

Narratives in School History Textbooks: An East African Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This study conducts an in-depth analysis of the content in school history textbooks from East Africa, assessing the potential impact on socio-political stability in the region. Citing relevant research on multiperspectivity, the authors recognize the significant role power dynamics play in shaping historical narratives, suggesting that colonial structures and the dominance of majority groups continue to influence these dynamics. The paper provides a historical context by reviewing the educational systems in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. It particularly notes the challenges faced by the Muslim minority group, who often study in public schools managed by Christian entities or the government. These institutions predominantly use secular history textbooks, potentially biasing the learning experience. The researchers employed content analysis to qualitatively evaluate the data in these textbooks. The results indicated a biased presentation of historical events, overemphasizing the colonial and post-colonial periods while underrepresenting the influence of Islam in East Africa. The authors argue that this selective approach to history education might intensify existing socio-political tensions in the region. They advocate for a more balanced and inclusive representation of historical events in educational materials to foster a more equitable learning environment.

KEYWORDS

East Africa, History education, Islam, school textbooks, content analysis

The selection of historical narratives for primary and high school history textbooks is a contentious issue in numerous societies, as evidenced by recent scholarship.¹ Despite challenges facing the teaching of history in schools, particularly in East Africa, studies have predominantly focused on administrative and pedagogical challenges, with scant attention directed towards the content of history textbooks.² The reluctance to address textbook content can be attributed, in part, to the politicization of revising history textbook content and the ongoing debate regarding the veracity of historical narratives. Additionally, school history textbooks have been criticized for their inability to tackle highly sensitive issues or change historical narratives.³ However, a revision of school curricula in East Africa, beginning with Tanzania in 2005, Kenya in 2017, and Uganda in 2020, has prompted an expectation of a concurrent revision in the content of school history textbooks. The adoption of a Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in East African countries represents a significant shift in the focus on nurturing learners' critical thinking skills.⁴ This is consistent with the view that history education promotes truth, remembrance, and critical thinking as crucial tools in facilitating transitional justice in divided societies.⁵ Consequently, school history textbooks are expected to begin exploring sensitive issues and offering diverse perspectives. To this end, research on textbook narratives, with an emphasis on identifying and incorporating marginalized histories, is urgently required.

The teaching of history in primary and secondary schools is intended to convey national narratives about the past, promote active citizenship, and imbue students with positive values, among other goals.⁶ However, the education system has both overt and covert agendas, which may lead to the omission of certain historical events for the sake of convenience. As such, there is a need to conduct research on the narratives in history textbooks. By analyzing the texts in school history books, patterns can be identified that could suggest the existence of omitted or incomplete historical narratives. This study assumes that there are omitted or incomplete narratives in school history textbooks, particularly in countries that have a history of colonial occupation or minority and majority groups.⁷ The analysis of narratives in history textbooks contributes to the discussion on multiperspectivity in history, the decolonization of history, and raising awareness of the need to consider ignored historical events. It is necessary to broaden the content of history books and be cognizant of minority cultures / communities despite the political challenge of achieving consensus on what constitutes true history.

Research Method and Data

The present study adopts a mixed-methods approach, integrating field research and content analysis to scrutinize the textual data. The field research component involved the identification of key informants in Kenya and the subsequent procurement

1 Li et al. 2020.

2 See, e.g., Ruto, Ndaloh 2013; Michael et al. 2022; Sebbowa et al. 2021.

3 Elizabeth A. Cole and Judy Barsalou, "Unite or Divide? the Challenges of teaching History in Societies emerging from Violent Conflict," United States Institute of Peace, June 2006, accessed June 21, 2023, https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/39202/2006_june_sr163.pdf.

4 CBC is an education system seeking to nurture a learner's potential, gifts and talents.

5 Keynes 2019.

6 Elizabeth A. Cole and Judy Barsalou, "Unite or Divide? the Challenges of teaching History in Societies emerging from Violent Conflict."

7 Robert Stradling, "Multiperspectivity in history teaching: a guide for teachers," Council of Europe, November 2003, accessed June 21, 2023, <https://rm.coe.int/0900001680493c9e>.

of relevant textbooks for textual analysis. Subsequently, natural language processing (NLP) was employed to analyze the text documents, deconstructing them into tokens. NLP is a computational method that is concerned with the processing and analysis of language and semantics, which provides easily interpretable meanings.¹ The study also considered word counts and frequencies as a means of identifying general narratives in the text.² This approach provides an indication of the text's importance and enables the researcher to make qualitative statements about the data and visualize the textual information. However, it is noteworthy that word importance can be misleading, as some words³ may appear less frequently but may have significant implications, while others may appear more frequently but may be of less significance.

To address this issue, unnecessary words such as pronouns, "in," and "the" were filtered out from the text data. The data pertaining to different countries was subsequently loaded into an R-program for analysis and later merged to form the East Africa dataset, which was analyzed once again. In the R-program, the text was read and converted into a corpus, representing the text to be processed, and tokenized. A term document matrix was created to illustrate the frequency of terms within the document. This term document matrix was then transformed into a data frame, and word clouds and bar charts were generated to visualize the trends in the text data. These visualizations were subsequently interpreted by referring back to the raw text data in order to establish the context in which each word was used. The attached codes provide further details on the methods employed.

We draw on primary and secondary school history textbooks from Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. The Kenyan data selected has been approved by the Kenyan Institute of Curriculum Development for grades 6 to 12⁴ and has been sourced from the content pages of the textbooks. In Tanzania, the data selected is from the Tanzanian Institute of Education⁵ but is only taken from the content pages of secondary school textbooks. In Uganda, the data used is from the National Curriculum Development Center⁶ and spans the P4 to senior 6 levels of schooling. The textbooks selected are approved by various primary and secondary education governing bodies in each respective country, and the three institutions are considered credible sources, thus providing trustworthy data. We seek to identify history topics in primary school textbooks, as they are often intermingled with other subjects, such as geography. In contrast, secondary school history textbooks are exclusive and do not contain other subjects. The study used both primary and secondary books in Kenya and Uganda, while only secondary school textbooks were used in Tanzania. A total of 2066 words were analyzed, excluding stop words,⁷ commas, and full stops.

1 Hall et al. 2022.

2 Stemler 2000; Neuendorf 2017.

3 Pronouns may appear frequently, but they may be of no use when it comes to understanding the text.

4 See, e.g., "Grade 5 Curriculum Designs," Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2021, accessed May 10, 2023, <https://kicd.ac.ke/cbc-materials/grade-5-curriculum-designs/>; "Grade 6 Curriculum Designs," Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2021, accessed May 10, 2023, <https://kicd.ac.ke/cbc-materials/grade-6-curriculum-designs/>.

5 See, e.g., "History for Secondary Schools Student's Book Form 1," TIE, 2019, accessed May 15, 2023, <https://elitestore.co.tz/history-for-secondary-schools-students-book-form-1/>; "History for Secondary Schools Student's Book Form 2," TIE, 2019, accessed May 15, 2023, <https://elitestore.co.tz/history-for-secondary-schools-students-book-form-2-tie>.

6 See, e.g., "Home Schooling Materials," National Curriculum Development Centre, 2020, accessed May 13, 2023, <https://www.ncdc.go.ug/content/home-schooling-materials>

7 Stop words are frequent words but provide little information. They include pronouns and conjunctions.

Historical Background of Education in East Africa

This section provides an overview of the historical background of education in East Africa with the aim of elucidating plausible reasons for the presence of certain narratives in historical textbooks, as well as explaining why certain narratives are often overlooked. Education in East Africa has undergone a transformation from pre-colonial indigenous African education¹ to secular education, which was introduced by missionaries in the mid-1800s, with Qur'anic education preceding it. The primary objectives of secular education were to propagate Christianity, impart general knowledge, and train responsible citizens and a select few Africans to execute administrative orders.² Conversely, Islamic education sought to balance noble character, prepare for life in this world and the hereafter, promote scientific inquiry, and provide professional training.³ Both Christianity and Islam played a role in education in East Africa; however, Islamic education predated secular education and was linked to the trade activities between Arabs and Bantu communities on the East coast of Africa⁴ from the 9th to the 14th centuries.⁵ Although Islam was introduced before Christianity, it has not had as much influence in shaping the discourse in school history textbooks as secular education.

During the colonial period, the introduction of secular education was impeded by the ideological differences between Christianity and Islam. The resistance of Muslims to secular education, until independence, led to rapid expansion of schools in Christian-dominated regions, as compared to the Muslim-dominated areas.⁶ The differences in cultural approaches to education and suspicions of the intentions of missionaries were among the reasons that prevented Muslims from attending secular schools. However, over time, Muslims established integrated schools that required Muslim students to attend both secular and Islamic schools. These integrated schools are privately owned by individuals and organizations.

During the early 1970s, attempts were made to introduce Islamic Religious Education (IRE) into the Kenyan educational curriculum with the aim of encouraging Muslim enrollment in secular schools.⁷ This move was earlier made in Uganda in the 1940s, resulting in a successful outcome.⁸ Despite having the highest percentage of Islamic faithful, Tanzania opted to abolish religious education in schools in favor of the *ujamaa* policy of national unity, which was later deemed to have failed.⁹ Consequently, the number of Muslim faithful has increased in East African secular schools, while history textbooks have mostly concentrated on the history of colonialism and mainstream groups. According to the 2019 Kenya population and housing

1 Indigenous African education involved knowledge, skills, cultural traditions, norms and values passed among tribal members from one generation to another; Mushi 2009.

2 See, e.g., Abdi 2017; Inyega et al. 2021; Isaack 2018.

3 Isaack 2018.

4 The countries include Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique and parts of central Africa.

5 See, e.g., Abdi 2017; Isaack 2018; Mombo, Mwaluda 2000; Oded 2000; Svensson 2018.

6 Bakari 2012.

7 Abdi 2017.

8 Nimulola 2018.

9 Inyega et al. 2021.

census,¹ the majority of Kenya's Muslim population (73%) identifies as Sunni, while 8% identify as Shia Muslims.² In Tanzania, 34% of the population identifies as Muslims, while in Uganda, they form 14% of the population.³ Therefore, there is a need to revise the school history textbooks to reflect on Islamic history in East Africa, particularly given the current socio-political destabilization caused by the terrorist group Al Shabaab.

Literature Review

The narratives found in school history textbooks play an integral role in the cultural development of students. Such textbooks serve the purpose of disseminating information that is crucial for nation-building.⁴ This has, in turn, given rise to discussions regarding the scope of content in school history textbooks⁵ and their potential contribution to socio-political instability. Given that textbooks convey social and cultural values to students, they have the power to shape students' perceptions of those who are culturally different from them, especially when such individuals are not covered in the narratives. Discussions surrounding these narratives vary depending on the historical background of the country. In post-colonial countries, debates have centered around the nature of colonialism⁶ and the limited information on the pre-colonial period in history curriculum textbooks.⁷ Scholars such as B. Dube and N. Moyo⁸ as well as P. Chimbunde and M. Kgari-Masondo⁹ argue for the need to decolonize curricula in history and social studies. They suggest revisiting historical narratives to extract values omitted in the textbooks while focusing on indigenous history to instill cultural values in students. M. Martínez-Rodríguez¹⁰ further suggests examining the contexts that shape the coverage of the ancient period in education textbooks used in compulsory secondary education. This is necessary to revise the textbooks due to the existence of controversial narratives.

While B. Dube and N. Moyo as well as P. Chimbunde and M. Kgari-Masondo focused on decolonization, S. An's study examined historical narratives through the lens of majority-minority dichotomy.¹¹ The study highlighted that K-12 history curriculum textbooks minimize the impact of minority groups on society, indicating the presence of biases. L. Li's subsequent investigation reinforces an assumption that textbooks are not impartial, and that the resulting asymmetry of power from this bias fosters disputed content that tacitly accepts other cultures, thereby creating an environment rife with socio-political conflicts.¹² L. Li discovered that Latinos, considered a minority group in the United States, are virtually absent from social studies and history textbooks

1 In 2019, the Kenyan population was at 47,213,282 and the Muslim population was 5,152,194. See: "2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census Reports," Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019, <https://www.knbs.or.ke/2019-kenya-population-and-housing-census-reports/>.

2 "Religious and Ethnic Affiliation," 2019 Kenya population and housing census. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019.

3 "Tanzania 2020 International religious freedom report," U.S. Department of State, 2020, accessed May 5, 2023, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-report-on-international-religious-freedom/tanzania/#:~:text=A%202020%20Pew%20Forum%20survey,5%20percent%20practice%20other%20religions.>

4 Martínez-Rodríguez 2023.

5 Emerson, Levi 2020; An 2022.

6 Enslin 2017; Brett, Guyver 2021.

7 Khalifa et al. 2019; Mullen 2020.

8 Dube, Moyo 2022.

9 Chimbunde, Kgari-Masondo 2021.

10 Martínez-Rodríguez 2023.

11 An 2022.

12 Li et al. 2020.

in K-12. Women are mentioned only in the context of marriage, home, and work, while black people are involved in actions with low agency and power. These conclusions could serve as a basis for advocating changes in the curriculum, potentially igniting socio-political tensions in regions experiencing deprivation.

To tackle the colonial and minority-majority dichotomy prevalent in school history textbook narratives, some scholars have adopted the concept of multiperspectivity, which originated from the “new history” approach.¹ This approach seeks to challenge the conventional emphasis placed on political and constitutional history, events, and personalities, while also questioning the assumption that the national historical narrative primarily aligns with the history of the largest national grouping and dominant linguistic and cultural community. The present study builds upon an ongoing analysis of history textbook narratives, with the aim of providing a multiperspective analysis that can mitigate socio-political instabilities.

Results and Discussion

Narratives in Kenyan History Textbooks

The word cloud and graph depicted in *Figure 1* encapsulate a wide range of narratives that are found in history textbooks. The initial two narratives, “African” and “Kenya,” serve to introduce the primary content of the book and the geographical area it covers respectively. These introductory narratives suggest that the textbooks expound upon the narratives of Africa and Kenya. The narratives “e-arly” and “migration” are concerned with events that predate the colonial period. “Early” pertains to the period before the advent of modern man and before modern Europe. “Migration,” on the other hand, refers to the movement of Africans within the continent before settling in their current countries. The narratives that are contextualized within the colonial period include “agriculture,” “east,” “political,” “trade,” and “colonial.” The narrative on “agriculture” is discussed in the context of the availability of white highlands² and the cash crop farming of tea, coffee, and flowers that was established during colonial times. This remains one of the economic activities that supports the Kenyan economy. The narrative of “east” is anchored on the East African region, considering that Kenya is part of the East African countries that form the East African Community economic block. “Politics” is discussed with regards to colonial administration politics, which led to the formation of the current Kenyan political system.

This aligns with the work of R. Stradling on the dissatisfaction with the previous approach to learning history, where the weighting of course content heavily favors political and constitutional history introduced by colonial administration.³ The narrative on “trade” is discussed in the context of early visitors to the East coast of Africa in the 16th century, which involved Arabs, the Portuguese, and other explorers. “Trade” is also discussed in the context of trans-Saharan trade, trans-Atlantic trade, and regional trade. Finally, the narrative of “colonial” focuses on colonial administration and the political system.

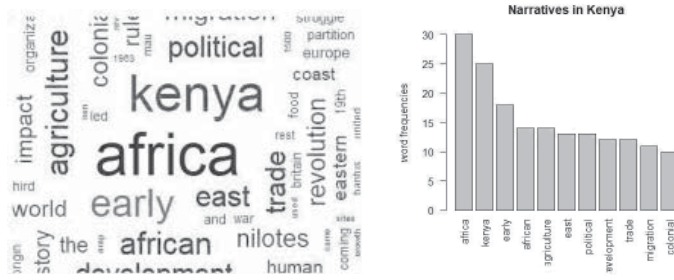
1 Robert Stradling, “Multiperspectivity in history teaching: a guide for teachers.”

2 White highlands are the high-altitude areas around Mt. Kenya that was occupied by colonial settlers due to its favorable climate.

3 Robert Stradling, “Multiperspectivity in history teaching: a guide for teachers.”

Figure 1.

WORD CLOUD AND GRAPH OF NARRATIVES IN KENYA
ОБЛАКО СЛОВ И ГРАФИК НАРРАТИВОВ В КЕНИИ



Source: Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development.¹

Kenyan school history textbooks offer an overview of the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods. However, the literature is subject to generalization. For instance, the reasons for the settlement of communities and tribes and their cultural practices are often deduced from their migration patterns rather than their places of origin. Furthermore, the discourse on the migration of tribes within Eastern Africa and how this factor informed the transition of Kenya from pre-colonial communities to the nation-state is discussed within the context of colonial narratives. Regrettably, the data presented fails to adequately capture the prominence of indigenous language, poetry, and songs that could reveal valuable insights regarding the history of Kenyan tribes and the country as a whole. This lack of information could be attributed to the insufficiency of data on migration patterns. Alternatively, omission of such content could also be justified by its falling outside the scope of school-level education.

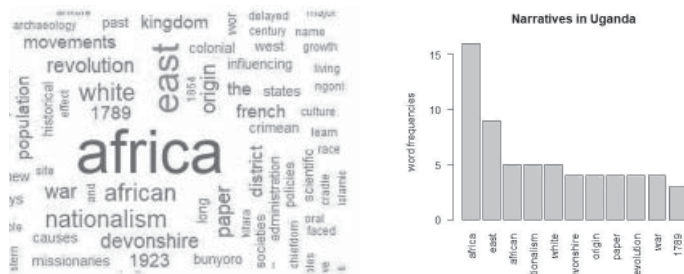
Narratives in Ugandan History Textbooks

The prevalent narratives discussed include “Africa,” “East,” “African,” “nationalism,” and “white.” The presence of the narratives “Africa” and “East” imply that the books are intended for schools in East Africa. However, the narrative of “African” is constructed within the context of African nationalism and society, both of which were salient during the colonial period. The narrative of “Nationalism” is also placed within the context of colonialism, which engendered nationalism in Africa. In addition to colonialism, nationalism could also be attributed to the existence of kingdoms in Uganda, such as Buganda, Bunyoro, and Wanga, which would have fueled the narrative of nationalism due to people’s pride in their culture. The narrative of “white” is employed when discussing the Devonshire white paper of 1923 and white South African nationalism. The Devonshire white paper was significant because it declared the rights of Africans to take precedence in whatever the colonial government was undertaking in East Africa. Furthermore, it championed access to education for Africans in East Africa. The narrative of “origin” is discussed within the context of creation theory and evolution, to address the hypothesis that humankind originates from East Africa. The narrative of “revolution” is examined in light of the French revolution of 1789,

1 “Grade 5 Curriculum Designs”; “Grade 6 Curriculum Designs.”

which was instrumental in informing political revolution in Uganda over the years, and the African revolution leading to independence. Finally, the narrative of “war” is discussed in the context of World War I and II, as well as the Crimean War, signifying the incorporation of the history of Eastern Europe to inform Ugandan history.

Figure 2.



Source: National Curriculum Development Centre.¹

In relation to Uganda, the school history textbook data touches on the pre-colonial period by discussing the kingdoms in Uganda. Understanding pre-colonial Uganda is important in comprehending present-day Uganda. However, some narratives utilize western institutions' experience to discuss the history of Uganda, such as the French revolution serving as inspiration for the Ugandan revolution or the Devonshire white paper enabling natives to access proper treatment and education. While such narratives may be advantageous for a multiperspectivity approach to history, they are not informative of Ugandan history devoid of colonial experience.

Narratives in Tanzania History Textbooks

Tanzania was under both German and British control, with the British exerting greater influence on establishing the country's education system. Tanzanian history textbooks commonly employ narratives such as "Africa," "colonial," "resistance," "African," "Europe," "rise," "war," "trade," "world," "development," and "economy." The "Africa" narrative implies that the book focuses on African history. The "colonial" narrative discusses the events that occurred during the colonial period. The "African" narrative delves into African issues, as well as people of African heritage living outside Africa who contributed to the development of Tanzania. "Resistance" refers to colonial resistance in Africa, including Ethiopia and Nigeria. The "Europe" narrative centers on European history and its comparison to African history in the 15th century. It also encompasses revolutions and nationalism in Europe before the 19th century. The "rise" narrative has been utilized in various contexts, from the rise of mercantilism and modern Europe to the rise of Africa and the USSR. The "war" narrative discusses African wars, such as the Maji Maji rebellion of 1905–1907, the Shona Ndebele war, or the Chimulenga war of 1896–1897. Additionally, it includes World War I and II. "Trade"

1 "Home Schooling Materials."

narratives involve trans-Atlantic and trans-Saharan trade, while the “world” narrative discusses a broad range of subjects from the First World War to the new world. Finally, “development” and “economy” narratives are discussed in the context of political and economic development in Tanzania, including the contribution of mercantilism in the 15th century and the monarchy’s development between 1500 and 1700. The narratives in Tanzanian history textbooks vary from before and after the colonial period.

Figure 3.



Source: Tanzania Institute of Education.¹

The analysis of Tanzanian school textbooks reveals that historical narratives tend to be globally oriented rather than locally focused. Despite covering the African diaspora and history of other African countries, the textbooks provide scarce information about Tanzania itself. This suggests a prioritization of teaching global history over local history. This trend may be attributed to Tanzania's complex history of shifting colonial powers from German to British control, as well as its adherence to socialist ideology, which led to the country's involvement in the political struggles of other nations. These factors presumably have a profound impact on the way in which history is taught in Tanzania².

Narratives in East Africa History Textbooks

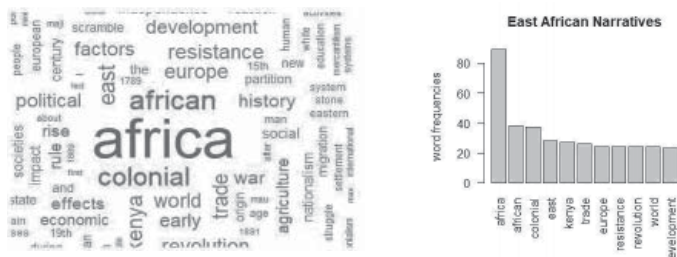
Upon combining all the textbooks from the three countries in question, it becomes evident that the most recurrent narratives are "Africa," "colonial," "east," and "trade." These particular narratives have been previously identified in the individual countries' respective historical accounts. Notably, the three East African nations share substantial commonalities in their historical topics, especially those pertaining to colonialism, trade, and revolution or resistance. Colonialism is expounded upon from both political, economic, and social perspectives, and it is significant to note that these three countries were placed under British rule; hence, the similarities in their historical approaches. Furthermore, the narratives are from the colonial and post-colonial periods, rendering the investigation central to the discourse on multiperspectivity, thereby highlighting the need to scrutinize the sufficiency of the taught history.

1 "History for Secondary Schools Student's Book Form 1"; "History for Secondary Schools Student's Book Form 2."

2 Machuko Tsubura, "Ideological Orientation of the Educated Youth in Tanzania: A Literature Review," Institute of Developing Economies, March 2019, accessed 21 June, 2023, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/288469605.pdf>.

Content analysis of the textbooks reveals that the narratives discussed primarily stem from the occupation of the region by colonial entities. However, the identified common narratives provide minimal insight into the pre-colonial era. Consequently, this observation raises the possibility that there may exist historical narrative biases requiring reevaluation if a multidimensional approach to history is to be achieved.

Figure 4

WORD CLOUD AND GRAPH OF NARRATIVES IN EASTERN AFRICA
ОБЛАКО СЛОВ И ГРАФИК НАРРАТИВОВ В ВОСТОЧНОЙ АФРИКЕ

Source: Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development,¹ National Curriculum Development Centre,² Tanzania Institute of Education.³

The school textbook data for the East African region reveals that the majority of the historical narratives covered in the curriculum are from the 19th century or later, with a limited focus on colonial narratives even after the introduction of secular education. The history of smaller non-Christian or non-secular communities, such as Muslim communities in East Africa between the 14th and 19th centuries, is given less prominence. This is likely due to the fact that East African Muslim history was documented in Arabic and therefore, not included in the secular education established by the colonial government. It is also worth noting that these countries are young, not exceeding 60 years of age, and prior to the existence of borders, tribes represented nations. Therefore, exploring East African history from the perspective of tribes could be a promising avenue to pursue. However, this may prove challenging, as the lack of written history in different local languages means that most tribal history was passed down through songs, dances, or oral tradition across generations.

Socio-Political Destabilization in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania

During the 1960s, a national Islamic council was established in East Africa as an intermediary between the state and Muslim communities, exposing the divide between these entities. While some associated groups formed political parties, they were eventually dissolved, either by the government or the communities themselves. Moreover, these associations were unable to advocate for the interests of the community, primarily due to corruption and factionalism within their ranks. As a result, critical functions of Muslim communities, such as youth education, were left in the hands of private sponsors.

1 "Grade 5 Curriculum Designs"; "Grade 6 Curriculum Designs."

2 "Home Schooling Materials."

3 "History for Secondary Schools Student's Book Form 1"; "History for Secondary Schools Student's Book Form 2."

The marginalization of Muslims has also been attributed to the failure of ruling elites, who were predominantly non-Muslim post-colonial, to regulate the Islamic sphere.¹ Despite adopting integrated education, there has been little effort to ensure the integration of East African Muslim history into school history textbooks.

Incorporating the histories of marginalized groups in school textbooks reduces the likelihood of repeating historical injustices. According to J. Espindola, it also provides younger generations with fundamental information for evaluating their values and commitments.² This is particularly significant in the East African context, given that the disintegration of Muslim movements in the 1980s and 1990s is attributed to the emergence of religious extremist groups, creating an environment conducive to radicalization. The subsequent generation of Muslim youth has had few opportunities to learn and understand the genesis of the current socio-political destabilization, only encountering this information at the tertiary level of education, if at all. The lack of knowledge of the past has eroded the value system of the youth in East Africa, leaving them predisposed to joining violent groups to seek recognition or self-worth. Therefore, educating the current generation about the events that led to this disintegration is essential, and school history textbooks can play a pivotal role in this regard.

The socio-political issues experienced in the present day arose from the pre-colonial period. For instance, religious misunderstandings and clan conflicts, coupled with the lack of support for the Muslim community in education, are historical occurrences. The clan and religious cleavages have been exploited by extremist groups, leading to the emergence of violent groups like Al-Shabaab, which is based in Somalia but active in East Africa.

Since the bombings in Kampala, Uganda, in 2010, and Westgate, Kenya, in 2013, there has been an increase in the study of the Al-Shabaab terror group and its activities in East Africa. However, little is known about the lack of a multi-perspective approach to history education in schools that may inform the relationship between the government and the Somali community, which initially formed the largest percentage of Al-Shabaab followers, though this has steadily changed to include several other communities in East Africa.³ This has resulted in the same oversight of the history of Muslim communities in East Africa, thereby contributing to the continual existence of socio-political destabilization in that region.

Conclusion

This study provides empirical evidence on the narratives of school history textbooks in three East African countries, namely Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya. The research employs content analysis that enables the visual representation of historical narratives in the aforementioned school textbooks. The study contributes to the existing literature on the multiperspectivity approach to historical narratives in school textbooks and identifies Muslims as minorities in all three countries who are predisposed to omitted

1 Jannis Saalfeld, "Before and beyond Al-Shabaab," Institute for Development and Peace, 2019, accessed June 21, 2023, https://www.uni-due.de/imperia/md/content/inef/ir113_saalfeld_web_neu.pdf.

2 Espindola 2017.

3 Community here means tribe.

or distorted historical narratives. Furthermore, the secular approach to teaching history in East African schools, despite Islam having preceded Christianity in East Africa, omits narratives on Islamic contributions to the history of East Africa.

The study finds that the narratives primarily focus on Africa and East Africa, trade, resistance, revolution, development, and colonization. The scope of school history textbooks in East Africa covers the colonial period, post-colonization, and world history, especially European history. However, focusing solely on the colonial period may result in incomplete or biased historical narratives due to colonial administration's suppression. While there has been a revision in the school curriculum to Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in all three countries, there is an expectation that critical thinking of history will be considered in the school history syllabus, thereby analyzing history from a multiperspectivity approach. Moreover, the Islamic approach to East African history is not present in secular education, thereby necessitating the incorporation of East African history through an Islamic prism. This is crucial given the multicultural nature of the three countries and the socio-political destabilization in East Africa, partly caused by ethnic marginalization preceded by colonial prejudice.

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Анализ нарративов в школьных учебниках истории: взгляд из Восточной Африки

АННОТАЦИЯ

В данной статье проанализированы нарративы в школьных учебниках истории в странах Восточной Африки и их роль в процессах социально-политической дестабилизации.

Исследование, таким образом, построено на анализе мультиперспективности, представляющей собой понимание истории с разных точек зрения, а также на обращении к нарративам школьных учебников истории. Авторы исходят из предпосылки о том, что колониальные системы сыграли важную роль в увековечивании конкретных исторических нарративов, и исторические нарративы в школьных учебниках истории в Восточной Африке сосредоточены на колониальных нарративах и нарративах групп большинства. Сначала мы исследуем историческую составляющую системы образования в трех восточноафриканских странах: Кении, Уганде и Танзании. В процессе мы идентифицируем мусульман как группу меньшинств в Восточной Африке, которая представлена в невыгодном свете в контексте школьной программы по истории. Они посещают государственные школы, находящиеся в ведении христианских организаций или правительств, а используемые учебники по истории ориентированы на светский подход к истории, несмотря на то, что ислам предшествовал христианству в Восточной Африке. Нами был проведен контент-анализ школьных учебников по светской истории и приведена качественная интерпретация полученных результатов. Анализ показал, что нарративы в школьных учебниках истории охватывают колониальный и постколониальный периоды без упоминания наследия ислама в Восточной Африке. Это говорит о предвзятом подходе к историческим нарративам, способным повлиять на социально-политическую стабильность в Восточной Африке. Но ожидается, что с пересмотром школьной программы по истории появится возможность использовать мультиперспективный подход к историческим нарративам.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА

Восточная Африка, историческое образование, ислам, школьные учебники, контент-анализ

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