promote student engagement in collective action. Related, it is plausible that student-centered pedagogy is tied to a more individualistic world view that is aligned with human rights far more than social movements. Perhaps alternative pedagogies, aimed at collective

<sup>4</sup> The text has been translated by the authors from the original Spanish text.

TABLE 2  
EACH SOCIAL MOVEMENT ( $n = 556$ )

	Women's Movement (1)	National Indep. Movements (2)	Civil Rights Movements (3)	Racial, Ethnic, Religious (4)	Labor Movement (5)	Environ. Movement (6)
1970s	.250 (.499)	.355 (.387)	.644 (.494)	.180 (.435)	.795* (.404)	.722 (1.257)
1980s	.617 (.488)	.309 (.373)	1.089* (.466)	.968* (.421)	.708 (.402)	2.158 (1.108)
1990s	.390 (.481)	.567 (.386)	.015 (.484)	.367 (.435)	.129 (.415)	2.742* (1.078)
2000s	.511 (.472)	.366 (.395)	.462 (.484)	.393 (.443)	.228 (.414)	2.740* (1.078)
Civics	-.406 (.468)	-.774* (.372)	-1.267** (.472)	-.058 (.439)	-.266 (.395)	-.163 (.549)
History	.635 (.361)	1.447*** (.298)	.551 (.347)	1.406*** (.345)	.893** (.308)	-1.109* (.494)
Student-centered	.681* (.266)	.111 (.249)	1.097*** (.303)	.109 (.276)	.494* (.251)	.240 (.345)
Human rights	.555 (.298)	.575* (.262)	1.131*** (.317)	1.001*** (.291)	.537* (.266)	-.009 (.411)
Latin America	-1.197 (.618)	-.185 (.553)	-.734 (.792)	.771 (.750)	-.707 (.524)	.388 (.686)
East Asia	-.584 (.620)	1.052 (.834)	.164 (1.171)	2.121 (1.123)	.475 (.750)	2.344*** (.700)
Central Europe	-.643 (.485)	-.242 (.504)	-.173 (.722)	.931 (.681)	-.149 (.478)	.212 (.592)
Sub-Saharan Africa	.118 (.638)	-.607 (.693)	-.641 (.986)	1.266 (.924)	-1.642* (.684)	.735 (.771)
Middle East	-1.915** (.707)	.007 (.619)	.608 (.876)	.037 (.828)	-2.234*** (.641)	-.382 (.824)
Geography	-1.279* (.575)	-1.932*** (.431)	-4.160*** (1.103)	-.697 (.484)	-2.601*** (.605)	.103 (.507)
Book length	.465 (.322)	.562* (.285)	.777* (.368)	.972** (.336)	1.392*** (.331)	.350 (.420)
Grade level	.426 (.290)	.422 (.257)	1.061*** (.308)	.404 (.278)	.225 (.262)	.233 (.389)
GDP per capita	.521** (.192)	-.456** (.166)	-.183 (.227)	.108 (.207)	-.019 (.167)	.295 (.230)
Political democracy	-.040 (.032)	.013 (.026)	.006 (.033)	.043 (.031)	-.020 (.027)	-.027 (.045)
Constant	-9.657*** (2.415)	-.382 (2.011)	-5.944* (2.794)	-9.578*** (2.609)	-8.810*** (2.169)	-9.197** (3.010)
Chi-squared	72.09	109.16	74.49	78.78	88.26	38.55

NOTE.—Standard errors in parentheses.

\*  $P < .05$ .

\*\*  $P < .01$ .

\*\*\*  $P < .001$ .

action and organizing, and focused on building group solidarity rather than individual empowerment is needed to support education in textbooks for social movements (e.g., contrast the empowering learning approaches in Freire versus ideas of “21st century skills”).

We also examined whether our findings remained consistent for each social movement individually (see table 2). In line with hypothesis 1, the year coefficients are largely positive, although rarely significant due to the highly reduced prevalence of each outcome. In line with hypothesis 2a, history textbooks tend to discuss movements more than civics and social studies textbooks—with the notable exception of the environmental movement. One possible interpretation is that the environmental movement is conceptually more similar to human rights—more abstract and universally applicable as a matter of good citizenship. Human rights and the environmental movement may be more concerned with nonpolitical institutional spheres, such as families, corporations, and science (Offe 1985). However, environmental politics can be highly divisive as they often intersect with land use rights of minority groups (especially indigenous peoples) and clash with pro-business factions. The social basis, organizational forms, and action repertoires in recent waves of mobilization have led scholars to critique distinctions between these types of movements (Eggert and Giugni 2012). As we are unable to disentangle the newness of the environmental movement from its possible conceptual difference from other movements, we leave it as part of our general social movement index. Removing it has no bearing on our main findings since so few books in the sample mention the environmental movement (seven percent). Related to hypothesis 3, student-centered pedagogy remains positively associated with mentions of social movements; in the case of both the women’s movement and civil rights movements the relationship is significant. Overall, the emergence of discourse about individual movements appears in roughly similar patterns.

#### *Robustness Checks and Further Analyses*

We considered a number of additional analyses to check the robustness of our findings and delve deeper into understanding our results. We looked at many more textbook and country level predictors than presented above, but found few other significant associations with our outcomes, and none that changed our main findings. At the country level, we examined regime durability (Marshall and Jaggers 2010), internal conflict (Norris 2008), ethnic fractionalization (Norris 2008), freedom of the press (Norris 2008), physical integrity violations (Cingranelli et al. 2014), and a measure of the representation of women in politics (Cingranelli et al. 2014). None of these indicators change the findings for our core arguments, and for the most part they are insignificant or inconsistently significant in analyses. In addition, country-level data are often missing systematically for older observations and for less developed countries, so including these indicators creates substantial reductions

and changes in the sample. At the textbook level, we also considered whether the material was presented in a chronological method, whether there was evidence of international involvement in textbook publishing (as an indicator of educational globalization), and whether the book was published by the government. We found no consistent results and including these measures does not shape our core findings.

In further models not shown (available upon request), we explored the possibility that our findings are explained not by the social movement aspects of our indicators but rather by something about the group or issue in general. Perhaps it is not the case that the women's movement is discussed in history textbooks, but rather that women in general tend to be depicted in history textbooks. For four items (women, race/ethnicity, labor, and the environment) the coding also included questions about whether the text discusses this group in general (not related to social movements specifically). For two types of social movements, national independence movements and civil rights movements, there were no parallel measures. In all cases, the findings hold. These topics are only historicized when social movement language is used.

Finally, it seemed plausible that results were influenced by the varied curricular structures in each country or changes over time in countries. For example, a country that does not have history as a subject may then discuss social movements in civics textbooks. As noted earlier, it is unfortunately implausible to obtain representative samples for each country over time, but as an exploratory effort we conducted a set of analyses at the regional level looking at interactions between the different subjects and region. Given our regions contain varied proportions of each book by subject (e.g., in our sample the proportion of history textbooks ranges from 57 percent in the West to 37 percent in East Asia), perhaps these differences reflect varied curricular structures that drive some of the findings. Related, it is plausible that there are changes over time in different parts of the world; thus, we also looked at interactions between the world regions and time periods, as well as between subjects and time periods. Prior studies note a decline in the prevalence of emphases on history in curricular policies worldwide over time (Wong 1991) and also that the nature of history education has grown and changed, and narratives have become increasingly homogenized and part of a rationalized social science discourse (Frank et al. 2000). However, we found little statistical evidence of heterogeneous associations by region-time or subject-time, and none of these more nuanced analyses changed our core conclusions (models available upon request).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> For the region-subject interaction analyses we found no statistical differences for our social movement outcome. But textbooks that are from the West *and* history books are relatively more likely to emphasize human rights (versus emphases on human rights in books that do not have both those qualities). Moreover, textbooks from the West *and* civics books are relatively less likely to discuss human rights (versus emphases on human rights in books that do not have both those qualities). The findings suggest at least two

## Conclusion

Our study presents one of the first-large scale efforts to document and understand the extent to which textbooks worldwide emphasize social movements. We situate our findings for social movement emphases in textbooks within existing knowledge about the rise of emphases on human rights. A great deal more could be done to build on this research and, given the dearth of cross-national, longitudinal empirical evidence about education on social movements, we provide a foundation for these future directions.

We show two key elements of variation in emphases on social movements in education at the secondary school level. First, they are increasingly discussed over time, similarly to human rights. Second, they are more likely to be taught as part of a historical past, appearing in history books more than civics or social studies books. Additionally, we find no significant association between using a more student-centered pedagogical style in the textbook and emphases on social movements. One possibility is that this indicates that social movements are mainly taught in a historical frame, rather than a frame meant to have contemporary and future applications. Human rights, in contrast, is seen as a contemporary issue (Cassidy et al. 2014), emerging most in civics books and is linked to a student-centered pedagogy. Having social movements depoliticized, even while being mentioned more in textbooks, provides evidence of “inconsistencies and tensions” in world culture (Meyer et al. 1997, 172). These tensions emerge between the rights of individuals and the rights of groups, and emphasis placed on the role of individual and collective action (Bromley and Lerch 2018).

The findings that social movements are mostly discussed in history textbooks and discussions are not closely correlated with student-centered pedagogy have important implications for movement activists. As discussions of social movements and human rights increasingly appear in curricula for youth, it will often be the earliest exposure that many have to social movements and likely shapes their vision of collective action. By regulating movements mainly to the submissive past, there may be a missing link between collective, transformative educational goals and the formal curricula found in textbooks. By reducing the exposure to collective action in subjects focused on building citizenship, the textbooks may be predisposing students to think, act, and imagine themselves and others in more individualistic ways thus prescribing specific types of civic action that do not fully incorporate collective understandings of social justice.

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possibilities, both of which may be at play: First, western countries not only historicize social movements, relative to non-Western countries they also historicize human rights to a greater extent. Second, it seems plausible that western countries have a longer history of human rights as a cultural matter and thus are more likely to discuss the issue in history texts relative to non-Western countries. These findings suggest future research along these lines would be valuable, particularly by comparing country case studies.

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