

Beirut, March 25/26, 2011

Textbook Revision and the Development of Common History Textbooks

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Introduction

Points of discussion:

- Textbook revision
- The development of common textbooks and teaching materials
- The Franco-German History Textbook

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Textbook revision

- History education in the 19th/early 20th century
 - Fostered national understanding
 - Legitimated social and power structure
 - Depicted chauvinistic attitudes, especially under war conditions
- Opposition by child-centred progressive educationists, internationally oriented peace activists and labour unions
- Activities on many levels after First World War:
 - League of Nations: Cesaes Resolution
 - Scandinavia: "Norden" Association
 - E.g. Franco-German textbook theses

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Textbook revision

After the Second World War

- Bi- and international textbook consultations: e.g. 1951-1967; 1981-2003 Franco-German consultations
- 1951: Foundation of the "International Institute for Textbook Revision" as clearing house for international textbook collaboration; since 1975: "Georg Eckert Institute for international Textbook Research"
- After 1990: activities in transformation and (violent) conflict environments

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Development of joint textbooks /materials

Objectives of joint history textbook projects:

- To overcome diverging narrations of history
- To support modern approaches of history teaching
- Issues: Divergent state controlled curricula and textbook approval
- Publication of supplementary material and teaching aides.



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Development of joint textbooks/materials

- Jointly approved textbook series
 - Backed by authorities, fitting curricula
- Non-approved international textbooks
 - Enriched perspective, not for regular use
- Multilateral alternative textbooks
 - Multiple perspectives, “correction” of dominant views
- Bi-national alternative teaching material (PRIME)
 - Awareness of the perspective of “the other”
- Additional multi- or bi-national materials on specific topics
 - Enriching textbook content
- Teaching guides, background information

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Development of joint textbooks/materials

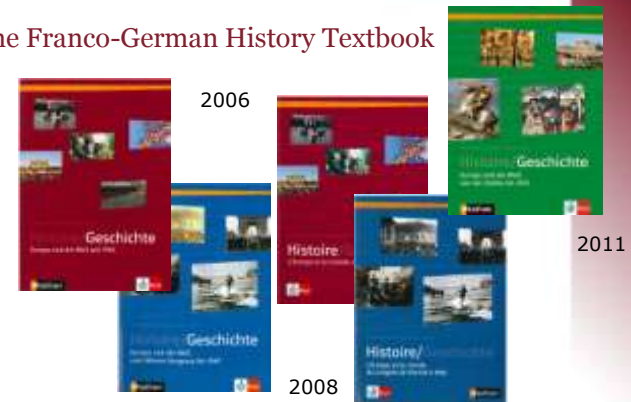
Methods

- Revised/discussed individual contributions; different perspectives not visible
- Compromise narration with different views pointed out in text and sources
- “Dual-narrative approach”
- Source book (with tasks)

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The Franco-German History Textbook

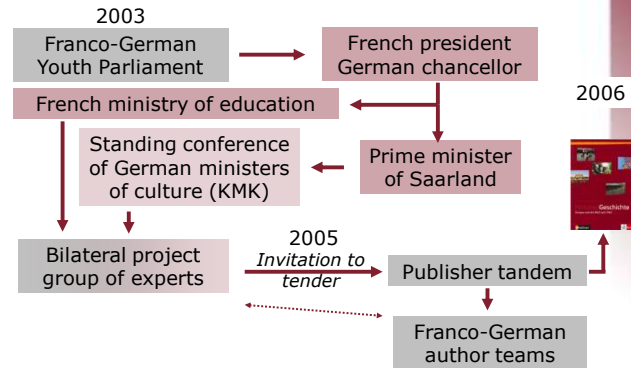


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The Franco-German History Textbook

Project development



The Franco-German History Textbook

Issues during the development process

- Power questions
 - Federal structure
 - Complication of curriculum revision
 - Examination requirements
- Divergent interpretations
 - Few „national“ perspectives
 - Different meanings/connotations of concepts/terms
- Differences between curricula
 - France and Germany: National history embedded in European history with global aspects
 - New: interlocking of historical developments

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The Franco-German History Textbook

Issues during the development process

- Concepts of history teaching
 - Germany: judgement, discussions
 - France: understanding, methods, interpretations
- Financial risk for publishers
 - Subsidies



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Conclusions

Franco-German History Textbook

- High symbolic political importance
- Decades of textbook revision cleared the ground from conflictual interpretations
- Books address (and analyze) remaining divergences
- Despite favorable conditions: Books rarely used as main textbooks

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Thank you
for your attention