Education to secure empire and self-government: civics textbooks in Australia and Aotearoa, New Zealand, from 1880 to 1920

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Abstract

Purpose – Recent trends in Western civics education have attempted to secure democratic institutions from perceived threats. This paper investigates how political securitisation historically operated within civics textbooks in Australia and Aotearoa, New Zealand. It further evaluates how Māori, Aboriginal and other Indigenous peoples were variably incorporated or marginalised in these educational discourses.

Design/methodology/approach – This discourse analysis evaluates a sample of civics textbooks circulated in Australia and New Zealand between 1880 and 1920. These historical sources are interpreted through theories of decoloniality and securitisation.

Findings – The sample of textbooks asserted to students that their self-governing colonies required the military protection of the British Empire against undemocratic "threats". They argued that self-governing colonies strengthened the empire by raising subjects who were loyal to British military interests and ideological values. The authors pedagogically encouraged a governmentality within students that was complementary to military, imperial and democratic service. The hypocritical denial of self-government for many Indigenous peoples was rationalised as a measure of "security" against "native rule" and imperial rivals.

Originality/value – Under a lens of securitisation, the discursive links between imperialism, military service and democratic diligence have not yet been examined in civics textbooks from the historical contexts of Australia and New Zealand. This investigation provides conceptual and pedagogical insights for contemporary civics education in both nations.

Keywords Civics education, Textbooks, Securitisation, Australia, New Zealand, Māori, Aboriginal, Indigenous, Decoloniality

Paper type Conceptual paper

Introduction

During the last two decades, a perceived global regression in the number and stability of democratic nation-states has prompted public and academic alarm in many Western countries (Malkopoulou and Norman, 2018, p. 50). Scholars and policy makers, from both Australia and Aotearoa (New Zealand), have expressed concerns about the present capacity of civics education to respond to current and anticipated challenges (Heggart *et al.*, 2019). The New Zealand Ministry of Education's *Civics and Citizenship Guide* states that

> the resilience of our democracy can't be taken for granted. Around the world, democracies are grappling with . . . ongoing issues of social, political, and ethnic conflict . . . although New Zealand students achieved some of the highest [ICCS] scores for civics knowledge, many scored some of the lowest and no other country had such a wide distribution of results (Potter, 2020, p. 4).

The Australian Commonwealth Minister for Education Alan Tudge echoed this concern in 2021:

> We should expect our young people leaving school to have an understanding of our liberal democracy . . . If they don't learn this, they won't defend it as previous generations did . . . Our

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Western political institutions are not always perfect but think of what they have given us (Maddison, 2021).

These discursive associations between civics education and the security of Western democracy are underlain by longstanding historical precedents in both Australia and New Zealand.

Scholars have analysed recent concerns about civics education through a conceptual lens of securitisation, adapted from the fields of political science and international relations. Buzan *et al.* (1998, p. 21) define securitisation as

> when an issue is presented as posing an existential threat to a designated referent object (traditionally, but not necessarily the state, incorporating government, territory, and society). The special nature of security justifies the use of extraordinary measures to handle them.

There is an extensive tradition of scholarship on military security but theories of securitisation emphasise the "existential" elements involved with socially constructing states, membership, perceived "threats" and desired responses. Securitisation has recently become a popular framework in educational research, especially in civics subjects, because governments often employ public schooling as an "extraordinary measure" to disseminate political ideals, problems and solutions to young people (Peterson and Bentley, 2016). For example, Kelly (2017) argues that the Afghanistan War prompted an educational push in Australia that promoted Western liberal-democratic values, attempting to discourage young people against the perceived ideological threat of terrorism.

Just as recent educational trends have sought to securitise democratic institutions in Australia and New Zealand, I argue that older civics textbooks from 1880 to 1920 attempted to secure British colonial networks of democracy against perceived threats. This period contained significant debates and ambiguities about the ideal relationship of self-governing colonies to the British imperial umbrella (Dermer, 2018). The Australasian colonies, except for Western Australia, had experienced decades of self-government by 1880 and had started to enact their own extensive systems of public education (Barcan, 1980, p. 151; Barrington, 2008, p. 40). Australian Federation in 1901 further reshaped democratic structures on the continent and strengthened a sense of political independence in New Zealand (Belich, 2001, p. 46). The civics textbooks of this era attempted to reconcile the growing independence of British colonies with the integrity of the empire by highlighting their mutual needs for military and democratic security. The authors urged colonial children to re-commit to the British Empire as an "unparalleled" network of defence and self-government. However, many Indigenous peoples were ruled undemocratically by British administrators, creating significant paradoxes for the sources to navigate. This is informative for the present moment as imperial history continues to profoundly influence the relationships between Indigenous communities and Western civic democracies with colonial origins.

Methodology

From a decolonial perspective, this discourse analysis applies theories of securitisation to a sample of five civics textbooks released in Australia and New Zealand between 1880 and 1920. Foucault (1972, p. 45) popularised discourse analysis as a method of evaluating power relations between "institutions, economic and social processes, behaviour patterns, systems of norms", epistemologies and education systems. Foucault's (2009, p. 108) later theorisation of governmentality also mused on the role of schools in conditioning children as citizen-subjects, inculcating desired behaviours and modes of thought. These conceptualisations are compatible with theories of securitisation as Buzan *et al.* (1998, p. 46) drew explicitly on Foucault's prior analysis of security as a reason for state and precondition of liberal democracy. Accordingly, this article combines these approaches to analyse civics textbooks

as a discursive web of relations, regularities and statements mediated by colonial power relations (Passada, 2019).

Historians such as Cormack (2013) have applied Foucauldian discourse analysis to materials of civics education, theorising the formation of citizen subjects in Australia during this historical period. Māori, decolonial and Indigenous scholars have adapted discourse analysis to evaluate the historical and contemporary operation of colonial power-knowledge (Ahmed, 2021). For example, Passada (2019, pp. 22–23) encourages discourse analysis from a decolonial perspective that deconstructs

> relations of inequality, classifications, and power logics of colonial modernity . . . metamorphosed discursively in concepts (like rights and citizenship) . . . the analysis of discourses that is mediated by decoloniality enables us to recognize subjects in their space, historical time.

Accordingly, my study deconstructs the colonial power logics located in civics textbook discourse during a specific historical era in the Australian and New Zealand contexts.

Historical and educational scholars have long used school textbooks as sources but these texts were rarely the focal point of analysis until the 2000s. Historians have recently prioritised textbooks to evaluate narratives and ideologies prevalent in colonial spaces of education (Grindel, 2017). However, this literature has focused primarily on educational resources for history rather than civics textbooks that theorise the roles, rights and responsibilities held by citizens and/or British subjects to a state and civil society (Rowse, 2003). Shatford (2002) provided one early exception about New Zealand civics textbooks. Historical publications on Australian and New Zealand civics education have been steadily increasing over the last decade but have emphasised curricula and other materials over subject-specific textbooks. For example, Cormack (2013) and Dermer (2018) evaluated civics discourse in school papers published in South Australia and Western Australia respectively. It is likely that historians have focused on these resources because the publication of specific civics textbooks was inconsistent, compared to other subjects, during this period in both Australia (McGennisken, 2009) and New Zealand (Shatford, 2002). These fields of literature analyse a diverse range of themes, including security, in civics materials but do not centre securitisation as a primary focus, as my article contributes.

The focused scope of five textbooks allows for in-depth qualitative evaluation of the civics discourse and the authors' "spatio-temporal coordinates" (Foucault, 1972, p. 107). The selection is based on the accessibility of the sources to Australian and New Zealand schools and libraries as informative texts. Educational institutions attributed these texts with an "authority" to enunciate truth claims about imperial security, democracy and citizenship (Nicoll *et al.*, 2013, p. 836). The resources were a measure of both governmentality and securitisation, surviving as artefacts of civic educational discourse. Drawing on Foucault, Smith (2012, p. 46) argues that the historical archive can unveil the discursive "rules of practice" observed by colonial societies in self-conceptualisation. The chosen temporal scope is also significant. Ball (2017, p. 5) interprets that European governments began to employ public schooling as a "device" in the nineteenth century to protect the state from perceived dangers by regulating and disciplining the young minds and bodies of citizen-subjects. New Zealand and most of the Australian colonies were transitioning into self-governing democracies after the 1850s, incentivising civics education. Expanding schooling networks, after the 1870s, also provided these new colonial governments with a means of disseminating civics materials (Barcan, 1980, p. 151).

Fittingly, the first three textbooks in the sample are collaborations with centralised education departments that were accountable to settler parliaments. *Laws we Live Under* was written by teacher and suffragette leader Spence (1881) for South Australian children whilst she was on the Education Department's Board of Advice (Spence, 1910). The second textbook, *The State*, was an initiative by the New Zealand Department of Education but uniquely focused on an Indigenous readership, being authored by Inspector of Native Schools

Pope (1887). The third textbook, *Struggle for Freedom*, was created by Australian teacher Murdoch (1911) in association with the Victorian Department of Education but was circulated in other Australian States and in New Zealand (Shatford, 2002, p. 10). This publication followed Federation, providing insights into how civics educators reconceptualised Australia's new Federal structure within a broader British imperial framework.

The remaining two textbooks were written by British metropolitan authors but were intended for schools in colonies such as Australia and New Zealand. Kirkpatrick's (1906) *British Colonization and Empire* was published in association with the League of Empire. This organisation believed that "the teaching of Imperial history" and "a common bond of literary intercourse" would foster "efficient citizens in whatever part of the Empire they may be called upon to live" (Empire, 1904) The League's resources were especially widespread in South Australia because the State's Minister of Education agreed to circulate them throughout public schools (Marshall, 1906). The other British metropolitan civics textbook, and the last in the sample, is *Children of the Empire* by Hartley and Lewis (1920). Unlike the other sources, this textbook emerged from the authors' academic interests rather than being commissioned by an external organisation. Hartley had written numerous publications on the changing social roles of women in Britain but turned her attention to broader notions of imperial citizenship. This text followed the First World War and interpreted victory as a validation of discursive associations, common in the textbook sample, between self-governing colonies and imperial military strength.

The formation of states through security

Foucault (1972) theorises that rules of formation determine what objects are related to a discourse and which statements are considered valid therein. A fundamental statement in civics discourse during this time was that security created a foundational purpose for states, whether democratic or undemocratic. *Laws we Live Under* defined that "[t]he necessary functions, or duties of government, are to defend the country against foreign enemies, and to keep peace in the country itself" (Spence, 1881, p. 63). *The State* agreed that

> common danger may unite them [human beings] and form them into a State . . . to defend the whole community from injury by any individual or class, or by a foreign State (Pope, 1887, pp. 24–29).

Struggle for Freedom concurred that

> it is the danger of war that holds the separate parts of a State together, in allegiance to a common government. That is to say, the possibility of war makes central government absolutely necessary (Murdoch, 1911, p. 213).

The textbooks taught students that "foreign" violence was a perennial threat and that a state constituted their only effective means of protection. Foucault (2009) was familiar with these discursive regularities, arguing that early modern European governments constructed territorial security from "foreign" rivals as a key *raison d'état* (reason of state) for continued authority and administration.

The textbooks presented state militarism as not only necessary, but as a politically generative force for English principles of "liberty", "freedom" and self-government. Firstly, it is important to clarify how the authors defined and related these discursive objects. Pope (1887, p. 217) viewed tyranny as "harsh" rule by a small elite group and "freedom" as "responsible" rule by a larger, more diverse, number of citizens. Murdoch (1911, p. 241) also discursively associated the concept with popular rule: "When a State is so governed that the will of the majority is always supreme in it, that State has got as near to liberty as it is possible to get." He did not necessarily view self-government as universal suffrage but rather "that those who provide the money have a right to choose their own governing body" (Murdoch, 1911, p. 216). *Children of the Empire* commended the English as the supposed

flagbearers of "freedom", described throughout the textbook as rights to speech, religion, fair trial, democracy, publication and the rule of law (Hartley and Lewis, 1920, pp. 18–21). The authors discursively related these civic ideals to the British Empire and its "exceptional" network of states.

English governance was praised as "exemplary" in "protecting" "freedom" and democracy because of past conflicts with supposedly antithetical opponents to self-government. Pope (1887, pp. 222–223) claimed that "foreign rule did one good thing: it made the English one people, and when the bad times had passed away English freedom regained some of its strength." Murdoch (1911, p. 105) argued that history was determined by "the struggle of the British people for liberty—for freedom to govern themselves". *Children of the Empire* agreed that English political principles were consolidated on the battlefield:

> What does England stand for? Freedom—to all English men and women and boys and girls, that word is dear . . . We are proud of this freedom, which has been won in the past by many heroes, who have lived and worked and died for England. Attacks on freedom will be made from time to time by foreign foes and native tyrants (Hartley and Lewis, 1920, p. 12).

Regarding North American colonists, *British Colonization and Empire* argued that imperial "rivalry . . . tended to preserve and emphasize their English character and sentiment and their attachment to the Mother country" (Kirkpatrick, 1906, pp. 31, 42). Passada (2019, p. 22) theorises that Eurocentric intersubjective relations construct "others" negatively in order to discursively "anchor" Western societies as the leaders of "progress". Accordingly, the textbooks juxtaposed "unexcelled" English civic values with supposedly antagonistic objects of discourse (Smith, 2012, p. 109).

Imperial security for self-government

The authors discursively formulated that the British "love of freedom" and "self-governing bodies" could only be upheld through a powerful military network. *British Colonization and Empire* argued that the North American colonies would have failed without "British superiority at sea" and "defence by the strength of the Empire" (Kirkpatrick, 1906, pp. 33, 68). *Laws we Live Under* agreed that the British Navy was essential for a colony's

> liberty to manage its own affairs. In the early days of South Australia, if it had not been that Great Britain was the greatest maritime power in the world, our little settlement might have been taken possession of by some other European nation. (Spence, 1881, p. 52).

The self-government of colonies was discursively securitised as a referent object, protected by the British military and threatened by rival empires. Spence (1881, p. 50) believed that a hypothetical "federation of the Australian colonies" would be complementary to security: "In case of war, all the colonies would have to work together to form some plan of general defence, and to act upon it." Murdoch (1911, pp. 204–205) wrote *Struggle for Freedom* in the decade following Federation but agreed that "it is useful to have a central [Australian] government . . . For purposes of defence, union is strength". The authors integrated the contemporaneous Australian Federation into their discursive formulation of imperial security.

Across the Tasman Sea, *The State* attempted to convince Māori students that they also held a mutual interest in upholding the security of the British Empire. Pope (1887, p. 228) argued that:

> the freedom which is to be found here in New Zealand is our share of English freedom, and that it is because we form part of the great British Empire that we can be sure that this freedom is secured to us: we are not yet quite strong enough to defend ourselves against every foreign enemy that might choose to attack us.

For many iwi (kinship groups) however, the vast number of recent armed conflicts had been fought against British soldiers over land and sovereignty (Belich, 2015). The New Zealand Wars challenged the security and legitimacy of the Pākehā (European) state so it is logical that Pope obscured colonial violence and redirected fears towards "foreign enemies". This fits what Walker (2004, p. 242) describes as a "one people" ideology that masks Pākehā priorities as national interests, regardless of Māori expense or resistance.

The textbooks conceived the relationship between the British military and self-governing colonies as a mutually reinforcing feedback loop. *Children of the Empire* articulated this explicitly by arguing that self-governing colonies

> could not defend themselves single-handed against the strongest navies of the other nations. British harbours are scattered over the world . . . It is in this way that all the different parts of the Empire are united to help one another and protect the safety and commerce of the whole Empire . . . feeling of kinship, would inspire [colonies] to make great sacrifices of money and of blood to help the motherland in her fight [WWI] . . . Splendid service has been done for the Empire by the self-governing nations, Canada, Australia and New Zealand . . . They have united to overthrow an attack, such as history has never before seen, upon the rights of civilised peoples and the peace of the world (Hartley and Lewis, 1920, pp. 45, 89–90, 92).

The feedback loop reflected a longstanding association in the educational discourse, formulated by all five civics textbooks in the sample. Students, and potential soldiers, were instructed to view the health of their colonial democracy as mutually tied to the broader military capability of the British Empire.

Children as citizens and soldiers of empire
The textbooks invited young readers to commit themselves to the hypothetical feedback loop, discursively linking British military service and democratic diligence as reciprocal civic obligations (Dermer, 2018). *Struggle for Freedom* stressed that

> military service is the essence of membership . . . for the foundation of the British Empire, and of all modern States is allegiance . . . the peace, and security, and comfort of our lives depends on the fact that we are members of a State; and that the very existence of the State is founded on the loyalty and public spirit of its members . . . More especially is this the case in countries such as Australia, where we all have a voice in the government; such a country, of course, will be well or ill governed according as its citizens are well or ill fitted to govern (Murdoch, 1911, pp. 9, 235–236).

Foucault (1991, p. 138) argues that military conflicts motivated reforms to European public schools as disciplinary institutions that could uphold state power through the aptitude, obedience and military service of citizen subjects. *Laws we Live Under* verbalised this function explicitly: "the well-being of the colony [South Australia] depends very much on all its children being prepared for the duties of citizenship by receiving a good plain education" (Spence, 1881, p. 10). Murdoch (1911, pp. 235–239) agreed that:

> in Britain, and Australia, and America, and almost all self-governing States, the State itself provides schools and teachers and insists that its young citizens shall go to school and be taught . . . If the people are to govern, it is necessary that the people be educated.

Military and democratic training were conceived as mutually necessary in securing colonial states against the perceived threats of "disloyalty", "regression" and "foreign" militaries (Buzan *et al.*, 1998).

Foucault (1991, p. 300) identifies schools as modern institutions that regulate and discipline children into uniform modes of managing their own time, bodies, thoughts and subjectivities. The textbook sample accordingly modelled classroom exemplars of "ideal" civic behaviour for children. Spence (1881, pp. 60–62) emphasised to readers that just

As every good scholar takes an interest in the general welfare of the school, and is proud when his fellow scholars distinguish themselves, so should every good citizen take an interest and pride in the land he lives in.

Murdoch (1911, p. 243) similarly declared that: "Every boy or girl who puts whole-hearted diligence into school work is not only learning to be a good citizen in the future, but is a good citizen already." These passages advanced a specific governmentality to students by idealising citizenship as both an immediate obligation at school and a future duty of adulthood (Foucault, 2009). *The State* compelled Māori children "to manage your own affairs and to secure liberty and equal rights for yourselves and the generations that will come after you" (Pope, 1887, p. 7). Murdoch (1911, pp. 232–234) concurred that without diligent subjects in the future,

the self-governing State would be an impossibility … Act in such a way as, upon mature consideration, you think it would be good for the State that all its citizens should act.

Wynter (2003, p. 277) theorises that during the European Enlightenment, there was a "civic-humanist reformulation" of the ethical individual as a "rational political subject of the state, as one who displayed his reason by primarily adhering to the laws of the state". Accordingly, the civics textbooks argued that an ethical political subject upheld the British civic, military and imperial order.

In some cases however, the authors qualified that students still had an additional civic obligation to criticise unjust wars and violence, even from British states. Murdoch (1911, p. 243) praised "the writer who risks his popularity by opposing a war which he feels to be unnecessary". The textbooks encouraged "permissible" critique as democratically valuable but maintained that "lawful compliance" was non-negotiable (Shatford, 2002). Of course, numerous Indigenous communities did not receive the right to open dissent in many instances (Topdar, 2015, p. 418). Hartley and Lewis (1920, pp. 20–21) agreed that "legal" and "orderly" dissent was valuable:

a single man or woman may, by being firm in opposing what they believe to be wrong, do great service and guard liberties that are to belong to the whole nation. Right doing in the upholding of justice must be not only in the councils of nations and in State affairs, but in the daily lives of all men and women, and all boys and girls.

The recognition of "girls" and "women" as civic actors reflected the building momentum for women's suffrage, eventually achieved in the United Kingdom in 1928. *Laws we Live Under* was published thirteen years prior to female franchise in South Australia in 1894 but Spence (1881, p. 8), a renowned suffragette, held similar beliefs:

The progress of the world in health, and in wealth, in knowledge, and in goodness, depends on the character and conduct of its women as much as on that of its men ; and there can be no greater mistake for girls to make than to suppose that they have nothing to do with good citizenship and good government.

The female authors in the sample, Spence and Hartley, strongly endorsed girls as civics students and democratic participants whilst Pope and Kirkpatrick did not explicitly address women in their texts. This shows how varying perspectives and "spatio-temporal coordinates" could facilitate distinct enunciations within an educational discourse (Foucault, 1972, p. 107).

Variation on Indigenous civic participation

The textbooks diverged significantly about civics education and democratic participation for Indigenous subjects in self-governing colonies. *Laws we Live Under* did not conceive a future for Aboriginal peoples as South Australian citizen-subjects, labelling them as "barbarous

races" with "no such law . . . of the land" prior to "the laws the white people brought from England" (Spence, 1881, pp. 4–5). Her denial of Aboriginal legal systems aligns with Barraclough's (2011, p. 11) description of "transition narratives", attempting to

> explain territorial expansion in ways that minimize violence, highlight the reason and order associated with the rule of colonial law, and emphasize the social and ideological benefits of expansion for the colonizers and for the colonized.

Of course, the colony's judicial system consistently failed in practice to protect Aboriginal peoples from the violence and dispossession perpetrated by European settlers (Foster and Nettelbeck, 2012). The South Australian Frontier Wars had peaked earlier in the nineteenth century but were not followed by the same degree of Indigenous political representation and public schooling experienced by Māori during and after the New Zealand Wars. Spence (1881, p. 52) dismissed "warlike native tribes" as a minor security threat compared to "foreign empires". It is possible that Spence did not view specific democratic and educational mechanisms, similar to New Zealand, as necessary for diplomatic conciliation with Indigenous peoples. However, Aboriginal franchise was never explicitly barred in South Australia and there is evidence of at least one man voting in the inaugural election of 1857 (Parliament of South Australia, 1859, p. 556). It is difficult to determine whether Spence was unaware or deliberately dismissive of Aboriginal voters. Regardless, she portrayed Aboriginal peoples as supposedly external, ignorant and hostile to British colonial democracy.

The other textbooks mostly omitted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from their content altogether. *Struggle for Freedom* did not mention these societies despite the textbook's Australian origins and emphasis. *Children of the Empire* implied that the British presumption of sovereignty over Australia was tacit and unchallenged. Hartley and Lewis (1920, p. 76) only named Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies among the "savage peoples" of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and South Africa who "may be different one from another in many respects, but they are all inferior or less advanced than ourselves". This "silence" or pattern of exclusion is unique considering the amount of content on other Indigenous peoples such as in India and New Zealand. Stastny (2019, pp. 362–368) disputes "overstated" applications of W.E.H. Stanner's "great Australian silence" theory in her survey of Australian history textbooks from 1877 to the present. Her study finds that Australian "Indigenous peoples" and "[c]olonial violence [are] depicted in all textbooks but one" (Stastny, 2019, p. 368). *Laws we Live Under* was consistent with this trend but *Struggle for Freedom* and *Children of the Empire* did not include any specific content on Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples. However, Stastny's (2019) survey focuses on history textbooks rather than civics resources and maintains that there was a metaphorical "silence" of Indigenous perspectives in many cases rather than a literal "silence". Both literal and metaphorical "silences" can be identified in the civics textbooks that I have sampled from 1880 to 1920.

In contrast to the other authors, Pope (1887, p. 247) emphasised that Māori men held an immediate role in New Zealand's democratic institutions:

> It seems plain that every important class in the community ought to be represented in the Council —not only statesmen and men of wealth, but also doctors, clergymen, teachers, tradesmen, working-men, Maoris, and especially lawyers.

Considering that *The State* was intended for Māori students, it is also significant that Pope refers consistently to the New Zealand state with "we" and "us" pronouns. There are a number of localised factors explaining Pope's unique approach. At the time of writing, Māori had specific electoral rolls with four guaranteed seats in the New Zealand Parliament. The Native Schools were also under ministerial and departmental oversight so elected Māori politicians often dealt directly with Pope himself (Rogers, 2017). The *Native* School Act 1867

(NZ) and the *Māori Representation Act 1867* (NZ) both intended to facilitate diplomacy and prevent further armed conflicts (NZ Legislative Council and House of Representatives, 1867, pp. 808–815) Pope's textbook similarly attempted to secure the stability of the colonial state by promoting a Pākehā governmentality among Native School attendees. Shatford (2002, p. 104) notes that Māori received relatively unique prominence in civics textbooks but qualifies that this often served to praise settler "benevolence" in "race relations". Regardless, *The State* is unique in my sample for promoting Indigenous democratic citizenship, demonstrating how discursive enunciations varied according to the colonial context, or "spatio-temporal coordinates", of the author (Foucault, 1972, p. 107).

Rationalising denial of self-government to Indigenous peoples

Crown colonies and "protectorates" contradicted the textbooks' discursive idealisation of British self-government because subjects were ruled autocratically without democratic rights. In cases such as India and Egypt, the British Empire could be accused of being the "foreign" and undemocratic ruler that they were supposedly opposing throughout the world. The authors rationalised that the British remained sympathetic to self-governing principles but that these subjects were not "ready", supposedly, for such responsibilities. *Children of the Empire* claimed that "Crown Colonies" such as Panama, Jamaica and "Basutoland" were "inhabited by people with little political skill or experience in governing themselves" (Hartley and Lewis, 1920, p. 44). In a Foucauldian sense, this discursive regularity marginalised Indigenous claims for independence as irrational statements (Nicoll *et al.*, 2013). The textbooks extended from this point that Indigenous societies were compensated for autocratic rule through "superior" British administration and "protection" from imperial rivals. The authors attempted to pardon the selective refusal of democracy by securitising "protectorates" and Crown colonies as referent objects, safeguarding their prior claims of British exceptionalism in self-government (Buzan *et al.*, 1998).

Wynter (2003, p. 281) theorises that European colonists projected African and Indigenous peoples as an "irrational/subrational Human Other to its civic-humanist, rational self-conception." Accordingly, the sample of textbooks cited historical examples that supposedly proved the "irrationality" of "native rule" and the "uplifting" nature of British administration. Regarding India, Hartley and Lewis (1920, p. 72) claimed that it was

difficult for England to assist its subjects in a country where no kind of government had existed for centuries, and where first one and then another despot was trying to gain power for himself.

Struggle for Freedom told readers that the British were resolving these issues and that the Governor-General of Bengal Warren Hastings should

be remembered for the system of law and government he gave to India ... he removed the native rulers who misgoverned it . . . he organised a government which gave to the natives the blessings of order and justice (Murdoch, 1911, p. 121).

Topdar's (2015, p. 423) study found that Indian textbooks also argued that students were relatively "better off" under British governance compared to previous "native rulers". In so doing, the textbooks securitised Indian communities as requiring protection from their own supposed "irrationality" and "predisposition" for "native tyrants".

The authors also depicted Egypt as too "irrational" for self-government. Hartley and Lewis (1920, pp. 64–66) claimed that

During almost all modern times, Egypt has been badly governed. For long periods it was supposed to belong to Turkey, but the Turks were not always able to control its Government . . . The English influence in Egyptian affairs has been for good . . . our purpose in recent years has been to promote the welfare of the inhabitants.

These statements implied that British imperial rule was an act of material security for Egyptians. Hartley and Lewis (1920, pp. 63, 66) argued that British control protected Egypt from rival powers such as Turkey and provided "valuable help in the wars in the Sudan and in protecting the Egyptian frontier". Pope (1887, p. 218) similarly criticised Turkey, Russia and China as "tyrannical" empires "who wield their power without being under any control". The textbooks securitised the "protectorates" and Crown colonies in order to justify the British denial of self-government to the subjects within these territories.

The sample frequently relativised British governance in comparison to rival Western European empires. These critiques were juxtaposed with praise for the supposedly "humanitarian" nature of the British Empire. Murdoch (1911, pp. 122–123) applauded the

the nation's firm determination, which has never altered, that British rule should be a beneficent rule; that Britain was not going to treat the unfortunate natives of India as Spain had treated the unfortunate natives of South America; that tyranny and injustice were not to be tolerated under the British flag.

Decolonial scholar Mignolo (2011, p. 8) interprets that the "Spanish Black Legend" was useful for British leaders in justifying their imperial investments. Pope (1887, p. 307) similarly warned students that:

It must not be thought that England has been more unjust than other nations, it is quite the other way. Peoples that have come under the control of England have probably been better treated by her than they would have been by any other nation. But it generally takes nations a very long time to learn to be merciful and thoroughly just to races that are weaker than themselves—to treat a weaker people, for instance, as the English have treated the Maoris.

Hartley and Lewis (1920, pp. 83–84) claimed that Britain entered the recent Great War with "compassionate" motivations: "German rule could not satisfy the desires of conquered peoples ... We could not allow her desire for "world power" to be satisfied by ruthless tyranny." The textbooks asserted that imperial expansion was inevitable and that Britain "secured" the welfare of citizen-subjects by checking the influence of other supposedly "tyrannical" empires, including those from Western Europe.

Foucault (1972) theorises that a "field of exteriority" is necessary to relate, define and differentiate objects of discourse. In this sense, the textbook authors characterised "native rule" and "foreign empires" negatively to conceptualise the British as a discursive object of civic exceptionalism. The authors concluded that autocratic British rule was a temporary but "necessary" arrangement on the road to self-government for "protectorates" and Crown colonies. Pope (1887, p. 306) claimed that British colonisation intended "to teach the people of India how they may become fit to be freeman, and to be free as England's own people are free". Hartley and Lewis (1920, p. 68) agreed that "[t]he masses of the Indians are not ready for complete control of their public affairs". They pointed to the Boers as "proof of English statesmanship" and that "conquered peoples" could transition eventually to self-government under the British framework (Hartley and Lewis, 1920, pp. 61–62). The promise of military protection and future self-governance attempted to excuse paternalistic administration and imperial self-interest in the present. This way, textbook authors could discursively rationalise imperial hypocrisies to children and maintain Britain's proclaimed status as the vanguard of self-government.

Conclusion

The discursive formations in the sample of civics textbooks from 1880 to 1920 reassured students that the security of their self-governing colonies and the British Empire remained intrinsically linked, despite increasing nationalist ideals and political independence. Firstly, the authors stressed that existential threats were omnipresent and that a capable military

was crucial for a self-governing state. "Foreign enemies" and "native tyrants" were identified as adversaries to Britain's "exemplary" ideals of "liberty", "freedom" and self-government. The texts extended from this point that the British military was the best equipped to defend self-governing colonies from rival empires who were supposedly worse at protecting their territories, including Indigenous subjects. The textbooks posited that institutions of self-government prompted imperial loyalty among colonial subjects, who would in-turn contribute more soldiers and infrastructure back into the British network of defence. The authors asserted that this relationship formed a mutually reinforcing feedback loop. This discursive formulation encouraged colonial children to embrace a British governmentality of militarism, self-government and dominion over Indigenous peoples. The colonies' evolving institutions of democracy incentivised civics instruction in Australia and New Zealand. Emerging systems of public education also gave the authors the infrastructure to circulate their ideal governmentality to children as future citizen-subjects (Foucault, 2009, p. 321).

However, the conceived civic roles for Indigenous subjects varied among the textbooks based on context. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were infantilised, omitted altogether or depicted as antagonists to the British Empire. Conversely, Pope depicted Māori as having some rights and responsibilities in New Zealand's colonial democracy. The authors rationalised undemocratic protectorates and Crown colonies by delegitimising "native rulers" and relativising British annexation as an act of protection from their own "irrationality" and from "worse" empires. The civics textbooks constructed a discursive "enclosure" that marginalised Indigenous desires for independence as invalid and unreasonable (Smith, 2012, p. 133). The sources claimed that the hypocritical denial of democracy in the present, within colonies such as India and Egypt, was a temporary "uplifting" measure on the road to self-government in the future. This discursive formulation excused imperial hypocrisies that would undermine their prior claims of British exceptionalism in self-government. It formed a power logic of coloniality that assuaged student reservations in order to procure their commitment to the security of the British Empire and its colonies (Passada, 2019). Civics education was and remains a complex intersection between the espoused virtues of democracy and the uncomfortable contradictions of imperial history.

Similar to discourses of civics education today, the textbooks proclaimed a desire to foster citizens who could uphold democratic principles. My introduction outlined how recent civics education in Australia and New Zealand has been used as a measure of securitisation and I will conclude with contemporary recommendations. At the time of writing, civics curricula in both Australia (ACARA, 2022) and New Zealand (Potter, 2020, p. 44) encourage the comparison of their governments with a "non-democratic system". I do not intend to argue that democratic/non-democratic comparison should not be explored in schools. Rather, I recommend that contemporary civics education move beyond the colonial caricatures of "democratic" protagonists and "undemocratic" antagonists presented in the textbook sample from 1880 to 1920. This type of securitisation often defines comparative examples by their perceived threat to democracy and inhibits more holistic engagement with plurality (Nicoll et al., 2013). Said (2019) argues in *Orientalism* that unfavourable, and inaccurate, conceptualisations of cultural difference have motivated Western societies towards war, imperialism and paternalistic governance. Historical examples flag the importance of deconstructing the colonial assumptions underlying comparison in civics education. Teachers and educational policy makers in Australia and New Zealand can facilitate valuable learning experiences for themselves and their students by critically reflecting upon their own positionalities. Contemplating the impacts of imperial ideologies on notions of democracy and citizenship is especially crucial for polities with colonial histories such as Australia and New Zealand (Sabzalian, 2019).

Holistic and reflexive critique is also productive for growing initiatives of "global citizenship". In this field, critical and decolonial theorists advocate reciprocal and meaningful encounters with social difference rather than the extraction of cultural, political and economic legitimacy (Schulz and Agnew, 2020). Future generations in Australia and New Zealand will likely hold wider and more diverse relationships with cultures, communities and nation-states outside of the Anglosphere conceptualised in civics textbooks from 1880 to 1920 (Fleras, 2017). This article contributes to fields of "global citizenship" and civics education by analysing an historical discourse of textbooks that entered political comparison with an underlying agenda of civic and military securitisation. The textbooks challenged young people to improve their colonial democracy but did not sufficiently recognise how their institutions were inhibited by imperial complexities and ideological contradictions. Rather than critically uphold their own espoused democratic principles, the textbooks infantilised Indigenous peoples to rationalise British exceptionalism. The ongoing legacies of colonialism continue to affect political agency profoundly for Indigenous peoples in nation-states such as Australia and New Zealand. Relativising one's own political system against "foreign" opponents, like older textbooks did, excuses rather than addresses shortcomings in democratic representation. Mignolo (2011, p. 92) summarises that "[d]ecolonizing is nothing more and nothing less than taking democracy seriously instead of using it to advance imperial designs". Critical reflection on one's own epistemic predispositions can assist students in reforming their own political values and institutions (McCowan, 2012). Introspective self-critique and nuanced conceptualisations of plurality can be complementary to "the democratic health of our nations" that civics educators seek to secure, both in the past and the present (Heggart *et al.*, 2019, p. 1).

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