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The comparative approach offers a particularly rich prospect for the study of textbooks, which are very complex objects. At first glance, one would think that they are simply the result of political choice and values of the country in which they are produced. But they are also determined by the evolution of knowledge in History, and by epistemological and ideological considerations. This article deals with the conditions of the comparison of textbooks, and proposes an approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods. Using the example of the Berlin blockade, we also give some first results that lead to questioning the place and use of pictures in the history textbooks.

Der vergleichende Ansatz bietet eine besonders reiche Perspektive für die Untersuchung von Schulbüchern, die sehr komplexe Objekte sind. Auf den ersten Blick könnte man meinen, dass sie einfach das Ergebnis politischer Entscheidungen und Werte des Landes sind, in dem sie produziert werden. Aber sie werden auch durch die Entwicklung des Wissens in der Geschichte sowie durch erkenntnistheoretische und ideologische Überlegungen bestimmt. Dieser Artikel befasst sich mit den Bedingungen für den Vergleich von Schulbüchern und schlägt einen Ansatz vor, der quantitative und qualitative Methoden kombiniert. Am Beispiel der Berliner Blockade werden erste Ergebnisse vorgestellt, die

dazu führen, den Platz und die Verwendung von Bildern in Geschichtsbüchern zu hinterfragen.

L'approche comparative offre une perspective particulièrement riche pour l'étude des manuels scolaires, qui sont des objets très complexes. A première vue, on pourrait penser qu'ils sont simplement le résultat de choix politiques et de valeurs du pays dans lequel ils sont produits. Mais ils sont aussi déterminés par l'évolution des connaissances dans l'Histoire, et par des considérations épistémologiques et idéologiques. Cet article traite des conditions de la comparaison des manuels scolaires, et propose une approche combinant des méthodes quantitatives et qualitatives. A partir de l'exemple du blocus de Berlin, nous donnons également quelques premiers résultats qui conduisent à s'interroger sur la place et l'utilisation des images dans les manuels d'histoire.

Textbooks are very complex objects. At first glance, one would think that they are simply the result of political choice and values of the country in which they are produced, and of course those are very important parameters, as curricula dictate their contents. But they are also determined by the evolution of knowledge in History, and by epistemological and ideological considerations. My previous work was about the representations of the Cold War in French history textbooks since the sixties, but I think it is necessary now to compare French textbooks with others from Eastern and Western European countries and with American ones. But we have to consider how the comparative analysis of textbooks can be possible, regarding their different contexts and conditions of

production, and to propose a methodological approach, before presenting some first results.

1. History Textbooks Today, a Comparative Approach

1.1 European and American Textbooks: Different Contexts, but a Trend towards Uniformity

The national context of textbooks' production is of great importance in understanding their form and contents. The first consideration is the level of decision for the curriculum. There are various possibilities: The federal or centralised State through a powerful ministry of education (France, Russia and former USSR), the Länder (Germany), State Departments of Education or School commissions (United States). Then, after the publication of the books, in most of these countries there is an approval procedure, although it is not the case in France. And in the end, if several books are explored, to find out who is responsible for the choice of the books: the school board or the teachers themselves? With all these different possibilities, one would think that it might be too difficult to compare these contexts, making impossible a comparative study. However, although they are very different, there is a trend towards a growing uniformity among the textbooks.

American publishers try to consider the decisions of the selection boards of the most populated States, so their books can fit different curricula. This can explain the thickness of the American history textbooks (Young, 1990:82). In Russia, most of the states don't

have enough money to buy the books, as they should according to the law. Therefore, parents or schools have to buy them, and as a result the market for textbooks is more open than expected (Erokhina and Shevyrev, 2006:87). In France, publishers try to fit the expectations of the teachers, who are in charge of the choice of textbooks. The French publishers guess that teachers want to find documents, pictures, texts which are familiar to them. The result is a great conformity and surprisingly very stable contents from edition to edition, in spite of the changes in the curriculum. In spite of differences among countries the textbooks are more similar than previously expected. In all the countries of this study, the textbooks during the last two decades tend to be more and more attractive, with more pictures and an attractive design.

In U.S. and French textbooks, it is interesting to notice that recent books present a similar pattern: the text of the lesson is on the left page, and sources (pictures and texts) are on the right page. Very often the chapter (or unit) begins with an opening page, in France even a double page. The reason for the increasing iconography (and consequently a decreasing place for the text of the lesson), is not only the improvement of printing techniques. Textbooks are economic products, published by firms whose aims are to make money, and the quality of the iconography is a selling factor. Moreover, in order to make history more attractive for students, textbooks are now widely illustrated with photos from the mass media, and very often they use sources from the news agencies (at least for the history of the twentieth century). So we can consider textbooks

as mass media and interesting sources for the study of social representations.

1.2 Textbook Analysis, a Combined Quantitative and Qualitative Method

This method was first tested for the purpose of my Ph. D. for the analysis of French books. In order to analyse the textbooks we must not only take into account the contents of the lesson, but also the forms and the means of the narrative: sources, iconography, place of the pictures, presentation of the pages. Therefore, I decided to adopt what Nicole Lucas called ‘a diversified methodological approach’ (Lucas 2001:60), combining quantitative and qualitative methods. Starting with an inductive method gives a view of what seems to be relevant. A first overview of the books helped at selecting and collecting large extracts related to the subject of the Cold War, which were classified in different items. Stored on digital files, they formed a consistent database which, although fragmented among the various items, provided a good overview of the textbooks. This makes it easier to manipulate and to compare data, to identify items that appear regularly in textbooks that can be quantitatively analysed. For some items I established their occurrence in the textbooks (i.e. mean number of items per textbook with standard deviation) and for some others their frequency or percentage of use among the books under consideration.

1.2.1 An Example, the Treatment of the Washington Summit (1973) in French Textbooks

This contribution, based on sixty books for the last level of French secondary school, analyses the representations of the Cold War in French textbooks since the sixties. The graph below shows the high occurrence of the photograph of Leonid Brezhnev and Richard Nixon during the Washington summit meeting in 1973 (vertically, the average number of pictures of the Washington summit in the books and horizontally, textbooks compiled by periods of curriculum).

The photo does not appear before 1982, because of the stability of the curriculum, which did not change until 1982, and so the publishers did not change the contents of the books. In 1982 the study of the twentieth century after 1945 was introduced in the curriculum. Thereafter 0.8 pictures of the Washington summit per book is found in 1982 and 0.9 pictures per book in 1988 (several photos of this event could be found in the same book). In the most recent books (for the 2002 syllabus), this average number decreased, due to a more compressed vision of the Cold War in the syllabus, which did not give room to all the events. One can note the high variability of the occurrence among books, represented by the bar over the column (i.e. standard deviation).

The Washington summit is commonly illustrated in the textbooks with pictures showing the two leaders greeting the crowd from the balcony of the White House. The most frequent picture, that is very interesting for our purpose, shows Leonid Brezhnev smiling and whispering something to Richard Nixon. This is a very friendly attitude, and even ambiguous: is he going to kiss his partner? In one of the books¹ this

picture is in the front page of the chapter, called 'From Cold War to Détente', with this comment: 'the meeting of the Big Two is the culmination of détente and at the same time represents the joint domination of the United States and the Soviet Union over international affairs'. This comment is representative of the narrative of the Cold War in French textbooks. Here, the Cold War takes a prominent place because more than the simple de-scription of facts and events, the purpose is in fact to reshape the image of France and Europe in a world ruled by the two great powers. The central representation of the Cold War in French textbooks is the 'condominium', a 'partage du monde' (the division of the world in two parts, with two leaders that agree together to rule the world for their own benefit). It begins with a foundation event, the Yalta Conference, the 'myth of the origins', according to Raymond Aron.² This 'Yalta myth' was first built by General de Gaulle, who was upset because France was not invited to participate in the conference, and worried about the future influence of France and Europe in the world. The myth was also widespread by journalists, such as Arthur Conte who wrote 'Yalta, the sharing of the world' in 1964. From then on, the meaning of Yalta in France was that the three big powers (Great Britain, the USSR and the USA) agreed to divide the world into spheres of influence without even consulting the rest of Europe (and above all, France). This inter-pretation is still very common in France, and sometimes people use the expression 'à Yalta', to say 'à not very satisfactory, but necessary sharing'. When in the eighties textbooks finally abandoned this 'Yalta myth', the myth of the

division of the world was reincarnated in every event of the Cold War (the Suez crisis, the red telephone etc.). The new concepts introduced in history textbooks were also used to rename the 'Yalta myth' as the bipolar world, the 'condominium', the fight between democracy and totalitarianism.

The Washington summit, especially illustrated by the photo of Leonid Brezhnev and Richard Nixon, provides new evidence that international affairs are no longer Europe's business. To French eyes, this picture is very similar to the one the famous photo of Yalta, and a remake of the story. How do textbooks of other protagonists of the Cold War represent this period? Do European and American books share the same history? How do they build their own narrative? I will give a few initial results, with the example of the Berlin blockade.

2. The Airlift Plane, a 'lieu de mémoire' of the Cold War?

This work is based on 60 French textbooks, 57 German textbooks (of which 26 come from the former GDR) and 30 U.S. books, all of them for pupils of approximately the same age, between 15 and 17.³ Only French books have been quantified, but a quick survey revealed that in Germany, France and the United States, the same photo of the U.S. aircraft landing at Tempelhof Airport is ubiquitous. This famous photo was taken in 1948 by Henry Ries, a German reporter who fled the Nazis to America. It shows children watching a U.S. C-54 about to land at Tempelhof Airport in Berlin.⁴ As long as it is presented in almost

every textbooks of these three countries, it seems that this picture belongs to what we can call a 'shared history'. But it doesn't tell exactly the same story.

2.1 The German Textbooks and the 'Rosinenbombers'

For German textbooks, the study consisted of identifying the pages on the period of the blockade, the event itself, and iconography proposed.⁵ Of course we must take into account the division until 1990, and compare the Western and Eastern textbooks. For the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), the situation is rather complex since the educational system was not unified and depended on federal states (the system was extended to all Germany after reunification). Many different books were printed, a few of them were used in several Länder, and therefore can be considered representative of how the event was taught in classrooms. For the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the study is easier because the educational system (and the curriculum) was centralised. The number of textbooks was reduced, and they all gave the same official view of history.

The textbooks of the GDR said nothing of the Berlin blockade, not even to deny it. The textbooks, unchanged from the sixties to the eighties, insisted on the division of the country, and they gave a common scenario. Beginning with the creation of the dual-zone, the story went on with the Marshall Plan, then the 'imperialistic monetary reform' decided by the Western Conference in London, and finally the union of the three zones with its direct consequence, the division of Berlin and Germany. The blockade was mentioned in

only one book in 1988, in which the event was presented as the product of Western propaganda.

In FRG and now in all German textbooks, the picture has been shown since the fifties. But since the eighties it is part of a narrative that emphasizes the role of American and English pilots, seen as heroes. In a book published in 2007⁶, a double page was entitled 'the monetary reform and the Berlin blockade'. On the left-hand page the monetary reform was illustrated by an extract of the 'Berliner Zeitung' of June 1949. The right-hand page was devoted to the blockade, illustrated by four pictures: a C54 landing, English food cans, an American airplane being unloaded, and a cartoon published in 1948 representing General Clay casually stepping over a belt of Soviet soldiers buckled with the Brandenburg Gate.

This is very representative of the way German textbooks usually tell the story: facts and anecdotes from the day-to-day life, clear presentation of ideological issues, iconic images (General Clay, the plane). In most of the textbooks the planes are called 'rosinen-bombers', because just before landing pilots used to throw candies for the children. This anecdote, still very well-known to the German people, depicts the episode as a heroic action of sympathetic pilots. The purpose is to raise an affectionate feeling for the United States⁷.

2.2 The American Textbooks: A Technological Feat to Rescue the Free World

Since the fifties, the American textbooks insist on the technological prowess of the airlift. A book published in

1966 by Laidlaw Brothers⁸ offers a whole page of photographs (four photos, which were not very common by this time) on the episode of the blockade, focusing on technological performance: the inside of a ship, a truck being unloaded, a C4 on the tarmac at Tempelhof and of course, the famous picture of the children watching the landing ship, with the following commentary: 'German children gaze hopefully at a plane approaching a runway of the Tempelhof Airdrome. In this field, a U.S. pilot dropped candy to the children by way of handkerchief parachutes on each of his flights to Berlin.' The history of the candies is a way of raising the interest of students and of making the blockade more understandable. It also highlights American power, its organizational superiority, and it values the role of the United States as rescuers of the free world: 'More than two million Berliners were supplied with the necessities of life. They were also given a dramatic example of the determination of the West to resist the ruthlessness of the Soviets. The airlift lasted for about ten months. It cost the lives of a number of American airmen, but won the hearts of many Germans'. American textbooks insist more on ideological issues than the German ones, but they emphasize the drama and the heroism of the pilots as well. In French textbooks, the picture of the plane takes another dimension.

Table 2:
Improvement in comprehension

Case study	Improvem	Non	No
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	ent ascertainm ent	improvement ascertainment	answer
Usage 1	88,8 %	9,7 %	1,5 %
Usage 2	69,1 %	23,6 %	7,3 %
Usage 3	66,7 %	33,3 %	0 %
Usage 4	94,3 %	4,6 %	1,1 %

2.3 *The French Textbooks: Europe under the American Wing*

The picture appeared in the eighties, at a very high frequency (more than 70 %) in the French textbooks, and remained very common thereafter (more than 60 % of the books published in 2002 shows it). Usually it is printed at the beginning of the Cold War chapter, just after the chapter about the World War II. The books emphasize the situation of Europe at the end of the war, showing ruins (economic, physical, and moral destructions). In 1983 the book published by Nathan⁹ depicted Europe as ‘a field of ruins’, not only material, but also ‘moral and political ruin’.

In the French books the photograph of the plane is more a symbol of the decline of Europe after the Second World War rather than the symbol of Cold War. This picture is also the symbol of the American superpower. If French textbooks admire the technological prowess, they also highlight the enrichment of the United States during the war and suggest that the rescue of Berlin was perhaps not entirely disinterested: As some textbooks said: ‘the war was not a disaster for everybody’.¹⁰

The picture of the plane expresses the ambivalence of how the United States is represented in the French

textbooks. They recognise the importance of U.S. aid, but nevertheless they suggest that the result is an increasing control of Europe by the United States, and bears an implicit nostalgia for European power. This leads to the third meaning of the picture, the ideological dimension of the East-West conflict. The high frequency of the picture coincides with the generalization of the concept of totalitarianism in the French textbooks.

Conclusion

The comparative approach offers a particularly rich prospect for the study of textbooks. First, it opens an interesting field of research regarding the cultural dimension of these books. In a European perspective, it can also lead to promising studies on history and memory in the different countries. Is the airlift plane a 'lieu de mémoire'? As we can see, although the picture is obviously shared by Europeans and Americans, it does not tell exactly the same story for everybody. The picture of the plane is also what I have called an 'image-type' of the Cold War¹¹. The growing uniformity of Euro-pean and American textbooks can be seen as positive, as it leads to a growing sense of a shared history. Nevertheless it may reveal a problem, which is the second dimension of this study. For more than sixty years, French textbooks presented the same picture to illustrate the same event. These pictures carry stereotypes, sometimes stereotyped knowledge, sometime cultural stereotypes. In France, this can be reinforced with the increasing use of narrative in

teaching history (as for example in the recent curriculum), in my opinion, at the expense of a critical and conceptual view of history. A future comparative analysis should study if these stereotypes are also shared.

Notes

¹ Gauthier, A. (dir.) (1991), *Histoire Terminales*, Paris: Bréal, 88. (86 dans l'éd. de 92, 90 en 1995).

² Raymond, A. (1997), *Les articles du Figaro*, Paris: Ed. de Fallois. T3, *La coexistence pacifique*, 550.

³ The French books come from the collection of CEDRHE, Centre d'Études de Documentation et de Recherche en Histoire de l'Éducation de l'IUFM de l'Académie de Montpellier - Université Montpellier 2. The German and American books were found at the Georg Eckert Institute in Braunschweig (Germany).

⁴ It can be seen on the New York Times website: <http://bintphotobooks.blogspot.com/2008/06/tempelhof-airport-berlin-airlift-of.html>.

⁵ Thanks to Ines Rülling, from the Georg-Eckert-Institute, and to Gilles Moutot, from the IUFM of Montpellier, for kindly helping me with the translation.

⁶ Brückner, D. & Focke, H. (2007), *Das waren Zeiten 2. Deutschland und die Welt nach 1871*, Bamberg: C.C. Buchner, 219.

⁷ This image seems to be deeply rooted in the memory of Germans from the former RFA. As I told them about my topic, people at the Georg Eckert Institute came

spontaneously to tell me the story, or to evoke the memory of their textbooks.

⁸ *A World History and Cultures* (1966). The Story of Man's Achievements. Laidlaw Brothers, 600.

⁹ Marseille, J. (dir) (1989), *Histoire terminales*, Nathan, 16-17.

¹⁰ Girard, L. (dir) (1977), *Le monde contemporain, histoire et civilisations*, 286.

¹¹ Morand, B. (2008) 'La guerre froide dans les manuels scolaires français des années soixante à nos jours: une recomposition douloureuse de l'image de l'Europe et du monde', *Revue Tréma* 2008 (29), 49-62.

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