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MULTIPERSPECTIVITY THROUGH ALTERNATIVE HISTORY
IN THE CLASSROOM

A Thesis Presented
By
ANGGITA PARAMESWARI LATIF

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies,
University of Massachusetts Boston,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS
August 2019

Conflict Resolution Program

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IN THE CLASSROOM

A Thesis Presented
by
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ABSTRACT

MULTIPERSPECTIVITY THROUGH ALTERNATIVE HISTORY IN THE CLASSROOM

August 2019

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This paper aims to evaluate existing teaching approaches in middle school history classrooms that incorporate alternative history materials. Alternative history focuses on the question of what might have happened differently, or ‘what if?’ The study focuses on addressing the following question: How does the understanding of one event’s significance on the chain of historical occasions contribute to students’ engagement in discussing past and current conflicts, based on teachers’ points of view? Interviews with 10 education practitioners focused on exploring the ways students can learn to see history creatively while developing tolerance. Existing approaches are explored through the viewpoints of conflict education, peace education, and historical empathy.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As the famous question posed by Edward Lorenz proceeds: “Does the flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil set off a tornado in Texas?” (Ghys & Lyon, 2012, p.1) we are bound to question what has happened and the significance of our present if another circumstance would have had happened instead. This concept prompts me to explore the question of an event’s significance in the chain of history—regionally, nationally, and internationally. Also, to understand how we use alternative materials to stimulate our analytical thinking of history, how to understand the chronological events, and how each event affects another. Growing up in Indonesia, I did not experience this approach. The national school curriculum there is set in stone and teachers did not have as much leniency to add supplemental materials, and discussions beyond the contents of a textbook barely happened throughout my 12 years of core education.

Having experienced a lack of creative and innovative approaches to history education prior to college, where I finally got to learn the narrative of historical facts while applying critical thinking and a relational approach to current climate, I can now argue that challenging history materials can be an opportunity for students to think not only historically, but also critically. I have experienced the two different approaches and can reflect that I was not provided an opportunity to see history through multiple lenses

when I was studying in schools that implemented a more rigid curriculum. As a study about Northern Ireland education system says, "...and while teachers generally do strive to present sources representing a range of perspectives, the failure to directly challenge students' pre-existing assumptions often leaves students to draw selectively from the perspectives encountered in ways that reinforce their partisan views" (King & King, 2012). This argument by the Northern Ireland scholars shows that to avoid one-way assumptions among students, teachers need to provide an opportunity for students to question and challenge past events, in addition to adding materials that incorporate multiple perspectives. In other words, teachers need to balance sources and approaches in their classrooms. With a more creative learning approach, students would benefit from the exercises to interpret the historical facts that are introduced through classroom learning. The combination of history education materials and the historical interpretation are purposeful to bolster the students' ability to understand how the past serves as an intervention for the present and the future, and to stimulate their abilities to think critically about current events (Chapman, 2017).

According to the National Reading Research Center, educators often supplement the students with materials consisting of "compelling narratives, wherein the authors have used first-person accounts, dramatic representation, and fictionalizing dimension," (as cited in VanSledright & Kelly, 1996, p. 3) including historical fiction. My first exposure to an alternate history series gave me the space to explore the butterfly effect question into a larger scale application, such as history education. The fictionalized narrative may also give more opportunities to bolster students' creative participation in the history classroom (Nawrot, 2018). Even though most school libraries from this study sample are

limited to only the common titles of fictionalized narrative such as “Philip K. Dick’s *The Man in the High Castle* (Berkley, 1974), in which the Germans win World War II; and Turtledove’s *Guns of the South* (Ballantine, 1993), in which the Confederacy uses weapons from the future to win the American Civil War...” (Snider, 2004).

In further discussion about alternative history materials and approaches, the primary focus of this research will be the use of alternative history or counterfactual history, either in classroom materials or in-class activities. To define the two terms, Grant Rodwell (2013) argues that they differ in terms of its definition. Alternate history includes the hypothetical plot of certain negated events, which is the fictional scenario of what if the event would have happened differently that allows the writer to create fictional figures in addition to the historical actors. Rodwell argues that this is considered a literary genre and belongs to the popular culture. And to define counterfactual history, although Rodwell believes to be related to alternate history, the two concepts are distinct as counterfactual history requires scholarly research and purposeful exercise to speculate chains of events of what might have happened. However, for this research, I will use the two terms synonymously to gauge what the teachers define as alternate history.

The goal of this research is to learn how alternative history can be used to bring innovation to education and possibly lead to planting conflict resolution and peace education skills in students, through teachers’ experience. I hope to further develop this study in the future by constructing a framework to evaluate existing projects of counterfactual history materials in the school classroom and to conduct a longitudinal study with a control group, to connect the curriculum to peace education. This can be done by measuring students’ perspectives into certain topics after receiving treatment of

alternative history. This particular thesis will be the starting mark to gauge what the teachers have reflected through the projects they have implemented.

Specifically, for the field of conflict resolution, the result of this research would be valuable to acknowledge the connection between conflict resolution skills and history education while developing tools that can be used to utilize history education to teach skills that are needed for peacebuilding. It is also important to expand the conversation to be part of peacebuilders' ingredients in stimulating tolerance in young learners. I aim to analyze how the teachers see their students learn differently through multiple perspectives of history, and how the students take a stance towards current issues and their identities based on the information and critical analysis, earned through a creative approach of history education.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ervin Staub (2014), a leading conflict resolution scholar, listed history that carries conflicting collective memories as one of the inhibitors of reconciliation and as a factor that can lead to violence. Staub emphasizes the characteristic conflicting collective memories, which usually consists of “each party blaming the other, are usually deeply held (Newbury, 1998) and are a likely source of new violence” (para. 50). This research focuses on discussing how history can become a carrier of collective memories that accentuate how one group assigns blame and create enemy image to the outgroup. Another focus of this research is to explore whether alternative history can be a start to create a shared history, which Staub suggests to be the vocal point for reconciliation and to counter the conflicting collective memory. Staub also puts accent on how collective memory does not only consist of facts, but also includes the group members’ interpretation. He believes that the reconciliation can begin from accepting that the other group has different views of historical events, regardless of its correctness or moral values. In the coming sections, concepts such as historical empathy and multiperspectivity will be discussed to explore how alternative history can be a vehicle to create a shared narrative to lead the conflicted society or any other society learning about conflicts into reconciliation.

In the field of conflict resolution, scholars and practitioners have put together frameworks and practices to not only prevent violence but to build peace. As Lederach (1997) lays out peacebuilding approaches through different levels, this study will focus on one of the categories that falls under the middle-range approach, which is conflict resolution training. This training aims to first, raise awareness by educating people about the conflict and second, to equip people how to deal with the conflicts itself. Internally focused, conflict resolution training develops participants' skills to respond to the conflict with the right tools and insights, instead of analyzing the conflict deeply without resolution.

Lederach's theory of conflict resolution training emphasizes on educating people, not only about the conflict, but also how to carefully respond to the conflict to create a peaceful society. In the following sections, this framework will be expanded through applying alternative history as an innovative method in history classrooms, which serves as a conflict resolution training platform to educate students about certain past or existing conflicts. The theory of multiperspectivity, which will also be discussed further in the following section, will be connected to the human consciousness that does not only see the outsiders as different, but also to systematically associate blame and hatred into the outgroup or the enemy, in the case of conflicts (Keen, 1991).

Multiperspectivity in history education

As different studies by history education scholars Robert Bain and Sean Cavanagh noted, world history is the fastest growing subject in the American middle and

high schools, it provides challenge for teachers and organizations such as Alliance for Learning in World History (ALWH) to promote more inclusive and meaningful world history education rather than the traditional narratives of civilization, to help them reason current political issues (as cited in Lovorn, Manning, & Warsh, 2017). Teachers are incorporating more creative approaches into the U.S. and world history by encouraging the students to conduct their own research. For one, David Hostetter reflected on his initiative to have his students interview different people who were involved in major historical events such as the World War II, Japan atomic bombing, and the civil rights movements to gain perspectives from all actors and to not limit themselves into a single narrative of a textbook. As examples, a black student interviewed a white activist regarding the civil rights movement, a student interviewing World War II veteran to gain first-hand account, and another student bravely took part in the difficult discussions about issues such as the American troops in Vietnam (Hostetter, 2009). Hostetter emphasized the takeaway of the project as fostering the students' ability to explore the variance of narratives, before creating enemy images based on historical interpretation that they might build through reading certain narratives.

Interpretation of history is captured in the term multiperspectivity, which can be reached through the encouragement to understand that people can perceive and interpret events differently (Rodwell, 2013). In the learning of history, "students must be encouraged to see that participants in the past may have seen events differently but also that, in the present, those events may be interpreted differently, depending on one's contemporary perspective" (McCully, 2010, p. 217). The interpretations that can be found through media, fiction, and heritage centers can be analyzed by connecting the

context to the purpose and political propaganda that might influence how history is portrayed. Ways to deconstructing the history of its purpose and agenda can also be as creative as using fictional characters and plot.

Although the lack of perspective can also be associated to conflicts that are driven from historical memory, by exhibiting the story of one particular group which contributes in drawing the enemy image and escalates marginalization (Duckworth, 2015), it can also show that multiple accounts can tell differently of the same experience. As an example, from a single significant event of the Holocaust, different accounts were drawn from one general group of Jews. According to Katharina Hall's theory of politics of memory, the memories of the Holocaust is perceived differently in Israel. Through the building of Yad Vashem, a center of remembrance of the Holocaust, there are multiple interpretations as memories were separated to the Jews who represent the resistance fighters, and the "Other" or the "ordinary Jews" (Hall, 1999). Clearly, different accounts of history do not always define the antagonist and the protagonist of every story. In this case, not every single non-resistance fighter does not resist the Nazi's brutal acts, yet they fall under the category of "the ordinary Jews." Hall's argument showcases the nature of multiperspectivity by showing that the Holocaust, which can be easily explained as the Nazi's brutal mass murder of the Jews, can still be perceived differently within a shared narrative amongst the Jews.

In order to distinguish between different interpretations, the understanding has to start from the conscious framing of historical thinking—how do we know what we know? It involves multiple accounts of history, analysis of sources, recognizing the connection of context and purpose, and connecting claims to evidence (Wineburg, 2007).

On a daily basis, this understanding can be put into practice in the classroom through several approaches such as giving the students access to multiple texts rather than one source of information e.g. textbook, incorporating academic searches for primary and secondary sources, and challenging students' pre-assumptions towards historical facts in discussions and activities. As the National Reading Research Center reports, that it is crucial for younger students who are learning history to develop their identities and "self-realization" to understand their own group bias, which are influential in shaping their collective present identities (VanSledright & Kelly, 1996). In other words, students' perspectives of certain historical events are tightly connected to their identities and how they view societal issues.

It is fundamental that students learn the basics of how historical accounts are formed; that historical accounts are stories that leave room for mistakes, gaps, and ulterior realities. This then can be a starting point for educators to teach students how to see that historical accounts do not narrate a fixed copy of the past (Peter Lee & Shemilt, 2004). By acknowledging the existence of multiple accounts, students will be welcoming of different narratives, and learn to develop their own perspectives. It is indeed a challenging tread, as students have to practice "embedding interpretations in a way in which illuminates, rather than distorts, the process of historical writing" (Howells, 2005, p. 29). This emphasizes the purpose of alternative history, which is so that students can bring forth analytical thinking and an empathetical approach to history through creative thinking, and not change the past or downgrade the historical authenticity. By connecting back to the previous example of the perspective of the heroic death of resistance-fighter Jews and how it differs from the "ordinary Jews," students can practice welcoming every

story that was told by historical actors from different backgrounds. Understanding the different perspectives did not distort the history, nor change the fact that a mass genocide happened to the Jews by the Nazis, but it highlighted how different individuals, who are all Jews, differ in their narratives of this experience.

On the contrary, the lack of multiperspectivity in history education is often used by political authorities to instill extreme political views as the UNESCO Plenary Session in 1946 indicated that history textbooks create and emphasize antagonism (as cited in Alpargu, Sahin, & Yazici, 2009). History narratives include a national narrative, which is defined as stories of meaningful events that shaped their identities that a nation tells themselves and others. Although there are many other narratives within one nation, as no one shares the same story, there is a master narrative, which is the basic storyline (Khoury, 2016). To counter the master narrative, peace education is necessary to change perceptions of the “other’s” narratives by accepting that the other’s narratives are part of a larger and varied collective narrative (Feldt, 2008). Peace education was embraced by a Czech educator in the 17th century, Comenius, who believes that “the road to peace was through universally shared knowledge” and that this approach “assumes that an understanding of others and shared values will overcome hostilities that lead to conflict” (Ian Harris, 2010, p . 12). Different definitions that are written by scholars vary by regions as values also differ by places. Gavriel Salomon and Baruch Nevo (2002) synthesize the different definitions of peace education into three sets of learning goals: changing mindsets to promote peace and tolerance especially towards enemies (Oppenheimer, Bar-Tal, & Raviv, 1999), cultivating skills of conflict resolution

(Deutsch, 1993), and promoting human rights and a culture of peace (Toh & Floresca-Cawagas, 1996).

History education can embrace peace and reduce tensions by challenging prejudices and providing multiple perspectives through narratives, using the education for its power to introduce other cultures and points of view instead of stressing incompatible identities or differences in society. This can be done through “challenging this narrative about the ingroup and outgroup [that denigrates the outgroup and establishes it is responsibility for ingroup suffering] and improving relationships between parties...encourages peaceful interaction that resists violence” (Korostelina, 2013, p. 3). The link between history education and peace education will be discussed further below.

Alternative history

For the purpose of this paper, the term alternative history will include alternate history and counterfactual history. Alternate history is described as a genre in literature which includes the alteration of history caused by a specific point or event made by science-fiction characters, with a “conscious departure from historical facts” (Rodwell, 2013, p. 102). Meanwhile, counterfactual history is defined as an approach to explore history by “extrapolating a timeline based on certain key historical events which did not happen or which produced an outcome which was different from what actually occurred” (Rodwell, 2013, p. 84).

As an example of alternative history, David Clay Large wrote a fictional spin of Germany’s contribution to the World War I in Robert Cowley’s compilation of counterfactual military history. The story focuses on Kaiser Wilhelm II, whose military

policies and alienation with other countries i.e. Britain, France, and Russia helped bring out the war. The story teasingly brings out the actual timeline, whereas according to the BBC UK¹ public history page online, the Kaiser's support for Austria against Serbia after the assassination of Ferdinand started the German's involvement in the massive war. Large wrote his spin-off story to highlight how one person's actions can be significant in a chain of reactions.

“Wilhelm was particularly keen to see the show's star attraction, Annie Oakley, famed throughout the world for her skills with a Colt .45. On that day, as usual, Annie announced to the crowd that she would attempt to shoot the ashes from the cigar of some lady or gentleman in the audience...Annie raised her Colt, took aim, and blew away Wilhelm's ashes. Had the sharpshooter from Cincinnati creased the Kaiser's head rather than his cigar, one of Europe's most ambitious and volatile rulers would have been removed from the scene. Germany might not have pursued its policy of aggressive Weltpolitik that culminated in war twenty-five years later. Annie herself seemed to realize her mistake later on. After World War I began, she wrote to the Kaiser asking for a second shot. He did not respond” (Large, 1999, p.290-291).

The aforementioned passage was an example of how a completely fictional story can be linked to an actual historical event. The story of Annie Oakley's show was not directly related to the World War I, but from the previous short story of what if the Kaiser had been shot before he could encourage the Austrians to go after the Serbians, readers could be directed to the primary and secondary sources of how World War I happened. How did the Kaisers' actions affect the years of violence and suffering? A spin-off story can open the gate for readers, especially the young ones, to research the historical events.

¹ (BBC, 2014) http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/wilhelm_kaiser_ii.shtml

Telling a story about Annie Oakley's is not recited to argue for what has happened, nor trying to change the impact of the event. However, this approach and this study focus solely on how the exercise of encompassing imagination into historical facts can teach students to understand the significance of an event with or without adding a fictional plot or characters. Alternate history, or allohistory, can "accommodate different views towards the contemporary world" to both validate and criticize the present (Rosenfeld, 2002, p.103). Brian Fay, in his book about unconventional history, explains that Gavriel Rosenfeld calls allohistory, "a full-scale historical narratives of alternative past" (Fay, 2002, p.4). Although alternate history is a literary genre, its cultural significance portrays the current political worlds and serve as political analysis that is applied to the genre (Schneider-Mayerson, 2009). Thus, alternate history can be used as materials for approaching issues in the society, through creative stories.

History education's link to peace

One of the broader visions of this thesis is to evaluate how education—specifically in history—can help build the appropriate skills to approach and manage conflicts, therefore, contributing to peace. Peace education—a process to teach people how to reach peace—can be found throughout generations and societies by informal education such as the tribal mechanism of handling disputes or religious teaching, to a formal education that relies on schooling institution's instruction (Harris, 2010).

Across the globe, peace education is presented differently in various countries. As a brief overview, in Japan, the nation provides "A-bomb education" in schools to increase the awareness of the horror of atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki during the

World War II that the nation experienced. In India, students read the treaties by Gandhi to learn about his lifetime studies about nonviolence. Scandinavian countries include peace education by focusing on poverty and human rights (Harris, 2010). And in Ireland (or Northern Ireland) is focused on how to live in harmony post-enmity between the Protestants and the Catholics (Uddin, 2015). This overview is a micro example of how peace education can be applied to different societies based on what they have overcome and how education can benefit its people's perspectives.

As Beatty Reardon, a leading peace education scholar, defines peace education as “the process of acquiring knowledge because knowledge based obstacles to peace are posed not only by what we know, but also by how we come to know it, how we think about it, and how we apply the critical knowledge...” (Wintersteiner, 2010, p. 46). In history education, Reardon's definition can be applied to students' analytical thinking of historical resources. Creative yet critical history teaching should promote the deconstruction of how students know about certain events, what are their reflections, and how that knowledge forms their identities and how they see current issues. The focus of peace education is to approach conflicts through redefining national identities that uphold shared identity and be welcoming of diversity (Tawil & Harley, 2004). Exercising analytical thinking through a creative method such as alternative history education provides students with an opportunity to play with the knowledge to approach issues and conflicts. Multiple perspectives that alternative history brings can be a practice that fosters the open-mindedness it takes to discuss varying identities.

In order to link history education with peace education, there are several aspects to focus on to examine the historical sources and approach it with trained moral and ethical responsibility. To highlight one of the aspects where students can learn peace through history education, according to James S. Page's theory (Page, 2000), actors' agency and removal of causation factors are important to take into account, among other things. In studying about wars, for example, students should understand that actors in history did have an option to exercise peace, but no single person is responsible for the catastrophe themselves. Although the exercise also stimulates students to understand that a single event might have changed the chain of reactions, students need to be grounded in the realistic scenario where large-scale conflicts include multiple factors. In addition to that, to avoid identity-based historical trauma, it is important that students do not focus on the causative factor of how one action causes another event. For example, as a reference to the earliest example of a fictional plot twist of the German Kaiser, students need to be reminded that the Kaiser is not the exclusive causative factor of the World War I. A severe negligence in this reminder can cause students to develop a collective stance and structured an enemy image and despair.

Providing students an opportunity to acknowledge actor's agency and removal of causation factors will work hand-in-hand with the diverse narratives to provide multiple perspectives in history education. Exercising this approach will also give a space to grow historical empathy, as will be discussed below.

Historical empathy

Learning to place oneself in that of another's position is essential in understanding history (Downey, 1995; Levstik, 1997; Thornton, 1994) and young students need to incorporate both feeling and thinking when learning history. In other words, instead of forcing children to understand the past only by empirical study, educators can approach the learning through what the children think and feel when they try to understand what was happening in the past and how it affects the society. Empathy, in this case, is "a combination of intellectual and imaginative capacity," and as defined by Lee and Ashby, "the ability to see and entertain as conditionally appropriate, connections between intentions, circumstances, and actions, and to see how any particular perspective would actually have affected the actions in particular circumstances" (Yilmaz, 2007, p. 332). Stuart Foster lays out the aspects to evaluate students' ability to articulate their historical empathy:

- Understanding of past actions of others
- Appreciation of historical content
- Multiple sources of evidence and narratives
- Evaluation of students' own perspectives
- Well-put, supported, but tentative conclusions (Foster, 2001).

Another important point is that historical empathy does not function as acceptance towards past actions of historical figures, but to understand that the actors do not always share the same values, points of view, or morals as we currently uphold. Students will be able to "differentiate between the historian and historical actors and their positions. He or

she is capable of making distinctions between what the historical actor knew and what we know now” (Rantala, Manninen, & van den Berg, 2016).

On the whole, historical empathy will be one of the products of multiple perspectives that are cultivated through exercising analytical skills in using alternate history as a part of students’ education. By acknowledging multiple narratives that are shared through generations formally and informally, students are trained to welcome different perspectives that will introduce them to approach issues with peace.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

To gather information about what has been done in the field of education in regards to incorporating alternative history materials and how these have been used to engage the students in class, I interviewed teachers who have implemented alternative materials in the classroom for a reading supplement or as an in-class project to learn about their experience and their own reflection of the approach. The sampling is done through a snowball sampling to recruit middle school teachers who have used counterfactual history materials in their classroom.

I started with a search engine keywords such as “US what if history project,” “US alternative history project,” and “US alternative history classroom,” that resulted in the article that highlights Diana Laufenberg’s AP US History project called *What If? History Project* in her classroom (Shifflet & MacPhee, 2013, p. 86). Students were allowed to choose a historical event and make a singular change and then conduct an analysis of what will be affected by the change, through primary sources and other sources. Students can choose their own medium from a standard essay or multimedia presentation. Through reading about her work, I was inspired to choose this topic as my thesis research. From this project publication, I had access to a teacher whom I contacted for an interview. I also recruited a social studies teacher at in Kentucky through his published presentation regarding his approach in history education in the Kentucky History Education

Conference 2016 (Kelly, 2016). I then recruited the other interviewees from the information provided by these two initial respondents.

Data collection and analysis

The interviews were semi-structured, conducted as a friendly conversation and discussion to inquire about these areas:

- The demographic background of the educational institute where the project is performed
- Theoretical framework in implementing the project
- Materials used in the classroom
- In-class activity or exercise used to enhance the materials
- Challenges and advantages of using historical fiction materials
- Teachers' reflection on the possibility of a large-scale implementation of the project

Teachers were interviewed through Google Hangouts and Skype, and the audio recordings of the interview were transcribed word-by-word. I then manually coded the transcribed interview to organize it by identified themes as mentioned above. I started with a preset theme to assist with an organized coding process. Through the interviews, I explored the stories told by teachers regarding their experiences, including those that are not in my preset themes.

After reviewing the proposal of this research paper, the Institutional Review Board concluded that this study is exempt from IRB review as the purpose of the interview is to evaluate existing academic materials or pedagogical approaches. In order

to protect the confidentiality of the participants, I have decided to not directly include the names and institutions of the interviewees. However, below are the identifying characters of the interviewees (n=10)

Teacher	Socio-Economic Class*	Years of Teaching	Neighborhood Categories**	Types of Institution	Approach /Project	Total Years of Project***
1	Working Class	>10 years	Urban	Public	Approach	6
2	Middle Class	≤10 years	Suburban	Public	Approach	2
3	Middle Class	≤10 years	Suburban	Private	Project	1
4	Middle Class	>10 years	Urban	Public	Approach	2
5	Upper-Middle Class	≤10 years	Urban	Private	Project	5
6	Upper-Middle Class	>10 years	Suburban	Private	Project	8
7	Middle Class	≤10 years	Urban	Public	Approach	2
8	Working Class	≤10 years	Suburban	Private	Approach	3
9	Upper-Middle Class	≤10 years	Urban	Private	Approach	2
10	Upper-Middle Class	≤10 years	Urban	Private	Project	2

*During the interview, I followed the interview protocol and started the interview by asking how the teachers would describe the institution's demographics by its neighborhood (n=3) and most times (n=7), teachers already described the socio-economic class of their institution when he/she introduced him/herself and his/her teaching career before I asked about the demographics. Using teachers' descriptions of the demographics of the school, I have categorized the schools' socio-economic class using Jean Anyon's (1980) socio-economic classification of schools into four classes, based on the parents' status:

- Working-class schools blue-collar jobs or unemployed and the group is below the poverty level. The teaching is mechanical, and students have very little decision-making power of their learning.

- Middle-class schools are a mixture of several social classes—skill workers, higher positions, and white-collar jobs. Students' work is valued by getting the right answer.
- The upper-middle school includes predominantly professional careermen and women and a mix the capitalist class. Teaching is more individually-oriented in these schools and students produce independent creative work.
- Capitalist class schools consist of top executives in major multinational companies in the United States. These schools foster intellectual power to reach top academic quality (Anyon, 1980).

**Neighborhood categories are based on the location that represents the style of living, also connected to the socio-economic status. Urban school is located within a developed society and is prejudiced as having a higher crime rate. Suburban schools' students are aiming for college, and they live surrounded by cars. Rural schools are set in the country, surrounded by meadows and mostly taught by caring, single young women as their teachers (Anderson & Summerfield, 2010).

***Project represents a graded product at the end of the exposure to alternative history, including but not limited to curriculum project (e.g. AP final project), presentation, or test. The approach represents how the teachers use alternative history as one of his/her methods of teachings, whether through discussion or analytical framework, without a graded product. These are identified based on the interviewees' answers.

Reflexivity

My personal concern in conducting this research is my own identity as an Indonesian conducting history education research in my non-native country. As the Indonesian education system did not allow additional materials outside the government-approved textbooks, especially fictional material, to supplement K-12 history education. I acknowledged the possible bias in wanting to lead on participants into agreeing that fictional supplements are helpful for the students' learning. The risk of leading the

participants becomes greater since the teacher interviews are the primary data source without directly assessing the actual outcome, which will only be available by applying the project to students. This concern will be alleviated by the approval of advisors, the International Review Board, and other peers to ensure non-biased interview questions.

In addition to that, the number of participants is also a limitation. Comprehensive interviews were conducted to ensure the quality of data gathered from a small sample ($n=10$). An interview protocol was carefully crafted to avoid lead-on questions but to be explorative to make sure the study compiles enough data that it needs. During the interview process, I also acknowledged a tendency to lean onto evaluative remarks, such as how I agree with their approaches and how important it is, especially when the conversation with equally passionate teachers became enjoyable. However, I tried to exercise impartiality while connecting to the interviewees by being careful with evaluative remarks to not choose a side and to constantly remind myself that I am here to gain information and not to agree or disagree with any particular comment.

The other concern is the length of project implementation, which will better serve the study if a longitudinal study is conducted to assess the outcome of the students through a persistent exposure to the materials. It is essential to remember that this project is not conducted to measure the students' perspectivity, but to learn the teachers' reflections on how the project influences their students. Another important aspect to consider is that the findings of this study might not reflect how history education is implemented in different places in the world, especially where curriculum is more centralized, given that this study population is middle school teachers in the United

States. As I mentioned previously about my experience studying using not only two different curricula, but also two education systems, every system is different, which means that academic flexibility also may differ.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Using the areas of inquiries stated in the methodology section, I have gathered information based on the exploratory interviews with 10 middle school teachers who are currently or have incorporated alternative history in their classrooms. This concept has been found in their classrooms through an in-class learning approach (n=6) or class project (n=4). Learning approach includes how the teacher sets up the discussion or initiated in-class activities, while class project includes tasks and graded-final projects. Information from the interviews are categorized by materials, in-class activities, institution's leniency towards teachers' approaches, the challenges in implementation, teachers' motivation, and other values to take away from the project. The identity of the participating teachers will be listed by assumed gender and the type of institution they taught at.

Examples of projects

To explore what approaches have been done to incorporate alternative history, I asked what my participants have used in their classrooms. As explained in the methodology section, I classified teachers' experiences into the project and approaches. Teachers who have shared their experiences in doing projects, the students had some kind

of product of assessment such as presentation or final project (n=6). While approach represents teachers who have used alternative history as the methods of teachings and the way they lead the discussion sessions (n=4). Two correspondents shared some of the highlights of their experience teaching the alternative history, with the first teacher to represent the project and the other for an approach. Both examples show an exploration of the factual historical timeline, inquiring about the different outcomes if one aspect is modified.

The first teacher was inspired by Diana Laufenberg's AP History project of What If (as described in the methodology section) and shared about her experience in implementing the question of what would have happened in historical events. She allows her students to pick one historical event that they are interested in and analyze the chain of events and how one slight change of situation can influence the chain of events and would it have changed history as a whole. Students need to create their own counterfactual history based on the research they conducted on primary and secondary sources. Below is her reflection on the project implementation.

"I have a student who investigated Claudette Colvin who was the young and unwedded, who is [an] African-American girl who was arrested seven months before Rosa Parks. So, she was arrested, and they almost started the Montgomery Bus Boycott but then decided since she was a teenage pregnant girl, she wouldn't be the right face for the movement. So, they delayed and ended up waiting for Rosa Parks to get arrested to trigger the boycott. We did a brilliant piece [presentation] about what would have happened if the bus boycott had started with Claudette Colvin and so then what you

know, because Martin Luther King wouldn't have yet been in Montgomery." – Teacher 6, female, private school.

Following up to the interview, Teacher 6 sent me a set of questions that she had her students answer to reflect on their projects, including the Claudette Calvin case.

Below are the reflection questions:

- Why have I chosen this topic?
- What did I use to brainstorm? What options are available?
- What questions do I have about potential results? [Potential changes of events]
- What message or story am I hoping to communicate?
- What do I know, and what do I still need to know? [To make the what-if scenario]
- How effectively do I communicate the message/story?
- What other turns were possible? Have you considered other possibilities?
What were some of them?
- How did this project change the way I think about history?

She emphasized that the goal of changing one event is not to try to change the history or to be stuck in questioning what if something would have happened differently. Connecting to Rodwell's (2013) definition of the extrapolated historical timeline, which was previously discussed, her goal is to encourage students to see that one action can be significant into the upcoming events. Through this approach, she believes that students were given a space to be curious and to dig different facts and comb through varieties of sources, including "*who is writing the sources, am I picking all white male authors? And*

the answer should be no...and so we try to be intentional about making sure that we're showing them that historians are all kinds of different people."

Another teacher within the Georgia Public School echoes this teacher's approach by focusing on the compiling of sources, and to encourage students' comprehension of the actual history before trying to creatively alter it. This teacher focuses closer into in-state history to also promote local history and to develop a connection between the students and their community.

"For example, we did... counterfactual history about what if Andrew Jackson had not removed the Cherokee from Georgia and what Georgia would kind of look like and it was so higher order thinking because the key to this concept, and that's what I liked about. It was the fact that you have to know the actual history before you come up with counterfactual history. Like if you don't know the dates, the fact, the major players during that time period, you can't actually make a good solid story." - Teacher 1, male, public school.

Similar to Teacher 6, this teacher allowed his students to explore the what-if scenarios based on one particular historical event through in-class discussions. He also highlighted the same point of the approach, of the importance that students get to know how one change can affect the chain of history such as Andrew Jackson's action in Georgia. Both teachers' projects focus on challenging the students to know the details of history by allowing them to creatively change the following events. Teacher 4 and 6's reflections illustrate an earlier theory by James Page of how exploring the what-if questions help promote the students' understanding of how individual agency plays a role

in changing historical events and the non-causal relationship between historical actors' behaviors and the events (Page, 2000).

Materials

Although teachers have interpreted the question of class materials differently, most teachers instantly referred to textbooks. Some teachers referred to history books or textbooks (n=5) as they incorporate different kinds of books in their projects. Some others mentioned the media such as documentary and Hollywood movies (n=3), while the rest (n=2) also referred to the Internet and productivity apps such as presentation or movie maker. None of the teachers used fictional history books in their classes. However, they applied alternative history through in-class activities and using other materials in addition to traditional textbooks.

“We will read Eric Foner, will read Richard Hofstadter, even though he’s really out of date now...and I think it’s important to say, okay, well, why do you think he was writing it at this time period how might things have changed since?... When I say when I’m thinking about choosing sources also in terms of who is writing the sources, am I picking all white male authors? And the answer should be no, you know, even though that’s what a lot of historians were for a while. And so, we try to be intentional about making sure that we’re showing them that historians are all kinds of different people.” –

Teacher 6, female, private K12 school.

The teacher’s response represents the pool of other teachers (n=5) who refer to history books and shows that she encourages the students to read the works of different historians while paying attention to how significant the choosing of the historians can

contribute to the narratives that the students will receive. Who is retelling the history will influence how the story is being delivered, and the teacher expresses how important it is to pay attention to that.

In addition to the history books, textbooks also became one of the *defaults* for materials used in schools, even in colleges. One of the teachers who also mentioned the use of textbooks in their class shows an example of the textbooks that they use,

“We use TCI history. It’s called History Alive and it’s a textbook that the district bought for all the history teachers in all the middle schools and high schools. And so, I kind of start there in terms of using the history book to go over the specifics of the background and situation of it. But what I really stress in my class, which is I think equally if not more important is primary source documents...in this case, we’re working on Indian Removal, so we would bring in you know Marshall’s decision from the Supreme Court.” – Teacher 7, male, public middle school.

His relationship with textbooks as a K12 educator gives us room to analyze the power and influences that other roles in the schools—including but not limited to the department chair, principal, superintendent, or school board—can have in choosing the materials. This respondent’s school district is an example of a school district that contributes to choosing the school’s learning materials. The aforementioned textbook is published by the Teachers Curriculum Institute as a way to provide students an active, student-centered, and applicable historical content and activities to support the teachers’ room to apply their own approaches in teaching (Bower, 2008). In addition to that, he also explains how he particularly uses that chosen textbook and incorporates it into his own way of teaching by adding primary source documents to the textbook materials used.

By doing so, he encourages students to develop an understanding of multiple perspectives on historical events and actors, even in the context of needing to use required texts chosen by others (e.g. school district, principals). This suggests that developing multiperspectivity through history education can occur even when the teachers have less freedom to rely on a wide range of resources.

However, not all schools are equipped with materials given by the school districts and were less fortunate because of the demographics of the area. There may be districts that have means and ways to provide educational materials and were lenient to what the teachers want to supplement, but there were also others who don't have access to any. As the equality in access and quality of education in this country is continuously developing, some districts are not as privileged as others.

“We had to create our own textbook...Each student was given a specific area that, [for example] Boston Tea Party, so they had to do the research and whatnot, and they created a [book] page. And I said, get the material and then come up with an illustration. You will find a picture and then we reproduce the book for all the kids and their parents.”
– Teacher 8, male, private middle school.

Although the educators at the school where this teacher was teaching were not equipped by materials provided by the public school system, he reflected that creating their own textbook actually becomes an upper hand in providing the students the content that they can grasp with curiosity, interest, and accessibility. He watched the students researched historical events and compiled all the information by themselves through primary and secondary sources, incorporating the library, technology, and media to find the information. Granted, he also points out the significance of making the textbooks

more interesting to students through illustrations. This suggests that textbooks can be something that students will want to look at and to approach multiple resources, including primary sources, with curiosity. And while the students are following their curiosity, they are able to collect different historical accounts, being exposed to a wide array of resources. With this in mind, the following response from another educator also coupled with the idea of using visuals and media to support the learning process on students.

“...watching a video clip from a movie and use multiple sources to determine how accurate they think the film as though this inquiry-based theory was embedded throughout the year...Don’t just Google, you know, what’s a primary and secondary sources all that stuff...if you can understand why a documentary would portray this historical figure one way, while a textbook would portray in a different way.” – Teacher 2, male, public K12 school.

By incorporating media and other additional sources, this teacher also suggests that the process of gathering the information can be an exercise for students to conduct proper research on appropriate resources. Clips are used to spark thoughts and discussions, and web searching is used to identify the correct sources. He also emphasizes how all the materials can support one another to provide resourceful historical content. In addition to the what-if approach, the research process is also conducted to introduce multiple perspectives. Connecting clips to web searching, connecting it to primary sources, and expanding the analysis through discussions will provide an opportunity for students to approach history through different lenses. Coinciding, another teacher also points out the importance of Internet-based research for

young students: *“There’s so many great websites...we went over Wikipedia...they still have the link to click-on to find [references].”* – Teacher 1, male, public K12 school.

This teacher points out that students can utilize what is available on the Internet, and they need to learn to comb through common search engines in order to gather the appropriate information. Cross-referencing with trustworthy and scholarly sources has to be done when using public websites where people can easily contribute to the content without having to support the evidence, e.g. Wikipedia.

These reflections suggest that multiperspectivity is not brought only by what alternative history materials are used by teachers. Instead, it comes from how teachers encourage students to incorporate everything that is available, from actively searching for multiple sources in addition to required textbooks or to creatively putting together a handmade textbook.

In-class activities

All of the teacher correspondents (n=10) implied the importance of activities to incorporate the different kinds of materials that are needed to supplement the written sources in order to stimulate the students’ analytical thinking. Specifically, with how history depends on how it is narrated, activities are crucial to ensure that students are equipped to approach different narratives. Different examples of projects and approaches show that different educators gauge their students’ styles of learning to provide them with a particular activity.

As Teacher 6 noted,

“The project allows them to pick whatever they are most interested in... We’ve been thinking a lot about the Webb’s depth of knowledge² in terms of understanding hierarchies of knowledge...you can only do them once you’re grounded on what actually happened this project wouldn’t be possible without a basic understanding of American History first and then doing those layers of research.” – Teacher 6, female, private middle school.

Letting the students have the power to decide what they want to learn based on their own curiosity was this teacher’s strategy into encouraging the students to research methods while stimulating their creativity. Students are allowed to choose the historical events that they want to turn into a counterfactual history plot through scholarly research. She encourages the use of Webb’s levels of recall of information, basic reasoning, complex reasoning, and extended reasoning as the baseline of the research.

“The next step [after choosing their historical event for the project] was to do a Venn diagram where they had to come up with, you know, their own or they had to come up with what would happen if...[what are] the similarities and differences in the current world and in the world that would have happened if there are other things happened.” –

Teacher 7, male, public school.

Similar to Teacher 6, this other teacher chooses Venn diagrams to help guide the students into analyzing the historical events and use it as a tool to craft their own what-if story based on the factual timeline. The diagram provides more visualization where students can see where the facts are being used to develop their creative storyline and see

² The depth of knowledge in social studies by Norman Webb (Webb, 2002) consists of four level of comprehension: from students’ ability to recall specific information, to contrast and compare, to connect into broader analysis and reasoning, and to develop solutions to problems.

where the two narratives overlap. In order to create a ‘parallel universe’ style of alternative history, students create diagrams of historical events, to see where the events correspond to be able to make connections. Through that process, the fictional story will include historical facts and provide an exercise for students to be creative while conducting a scholarly process. Another strategy that is being used by another teacher is a simple pyramid,

“We start with a pyramid—just basically builds the action from where the characters start to where the whole story kind of ends. Climax and anticlimax, kind of peaks and valleys of the story and they get to the very end of it with an appreciation of how characters because of their perspective and because of the way that they value certain things and how they see certain things.” – Teacher 2, male, public school.

This visualization gives pictures to the processes of how historical events occur and to see how the events interact like a chain. It will then help students to understand the significance of each action by recognizing the climax and anticlimax of the story. The teacher also reflects that making a pyramid for each character will highlight how each historical actor sees the event and contributes to it.

Any of these approaches—Webb’s depths of knowledge or a simple pyramid—can be applied within the umbrella of a learning style where students can be fully participating and to inquire about their thoughts and creativity. A teacher refers as project-based learning, to represent any other strategies that the teachers named differently, yet it leads to the same approach.

“So, this is project-based learning...which is developing this story and so the things that you would normally habitually do in class. Those are all the things that are

going on routinely as part of the class and so we have basically a 50-minute class...The formal instruction part is probably like half of the period and then half the period is devoted to their project that they're working on which is the story so it's kind of a balance between the two." - Teacher 3, male, public K12 school.

Project-based learning is a contrast to the traditional mode of instruction (e.g. lecture style) where the teacher did the transfer of knowledge from in front of the classroom. Then the floor is opened to student's participation into the thinking processes and to follow up on what the students want to work on. Teachers listen to the student's desire and turn it into productivity. This teacher sees the by-product of his approach when his students are more comfortable and equipped in participating in the conversations about difficult history such as slavery, World Wars, segregation, and the Holocaust. He also sees that the students are more open to asking questions and welcoming opinions through project-based learning.

"The students, they're, they're curious, and they're engaged, and they want to learn, and they want to understand. Even before they chose their topics, they already posed questions. So, would we have more Jews if Hitler drowned when he was a kid? And that to me is what we need from historians and from critical thinkers." – Teacher 8, male, private school.

Similarly to the reflections regarding the materials that are used by the interviewees, multiperspectivity is introduced rigorously through in-class activities and the processes that are used to exercise multiple perspectives in learning alternative history. Teachers have the flexibility to apply existing approaches such as a Venn diagram, Webb's depth of knowledge, into a pyramid concept in order to understand

history creatively while learning about different narratives and accessing scholarly resources.

Teacher's motivation and leniency in the institutions

Many teachers who I interviewed (n=6) discovered the alternate history approach from their own personal research, participate in conferences, and brainstorming with networks of educators. In this new era of Internet and communication, any platform can be used for teachers across states and nations to interact with each other, to use the time on the web as their personal and professional development.

“It’s these #SSchat [Social Studies chat hashtag on Twitter] that happened every Monday evening as a chance for social studies teachers to get together and bounce ideas around that kind of thing and she [Diana Laufenberg] and I connected there.” – Teacher 6, female, private school.

In addition to development through technology, some teachers (n=4) are inspired by existing work such as published fictional books inspired by counterfactual history, and many other historians who use counterfactual concept as their way of delivering the content. For example, one teacher began his exploration of alternative history through reading fiction that led him to research more about the genre.

“So there is an author named Harry Turtledove, who writes a lot of either alternative history or counterfactual [history] ...it was an alternative history, like you have time travelers or aliens or some external force comes in and changes the timeline of history for whatever purpose” – Teacher 2, male, public school.

As teachers discovered creative ways to bring introduce these methods into their classroom, either as an approach or a project, both of the materials and in-class activities will be hard to execute if teachers are not allowed to incorporate any of them in the classroom. Although teachers can develop their ways of teaching and add supplemental materials, they have to answer to their superiors. Thus, the next factor to explore is how any other role in the system influences the teachers' approach, whether it is the superintendent, school board, principal, department chair, or any other superior voice. Especially the U.S., the education system's specifics vary between school districts, which makes leniency in teacher's freedom and power to choose their approaches also different across states and even cities.

One teacher reflected that when he was given the flexibility to conduct their own ways of teaching, he focused on finding the approach that fit his students, while also considering other outcomes that he needs to meet. This can take form as a specific curriculum, standardized testing, etc.

"I think my principal just kind of let me do [what] I want to do as long as I can back up my claims with evidence and of course being armed with all the [Sam] Wineburg's³ work and all the researchers [to] say 'hey, this is why I'm doing this'." – Teacher 7, male, public K12.

³ Sam Wineburg, whose works I also encountered during literature research, is a professor of education and history at Stanford University, who has published his research regarding historical thinking, history education, and civic education. <https://profiles.stanford.edu/samuel-wineburg?tab=research-and-scholarship>

Another teacher noted,

“Our institution is really supportive of that...the institution’s philosophy has always been as long as students are doing pretty well on the AP exam, do your thing.” -

Teacher 8, female, private middle school.

Finally, one teacher explained the lack of standardization around the use of alternate history:

“There is no one really directing this instructional strategy or this instructional approach. It’s completely powered down to the teacher at the classroom level what they choose to do. We have a very robust PTC [parent-teacher conference] process, where we discuss student performance and we examine the rightness of an instructional approach or strategy and if you don’t get high yields from it, then you’re going to adjust that.” –

Teacher 3, male, public school.

On the contrary, leniency is not always guaranteed. As mentioned before, different systems bring variances in teachers’ creativity. A few teachers (n=3) are often turned down by a more superior role before they were able to bring the alternative history approach into their institution. Although teachers believe this approach or project can be a revolutionary approach for their students, as a refreshing alternative to learning aside from regular textbooks, teachers needed to work with other key players in the curriculum planning before they can bring the creativity to class. As this teacher shared details about his experience being turned down multiple times before being able to implement the project,

“A lot of times where I tried something new, they said ‘oh we don’t do that here.’ After many years we found good superintendent who loves my ideas and lets us try that

curriculum and used it on 4th, 8th, and 10th grade. But it took years. Many are reluctant to let you try things as be risk-takers and to be innovative.” – Teacher 7, male, public school.

Regardless of the hurdles, Teacher 7 persisted to present to his superiors in the institution so he can bring innovative approach, as he saw his students grow up in a low-income neighborhood as he describes, “dangerous neighborhood, they had tough lives, and they want to learn new things every day. I want to start from where they’re at but to challenge them.”

From talking with all the respondents, their experiences suggest that the project implementation of alternate history in the classroom starts from the teachers’ initiatives and their persistence in going through the process in their own institution, including presenting the ideas to superiors such as school principal and superintendent. Teachers are getting inspiration from all sources, from historical fiction books, social media feeds, to their own personal drive through witnessing the difficult life that their students experience in their neighborhood.

Challenges

In the like manner of the variety of levels of leniency that teachers get to craft their teaching strategy, different things also pose a challenge for educators such as providing students with an innovative way to learn. One particular obstacle that teachers (n=5) expressed is that they have to work their way around specific objectives of the standardized tests and fixed curriculums

“I think one of the challenges with an AP class is that you’ve got this curriculum and you’ve got this exam at the end of it and that’s kind of a push to, you know, we’re not measured exactly by the AP scores that students get, but it is a thing that people think about.” – Teacher 6, female, private school.

However, it is not only the specific curriculum’s or standardized test’s benchmarks that teachers need to ensure that the students can still make it through the creative and visionary approach, but also the timing of the tests itself. Teachers need to consider the amount of time needed to finish the project or incorporate a different approach, while making sure that the students developed their analytical skills and equipped them with the appropriate historical facts to support their project.

“I did this at the end of the school year where they had already taken the standardized test in like April. So, I found that time to do this type of activity. If I can do it all over again, I would do this earlier because I think would be a good way for them to remember the facts they learned, remember some of these key concepts. I think it would have really ingrained this content and they will have answers on these standardized tests better.” – Teacher 4, male, public school.

Teacher 4 reflected on the challenge of fitting into an existing curriculum timeline and practicing flexibility to ensure that students can partake in additional activities on alternative history, while at the same time realizing the possibility of using the alternative history activity as a module to help students master the existing curriculum’s requirement.

Applying alternative history activities is not an easy task, which sometimes can be another challenge as teachers do not always have available time to spare, especially when

the existing curriculum timeline is followed. As this following interviewee reflected on needing more weeks to apply this approach,

“So, I think the biggest weakness of it is it takes three weeks, it isn’t something you do in a class period because it’s so much steps. That’s why perhaps college professors will use it more because professors can spend weeks, they may have a three-hour class.” – Teacher 7, male, public K12 school.

Besides the timing and curriculum that educators need to strategize around, there are also other challenges that require teachers to reflect and check-in with themselves, which includes their willingness to learn alongside their students. As one teacher reflects on her experience, representing some others (n=3) who echo her participation.

“Is the fact that I’m not going to know everything, when you give students free reign, they’re going to choose things that I don’t have more than a surface level of understanding...as a teacher, I think we like to be in control a lot of the time and we like to feel like we have the answers and one of the things that I realized with projects like this is that you don’t and that’s okay. I’ve gotten really good at saying, ‘Cool, look, I don’t know either, let’s figure it out together.’ I think that’s how we engage them and learn together with them.” – Teacher 6, female, private middle school.

Teacher 6 highlighted the teachers’ reflections that an alternative history approach opens the door to a broader world of knowledge, that even history teachers need to learn alongside the students. All four teachers who discussed this understand the importance of humility and willingness to work together with the students.

Overall, applying an innovative approach comes with a price of overcoming challenges that will arise. Not only navigating through institutional

bureaucracy or working around the existing curriculum, teachers also need to check in with their willingness to learn with humility, together with their students.

Other take-aways

In addition to the benefits that teachers aim to accomplish through creative approaches, teacher correspondents (n=4) share other non-academic take-aways that they gained through this concept.

“I think their intrinsic motivation goes up because they have the power to choose [the topic.]. You have to work on this case study, that’s true, but how do you do it is entirely up to you. So that makes a big difference in their desire to be in charge of it and not just being told.” – Teacher 7, male, public school.

This particular teacher reflected on what he thinks inspired his students by doing the alternative history project, by giving students the independence to choose their own topic for the project does not only define their participation, in addition, it also taught them beyond the classroom. Young students who are given the power to choose became assured that they can take charge, especially in an environment where they will feel the exhaustion or boredom of having the routine, especially where they had to be told of something that they might not have interest in.

Moreover, teachers reflected that they received evaluative responses from the students of the learning process through this new project that they have done. The reflection did not come in a form of formal assessment of the pedagogical approach or academic achievements, but how it has sparked lessons that will be beneficial in their social skills, empathy, and emotional intelligence.

“The vast majority of them [students] will come back to me saying I hadn’t realized how much one person’s actions make a difference. And that’s what I want them to take away as 17-year-olds. They’re about to become voting-age citizens, we’re sending them from this high achieving institution off to college in the hopes that they will be future leaders in whatever it is that they do. One person’s actions can make a difference and I think this project allowing them to do some counterfactual history and think about how the smallest changes have implications is a really good way to help students understand their own agency.” – Teacher 6, female, private school.

To mention social skills, another teacher also expressed his experience in teaching in a “rough neighborhood,” as he referred to the neighborhood as, where students are raised in poverty and violence, and how the project implementation taught his students the social skills that they need through the in-class interaction. This teacher incorporates the demographics of his students into the preparation of his lessons. He believes that through this project, he can foster a group discussion where students will come up with different scenarios made from history and learn how to manage a conversation that is diverse and might be difficult.

“You want them to think individually AND in groups, so I break them up in groups. That’s what I want to collaborate, to work with one another. And to create a community where it’s okay to give different opinions. A lot of times they weren’t used to this. One way or the highway, they’re tough kids, gang kids. They were unfortunate. I had to think about other approach.” – Teacher 4, male, public school.

Similarly, another teacher in another part of the country expresses how he used the What If questions to encourage students to reflect on their own living conditions and

compare it to how it would have been in the past. In order to make the comparison, the students need to get the facts properly and the teacher leads them to engage with their emotional intelligence to experience empathy and gratitude.

“Teachers are under a lot of stress because of the approach we have now and that’s something that’s not addressed. You see more now of SEL—social-emotional learning... We don’t appreciate the people who moved west and across this country in covered wagons and I tried to get them to learn. It was a great experience for the kids had to go across the country with certain supplies and they had all the hardships [in their real lives] and you equate it with today’s hardships. How to prepare them for the next for the real world.” – Teacher 1, male, public school.

From social-emotional learning, students’ learning independency, to communication skills, teachers observed that their students are able to develop intrinsic values more than academic gains. These skills can be valuable for students to perform day-to-day activities and interactions, also to approach current life issues around them such as social justice issues and political events.

Possibility of large-scale implementation

Lastly, another area to assess is the effectiveness of applying the alternative history approach in history classroom will be the possibility to apply this on a larger scale. Is there a possibility of developing a formal curriculum that will include this approach? And if there is, what does it take to conduct the appropriate assessment to evaluate the concept? As this question was asked, teachers expressed hopeful comments about wanting to see more of this concept to be applied in more schools (n=7) and a more

reality-checking answer to acknowledge the needs for more research and development to be more than just a teacher's innovation in class (n=3). Although most teachers did not give a specific opinion on whether this approach can transform into a fixed curriculum, there are two respondents who share their anticipation towards the possibility of wider-scale implementation.

“I have really seriously considered exporting it to other areas of American history and like we have a substantial block on colonial America...and so I'm thinking that in the past we've done things like would be a project where they would present on that area and the kind of the six areas like geography, economics, and others.” – Teacher 4, male, public institution.

This teacher started the alternative history project by focusing on the topic of Native American history. The outcome of the project and how the teacher sees the engagement of the students motivates him to expand the project into other subtopics in American history. He also believes that he could work with teachers at the institution to incorporate other subjects in the project.

Another teacher noted the need for more studies before this project can be implemented widely and officially,

“The possibility of a larger-scale implementation of this kind of approach is interesting. There is no, you know, pre-test or post-test, t-test type research. To me, it's basically this is a theoretical idea.” – Teacher 10, male, public school.

His idea of pre and post-test is aligned with the continuation of this research that I hope to conduct. He believes that an assessment should first be constructed to see in which ways an alternative history approach influenced how students will process conflict

and difficult issues, or to distinguish different narratives and not to adopt only one strong narrative that refers to one group of people.

As an innovative approach to history education, using alternative history in the classroom is seen through the teachers' application on combining required textbooks and existing curriculum (e.g. AP, district-assigned textbook) and incorporating other methods of learning such as diagrams and pyramids to what-if questions in history. Alternative history is present through how the teachers brought the concept into the classroom to foster analytical discussion to challenge the status quo of history. Although the challenges are not easy, as teachers have to not only be motivated to discover new ways for their students to learn, but also to be persistent in navigating through institution and curriculum. Teachers also need to be able to seek new knowledge and learn alongside the students. Although the challenges are there to overcome, teachers are determined as they observed not only academic achievement of advancing research skills and acceptance of different opinions and new ways of learning, but also to watch their students develop their social skills and personal growth as they use what they learn on alternative history to their day-to-day interaction.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The data from these interviews points to several important issues regarding the implementation of alternative history in classroom settings. First, an important aspect that is heavily reflected through multiple accounts among interviewees (n=10), the innovative project of alternative history starts from the teacher's willingness to bring it into his or her classroom. Ideas emerge from teachers' own time and to develop creative ways to learn history, either through reading books outside of the regular materials in their field or surfing through social media and network with fellow educators. Teachers are now challenged to keep up with the technology in order to match the students' exposure to technology and to gain more knowledge that they can use to encourage learning to their students. As Teacher 6 reflected on her digital research time, she was introduced to the concept of what-if questions through Twitter conversations where social studies teachers can share their views and foster innovative ideas. Her experience suggests that spending time on the Internet can be productive when the time and space are used to spread the network of connections and gain knowledge.

In addition to the teachers' own research time, modern educators need to incorporate technology into the classroom, especially in doing these projects where it aims the students to have self-grown curiosity and desire to know more and be creative

using the information that they gathered properly. Technology can be used to provide lessons that,

“...are historically rigorous and clear about the conceptual thinking they want their student to do... Yes, we want students to find out (or just be told) about events of 1066, but that is not enough. We then want them to think about why the Normans were successful...” (Walsh, 2017, p.254).

Incorporating the web will be key for students who seek new information following their burning curiosity that equally curious teachers encourage them to have. History lessons with access to technology and the Internet are no longer negotiable nor questionable. Through allowing students to learn how to find and access primary sources while compiling additional sources from Internet, biographies, and others, they will learn that that history is no longer “the story” that meant to be accepted as the way it is without cross-checking different narratives, but by looking at other historians’ accounts, and reflecting on what could have happened differently. Encouraging access to a wide array of sources will give students an opportunity to gain multiple perspectives. The Internet can also be a place where students can access creative stories of alternative history, as website such as www.uchronia.net, www.alternativehistory.com, and the “Today in Alternative History” blog are becoming a rich database for alternative history writers, enthusiasts, and even historians to find works and articles to explore (Singles, 2013).

Having the resources to explore different sources will also allow students to get more perspectives on the same narrative that has been told. Especially, as telling a purely objective history narrative is impossible, and the “so-called facts of history are not found but created, by a signifying process in which incidents are selected and placed in an

ordered sequence to form a coherent story of ‘what really happened’ in the past” (Petzold, 2016, p.88). Teachers can utilize this reformative thinking upon history to reflect on the current world’s conflict and get the students to partake in discussions about specifically difficult issues.

As conflicts are omnipresent in the world and are being examined by young students, it is crucial to know that in an ongoing conflict such as the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, history is actually a

“vital part of the conflict and the mutual denial of the Other’s legitimate existence, at least on a collective level. Histories are constructed between Israelis and Palestinians as a function of their mutual denial and their respective nationalist ideologies, and these histories effectively rule out the possibility of the legitimacy of the history of the Other” (Feldt, 2008, p. 190-191).

In fact, historical imagination can be used to visualize a utopian peace that can encourage real-life peace through the reform of our society. Specifically, a society that can allow itself to listen to the *Other’s* point of view and separate themselves from the collective subjecting of an actor in history. Creating this reformed society will counter the propaganda-infused images that can be carried through narratives, campaigns, or stories about the negative image of a common enemy (Keen, 1991). Through this approach, history can be used not only to highlight the pain of the past by delivering collective memory through generations, but also can be utilized to be a vehicle of understanding others.

Existing alternative history projects discussed in this study show that every project is spearheaded by the lead teacher through his or her own motivation. Teachers

who started the project built their supporting theories such as Diana Laufenberg's *What Ifs* project and Harry Turtledove's fictional work. Fostering a creative approach in students' learning environment starts from the educator's creativity and motivation to search for innovation. Educators need to be aware of the demographics of their students to guide the students into reflecting on the history project and connecting it to contemporary life, to prepare them into the real world where there are injustice, poverty, inequality, and hardships. Students learn multiple things other than history, such as social skills or respect, from the pedagogical approach that incorporates social-emotional learning that is needed in preparing students to embrace and manage conflicts. As a matter of fact, it also includes the growing of social-emotional learning through the in-class activities that educators have used to incorporate the information that students gained whether from primary or secondary sources, books, video clips, or even conversations with fellow classmates about the topic.

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is defined as "the process through which children acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to understand and manage emotions, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions" (Dugas, 2017). Especially with such difficult issues like the Israel/Palestine conflict, or Teacher 4's student's project on the Montgomery Bus Boycott, students might experience different kinds of emotions. Incorporating activities that can help students manage their emotions that will curate their behaviors, teachers are educating future citizens of the world who can incorporate their emotional intelligence in their daily interactions and to make important decisions.

Several teachers reflected on non-academic takeaways such as students' social skills and their interaction with their community. As Teacher 1's reflection suggests that social-emotional learning (SEL) was observed during his implementation of alternative history approach, connections can be made as historical empathy is fostered through the practice of collecting multiple perspectives on historical events or figures. Using affective connections, students will be able to view historical figures as human beings who share experience and to make a better sense of how the situations hold influence in that historical figure's action. This connection is understood as historical contextualization and perspective-taking using affective connection. As an example, students can be encouraged to emotionally connect to President Truman's decision of the atomic bomb (Endacott & Brooks, 2013), and to connect to the Japanese peace education system that promotes "A-bomb education" (Ian Harris, 2010) with a framework that has removed the actor's causative factors and to acknowledge actors agency and how no single person is responsible for the whole catastrophe (Page, 2000). Through an SEL-promoting curriculum, students are prepared to confront an issue and to identify what the issue is, why it happens, who is involved, and what are the solutions (Zulkey, 2017). This can stimulate multiperspectivity by giving students the opportunity to learn about counterfactual history and equip them with the social-emotional skills to process their understanding of certain events.

Although materials reflect the general content of the course, the teachers' way of teaching it to the students is more crucial in developing the social and emotional learning that can be learned through the in-class activities. A student-centered project requires students to interact with others. Students learn to listen to different perspectives

especially when hard conversations emerge from the analytical discussion about history and manage disputes when different opinions clash. Through turning stories based on historical facts, students can strengthen their emotional intelligence by allowing their empathy to be involved in how they compare the past lives and the current societal conditions. This empathy can then be used by them to digest the world's current conflict or wars, where they have learned from their class exercise that there are many aspects in an event and a single act can affect it. By showing them the power of an act, students will be more aware of their behaviors and how people behave around them, knowing that the significance of it might not be seen through their eyes immediately. However, one's action can impact another action, creating a chain of reactions that will be a part of the world's story, no matter how small or large it is.

As portrayed in the materials that the interviewees choose, none of the teachers mentioned one specific alternative history material such as *the Man in the High Castle*, as mentioned in the introduction. Instead, alternative history is found through how the teachers conducted the discussions or build a project on the topic. Multiperspectivity is introduced through the process, from choosing the topics, researching the sources, approaching the discussion or presentations, and reflecting to the works that have been done.

The objective of this alternative history approach can be an exercise of the conflict resolution training that is crucial to develop people's internal capabilities to respond to conflicts and build peace. It can be used as a practical approach to educate students about past or existing conflicts without emphasizing the conflict itself, but to focus on how to use the knowledge about the conflict towards peacebuilding (Lederach,

1997). Especially with the focus of this approach that targets how people internally process and respond to conflict, the concepts of historical empathy and social-emotional learning will be one of the many vital practices to develop conflict resolution skills. With this being said, with further studies that will hopefully be conducted about the implementation of alternative history into peace education, we can develop conflict training, especially in conflict areas that will use this approach to create shared identity and work towards understanding the other group and their interpretation of collective memories and historical narrative. For example, Staub (2013) lays out the group reconciliation workshop in Rwanda as an approach used to help the community heal from the genocide through learning about the cases of genocide across the world and by facilitating discussions that promote acceptance, increase empathy towards other groups, and retract blame and guilt from historical action. The workshop also includes an activity using local radio drama that is infused with educational materials to prevent violence. Hopefully, with further research, we can explore the possibility of using alternative history as a resource as the Rwanda community facilitators use the radio drama to teach about the history of Rwanda's and the world's genocide to promote peace and reconciliation.

Lastly, the positive outcomes of this approach need to be carefully assessed, especially in exemplifying the significance of specifically the counterfactual history exercises and students' ability to manage conflicts. However, it is clear that more studies in the future are greatly needed, as one example, to assess the comparative responses from students who are given the opportunity to explore multiple perspectives with SEL and those who receive normal lecture-type history class. Students can be given a pre and

post-tests including questions that can portray their ability to respond to conflicts or possible conflicts.

Different assessments can be made to measure students' mastery of the historical facts and creativity in making stories, with each having its own advantage and challenge. For example, measuring essay questions can help unpack the knowledge and rigorous processing that the students have performed well. While multiple-choice questions are good to measure mastery into equal standards, which is what our existing education system still needs to standardize our education, it will not cover the breadth of the thoughts and emotions that students have been trained—or not—to have (Fordham, 2017).

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This study illustrates that alternative history was introduced to the classrooms of the teachers of my sample through new approaches, such as what-if question discussions or projects, in addition to using existing traditional history materials such as textbooks, primary/secondary sources. This approach is limited to each teacher's willingness to plan, create, and advocate for an innovative approach in addition to the school's regular curriculum. A pattern was observed that teachers who were able to implement an alternative history approach had more institutional leniency towards planning their subject's curriculum.

Encouraging students to acknowledge different narratives regarding historical events showed history teachers that words can influence collective memory and will contribute in the shaping of collective identity. To collect different sources will give them the opportunity to understand an event through varying lenses. In addition, to challenge them to question what would have been happened differently, teachers noted that it was not the purpose to provoke regrets or scapegoating certain actors in the history, but to show how crucial a minor action can be in a chain of events and help them understand an issue through different actor's views.

In regard to conflict resolution skills, although limited to teachers' personal reflection and yet to be assessed through studies or further observation, teachers reported an increase in awareness of social issues and a welcoming response to topics pertaining to past or current conflicts. In order to create a proper evaluation, studies that include a control group have to be conducted to learn the impact of the approach on how students react to social issues. We could then initiate larger-scale implementations on how this approach can be crafted into a curriculum, lesson plan, or to be applied in non-formal educational settings across ages. That is to say, this is an area to advocate for educational policy to allow teachers to be more creative in their curriculum approach, including to bring alternative history materials or activities into their history class study plan.

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW INVITATION SCRIPT

**Multiperspectivity Through Alternate History in the Classroom
Interview Invitation**

Dear [name],

I am writing to invite you to participate in an interview to study the use of alternate history materials in the classroom for the purpose of completing a thesis project for a master's degree in Conflict Resolution.

This research will serve as a way to understand the choice of materials and the creative approaches used by educators to introduce history education to their students. I aim to learn the important aspects in the materials to be able to develop an evaluative framework that can be beneficial for educators, institutions, and parents. This is an initial study with the hopes of later conducting a longitudinal study to learn how history curriculum connects to peace education.

In this interview, you will be asked to share your opinions and reflections from your experiences in using alternative history materials in your classrooms. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to be interviewed via video conference. The interview will be audio recorded so that transcript can be made for data transcribing. All digital data and transcript will be password protected and will only be accessible by the Principal Investigator and her faculty advisor.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may choose to not be in this study. If you'd like to participate, we will schedule a video conference. If you need more time to decide whether or not you would like to participate, you may contact me for any question or concerns. You may choose at any time to end your participation.

In order to invite more participants who are implementing alternate materials in their history classrooms, I ask for your willingness to pass along the study information sheet (please see attached) to your colleagues who may also be interested in sharing about their teaching experience. I also welcome you to provide me the name and contact information, if available, of any colleagues or acquaintances who may be interested in participating.

If you need to contact me, I may be reached at anggita.parameswa001@umb.edu and (857)389-9529. Thank you in advance for your time and participation.

Best Regards,
Anggita Latif
Principal Investigator

APPENDIX B
INFORMATION SHEET

**Multiperspectivity Through Alternate History Materials in the Classroom
Information Sheet for Interviewees**

You are invited to participate in a research study about the use of alternate history materials in the classroom. This research will identify existing approaches in incorporating alternate history materials that school teachers have used in the classrooms in order to construct an evaluation framework. You have been asked to participate because the activity in your classroom has incorporated non-textbook alternate history materials. Please read this form and ask any questions you have before agreeing to participate in this study.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you agree to take part, we will go ahead and schedule a video conference. You are not obliged to answer any question if you choose not to. You also may end your participation at any time without consequence. If you wish to end your participation, you should inform the Principal Investigator via email, text message, or phone. Whatever you decide will in no way penalize you.

Your participation is confidential, as well as any personal or institutional affiliation you may have, unless otherwise noted and agreed. Although the interview will be audio recorded so that transcript can be made for faithful data transcribing, all digital data and transcript will be password protected, which will only be accessible by the Principal Investigator and her faculty advisor.

Due to the nature of this research, I will ask for your willingness to pass along the study information sheet (please see attached) to your colleagues who may also be interested in sharing about their teaching experience. The Principal Investigator may also ask that you provide names for other potential participants. You are under no obligation to share this information or to provide referrals and whether or not you share this information will not penalize you in any way. You will not be offered any incentive to provide potential participants to the researcher either.

There is minimal risk in participating in this project. There is no direct personal benefit to participating in this interview. However, your participation may help the researcher to learn more about the more creative approach of teaching history lessons to young students and explore opportunities to incorporate fictional materials in the history classroom.

If you have further questions about this research or if you have research-related problem, you can reach Anggita Latif, via email at Anggita.Parameswa001@umb.edu or telephone at (857)389-9529; or the thesis advisor, Dr. Karen Ross via email at karen.ross@umb.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact a representative of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, which oversees research involving human participants. The Institutional Review Board may be reached by telephone or e-mail at (617) 287-5374 or at human.subjects@umb.edu.

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Multiperspectivity Through Alternate History Materials in the Classroom Representative Sample Of Interview Questions For Teachers

During all interviews I will ask the lead-off question, then I will try to identify information about the covert categories based on the conversation following the subject's response. I may specifically ask subjects to elaborate on responses related to the covert categories.

Topic Domain I: Teaching history

Lead-off Question: Please tell me a little bit about your experience as a history teacher

[Covert Categories: Years teaching, educational institute she/he taught, demographic of the institution(s) he/she taught, education background, motivation to teach history]

Topic domain II: Motivation to implement the materials

Lead-off Question: I am particularly interested in the implementation of the alternate history materials in your classroom. Can you tell me what made you aware of this approach?

[Covert Categories: Theoretical framework in choosing to implement fictional history, personal objective, school's role in approving the teacher's material, other educators' role in inspiring the teacher, resources used, supporting organizations]

Topic Domain III: Materials and in-class activity used

Lead-off Question: Can you please walk me through the initial process of choosing the materials?

[Covert Categories: Teacher's choice of material, considerations in choosing the materials, approaches in starting the discussions about the materials, other in-class activities used, teacher's reflection in engaging the students, teacher's perspective of students' level of participation]

Topic Domain IV: Challenges and advantages in using the materials

Lead-off Question: What did you find challenging in implementing this approach in your classroom?

[Covert Categories: Teacher's reflection on the possibility of a large-scale implementation of the material, teacher's evaluative opinion on the materials]

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