

**Wolfgang Höpken**

(Georg-Eckert-Institute for International Textbook Research, Braunschweig, Germany)

**History-Textbooks and Reconciliation – Preconditions and Experiences  
in a Comparative Perspective**

- Draft -

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## **I. Introduction**

Can textbooks and education help to promote tolerance, to appease ethnic tensions or even to foster peace and reconciliation, once a conflict or a war has ended? Probably everybody would answer “yes”, and indeed, wherever and whenever a conflict has been terminated, education and textbooks usually are seen as a major instruments to restabilize the society, to reconcile former enemies and to foster peace. International agencies today distribute a lot of their resources to the improvement of education and textbooks in post-conflict areas, in the Balkans as well as in the Caucasus, in the Middle East or in African countries. Despite of these widespread experiences and against the high expectation, we usually have in education in particular in post-conflict societies, we still know very little about the role textbooks can play in the process from war to peace, from ethnic conflict to respect for diversity, from an authoritarian system to a democratic order. And more than that we know relatively little, when, how and under which conditions the attempt to improve textbooks and education should be started and can be successful.

Why did textbooks indeed contributed a lot to the process of reconciliation between Germany with its neighbours France or Poland, while in the case of Japan’s relations with Korea and China textbooks time and again are provoking conflicts. Why did textbooks and education in Northern-Ireland changed from a largely nationalist perspective to a peace oriented one, while in the Balkans relatively little was achieved in this direction, at least up until now. Why do some post-conflict societies intentionally try to make history teaching a matter for dealing with the legacy of ethnic violence as in South Africa, while others, such as Mozambique or Cambodia, ignore their recent past in the textbooks or, as in the case of Rwanda, at least postpone to deal with it in class for the time being.

In the following I will try to identify some of the environmental conditions and variables, which seem to be influential for the role and the capacity of textbooks in post-war or post-conflict societies, illustrating them very briefly with some examples, mostly from experiences, my Institute has gathered in various textbook projects in particular in Central Europe, the Balkans, but also in the Middle East and East Asia.

## **II. Factors influencing the role of textbooks in post-conflict and post-war societies**

What are the most important factors for textbooks in post-conflict societies?

First of all

### *1. The character and the outcome of the conflict*

for obvious reasons are decisive preconditions. The role history teaching can play for reconciliation differ substantially if we speak about traditional wars among states, who after the fighting has ended try to overcome the hostility between their population, such as for example Germany’s attempts to

reconcile with neighbours like France or Poland, or if we talk about “internal wars and conflicts”, such as authoritarian dictatorships, committing massive human rights violations, violent conflicts among ethnic groups or even genocides within a given state, which today make up the absolute majority of violent conflicts.

In the case of “traditional” bilateral wars among sovereign states, education becomes an instrument for peace settlement and reconciliation usually after peace has been firmly established, often – as in the German-Polish case - only after a considerable amount of time has passed since the war. The immediate impact of the war on the society already has passed its peak. Turning education and textbooks into an instrument for reconciliation and tolerance takes place under stable internal conditions and – again as in the case of Germany’s relation with France and Poland - educational and textbook improvement was only one part of a more general policy of reconciliation. Improving textbooks under these conditions might well be difficult, but it usually is much easier as under the conditions of an “internal war”.

In the case of “internal wars” the conditions for education and textbooks are substantially different:

Education and textbooks here usually have to be changed, immediately after the violence has been terminated, often only from outside, such as for example in the case of Bosnia, Kosovo or (more or less) in Sri Lanka, or they start even with violence still going on (as in Palestine, or – on a very different level - in the case of Northern Ireland);

they have to be conducted under the condition of memory and pain still being fresh, often traumatic and after a conflict, which usually has eroded the entire community and which usually has been accompanied by excessive violence or even genocide (such as in Cambodia, Rwanda or Bosnia). It makes a difference, if we speak about a conflict like in Northern Ireland – without any doubt a tragic conflict - with about 3000 casualties in 30 years, but with at least some inter-communal relationship and “normal” life within the society being kept upright even during the time of violence, or if we speak about Bosnia with 300 000 casualties, ethnic cleansing and rape or about the genocide in Rwanda, deeply destroying the community,

The causes behind the conflict in these cases at best are being appeased (mostly by international agencies but not settled, under extremely unstable internal conditions and with educational and human resources being insufficient or even largely destroyed by the conflict.

All these conditions in post-internal-conflict-societies make it very difficult for education to promote reconciliation and peace-building. And while education indeed in some cases of bilateral reconciliation after “traditional” wars has played a favorable role, such as between Germany and France and Poland, the picture looks less enthusiastic if we look at post-internal conflict societies. In many of these cases little has been achieved as in Bosnia or Kosovo for example, in some cases initiatives face considerable difficulties such as in Sri Lanka, in some cases attempts even years after the conflict have been reluctant without too much impact on the practice as in Rwanda, sometimes more or less nothing has been undertaken in this field as in Cambodia, and even were considerable resources have

been invested in sophisticated educational initiatives, it did not really succeed in overcoming the legacy of the conflict, as in the case of Northern Ireland.

Much depends also on the outcome of a conflict. Where a war among states or a bilateral conflict ends with the total defeat of one side, and where the responsibility for the violence is undisputed, peace building, tolerance and reconciliation become a necessity or even a precondition for recovery. Germany's total moral and political defeat after the war and the Holocaust became a driving force to seek for reconciliation with its neighbours and former victims and over the time led to a substantial policy of coming to terms with the past, including education and textbooks.

Where the outcome of a conflict and the question of responsibility is less clear, where the end of a conflict comes as a result of a bargain or a military deadlock, a concise policy of reconciliation often is more difficult to implement, in and outside education. The widespread feeling of having not only been an aggressor and a perpetrator against others during World War II, but also a victim of the atomic bomb, for example, has contributed very much to the ambiguities of the Japanese attitude on the World War II legacy, influencing also its educational policy. In particular in internal conflicts the outcome and the responsibility for the break-out of the violence often is diffuse. Often responsibility for the outbreak of a conflict is difficult to tell and the former conflict opponents after the ending of the conflict have to co-exist. In the former Yugoslavia for example, virtually all conflicting sides feel that they have been a victim and that others bear the responsibility for the conflict, and also education still till today largely is based on this selfperception, making reconciliation and tolerance difficult.

## 2. *Textbooks can only act in a general favorable environment*

A favorable environment first of all, means, that the immediate conflict, at least the *violence has to be ended* and that a relatively stable peace has been established, before former opponents can try to turn textbooks into an instrument for reconciliation. Ongoing violence, even when it becomes an exception from the rule, makes any attempt to develop and make use of peace oriented textbooks extremely difficult, not only because the violence keeps upright the polarization of the society, but most of all, because it creates a gap between the peace oriented intentions of the textbook and the student's everyday life. Students cannot link the textbook with their everyday experience, at best they will see the peace oriented intentions of the textbook narrative as an abstract principle, which they might even may agree upon, but which for them has little immediate relation to their reality.

More than that, experiences from different examples proof, that *basic political questions* such as questions over status, sovereignty, territory, constitutional rights for ethnic minorities etc, which usually are behind internal wars, *have to be settled* before education can play a role in the process of reconciliation. As long as these basic issues are open, they usually become a

matter for political fights and an instrument for political or ethnic mobilization and conflict among the competing elites, usually turning also education into a field for political confrontation.

It is useful, if not necessary, that textbooks and education is part of a general and broader policy of bilateral or internal *detente*, including symbolic forms, reparations, legal procedures etc. in order to have a positive impact on reconciliation and peace building. Education and textbooks should not be overestimated in their effect, they hardly can initiate or even replace a general policy of detente and reconciliation, but have to be part of it. If reduced to isolated initiatives, they usually have little impact on the society.

One of the most important political precondition is the *commitment of the political elites*. Confronting the legacy of the past in and promoting reconciliation through education must be a rewarding political capital and a source for legitimacy for political elites and among the conflict-actors. As trivial as it sounds, it is exactly the lack of elite-commitment, which has contributed to the many failures of improving textbooks in favor of tolerance and reconciliation in post-conflict societies, and I will illustrate this in a minute with some examples.

Finally, it is helpful, and in some cases inevitable, if conflicting actors, either states or ethnic groups, develop some kind of *common sense or commonness*, going beyond their otherwise divergent interests. Common values and traditions, going beyond ethnic or political cleavages within the society or among the conflicting actors can be extremely helpful in order to turn education into an instrument for conflict settlement and peace.

Various examples illustrate the vital importance of the general political environment.

In the case of Germany and its neighbours France and Poland, for example, this favorable political environment in almost all aspects was existing. When the German-french textbook cooperation started in the early 1950s and when, under totally different political conditions, the German-polish cooperation began in the early 1970s, in both cases peace was stable. Former disputed issues, such as territorial questions, had lost all their significance as for example the question of the Alsace between Germany and France or were settled at least de facto as in the case of Poland and Germany with the Warsaw Treaty of 1970/72. In both cases joint textbook cooperation took place as part of a general politics of detente; in the case of France, a strong feeling of a common sense of values, as promoted by the joint integration into a unified Europe and NATO-alliance, supported the process of reconciliation. In particular in the case of the franco-german cooperation, reconciliation was undisputed among

the elites and the public; that was less the case in the german-polish rapprochement, but also here the idea of reconciliation very soon gained a substantial political support among the elites and the society as well. It was exactly this favorable political environment, which made it possible to change textbooks in favour of an active promotion of reconciliation. As a result, textbook-cooperation among the two countries proved to be relatively successful, since long having gone very much beyond the elimination of stereotypes or biased contents into the joint development of teaching material, teacher's guide etc. (I can't go into detail here). In both cases there had been former attempts to do so, which however due to the less favorable political conditions had failed: in the German-french case early attempts during the interwar period had not had a great impact, and similar German-Polish initiatives in the 1950s and 1960s soon had ended up in a deadlock due to the Cold War. In both cases the political environment simply had not been ready for educational reconciliation.

The Japanese-Korean relations just the opposite could illustrate, that reconciliation via textbooks and education has its limits, when this favorable political environment is missing. I can't go into details here, but:

in Japan in particular the elite-commitment to reconciliation with its former enemies was lacking or was much more ambivalent on the Japanese side, oscillating between gestures of acknowledgement and even excuse for Japanese war-time policy ignorance or even provoking gestures on the other side, time and again also turning textbooks and education into a matter of diplomatic conflict in particular with Korea and China. Reconciliation in the Japanese case obviously is not a primary source for legitimacy for political elites, and thus, this did not create an environment, in which education could be turned into a promoter of reconciliation. Secondly, Japan never developed something like a feeling of Asian "commonness", not to speak about a process of integration, which helped so much German-French rapprochement and textbook cooperation. Just the opposite: here post-war political and economic orientation largely was directed towards "the West", distancing herself from her regional "Asian environment". Even the common anti-communist position in the Cold War did not, as in the case of Germany and France, stimulate such a feeling of common sense.

The crucial importance of the political environment becomes even more obvious in looking into societies which are faced with "internal" conflicts: The Israeli/Palestinian case (but also many others like the Bosnian one) is a particular example for that: None of the variables, mentioned above, currently are existing in this particular case: Violence is still going on, none of the disputed questions are settled, and the ongoing conflict has eroded any real commitment of the elites on both sides for any detente, including education. The

general environment has discredited peace oriented textbooks and education not only among politicians, but among many students and parents as well.

When the Oslo-Agreement between Israel and the Palestine authorities in 1990 apparently had opened a road to peace several textbook initiatives were started between both sides, which in the beginning proved to be very encouraging. Both sides agreed to eliminate offending narratives and terminology from the textbooks, and there was some considerable progress in the textbooks, especially in Israel, introducing much more multi-perspectivity and empathy for the Palestinian side into the textbooks. The outbreak of the Intifada and the Gulf war already made joint textbook activities difficult, while the recent outbreak on violence more or less caused a deadlock to such initiatives. Common educational and textbook initiatives, which had been started in the 1990s after the Oslo agreement, with very few exceptions therefore almost have become impossible. As long, as a conflict within a society or among two states or conflicting groups has not been definitely come to an end, textbooks obviously can do little, as little as probably education in general.

Bosnia and Kosovo could serve as other examples to prove the crucial importance of a favorable political environment: elite-commitment for an education for peace and reconciliation is missing in both cases, and the still unsolved question of the status of Kosovo currently is more flaming a largely nationalist educational policy. The most recent Albanian textbooks, strongly nationalist and emotionalizing in their content, clearly indicate this, having led already to strong criticism and disapproval by the UNMIK. Most recently, by the way, also among the Serbs and the Albanian minority within Serbia (outside Kosovo) is running into a severe conflict over education and textbooks, because the Albanians, largely settled in south-west Serbia are demanding not only Albanian written textbooks, but the textbooks from Kosovo or even Albania, which is rejected by the Serbian government – again a result of the largely unresolved status of this region within Serbia.

There seem to be very few exceptions from this rule, such as *Northern Ireland*, where even under the condition of ongoing violence significant steps could be made to turn teaching and textbooks into an instrument for peace.

Societies in many aspects have to be “ready” for reconciliation and for textbooks promoting it. Thus,

3. *the “mental” condition of the society*

is another important set of preconditions for making textbooks a tool for peace-building, and again, in particular this goes for societies, which have gone through ethnic and civil wars. A crucial issue seems to be, that there is a general *consensus* within the society, that reconciliation, tolerance and respect for diversity is necessary and beneficial for all groups in the society. Where societies are divided about reconciliation also educational issues often become politicized.

*Stable identities* as well seem to be of importance. Societies, which are in the process of nation-building, in particular, when the nation and the nation-state are the immediate product of the conflict, or societies, where *identities* are fractured as a result of a conflict or a social change, tend to make education more an instrument for promoting an ethnocentric and closed concept of identity. Identities here often are based on the narrative of ones own victimization, leaving little room for an education for Respect for Diversity, tolerance or reconciliation.

Finally, and this something which a comparative look at post-conflict societies increasingly demonstrates, reconciliation through education and textbooks needs time. *Time* is a crucial factor, which we constantly underestimate in our expectations towards peace-building processes. I don't see any example, where a successful policy of educational reconciliation has been implemented soon after the conflict had ended (may be with the exception of Germany and France, where reconciliation took place, as indicated, under particular favorable political conditions), but I see a lot of examples, where such attempts failed or were falling behind the expectations, when being started immediately after violence had ended or even still with the conflict going on.

Again, let me very briefly illustrate this with some examples, very different in their character and their outcome.

All the mental preconditions, mentioned here, again more or less were existing in the case of Germany's rapprochement with France and later with Poland. I refrain from going into details here. Reconciliation with France had an almost undisputed consensus within the society; the society was more divided about reconciliation with Poland, but again, the East policy in the early 1970s more and more got the support, in particular among the younger generation. This made textbooks and teaching, advocating reconciliation acceptable and attractive for teachers and students. In particular in the case of Poland also time had made it easier to start the

cooperation on textbook with Poland. When joint cooperation over textbooks started the head of the German working group was somebody, who as a young soldier had taken part in the Nazi-occupation of Poland, while his colleague on the Polish side had spent the occupation in a German concentration camp. This kind of cooperation probably would have been less likely in the early 1950s.

And I could show, that again some of these factors are missing or lacking in the Japanese-Korean case: In particular an undisputed consensus over facing the past seems to be lacking within the Japanese society. In the case of Japan, however, also the question of stable identities seem to be influential. As analysts have argued, the current signs of a neo-nationalist revision of history, denying Japanese responsibility for war crimes during World War II, which have found their way into some new textbooks seem to be part of a more general tendency to fight an apparently endangered Japanese identity, in particular among the young, by a revised concept of the past.

Also in the Israeli-Palestinian case, many of these preconditions are not at hand in the moment: Certainly as a result of the ongoing violence on both sides there is no consensus on reconciliation. Also the question of firm identities seem to play a role for both actors. In Israel the exciting examples of more multiperspective textbooks, going beyond the Zionist narrative and deconstructing many of the former pictures of history as myths, which came up since the 1990s, mostly in the aftermath of the Oslo peace agreement, have not only been heavily criticized in the Israeli society for political reasons as being inappropriate in times of a military conflict, but also because their deconstruction of the traditional Zionist narrative is seen as endangering an anyhow shaken identity of the Israeli society. While these so-called revisionist textbooks certainly can count upon their didactical and academic quality, under the present conditions they find it hard to be perceived as an instrument leading to a more peaceful future. And also on the Palestinian side, it is not just the violence and the unresolved conflict, which makes it hard for the Palestinian textbooks to treat their history with Israel in a proper, more peace oriented way, but no less the fact, that education currently primarily is seen as a tool for a Palestinian nation- and statebuilding. The new Palestinian textbooks strongly are trying to develop and foster a Palestinian national and state identity. They extensively use national symbols in textbooks of all subjects and despite a non-discriminative attitude towards other religions, they largely promote an ethnocentric concept of the Palestinian nation. And while they seldom are *directly* questioning the existence of Israel or legitimating terrorist acts against Israel, their constant and stubborn ignorance of Israel, for example in the maps printed in textbooks or their favorable treatment of the religious

principle of self-sacrifice as a matter to free oneself from “suppression” hardly are contributing to any reconciliation, but at least indirectly are coming close to dispute the legitimacy of an Israeli state. When identities are at stake, this might be the conclusion from many examples, it obviously is difficult to promote an education in favour of respect for diversity and reconciliation.

South Africa and Bosnia may serve here as in some sense divergent, but also similar examples. Certainly in South Africa there was a strong commitment for a post-apartheid concept of history teaching, which should foster a new, de-segregated society. A reform of history teaching therefore was part of the optimistic renewal after the end of apartheid. The results however, at least if looking at history textbooks and history teaching, seem to be ambivalent, and history teaching has not gained a substantial role in the process of reconciliation and peace-building. It did not get a substantial place in the so-called curriculum 2005, which replaced the former apartheid education. Also among parents history as a school subject has little reputation and, as critics have argued, in its context it did little to explain apartheid historically to the students. Conceived in the “spirit of amnesty”, as the South African educational specialist Cynthia Kros has written, the curricula, the textbooks and the teaching did little to develop an appropriate way to deal with the apartheid legacy and to develop a genuine approach to South African history. Again it seems, that the factor of time plays a role, because teachers often feel uncomfortable to teach about apartheid. Only during the last two years new attempts have been undertaken, to make a better use of history for educating the youth and thus stopping, what the Johannesburg Sunday Times once called the danger of the loss of memory in class.

Bosnia certainly is one of the most striking examples for the lack of a “mental” readiness for reconciliation, and this is also reflected in its educational policy. Also after ten years of international activity, there is little consensus about reconciliation and all three ethnic groups favor a concept of education, which is almost exclusively ethnocentric. Even the most recent activities of the international community to bring the educational and textbook systems of the three entities closer to each other, have not really overcome this. It is true, that the international community very recently was successful, for the first time in ten years, to promote a so-called common core curricula, which was signed by all three ethnic groups. A joint textbook commission agreed on eliminating offending texts from the books and corrected obviously factual errors. New textbooks, modernised in a some sense also improved textbooks have appeared since September 1<sup>st</sup>, at least in the Bosnian Federation. A common core curricula has been agreed upon, at least for the so-called non-national subjects. The up

until now divided schools in mixed areas are in the process of at least an administrative unification, not without heavy resistance in particular in Croat inhabited areas such as the Hercegovina, however. Without neglecting this progress, it is far from being a breakthrough. First of all, the educational reform was not the outcome of a growing consensus among the Bosnians themselves, but of international pressure. The common core curricula, more than that, includes only the so-called non-national subjects, leaving history, language, religion and culture up to the ethnic groups and making three in itself largely antagonistic and ethnocentric narratives also for the future very likely. Indeed it is a progress, that representatives from the three ethnic groups agreed on eliminating offensive material from the textbooks, which in former times had been imposed by the international community. But this agreement was possible only because the most recent history will be excluded from teaching and will be covered in the textbook only by a bare chronology. Again time proves to be a crucial issue for teaching past conflicts, because the three ethnic groups up until now are unable not only to agree on a common narrative of the past, but are not willing to confront their kids with a multiperspective narrative going beyond their own ones.

A similar situation, by the way, we also can find in the Serbian inhabited parts of Croatia. Here in Eastern Slavonia, as in Rwanda after the genocide, a five-year moratorium on teaching of the most recent history was ordered, ending only this year. And despite of the fact, that the situation looks better than in Bosnia with more professional contacts among teachers from both ethnic communities, Serbian teachers and parents are reluctant to have the moratorium lifted, because they fear, that the Serbs will be portrayed in textbooks exclusively as the perpetrators, thus in fact increasing the already high ethnic distance and making new conflicts over history possible.

Thus Bosnia, as well as Eastern Slavonia, show, that obviously not all past conflicts are negotiable in class, even when the violence has ended. Not always this is exclusively due to the vested interests of political elites, but I think, we have to take the question serious, how much ambivalence students and parents can be confronted with, when the legacy of the past violence is still vivid.

This leads me to my last set of conditions,

4. *education as a cultural resource for tolerance, respect for diversity and reconciliation.*

*Is education seen as an instrument and a cultural resource for respect for diversity, tolerance, reconciliation and peace building? While the idea, that education has to play such a role is an essential "western" idea, rooted in enlightenment traditions, in other cultures education does not necessarily have to play this role. In some cases, reconciliation might be dedicated to other*

institutions, such as families, local communities or traditional forms of healing. In Mozambique for example almost all forms of an institutionalized memory on the civil war is missing at all and also history teaching is not the place to speak about the past. Even in a country like Japan, as a japanese-american scholar recently has pointed out, education aiming many is not necessarily seen as an institution which should deal with questions of responsibility for the past, something which might explain, why the educational system has found it hard to come to terms with the World War II legacy.

Others questions in this field are important as well: what is *the understanding of education, in particular of history education* ? Is it based on values and principles like multiperspectivity or empathy building or is it seen basically as an instrument for identity-mangement in favour of loyalty towards ones own group; is it based on the purpose of educating a self-reflective individual or is its main task to promote state loyalty ? If education is based on values like promoting primarily national identity and loyalty to the state, textbooks and textbook reform projects hardly will be successful. Again Bosnia as well as more or less all counries of the former Yugoslavia (but also Palestine) can serve as an illustration. Here it is still the predominant understanding, that the textbook primarily has to foster the identity of the majority ethnic group and to legitimize the nation-state. Minorities and non-dominant ethnic groups in their textbooks therefore at best appear as “historical enemies” and trouble-shooters, trying to damage the dominant nation. Even, where minorities are present in textbooks, such as for example in a country like Romania, it is more difference than diversity, which the textboks are stressing and not any interethnicity.

Can education and Textbook development rely on a *pluralistic academic discourse* seems to be another precondition. Examples like Northern Ireland but also Israel show, how much the development of textbooks have been stimulated and are dependent on the development by a pluralistic academic discourse. Here it was the academic historiography, which since the 1970s questioned the traditional nationalist perceptions of history, predominant for many decades, and which later on led to the writing of new textbooks. And this is one reason, why for example in the Israeli-palestinian case, today there exist such a great assymetry among the two sides: The very plural and well developped Israeli textbooks today are the result of a developped and increasingly self-critical historiography by the so-called revisionists, while the still young palestinian textbook up untilo now could not benefit from a similar academic culture.

A very similar picture can be seen in Bosnia (as in many of the former Yugoslav states), where the public and academic discourse is as much ethnocentric and more monoperspective

as the textbooks, thus leaving little room for the textbook to go beyond the official narrative. Textbooks here can hardly draw any inspirations from the academic discourse.

Education and textbooks as an instrument for reconciliation, peace building and tolerance, in particular in post-conflict societies, are dependent on a variety of factors, reaching from the character of the conflict to the political, mental and educational environment.

- *Summary: transparency* -

### III. Suggestions for Designing a Textbook-Project

In dealing with conflict and post-conflict societies, any project seriously should reflect the general conditions for textbook and educational reform in each single case.

It seems, that four theoretical scenarios might be figured out, offering differing room for outside intervention:

- *Folie: Scenarios* -

#### 1. *In-Conflict Societies*

probably are too complicated to deal with. The political environment is extremely unstable, their institutional and educational framework usually is too shattered to make any work possible, inter-ethnic and political relations are characterized by frequent violence or even war. Education in in-conflict-societies usually is misused as a tool for mobilizing for conflict. Their educational objectives are based on homogenization and therefore offer little or almost no windows of opportunities for implementing respect for diversity, tolerance or reconciliation. (It seems that the *Palestine* currently falls into that category; outside intervention at best can prepare for better conditions in the future)

#### 2. *Post-conflict societies*

are much more open, but nevertheless are difficult to deal with. The prospects for success depend on the character of the conflict, how deeply it had effected and eroded the society and to what extend the society has been able to keep upright or to regain a certain degree of institutional cohesion. Their institutional framework is still weak, often depending on international assistance and their educational and human resources mostly are still poor. Ethnic co-existence is appeased, but essential questions often still have to be settled. At best a “negative” peace is reached. Due to the legacy of ethnic or political division within the society, post-conflict societies sometimes feel reluctant to apply educational models, which stress divergency, but seek for cohesion. Different “paradigms” could be selected, reflecting the different degree of challenges:

- *post-authoritarian societies* (Latin America)

- *post- (ethnic) conflict societies* (Caucasus, Balkans, Sri Lanka)

- *post-genocide and mass-violence societies* (Ruanda, Nigeria, Cote Ivoire, Bosnia, Kosova)

### *3. Pre-conflict societies*

are in danger that institutional stability are eroded, sometimes already by first acts of violence. While educational resources might still be sufficient, they might increasingly become a matter for ethnic or political disputes. Principles of respect for diversity or multicultural education, which had been accepted in general for a long time increasingly are questioned, either by a policy change or due to processes of increasing ethnic mobilization by competing elites. Influencing textbooks (and curriculum) may have a supportive effect to prevent conflicts from escalating, they need however a commitment by the elites to de-escalate an upcoming conflict. India seems to be an example, having in mind the tensions which were fueled by the announcement of a change in curricula and textbooks recently.

### *4. opening-up societies*

certainly offer the best windows of opportunities. I understand "opening up societies" as societies, which have been able to keep ethnic antagonisms below the level of violent clashes or which after a conflict have been able to regain a certain degree of institutional stability and to restabilize the ethnic coexistence by settling disputed issues between the former conflict actors. Ethnocentrism and ethnic distances might be still strong among the society, but the elite has made a commitment in favour of an education, developing respect for diversity and tolerance. Often those societies, however, are still lacking the institutional and material resources and the competence to do so. Examples for this paradigm could be countries like *Bulgaria or Romania*, may be some latin american countries. In both countries ethnic clashes reached a peak in the early 1990s, in some cases even ending up in violent conflicts. Both countries, managed to calm down their ethnic conflicts and have committed themselves to an educational system reflecting their multi-ethnicity. First steps have been undertaken, but the textbook (and the curriculum- ) situation and the educational situation of at least some minorities (for example Roma-minorities) still is insufficient. Minorities have their rights to be educated in their mother tongue and have textbooks of their own; the majority ethnic group however learns little about the minorities and intercultural and interethnic relations are not really developed by the current standard of Textbooks.