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Research article

# Representation, responsibility and legacy: a comparative analysis of how colonial history is narrated in Bolivian social science textbooks, pre- and post-070 Educational Reform

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Submission date: 23 October 2023; Acceptance date: 25 September 2024; Publication date: 14 November 2024

## How to cite

Choque Apaza, J. and Robinson, N. (2024). 'Representation, responsibility and legacy: a comparative analysis of how colonial history is narrated in Bolivian social science textbooks, pre- and post-070 Educational Reform'. *History Education Research Journal*, 21 (1), 13.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14324/HERJ.21.1.13>.

## Peer review

This article has been peer-reviewed through the journal's standard double-anonymous peer-review process, where both the reviewers and authors are anonymised during review.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14324/HERJ.21.1.13>.

## Open access

*History Education Research Journal* is a peer-reviewed open-access journal.

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## Abstract

This research offers a comparative analysis of how colonial history is narrated in Bolivian textbooks, before and after the 070 Educational Reform. The 070 Educational Reform, introduced in 2010, aimed to decolonize, depatriarchalise and reaffirm Indigenous and Afrobolivian identities. Three specific features of colonial narratives were analysed: 'identity representation' (the specific description of different groups of people within the narrative); 'responsibility' (the association between individuals and their actions); and 'contemporary legacies' (the causal relationship between the past and present). Text and images from six textbooks pre-070 Reform and five textbooks post-070 Reform were examined through sociocognitive critical discourse analysis (text) and multimodal critical

analysis (images). Findings from this study indicate that textbooks have made partial adjustments post-070 Reform. 'Identity representation' showed the most progressive change. 'Responsibility', on the other hand, continues to omit the accountability of the Spanish and the Catholic Church for colonial abuses. Textbooks only briefly discuss colonial legacies, and characterise these legacies as positive. This research contributes not only to research on colonial narrations in school textbooks, but also on the educational impact of decolonizing reforms. It provides suggestions for publishing houses and the Bolivian government to improve the impact of the 070 Reform in textbooks.

**Keywords** history education; social science textbooks; decolonization; Bolivia; 070 Educational Reform; colonial representation; colonial legacies

## Introduction

Colonial hierarchies have shaped Bolivians' way of coexisting since 1532 (Rivera Cusicanqui and Morón, 2010). Such hierarchical structures are ratified and legitimised through written and oral text (Rivera Cusicanqui and Morón, 2010). For instance, in 2021, Rómulo Calvo, the leading politician of Bolivia's most industrialised region, referred to the Indigenous flag – 'Whipala' – as a 'floor cloth' that did not represent that region (Erbol, 2023). Such ideas, according to Rivera Cusicanqui and Morón (2010), are not only part of general speech; they have also normalised discrimination against those on the bottom rung of Bolivian society.

It is this reality that Indigenous and popular movements have long fought to change. Yet only with the election of the first Indigenous man – Evo Morales – to the Bolivian presidency have such movements become influential at the governmental level (Katz, 2007). Alongside the structural changes carried out by Morales's government, the 070 Educational Reform (Ley N° 070, 2010), named 'Ley Avelino Siñani y Elizardo Pérez' (herein referred to as the '070 Reform'), was introduced to subjectively *decolonize* and depatriarchalise education, and to strengthen Bolivian Indigenous and Afrobolivian identities. American studies divides the 'decolonization' into two separate definitions: 'descolonización' and 'decolonización' (Fanon, 2008). While decolonisation (with 's') implies physical and objective freedom from colonising countries, *decolonization*, no 's', refers to colonised community members' subjective submission and mindset. In the context of the 070 Reform, this article concerns processes of decolonization without 's'. This 070 Reform further developed the internal decolonization process that had started with the 2009 State Constitution, when Bolivia became a state formed by Indigenous and non-Indigenous nations (Bolivia CPE, 2009). While there has been significant research on the content of the 070 Reform, Reinales (2020) argues that its application and impact require further investigation.

Under the 070 Reform, social sciences have become a critical interdisciplinary subject that seeks to comprehend and explain the country's social, historic and political reality (MdE, 2015). In this sense, history – which explains a succession of events in time – is integrated with geography (space), sociology (social organisation) and civic education (norms) (MdE, 2015). As a result, social science textbooks provide a horizontal and interdisciplinary set of history, geography, sociology and civic education content.

This article explores the application and impact of the 070 Reform on narratives of colonial history in Bolivia's social science textbooks. Textbooks help to establish a nation's official narrative, as they can have 'immutable authority, together with the teacher, over students' perceptions' (Morgan, 2010: 301). This is especially true in contexts such as Bolivia, where students lack alternatives besides the learning resources that schools provide (Morgan, 2010). Chu (2015: 472) further adds that textbooks 'are a good source for researchers to examine the ideological message and power relations that underlie the discourse that dominates the construction, transmission, and reproduction of school knowledge'.

An analysis of Bolivian textbooks pre- and post-070 thus offers an opportunity to assess not only the ideological messages concerning colonialism that students are accessing in the classroom, but also the influence of the 070 Reform on historical narratives of colonisation. To do so, this study employs a critical discourse analysis and multimodal critical discourse analysis of the representation of colonialism in 11 secondary social science textbooks in Bolivia.

The structure of the article is as follows. The article starts by contextualising colonialism in Bolivia, the 070 Educational Reform, and the production of textbooks in Bolivia. It then discusses previous research which has analysed textbooks' narrative of colonialism. We argue that the analysis of colonial narratives in Latin America has tended to focus only on representations of Indigenous people and Europeans. In outlining our conceptual framework, we suggest that textbook analysis should also include the representations of the Catholic Church and African Americans, how responsibility for colonisation is distributed, and how the contemporary legacies of colonisation are discussed. We then present our methodological approach, before turning to discuss the findings.

## Context for this research

### Bolivian colonisation

Prior to the Spanish arrival, Bolivia's territory was populated by sophisticated Indigenous communities. In the highlands, the Aymaras and other ancient groups – the Urus, Mollo and Choqueles – lived almost autonomously as part of the Inca empire (Klein, 2021). According to Klein (2021), Francisco Pizarro established the definitive Spanish settlement in Bolivia after 1535 in the Charcas region. The new Spanish settlements caused significant changes for the native habitants of Charcas, who were subjected to harsh forced labour (Carballo, 2020), and whose numbers radically reduced. This process of colonisation furthermore solidified a racialised social class system, in which the Spanish were at the top, and Indigenous and Black people were at the bottom (Klein, 2021).

While Bolivia obtained its independence from the Spanish in 1825, Stern (1996: 378) argues that 'colonial-like social and economic relations have been maintained (reinvented) and put to use in modern context'. The perception of the Indigenous and Black population as unskilled labour has prevailed (Stern, 1996), and the employment of Indigenous and mixed-race people in mines is still widespread (Josefsen, 2023). While Bolivia's cultural White elites are concentrated in affluent metropolitan areas, dark-skinned labouring classes live in the poorest towns (Stern, 1996).

Ramírez (2015) adds that this racialised hierarchy has subjected Indigenous people to poverty and exploitation. Quijano (2007) notes that the idea of the 'indio' – a pejorative term for native people, introduced by European settlers – is still common in Bolivia. This has resulted in exclusion and racism against AfroBolivians, Indigenous and mixed-race descendants throughout the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries (De Mesa et al., 2007; Reinales, 2020).

### The 070 Educational Reform

In response to these colonial racialised hierarchies, Evo Morales's government approved a new constitution in 2009 that changed Bolivia from a republic to a plurinational state. This was shortly followed by the approval of the 070 Reform).

The 070 Reform aims to *decolonize* and depatriarchalise education, and to reaffirm Indigenous and AfroBolivian communities (Ley N° 070, 2010). Education in Bolivia is envisioned as a social and political process of liberation from the country's 'neocolonial' condition through internal and national self-determination (Efron, 2013; Samanamud, 2015). According to Efron (2013), the 070 Reform does not pursue cultural, pedagogic or epistemological homogenisation. Instead, it seeks to connect different social groups' knowledge and experiences for fair cohabitation (Efron, 2013; Gómez et al., 2010). It aims to develop critical, reflective individuals who are conscious of their historical background and the plurality of other identities (Efron, 2013). Within the 070 Reform, the concepts of intraculturality and interculturality are incorporated as guiding principles which foster subjective decolonization. Intraculturality is the mechanism by which Indigenous knowledge and experiences are revalued, and interculturality is the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and experiences within the education system (Efron, 2013).

Of particular interest to this study is Bolivia's history curriculum content. Following the 070 Reform in 2010, the history curriculum is based on Indigenous perspectives (MdE, 2021). For instance, the national content guidance on colonialism starts with historical and religious references to Abya Yala – the Indigenous name for America – and continues with the European and religious invasion and the Native American resistance, before finally opening space for a discussion on the effects of colonialism (Plá, 2016). The narrative structure of this history curriculum fractures a Eurocentric historical narration and provides continuity to Abya Yala's community's own history. The Ministry of Education (MdE, 2021)

indicates that the content-specific learning objectives are not to memorise dates or characters' names, but rather to deconstruct colonial history and to rebuild the history of the Native communities.

However, the 070 Reform has also been the focus of criticism. First, it was criticised for reproducing teacher-centred education. [Coro and Hugo \(2012\)](#) explain that since changes were content and not pedagogically oriented, schools are not teaching critical thinking, but rather simply offering greater exposure to Indigenous content. Second, there has been a concern that the emphasis on Indigenous knowledge may generate cultural ethnocentrism which leaves no space for discussing other national identities ([de Souza, 2017](#)), and which may weaken non-Indigenous citizens' national identity ([Efron, 2013](#)). Third, the 070 Reform's aim to develop citizens as *decolonized*, critical and intercultural individuals ignores the reality of other social demands, since citizens are not only political and democratic beings ([de Souza, 2017](#)). Fourth, [Efron \(2013\)](#) notes that the 070 Reform needs to overcome significant structural, material and symbolic difficulties, if decolonization is to become real beyond national study plans.

The scale of the challenges identified by these scholars are difficult to assess, given that research has not yet been conducted on the effects of the reform ([Reinares, 2020](#)). Instead, research on the 070 Reform has undergone different stages: (1) describing and explaining its main characteristics, background and goals (for example, [Reinares, 2020](#)); (2) critiquing and predicting its success or failure (for example, [Efron, 2013](#); [Plá, 2016](#)); and (3) studying the ways in which the reform has been implemented in schools and universities. For example, while [Molina Gutierrez \(2008\)](#) and [Patzí Paco \(2013\)](#) expected no implementation at all, [Mendoza and González \(2016\)](#), [Cruz Nina et al. \(2018\)](#) and [Ovando Rojas \(2019\)](#) demonstrated that the reform has become part of Bolivia's educational practices. Nevertheless, such studies only display generalised evidence regarding the activities and programmes incorporated in the system. No information is provided regarding changes in colonial perceptions.

An area of particular interest concerns school learning materials, since [Galarza Claudio \(2015\)](#) has demonstrated that textbooks are a key bridge between the 070 Reform and classroom practices. This study thus explores how the 070 Reform has impacted historical narratives of colonialism in social science textbooks in Bolivia.

## Textbooks in Bolivia

A difficulty the government perceived when planning to *decolonize* the education system was the actual content being displayed in textbooks. In 2009, President Evo Morales specifically criticised the narration of Bolivia's history in textbooks, which did not reflect the experience of all the social groups in the country ([Parasso, 2009](#)). In particular, the government accused multi-corporate Spanish publishing houses of promoting colonial ideologies, and announced their intention to expel these entities from the country ([Parasso, 2009](#)). The exit of the Alfaguara Spanish publishing house from Bolivia, the creation of the state's public publishing house, the growth of small local publishing companies, and the arrival of new Latin American companies, can all be attributed to the 070 Reform ([Almadal, 2021](#)). While these actions have been supported by many social sectors, other voices advocate for research regarding textbook quality in Bolivia before making further permanent changes ([Parasso, 2009](#)).

The textbook publishing industry in Bolivia has always been small, with only 15 to 20 companies currently officially registered. Fifty per cent of the school textbook market is controlled by three of Bolivia's oldest publishing houses: Don Bosco, Bruño, and Santillana ([Almadal, 2021](#); [El Nuevo Dia, 2003](#)). In 1896, the Don Bosco publishing house arrived in Bolivia with the Italian Catholic religious order the Salesians of Don Bosco, aiming to 'educate Bolivian people' ([Aramayo, 1976](#)). It currently produces more than 450,000 school textbooks per year, and other school materials based on the national study plan and the Salesian's social values ([Agencia Info Salesiana, 2016](#)). Bruño publishing house arrived in Bolivia in 1919 with the La Salle Brothers French Christian Order ([Gómez and Piedrahita, 2014](#)). Santillana arrived in Bolivia as a result of the 1994 neoliberal educational reform, and it was granted the title of 'officially approved material' by the government ([Dausá, 2009](#)). With this title, Santillana monopolised the national market ([Dausá, 2009](#)). While Evo Morales's government removed the officially approved title, Santillana continues to control the largest market coverage in Bolivia ([Almadal, 2021](#)).

Research regarding how publishing houses narrate colonial history is important for understanding how they respond and adapt to national educational reforms. Given that Don Bosco, Bruño, and Santillana textbooks represent 50 per cent of the Bolivian schoolbooks market, and have an international presence, they have been selected as data sources for this analysis.

## Colonial narratives in textbooks

International and regional research on textbook narratives of colonialism has mainly focused on analysing the identity representation of European explorers and Indigenous inhabitants. In English-speaking contexts, authors (for example, Mikander, 2015; Purwanta, 2018; Weiner, 2016) argue that textbooks represent European conquerors in idealised ways as heroic and superior. In contrast, Indigenous people have been represented as exotic, primitive, lazy, violent, flawed others, who are responsible for their own delayed development (Aamotsbakken, 2008; Canales-Tapia et al., 2018; Carleton, 2011; Crawford, 2013; Kaomea, 2000; Loftsdóttir, 2010; Torres, 2021). Numerous authors (Crawford, 2013; Kaomea, 2000; Mikander, 2015; Pousa and López Facal, 2013; Soler, 2008) argue that this identity representation perpetuates the subjugated relationship between the colonised populations and Europe, justifies colonialism, reinforces colonial mentality, and rationalises the idea of Western culture as the hegemonic sociocultural model.

However, focusing on the representation of European explorers and Indigenous people has eclipsed other important actors involved in the colonisation of South America, such as the Catholic Church and Black people. While there have been two studies (Aman, 2009; Soler, 2008) concerning the representation of Black people in South American textbooks, they are not as detailed as the Indigenous representation. As far as we are aware, there has been no research on the representation of the Catholic Church in South American history textbooks. Our article addresses this gap.

As well as identity representation, changes in the way textbooks narrate colonialism have also been studied. Purwanta (2018) demonstrates how – following the 1975 Indonesian curriculum implementation – the perception of colonialism as a cause of misery changed to colonialism as a source of development. This is contrary to other studies in which national reforms changed the narration of colonialism from a Eurocentric to a nationalist perspective. For instance, Cave (2013) demonstrates how progressive pedagogy and the 2000 curriculum reform impacted the patriotic representation of colonialism in Japan. Bentrovato and Van Nieuwenhuysse (2020) specify how Congo's narration went from the glorification of colonisation to anti-colonial nationalism. Williams and Bennett (2016) register how North Rhine-Westphalian history textbooks made efforts to deconstruct colonial narratives after post-colonial discourse gained traction in German public debates, while Argentina's 2006 Educational Reform motivated the brief introduction of Indigenous resistance into textbooks (Lewkowicz, 2015). The current study contributes to this literature by focusing on how historical narratives of colonialism have changed following a reform with an intentionally decolonial mandate.

Also less explored in studies of history textbooks have been questions of how responsibility for colonialism, and the contemporary legacies of colonialism, are discussed. We suggest that 'Representation', 'Responsibility' and 'Legacies' are three important aspects of colonial narratives. This triad forms the basis of our conceptual framework, to which we now turn.

## Conceptual framework

Our analysis of textbooks before and after the 070 Reform focused on three aspects of the colonial narrative: Representation, Responsibility and Legacy. As has previously been discussed, considerations of identity representation are common in textbook analysis. However, we suggest that understanding how textbooks distribute responsibility for colonisation, and narrate the contemporary legacies of colonialism, are equally important for understanding the ideological messaging that underpins narratives of colonial history.

### Representation

'Representation' refers to the ways in which specific identities – European, Indigenous, Black, Catholic – are described in the textbooks. Studies have shown how negative representation of specific groups (for example, Black communities, women, immigrants) in textbooks transmit stereotypes, sexism, stigmatisation and racism (Fleming, 2009; Loewen and Plonsky, 2017), and have significant effects on the self-esteem of students who identify with the groups that are negatively represented (de Souza, 2017; Mushtaq et al., 2022). While there is significant evidence of the negative representation of Indigenous

people and Black people in textbooks (for example, [Brown and Habegger-Conti, 2017](#); [Ninnes, 2000](#); [Rogers Stanton, 2014](#)), no research has been done on their representation in Bolivian textbooks.

## Responsibility

'Responsibility' refers to 'the way in which, in looking back on history, we associate the actions of different persons' ([Sparrow, 2000](#): 348). For example, [Weiner \(2016\)](#) claims that Dutch schoolbooks absolve European agents of any responsibility related to slavery, South African apartheid and colonialism. [Aman \(2009\)](#) similarly points out that when describing specific colonial-era events, Colombian textbooks hide the causal relationship between the agents and the actions.

Studying how textbooks address responsibility helps to determine the type of actions for which individuals and communities are held accountable, and whether accountability among individuals and groups is attributed equally in the textbook narration ([Machin and Mayr, 2023](#)). For instance, if textbooks use an active voice when describing the wrongdoings of some groups, but use a passive voice when describing the wrongdoings of others, there is evidence that responsibility is not being equally distributed ([Machin and Mayr, 2023](#)). Similarly, a separation between an agent and verb 'makes [the action] appear as a fact rather than the result of a decision [made by explicit individuals]' ([Machin and Mayr, 2023](#): 138). A study of responsibility thus becomes important for determining the position of textbooks towards these actions and their agents.

## Legacy

[Robinson \(2022: 8\)](#) differentiates the meaning of legacy in terms of legacies as the 'essentialised causal relationship between the past and the present' and legacies referring to 'how people construct casual relationships between the past and the present'. The present research is interested in the latter definition: how textbooks use the colonial past to explain contemporary Bolivian society, and thus construct a causal relationship. [Rafferty \(2013: 28\)](#) states that the omission of historical legacies 'undermine[s]' today's social structures, which are a consequence of historical events. [Robinson \(2022: 5\)](#) similarly states that 'a history of wrongs' can be neutralised by not recognising the present structural manifestations of a history of oppression, since the present effects of historical injustice become normalised and hidden ([Murphy, 2017](#)). Textbook analysis which does not consider colonial legacies thus fails to investigate how textbooks connect students' present with their past, and whether textbooks create spaces for discussion of colonial reparation ([Robinson, 2022](#)).

## Methodological approach

Text and images from six Bolivian social sciences textbooks pre-070 Reform and five textbooks post-070 Reform were examined using sociocognitive critical discourse analysis (text) and multimodal critical analysis (images). Textbooks from the publishers Santillana, Don Bosco and Bruño were selected, as these are the most widely used textbooks in Bolivian schools. Bruño published one set of textbooks post-070 Reform, reprinting this edition several times. Therefore, only one post-070 Bruño textbook was incorporated for data analysis. All textbooks that were analysed in this study are presented in Table 1. Before the 070 Reform, colonialism was taught in the first and second grades. Since the 070 Reform, colonialism has been taught in the first and fourth grades. Therefore, textbooks from these grades were considered for analysis. Since textbooks were written in Spanish, the units addressing the topic of colonialism were translated into English for the purposes of analysis.

## Sociocognitive critical discourse analysis

[Van Dijk's \(1998\)](#) qualitative social cognitive critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach was used to analyse the written narration of colonialism in textbooks. Sociocognitive CDA proposes a six-step analysis that considers the text's content and context ([Wodak and Meyer, 2009](#)). While [Van Dijk \(1998\)](#) insists on following each step for analysis, he understands that 'a complete CDA for a large corpus is impossible' ([Wodak and Meyer, 2009](#): 29). Therefore, since the corpus of this research consisted of 11 school textbooks, we concentrated on the content analysis steps which included 'local meaning' and 'subtle formal structure' analysis.

**Table 1. List of analysed pre- and post-070 Reform social science textbooks**

| Publishing house | Textbook title  | Year  |
|------------------|---|-------|
| Bruño            | <i>Sociales 2</i>   | 1996a |
| Bruño            | <i>Estudios Sociales 2º Secundaria</i>                      | 1996b |
| Bruño            | <i>Ciencias Sociales 1º de Secundaria</i>                   | 2012  |
| Don Bosco        | <i>Secundaria Sociales</i>                                  | 1999  |
| Don Bosco        | <i>Estudios Sociales 7</i>                                  | 2000  |
| Don Bosco        | <i>Ciencias Sociales 4 Educación secundaria comunitaria</i> | 2010a |
| Don Bosco        | <i>Ciencias Sociales 1º de Secundaria</i>                   | 2010b |
| Santillana       | <i>Secundaria Ciencias Sociales 2º</i>                      | 2002  |
| Santillana       | <i>Ciencias Sociales 7 Nueva Primaria Santillana</i>        | 2003  |
| Santillana       | <i>Hipertexto Santillana Ciencias Sociales 7</i>            | 2010  |
| Santillana       | <i>Ciencias Sociales 1º de secundaria</i>                   | 2021  |

Local meaning analysis was carried out through lexical denotation and connotation descriptions. Lexical meanings ‘most directly influence the mental models and hence the opinions and attitudes of recipients’ (Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 69). Subtle ‘formal’ structure analysis consisted of transitivity analysis based on Halliday and Matthiessen’s (2004) functional grammar theory. In transitivity, the clause – which is a grammatical unit – demonstrates the actions taking place in the text (Van Dijk, 2008). Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) classify such actions in material, mental, behavioural, verbal, relational and existential processes, and explain that meaning can be described in relation to participants (‘doers or done-to’), verbs (processes), and circumstances (adverbial or prepositional phrases). Subtle formal structural analysis exposes the writer’s real perspective about the topic, since clause structures are generally not consciously controlled (Wodak and Meyer, 2009).

### Multimodal critical discourse analysis

Discourses can also be signified through visual, audio and spatial modes of choices, ‘each having a unique representational potential’ (Machin and Mayr, 2023: 23). Textbooks are accompanied by other semiotic forms, for example, images, videos and soundtracks, and they are thus naturally multimodal resources (Kress, 1990). Such modes, besides representing an event, create proximity between events and readers by translating the event into an experience that transports the receiver from spectator to witness (Kress, 1990).

Our analysis of textbook images drew on Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996) approach of multimodal critical discourse analysis (MCDA). These authors argue that ‘the visual component of the text is an independently organised and structured message that in no way depends on [the text]’ (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996: 18). According to the MCDA approach, images can be divided into two categories: they either depict a narrative (‘doings’), or they depict conceptual processes (‘having or being’) (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996: 25). Images with narrative processes have at least two interacting participants, ‘connected by a vector’ (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996: 59). This vector is represented by a strong oblique, diagonal line that departs from the actors (active participants) to the goal (passive participants). In images with a conceptual process, interaction among participants is missing; this type of image generally portrays just one participant (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996), and it can be analysed according to how the participant is represented (for example, colour, expressions, gestures, objects).

### Analysis framework

Employing a CDA and MCDA approach, we explored how textbooks pre- and post-070 Reform narrated issues of ‘representation’, ‘responsibility’ and ‘legacy’, both in their written and in their visual forms.

The ‘representation’ of identities in written text was analysed by looking at the most frequently used nouns and adjectives describing people in the narrative (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). More specifically, the connotation of nouns and adjectives in sentences that used the verbs ‘to be’, ‘to have’ or their synonyms were analysed; such verbs defined things or people in relation to the existence of other

things (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). Each group (Indigenous, African, European, Catholic) was divided in two subcategories: characters as a group (for example, Indigenous communities, the Catholic Church) and important personalities (for example, Francisco Pizarro, Atahualpa). The visual 'representation' of identities was analysed by looking at textbook images that depicted a conceptual process, through attention to the participants' 'possessive attributes'; for example, elements they carry, possess or wear (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996: 87). Such images represent participants as 'stable and timeless', bringing focus to their essential characteristics (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996: 69). Additionally, the person in the images' gaze (eye contact with the viewer), gesture (individual's attitude), and the image background colour (the mood of the image) were included in the analysis (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996).

Within the written text, 'responsibility' was identified by the presence or absence of the agent of a clause. Considering Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) functional grammar theory, verbs for mental (cognition, perception and affection) and material (physical action) processes were considered. 'Responsibility' was analysed by identifying the presence or absence of the agent (individual responsible for the action) in the clause when narrating mental (thoughts or opinions) and material (action) processes. To establish how textbooks' visual data represented responsibility, images with narrative processes were examined. By identifying the image's main action (determined by vector), and the active participants (responsible for this action), it was determined which actions are attributed to which type of participants and, thus, the type of actions for which they are responsible.

For the written data, 'legacies' were perceived through the lexical choices in sentences associating the present with the colonial past. After identifying such sentences, lexical connotations and suppressions were considered. As lexical connotations 'play an important role in interpreting subtle shades of sentiment beyond denotative or surface meaning of the text' (Feng et al., 2013: 1774), the analysis of the lexical connotations determined whether the textbooks associated the colonial past with negative or positive contemporary consequences. The description of lexical suppression – the absence of expected words – highlighted publishing houses' omissions. For visual data, conceptual images that depicted colonial features which remained in the present were evaluated. Through an analysis of the type of objects represented, and the characteristics of these objects – such as light, angle and colour – the concepts and sentiments associated with colonial legacies were determined.

## Findings

### Representation

This section explains how the representation of Spanish explorers, the Catholic Church, Indigenous people and Black people have changed before and after the 070 Reform implementation. An asterisk (\*) after a word or phrase indicates that that word or phrase was used at least three times across all the pre-070 Reform textbooks, or across all the post-070 Reform textbooks. Table 2 summarises these representations. Pre-070 textbooks represented the Spanish and their colonial personalities positively. Words such as 'adventure\*', 'technologically superior\*', 'economically powerful\*', 'diverse\*', 'goddesses\*' and 'extensive culture\*', were used to describe Spanish explorers. The representation of Spanish figures reinforced this image, as the terms 'founders\*', 'control\*', 'adventurous\*' and 'outstanding skills\*' were constantly used. Images similarly highlighted desirable characteristics. For instance, the image entitled 'A Spanish Lady with her Black slave' (Santillana, 2003: 99) portrays a Quito Audience Spanish woman being served by a Black woman. The Spanish woman occupies half of the painting, and she is depicted as fashionable, religious and powerful. Similarly, the image entitled 'Mayor of the city hall according to Guamán Poma' (Santillana, 2002: 171) portrays a Spanish descendant colonial mayor, holding a long rod and rosary, once again reinforcing the idea of the Spanish as superior, and as economically and culturally powerful.

Figures associated with the Catholic Church were portrayed as sincere advocates, and as the most respected members of colonial society. The commonly employed adjectives 'advocate\*' and 'respect\*' suggest that the church publicly pleaded in favour of Indigenous communities, and that it was well liked. In an image of Bartolomé de las Casas – a Dominican priest in the sixteenth century – elements such as the fountain pen and paper, and his focus on his writing, portray him as an intellectual, reflective and kind man.

The representation of Indigenous people is minimised in pre-070 Reform textbooks. The words 'indio\*', 'aboriginal\*', 'barbarians\*' and 'savages\*' are frequently used, and they represent Indigenous



existence as a state of misery, poverty and suffering. Similarly, the words 'labour force\*', 'slaves\*' and 'exploitation\*' reduce Indigenous people to service roles, while Indigenous men are visually depicted with tools (for example, rope, sticks, picks and shovels) and sorrowful expressions. An emphasis on collective nouns – for example, 'communities\*', 'population\*', 'mass\*', 'cultures\*', 'human beings\*' – suggests that Indigenous people do not have unique personalities or perspectives. However, when individual figures are represented – such as the Inca successors Atahualla and Huascar – they are associated with civil war and division.

Textbooks offer limited descriptions of Black people. The main words associated with this group are 'slaves\*', 'exploitation\*' and 'labour force\*', or they are portrayed as outsiders, for example, 'people from Africa\*'. The single image of Black people depicts this community with no possessions, with downhearted facial expressions, and as children.

Post-070 Reform textbooks still refer to the Spanish and their main personalities more positively than negatively. Positive vocabulary such as 'adventurers\*', 'privileged\*', 'military power\*', 'control\*' and 'superiority\*' are frequently used to describe the Spanish in general. Analysis of images reinforce these findings by depicting Spanish military power, wealth, authority and knowledge. For instance, one image depicts two Spanish men surrounded by a variety of products to sell. It is evident that they own a business, and that they are checking the stock book. In an image of Hernan Cortés, he is similarly depicted as serious, secure and strong, with direct eye contact implying his authority. However, unlike in the pre-070 Reform textbooks, the words 'ambitious\*', 'illnesses\*', and 'colonial looting\*' are also frequent in post-070 Reform textbooks, suggesting a greater balance, at least in their textual representation. Equally, soldiers, who were previously visually depicted as strong, serious, armed men, are shown gambling and surrounded by wine (Bruño, 2012; Don Bosco, 2010a).

The representation of the Catholic Church in the post-070 Reform textbooks has shifted from being an institution that advocated for the poor and was well respected to one that is also open to criticism. Textbooks represent the Catholic Church with words carrying negative and positive connotations, such as 'tools of control\*', but also 'education\*' and 'extraordinary skills\*'. However, visual data still highlights Church personalities' thoughtfulness, authority, kindness and benevolence. For instance, an image of Pope Francis depicts him as kind and calm.

Indigenous people and their main personalities have a wider positive representation in post-070 Reform textbooks, which describe them as 'organised\*', 'diverse\*', 'rebellious\*', 'resistance\*' and having 'writing skills\*'. Indigenous personalities are similarly introduced as individuals with authority and control. Images support this description, portraying Indigenous peoples as hard working, energetic, enthusiastic and fearless. For example, one image depicts 12 Indigenous people harvesting a crop, yet they are well dressed and look strong, skilful, autonomous and proud. However, some textbooks (Bruño, 2012; Santillana, 2010, 2021) still refer to Indigenous people in general terms, using words such as 'mass\*' or 'population\*' and, to a lesser extent, words with negative connotations, for example, 'poor\*', 'savage\*', 'indios\*' and 'labour force\*'.

A significant addition to post-070 Reform textbooks is the visual representation of female Indigenous leaders. Don Bosco (2010b: 50–1) mentions the actions and names of Bartolina Sisa (Aymara leader) and Kura Oqlllo (Quechua leader). While the textbook names their actions (verbs), no further description is given (nouns and adjectives). However, images do depict female Indigenous leaders as political actors.

Black people's representation continues to be limited to negative descriptions. The words 'slaves\*' and 'bottom of the social scale\*' are commonly used. Only Santillana (2021) mentions the cultural contribution made by Black people, and no textbook mentions any historical Black personalities. However, images have slightly improved, and now reflect positive and negative characteristics. For example, some images portray Black culture and music (AfroBolivians with traditional outfits, family and jewellery), while others depict Black people as sorrowful, hopeless and subjugated.

In summary, the most significant change in regard to the representation of identities is in the visual and written representation of Indigenous people, followed by the Spanish and the Catholic Church. While there is a stronger acceptable Indigenous representation, pejorative terms have remained post-070 Reform. Spanish and Catholic Church descriptions are no longer purely positive, yet the idea of the Spanish as 'technologically superior' continues. Last, Black people's description remains derogatory, with the terms 'slaves\*' and the 'bottom place of the social scale\*' commonly used.

**Table 2. Identity representations in textbooks pre- and post-070 Reform**

| Pre-070 Reform  |   | Post-070 Reform                               |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <b>Spanish explorers and descendants</b>                    |   |   |  |
| Adventures  | Bruño (1996a, 2012)   | Control/monopoly                              | Santillana (2010),<br>Don Bosco (2010a),<br>Don Bosco (2010b)                  |
| Extensive culture/cultural power                            | Bruño (1996a, 1996b),<br>Don Bosco (1999)                                   | Adventurers                                   | Bruño (2012),<br>Don Bosco (2010a),<br>Don Bosco (2010b)                       |
| Technologically, military and economically superior         | Bruño (2012),<br>Santillana (2002, 2003),<br>Don Bosco (1999)               | Privileged                                    | Bruño (2012),<br>Santillana (2021),<br>Don Bosco (2010a)                       |
| Enrichment  | Bruño (2012),<br>Don Bosco (1999)   | Military, cultural and scientific superiority | Bruño (2012),<br>Santillana (2010),<br>Don Bosco (2010b)                       |
| Control   | Bruño (1996a, 1996b, 2012)  | Ambitious                                     | Bruño (2012),<br>Santillana (2010),<br>Don Bosco (2010a)                       |
| Children of the sun/Indigenous gods                         | Santillana (2002, 2003)   | Illnesses                                     | Bruño (2012),<br>Santillana (2021),<br>Don Bosco (2010a),<br>Don Bosco (2010b) |
| Diverse/different people                                    | Santillana (2002, 2003)   | Colonial looting                              | Santillana (2010),<br>Don Bosco (2010b)  |
| Economically powerful                                       | Santillana (2003)<br>Don Bosco (2000, 1999)                                 |   |  |
| Ambitious   | Bruño (1996b, 2012),<br>Santillana (2002),<br>Don Bosco (1999)              |   |  |
| <b>Spanish historical figures</b>                           |   |   |  |
| Adventures  | Bruño (1996a)   | Military power and control                    | Santillana (2010, 2021)  |
| Outstanding skills in commerce, military and urban planning | Bruño (1996a, 1996b),<br>Santillana (2003),<br>Don Bosco (1999)             | Efficient                                     | Santillana (2010),<br>Don Bosco (2010b)  |
| Control/monopoly  | Bruño (2012),<br>Santillana (2003),<br>Don Bosco (1999)                     | Owners of land and mines                      | Santillana (2021),<br>Don Bosco (2010a)  |
| Men of authority  | Bruño (1996a, 1996b, 2012),<br>Santillana (2003, 2002),<br>Don Bosco (1999) | Authority                                     | Santillana (2010, 2021),<br>Don Bosco (2010a)                                  |
| City founders   | Bruño (2012),<br>Don Bosco (1999)   | Fraud   | Don Bosco (2010a),<br>Santillana (2021)  |
| <b>Catholic Church</b>                                      |   |   |  |
| Essential role  | Bruño (2012),<br>Don Bosco (1999)   | Control tool                                  | Santillana (2010, 2021)  |
| Sincere advocates   | Bruño (1996a, 1996b, 2012),<br>Don Bosco (1999)                             | Tithe   | Santillana (2021),<br>Don Bosco (2010b)  |
| Respected, admired  | Santillana (2003),<br>Don Bosco (1999)                                      | Education                                     | Santillana (2021),<br>Don Bosco (2010b)  |
| Evangelisation  | Bruño (2012),<br>Santillana (2003),<br>Don Bosco (1999)                     |   |  |
| Education   | Santillana (2003),<br>Don Bosco (1999)                                      |   |  |

Table 2. Cont.

| Pre-070 Reform   |   | Post-070 Reform   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <b>Catholic Church historical figures</b>                  |   |   |   |
| Indigenous advocates                                       | Bruño (1996a, 2012),<br>Santillana (2002),<br>Don Bosco (1999, 2000)        | Extraordinary skills                                    | Bruño (2012),<br>Santillana (2021)                            |
| Denounced unjust actions                                   | Bruño (2012),<br>Don Bosco (1999)   | Education   | Santillana (2021),<br>Don Bosco (2010b)                       |
| <b>Indigenous people</b>                                   |   |   |   |
| 'Indio'  | Bruño (1996a, 2012),<br>Santillana (2002, 2003),<br>Don Bosco (1999, 2000)  | Indios  | Santillana (2010),<br>Don Bosco (2010a)                       |
| Aboriginal, barbarians, savages                            | Bruño (1996a, 2012)<br>Santillana (2002, 2003),<br>Don Bosco (1999, 2000)   | Savage, primitive                                       | Don Bosco (2010a),<br>Don Bosco (2010b)                       |
| Slaves   | Santillana (2002, 2003),<br>Don Bosco (1999)                                | Poor  | Santillana (2010, 2021),<br>Don Bosco (2010a)                 |
| Labour force   | Bruño (1996a, 1996b, 2012),<br>Santillana (2002),<br>Don Bosco (1999)       | Labour force  | Bruño (2012),<br>Santillana (2010, 2021)                      |
| Exploitation   | Bruño (1996a, 1996b, 2000),<br>Santillana (2003),<br>Don Bosco (1999, 2000) | Communities, population,<br>culture, mass, human groups | Bruño (2012),<br>Santillana (2010, 2021)                      |
| Miserable  | Santillana (2002, 2003),<br>Don Bosco (1999)                                | Important and organised<br>societies                    | Santillana (2010),<br>Don Bosco (2010a),<br>Don Bosco (2010b) |
| Unfaithful   | Santillana (2002, 2003)   | Indigenous advanced<br>technology                       | Santillana (2021),<br>Don Bosco (2010a)                       |
| Communities, habitants, tribes,<br>population, group, mass | Bruño (1996b, 2012),<br>Santillana (2002, 2003),<br>Don Bosco (1999)        | Diverse (Quechuas, Aymaras,<br>Zamuro and so on)        | Santillana (2010, 2021),<br>Don Bosco (2010b)                 |
| Empire, empires  | Bruño (2012),<br>Santillana (2002, 2003)                                    | Rebellious  | Santillana (2021),<br>Don Bosco (2010b)                       |
| Human beings   | Bruño (2012),<br>Santillana (2002),<br>Don Bosco (1999)                     | Resistance  | Santillana (2010),<br>Don Bosco (2010a)                       |
| Native, different, developed<br>culture                    | Bruño (1996a, 1996b, 2012),<br>Don Bosco (1999)                             | Writing   | Santillana (2021),<br>Don Bosco (2010a)                       |
| Resistance   | Santillana (2002, 2003)   |   |   |
| <b>Indigenous historical figures</b>                       |   |   |   |
| Tax collectors   | Bruño (1996a),<br>Santillana (2003),<br>Don Bosco (1999)                    | Prisoner  | Bruño (2012),<br>Santillana (2021)                            |
| Prisoner   | Santillana (2002, 2003)   | Abuse   | Santillana (2021),<br>Don Bosco (2010a)                       |
| Internal division, civil war                               | Bruño (2012),<br>Santillana (2002)  | Authority   | Bruño (2012),<br>Santillana (2021)                            |
|  |   | Control   | Santillana (2021),<br>Don Bosco (2010a)                       |
|  |   | Resistance  | Bruño (2012),<br>Santillana (2021)                            |

Table 2. Cont.

|                         | Pre-070 Reform  |                                     | Post-070 Reform   |
|-------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|
|                         | <b>Black people</b>                                     |                                     |   |
| Slaves                  | Bruño (1996a, 1996b, 2012), Santillana (2003)           | Africans from Angola, Congo, Guinea | Bruño (2012), Santillana (2010), Don Bosco (2010a)                    |
| Exploitation            | Bruño (1996a, 1996b, 2012), Santillana (2003)           | Black slaves                        | Bruño (2012), Santillana (2021), Don Bosco (2010a), Don Bosco (2010b) |
| Labour force            | Bruño (1996a, 1996b), Don Bosco (1999)                  | Bottom of the social scale          | Santillana (2010), Don Bosco (2010a)                                  |
| People from Africa      | Bruño (2012), Santillana (2002, 2003), Don Bosco (1999) |                                     |   |
| Black population, group | Bruño (2012), Santillana (2003), Don Bosco (1999)       |                                     |   |

## Responsibility

This section discusses how the responsibility attributed to colonial actions changed between the pre-070 Reform textbooks and the post-070 Reform textbooks.

While textbooks do attribute Spanish agency to colonialism in general in pre-070 Reform textbooks – ‘Colonisation in America was initially carried out by the Spanish Crown’ (Don Bosco, 1999: 13) – they linguistically neutralise responsibility for specific colonial actions. For example, the pre-070 Reform textbooks note that ‘Black people were brought from Africa as slaves’ (Don Bosco, 1999: 31), ‘American cultures were decimated’ (Santillana, 2002: 164), and ‘the lowland inhabitants were considered barbarians’ (Santillana, 2003: 99), without stating *who* enslaved, decimated or considered. Therefore, such actions are implicitly presented by the textbooks as a natural event, and not as an event caused by the Spanish.

However, pre-070 Reform textbooks do attribute Spanish agency to actions that entail victory and skill, for example, establishing alliances with natives, founding cities, exploring, and defeating the Indigenous empires. Visual data support the Spanish connection with victory and skill. However, contrary to the written disconnection between Spanish agency and colonial actions, images do imply Spanish responsibility for Indigenous labour exploitation and African slavery. For example, the image entitled ‘Work in Bolivian mines’ (Don Bosco, 1999: 19) depicts a person of Spanish descent controlling an exploitative labour system in Potosi mine.

Textbooks largely avoid the Catholic Church’s responsibility for colonial actions. The classification of Indigenous people as ‘child-like’ and ‘non-Christian’, Indigenous communities’ geographical relocation, and the destruction of Indigenous temples all lack a specific agent. Instead, written and visual data highlight the Catholic Church’s responsibility for positive actions, for example, advocacy and education. For example, Fray Domingo de Santo Tomas is credited with advocating for better living conditions for Indigenous people (Santillana, 2003: 104). An image entitled ‘The Catholic Church preaching’ (Don Bosco, 1999: 43) similarly implies that the Catholic Church is responsible for defending, educating and evangelising to Indigenous people, and for creating missions.

Textbooks acknowledge Indigenous efforts to survive on a poor diet, preserve their traditions and fight against colonisation. There is a connection between the Indigenous agent and the verbs ‘survive’, ‘enforce their right’ and ‘preserve customs’; for example, ‘Indigenous were tenacious in their resistance to the conquest attempts’ (Santillana, 2002: 169). Visual data confirm these findings. Textbook images positively portray Indigenous people revolting against the colonial system. This is evident from the Indigenous leader’s and Indigenous people’s facial expression, and the Spanish descendant’s body language, which suggests embarrassment.

Pre-070 Reform textbooks reduce Black people to passive responders and victims of the events around them. Black people are described as not adapting to the cold American weather, and as African

mothers drowning their children. While slavery and sugar plantation labour are mentioned in written text, there is no information about the specific contributions of Black people. Images do not portray Black people as active agents; instead, they are depicted as people receiving or reacting to the actions undertaken by those around them.

Post-070 textbooks mostly continue to ignore and neutralise Spanish responsibility for most colonial actions. For example, one textbook notes how 'native people continued to be considered as inferior and were subjugated to a savage condition' (Don Bosco, 2010b: 32) without indicating who did the subjugating. Similarly, another textbook describes how 'people were classified according to their skin colour' (Don Bosco, 2010a: 18), again omitting responsibility for who did the classifying, and thus normalising racial classification. Like pre-070 Reform textbooks, post-070 Reform textbooks also continue to connect Spanish agents to colonial achievements, for example, establishing order, defeating rebellions and founding cities.

However, post-070 Reform textbooks textually and visually do explicitly attribute responsibility to the Spanish for the death of Atahualpa and Tlatoani – two pre-Columbian Indigenous rulers. For instance, an image entitled, 'Pizarro Seizing the Inca of Peru' (Don Bosco, 2010b: 16) depicts how the conquerors captured Atahualpa causing his death. Unlike textual data, textbook images also depict Spanish responsibility for enslaving and mistreating African and Indigenous people.

Post-070 Reform textbooks also normalise the Catholic Church's actions to eliminate Indigenous religions. Sentences which foreground the Catholic Church's agency only refer to their advocacy, art promotion and teaching role. Actions referring to the destruction of temples, faith imposition, racial categorisation, prohibiting other types of faith, and asking for tithes are largely absent in textbooks. The exceptions are Don Bosco (2010a: 31), which visually depicts the Church asking for tithes, and Santillana (2021), which mentions the Church's intention to disconnect the Indigenous people from their beliefs. Nevertheless, Santillana does not give further details on how the disconnection happened. Instead, it simply says that 'the Church proposed an absolute break with the non-Christian past' (Santillana, 2021: 78).

Indigenous agency in post-070 Reform textbooks reflects Indigenous effort, recognition and accountability. On the one hand, textbooks recognise Indigenous female and male efforts to develop technologies, lead rebellions, confront invaders, survive, and preserve their culture; for example, 'Indigenous people led numerous rebellions against the colonisers' (Don Bosco, 2010b: 46). Images support Indigenous people's resilience, since they are portrayed as active agents practising their rituals, working, paying tribute to the crown, and defending their territory. For instance, an image entitled 'Encounter between the Spanish colonists and the lowland Indigenous people' (Don Bosco, 2010b: 38) depicts lowland Indigenous people defending their territories by fighting with Spanish conquerors. However, some textbooks (Don Bosco, 2010a; Santillana, 2021) also note that it was Indigenous people who lost their land – thus implying Indigenous responsibility, rather than the responsibility of the colonisers who took their land away.

Post-070 Reform textbooks continue to largely refer to Black people as passive agents. For example, Santillana (2021: 36) mentions that 'African slaves were unable to adapt to the Potosi climate and thus were sent to the haciendas in the Yungas to do domestic work'. However, they do express the agency of Black people in buying their liberty (Don Bosco, 2010a), and images portray this population not only as slaves, but also as active contributors to the local economic system. For example, an image in Santillana (2021: 76) depicts a Black family working in a shoe shop.

In summary, the ways in which textbooks attribute responsibility to specific colonial actions has only marginally changed post-070 Reform. While the murder of Indigenous leaders was added, Spanish accountability in relation to specific colonial practices (for example, racial categorisation, murdering and enslaving) continues to be avoided, thus implying that these atrocities were natural and inevitable. This is contrary to images that have consistently attributed Spanish responsibility for such acts. The Catholic Church continues to be connected to advocacy and thoughtfulness. Indigenous accountability has slightly switched from resilience and preservation to the loss of land and way of living. Black people's agency remains passive in written language, but in images, Black people are presented as more active.

## Legacies

This section describes how the approach of textbooks towards colonial legacies changed post-070 Reform.

Only three out of six pre-070 Reform textbooks refer to colonial legacies. These three pre-070 Reform textbooks connected the colonial past positively to Bolivia's present. Written text mentions the high percentage of Bolivians with mixed racial heritage, the prevalence of Indigenous Moxos and Chiquitos colonial music and festivals, Catholic rituals and customs, land redistribution reforms, education, cattle breeding, and the arts as main colonial legacies. The significance of the mixed racial heritage can be attributed to the high percentage of an urban mixed-race population. Moxos and Chiquitos villages and music have been internationally recognised as a world cultural heritage site by UNESCO (Kühne, 2022). Cattle breeding is one of Bolivia's most important economic industries (Chávez Torrico, 2018).

Visual data – besides reinforcing positive legacies of colonialism by depicting colonial architecture, religious festivals, art and populations of mixed racial heritage – also refer to reparative actions taken by the government for harmful colonial legacies. For instance, an image in Santillana (2003) illustrates an Indigenous man working on his crop after the 1953 Land Reform forced Spanish descendants to return land to Indigenous communities.

The only detrimental legacy that the pre-070 Reform textbooks mention is the rate of poverty in Potosi and Oruro (Don Bosco, 1999), which were the richest colonial cities. An image taken from a Don Bosco (1999: 56) textbook depicts poverty, under the headline 'social strata in the colony'. No further details are given regarding who is most affected by such legacies.

Of the post-070 Reform textbooks, only Santillana (2010, 2021) and Don Bosco (2010b) refer to colonial legacies; other textbooks avoid the topic. Like pre-070 textbooks, most connections with the colonial past are strongly positive, for example, racial and cultural mixing, Chiquitos and Moxos heritage, Catholic rituals, development, the 'cholita pollera' (Quechua and Aymara Indigenous skirts), and bilingualism. For example, one textbook notes that 'religious colonisation allows fusion among beliefs which generates cultural richness and promotes the development of new art expressions' (Don Bosco, 2010b: 33). Post-070 textbook images support these positive legacies, since racial and cultural mixing, Moxos and Chiquitos heritage, Catholic rituals and festivals, art and bilingualism, are predominantly portrayed. For instance, an image in Santillana (2021: 28) portrays El Alto city as having the highest rate of bilingual speakers (Aymara and Spanish).

However, unlike the pre-070 Reform textbooks, the post-070 Reform textbooks also mention a wider range of detrimental colonial legacies, for example, the 'colonial mentality of superiority', Spanish descendants' social and economic control, and identity loss. For instance, a Santillana (2021: 87) textbook notes that:

The coloniality of cultural supremacy which did not obey European parameters was simply labelled as something else. Michelangelo's David was art and Copernicus was science, but the Aztec calendar was witchcraft.

Thus, while the topic of colonial legacies is not broadly developed by Bolivian textbooks, the textbooks that made the connection between the present and the colonial past moved from a strongly positive view of colonial legacies to the recognition of some detrimental colonial consequences. However, even the post-070 Reform textbooks avoid discussing legacies such as the role of the labour force, class and racial structures, Indigenous and Black peoples' poverty, and racist exclusionary practices.

## Discussion and conclusion

This study suggests that social science textbooks' narration of colonialism has partially changed after the 070 Reform. The most significant change is in regard to the representation of Indigenous identity, Spanish identity, and the identity of the Catholic Church. The way in which responsibility for colonialism is presented continues to normalise colonial atrocities and the processes of racial categorisation. In regard to colonial legacies, half of the analysed textbooks avoid the topic, even though it is part of the study plan. Textbooks which address the topic focus on positive legacies, and only briefly mention some detrimental colonial legacies. Therefore, textbooks do not significantly contribute to Bolivia's decolonization process, as they continue, to a lesser extent than before the 070 Reform, to display colonial ideas and to reinforce a colonial mentality.

Findings from this study make several important contributions both to the literature on textbook narrations of colonialism, and to our understanding of how political reforms shape learning materials.

For example, the findings relating to the identity representation of Spanish and Indigenous people in the Bolivian context contribute to previous studies (for example, [Canales-Tapia et al., 2018](#); [Torres, 2021](#)) on how Latin American textbooks depict colonial ideas of European superiority, despite decolonizing reforms. These findings also give the first regional insight into how textbooks positively represent the Catholic Church as thoughtful and authoritative advocates. The results regarding Black peoples' representation expand [Aman's \(2009\)](#) and [Soler's \(2008\)](#) regional findings. While [Aman \(2009\)](#) and [Soler \(2008\)](#) found that Black people were mainly represented as slaves, findings from this study show that Black people are also portrayed as outsiders.

Findings from this study also support [Weiner's \(2016\)](#) and [Aman's \(2009\)](#) previous observation that textbooks avoid discussing European responsibility for colonial atrocities, and also suggest that narratives of European responsibility are most resistant to change. Indeed, accountability of the Spanish, the Catholic Church, Indigenous people and AfroBolivians have broadly remained the same, with only slight modifications after the 070 Reform.

In relation to legacy, these research findings give the first Latin American insight into how schoolbooks positively connect students' present to their colonial past by emphasising cultural/racial mixing, Moxos/Chiquitos world heritage, and Catholic traditions and practices. In the case of Bolivia, this study finds that half of the studied textbooks do not follow the official content structure established by the education minister. According to [MdE \(2021\)](#), the historical content of colonialism should end with a discussion of the effects of colonialism, yet only three out of six textbooks have considered the effects of colonialism. This evidence generates further questions about why publishing houses do not specifically follow the minister of education's official instructions, and supports [Robinson's \(2022\)](#) suggestion that the construction of historical legacies can be deeply controversial, and is therefore often avoided.

[Molina Gutierrez's \(2008\)](#) observation regarding Bolivia's neoliberal social structure may provide an explanation as to why the 070 Reform has only generated partial modifications in school textbooks. Since Bruño, Don Bosco and Santillana are private international publishing houses, they have the freedom to interpret the 070 Reform according to their own institutional values and interests. For instance, an article from the newspaper [Agencia Info Salesiana \(2016\)](#) states that Don Bosco produces school material which takes into consideration both the national study plan and the Salesian's (Don Bosco's religious founders) core values. This combination is especially evident in the representation of the Catholic Church.

A second explanation suggests that while the Bolivian education minister carried out a national 070 Reform training programme for teachers ([Mendoza and González, 2016](#)), there is no record of training programmes for publishing houses. Instead, the government simply accused publishers of spreading colonial ideologies and created its own public publishing house ([Almadal, 2021](#)). In this sense, publishers' freedom of interpretation and the government's distant position towards these entities limit the impact of the 070 Reform on the narration of Bolivia's history.

Lastly, our study demonstrates the value of considering responsibility distribution and colonial legacies alongside identity representations when analysing historical narratives of colonialism. A failure to consider responsibility risks normalising abuses, while a failure to consider legacies prevents young people from using the past to interpret their present. A consideration of responsibility and legacies is thus important for historical narratives of colonialism that prepare young people to advocate for reparations and address colonial harms. We hope that the conceptual and analytic framework that we have proposed may prove useful in the continual development of textbooks that address histories of colonialism.

## Acknowledgements

Juliana Choque Apaza would like to acknowledge the generous contribution of the Chevening Scholarship, which made this research possible, and also Bolivia's Indigenous communities. Natasha Robinson would like to thank David Jeffery for his critical feedback on this article.

## Data and materials availability statement

The data sets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

## Declarations and conflicts of interest

### Research ethics statement

Not applicable to this article.

### Consent for publication statement

Not applicable to this article.

### Conflicts of interest statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest with this work. All efforts to sufficiently anonymise the authors during peer review of this article have been made. The authors declare no further conflicts with this article.

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