

CHALLENGES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING HISTORY: THE CASES OF THAILAND AND NEW ZEALAND

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Abstract

History, in many countries around the world, tends to be undermined (de Oliveira, 2008; Vickers, 2016). It is essential to learn about controversial historical issues in order to participate constructively as citizens in a democratic society (Sheehan, 2017). This is a trigger to the quest of powerful knowledge. After reviewing literature concerning curriculum issues nationally and internationally, this article attempts to discuss the challenges of teaching and learning history in Thailand and New Zealand regarding an educational curriculum setting. The article begins with a historical background of the two countries, their curriculums, purposes and how history teaching and learning are conveyed in the two countries. Then, the discussion proposes three arguments. Firstly, the state's strictly prescribed curriculum of Thailand challenges teachers' autonomy to teach well-rounded history critically and effectively. Secondly, a high-autonomy curriculum of New Zealand leaves teachers with facing challenges of teaching history and struggling on their own. Lastly, controversial historical events matter in developing young people to constructively participate in a democratic society that is aiming to build social cohesion.

Keywords: challenge, teaching and learning, history, knowledge, curriculum issues

1. INTRODUCTION

Whilst modern curriculum is highly contested and must adapt to the globalization, there are a number of scholars who are curious and debate about what 'curriculum' in the 21st century regarding history education should be like. What content and knowledge young people should learn? How does history matter in this 21st century? And what challenges teachers and students face in gaining this knowledge of society?

Published in 2012, *History Matters: Teaching and learning history in New Zealand secondary schools in the 21st century*, by NZCER Press offers readers rich and comprehensive historical insights

coming from the classroom and reflects the dynamics of teaching and learning history in New Zealand. In the foreword, Christine Counsell from University of Cambridge stated in one important sentence "The effort to reduce school history to one story can only fail". The statement is relevant to NZC 2017¹ where Sheehan (2017) addresses that historical knowledge has a low priority and that specific content is not mandatory to that which is chosen by the teachers or the local community. Such content is, for instance, New Zealand Wars and colonisation, perceived as a controversial history. Whereas, a strictly prescribed curriculum of Thailand, history curriculum emphasizes inclusively on national history which is rather from a single narrative of nationalist perspective aiming to build

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social cohesion. Moreover, Thailand's education authority avoids adding thorough historical controversial issues and asking critical questions to engage with students such as the Siam Revolution 1932, Thai popular uprising 1973 or Thammasat University Massacre 1976 etc. Essentially, knowledge of Thailand in Thailand itself is a knowledge of one's own country, not of others. Such knowledge is developed and generated under the influential national politics and economic situation. It is generated by authoritarianism or the powerful military-royalist regimes that held authority during the modernization era, or by the bureaucratic scholars who worked at the university while serving the state, etc. (Harrison, 2014).

There are complications within the curriculum's construction which are socially and politically significant in both countries. The objective of this paper is to illustrate a background overview history of the two countries and explore the challenges that affect teaching and learning history in Thailand and New Zealand in terms of developing young people to actively participate in a democratic society. This research paper implies benefits that educators, nationally and internationally, can gain great insights with regard to challenges of teaching and learning history within the two curriculums.

It is apparent that there are challenges in history teaching and learning within different curriculum settings. In Thailand, the state's strictly prescribed curriculum challenges teachers' autonomy to teach national history critically and effectively. On the other hand, New Zealand, with a high-autonomy curriculum, leaves teachers facing challenges of teaching controversial history on their own. Regardless of the nature of curriculums, controversial histories are significant in developing

young people to constructively participate in democratic societies, especially in working to enhance socio-cultural reconciliation.

2. BACKGROUND

The controversies of two histories

Thai history can be traced back to the ancient civilisation around 700 CE. Regarding Thai history curriculum, young Thais are required to learn Thai history from the Sukhothai period, around 1238 CE, until modern era (Ministry of Education, 2008). According to Winichakul (2011), there are several issues that become essential premises that shape the entire knowledge of Thai history. One should learn and agree with these premises as if they were prerequisite for understanding Thai history. Therefore, a challenge to these premises is very sensitive and can be controversial. Controversial problems that are theoretically and politically complicated, such as the studies of the 1932 revolution when absolute monarchy came to an end and was substituted by constitutional monarchy, the subsequent power struggle between revolutionaries and royalists until 1950 and history of Sukhothai. These are issues that have become Thai history's 'doctrines' and have generated more understanding that reaffirms the ideology and creates a solid basis for a political and social institution.

One fundamental fact of Thai history is the understanding that Siam² has never been colonized. It is also a fact that most Thais acknowledge and are always proud of although the colonial era has long since gone. Moreover, this particular fact has been essential to the production of the modern historiography of Siam for the past hundred years (Winichakul, 2011 p.22). This premise was powerful and led to a

¹ New Zealand Curriculum 2017

² Siam was a previous name of Thailand before 1939, between 1946 – 1948 and the country's name has remained as Thailand since 1949.

single narrative Thai history that is underpinned by the royal-nationalist ideology. Any circumstances enabled Siam to be recognized as an 'independent' state, most credits are attributed to monarchs of the modern era, especially King Chulalongkorn during the colonial period of Southeast Asia. Additionally, the conservatives have always been in charge of political power while the liberals have had little place in their own history. Although the revolutionaries had an amount of power after the revolution in 1932, it was just for a short time. These ideologies and myths survive through the strength of the state, the influence of strong social institutions, the danger of legal persecution, and Thai society's discord and disharmony issues.

It has become controversial when considering the colonialism and independence as Siam's colonial condition was never as simple as the conventional history suggests (Winichakul, 2011 p.24). Questions and revisionism have not been able to challenge this dominant historiography. However, Siam's colonial condition is not new to scholars of Thailand who are resided outside of the country (Anderson, 1978). Nonetheless, the wars between Ayutthaya of Siam and Burma from the 16th-18th centuries are well-known as a historical fact. The narrative focuses more on the Thai royal hero who rescued the country rather than the fact that Thai kingdom fell to the Burmese twice, in 1569 and 1767 (Harrison, 2014). The question is what factor then would allow Thais to claim to be 'the only country that has never been colonized in Southeast Asia'? Answers will be varied based on the different historical perspectives one holds.

Growing up within the system and as a Thai national, it is obvious that the country has long been cultivated with the ideology of royal-nationalism. The evidence is shown in the school history textbooks, movies and TV dramas emphasizing kings as nationalist heroes. The three pillars – the nation, the religion,

and the monarch, are to be protected and symbolize identity of the nation regardless of any circumstances. There is also a remarkable notice that some controversial issues are reduced, excluded and untouchable in the mainstream Thai historical content, especially in the school environment. For instance, critical controversies of the 1932 revolution, the mysterious death of King Ananda, and many political unrests during democratic period including 14 October 1973, 16 October 1976 and the series of coup d'états after the revolution until the last one in 2014. Additionally, the story of Jit Phumisak, a Thai radical historian, writer and communist revolutionary who wrote 'The Face of Thai feudalism', is left untold in the historical school textbooks.

It cannot be denied that in this 21st century with the distribution of technology and globalisation, not all young Thai people are attracted to this royal-nationalist ideology as much as in the past. The current political situations in 2019 are revealing. Although, history subject has low priority within the curriculum, nonetheless it is compulsory to learn and pass the exam for Thai students. Thus, it cannot be denied that the royal nationalist ideology has always been a foundation for historical knowledge within the Thai curriculum.

New Zealand or Aotearoa, the land of the long white cloud, is a country with a much shorter history compared to Thailand's. To the outside world, New Zealand seems to be one of the most peaceful nations with a remarkable cultural diversity. Internally, its history has seen a great deal of conflict. The Treaty of Waitangi, the country's founding document, has been considered controversial and debated about since 1840 (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2019). New Zealand Wars include a series of events that began in 1845 and continued until 1872 portraying conflicts between the indigenous Maori communities and the Crown (O' Mally & Kidman, 2018). Although this historical fact can be found in

many historical books or the NZ government website on the culture section, this particular content is not compulsory for all New Zealanders to learn and acknowledge in history class. It is little known about, especially outside the generations of those affected, and is not generally taught in schools across the country (O' Mally, 2016).

(O' Mally & Kidman, 2018) addresses the petition proposed to the government by Ōtorohanga College students in December 2015. The petition's key objectives are to demand a national day of remembrance of the New Zealand Wars and the subject to be included and taught in schools. The petition's organisers have three aims underlining the petition which are; *“raising awareness of the wars and its relation to local history”*, *“introducing local histories to New Zealand Curriculum for all New Zealanders”*, and *“commemorating those who lost their lives on New Zealand soil with a day of recognition”* (New Zealand Parliament, 2016). However, there were both supporters and opponents to the petition. While the supporters pointed out that the petition can bring reconciliation and healing to solve the tensions between Māori and Pākehā New Zealanders, the opponents interpreted that the petition could be rather deeply divisive. Those with objections were not convinced by this view of the past and saw them as tribal rebellions rather than wars. They are concerned that the history of New Zealand was being rewritten profoundly to support some groups with interests associated with the treaty and commemoration was unnecessary as Anzac Day and Waitangi Day were already appropriate. However, those who support the petition firmly pointed out the impact of the war on the development of the country as well as historical significance, especially teaching this particular history in schools would provide benefits rather than conflicts (O' Mally & Kidman, 2018; Sheehan, 2017).

Lamont (1998) once stated that

‘controversies in history are its glory, not its weakness.’ The conservative Thais and New Zealanders might not agree with this statement. For the Thai conservative perspective, controversy is not often seen positively in a Thai cultural setting because it is simply opposed to the Thai value of loving peace as well as the lyrics of the national anthem. Consequently, Thai people tend to avoid confrontation or an argument about controversial history instead of facing it. Corresponding to those conservative minded New Zealanders, who feel there may be a particular impact from history teaching, and who opposed the petition, controversial history is seen as a divisive feature. They preferred to avoid the controversial past and focus on the future. According to Sheehan (2017), opponents to the petition indicate a “wilful ignorance” (Zembylas, 2017) of the controversial features of colonisation.

3. FINDINGS

Teaching and learning history: from two different curriculums

There are some interesting similarities and differences between the two distinct curriculums. History, for Thailand and New Zealand, is not as prominent for both curriculums. In New Zealand, history is integrated into social studies for students from Year 1 to 10 and is an elective subject for secondary students, years 11-13 (Ministry of Education, 2007). Similarly, history was once consolidated with social studies in Thailand's Basic Education Curriculum 2001 (Ministry of Education, 2001). Lately, history has become a requirement as an autonomous subject in the Basic Education Curriculum 2008 that all students must learn for at least an hour per week. However, it still features as a subject under Social Studies, Religion and Culture Department (Ministry of Education, 2008). This can be perceived as a good shift towards history learning for young Thais, if

only that it involves more various perspectives of Thai national history.

New Zealand history curriculum adopts a topic-based approach which rarely incorporates New Zealand aspects and essentially excludes religion, rural history and the histories of non-western people and focuses largely on 16th-17th century England (Sheehan, 2010). The specific material was mandatory for Year 13 learners as early-modern England had a more extensive historiography than the history of New Zealand, thus reflecting the discipline truly (Sheehan, 2008). Typically, the program involves a small variety of unconnected chronological subjects that are limited in place and time. In 2007, history is eventually no longer an optional subject and has been integrated as one of senior social sciences learning areas which was not the case back in 1989. Moreover, teachers and schools have a high autonomy in designing history programmes that are significant to New Zealanders. Interestingly, this change has resulted in a polarized history teaching community. While the liberals enjoy opportunities to focus on student interests and contemporary history, the conservatives are afraid of the weakened intellectual credibility. None of these are not something new whatsoever (Sheehan, 2010).

Sheehan's (2017) findings reveal that significant events such as the colonial wars were not included in the school curriculum and there is no plan to advocate the wars in the NZ curriculum. These results imply an essential lack of a sympathetic view of Maori's colonization experience, which may well be prevailing in the broader community.

While New Zealand's history curriculum focuses elsewhere excepts its own, Thailand's, on the other hand, emphasizes on its own history with a single narrative, royal nationalist one. Regarding historical knowledge and content, Jatuporn (2016) argues that the Thai government exploits history education to embed selective myths and nationalist narrative as

well as teach selective history contents in all levels of basic education. The main sources of historical knowledge for kids are largely relied on school textbooks and movies which must be granted and screened by the government.

Unlike a non-prescribed characteristic of NZC, Thai history curriculum is highly prescribed with a period-based approach starting from ancient Thai, and classical Thai eras; Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, Thonburi and Rattanakosin eras until the democratic era which is more modern and more politically complicated. World history will be taught in year 9 of basic education and in year 11 for higher secondary education (Ministry of Education 2001; 2008). Students capability must meet with the History Standard as enacted in the curriculum. Besides the Standard SO 4.1 and 4.2, "understanding of significance of historical time and periods"; and "understanding of development of mankind from the past to present", Standard SO4.3 is "knowledge of historical development of Thailand as a nation and culture; Thai wisdom; cherishing, pride in and preservation of Thai-ness" is the last important one (Ministry of Education, 2008). This is obviously a testimony of nationalist characteristics of history curriculum presented. Not much research has been done to critically examine this characteristic of history curriculum and its effect. Hence, under a strictly prescribed feature of national curriculum, history curriculum has always been and still is reflected as an inherited tradition of 'Thai historiography' which has been constructed based on Thai values, experiences, traditions and worldviews produced by the ruling classes in Thai society (Jatuporn, 2016; Tawil and Harley, 2004). According to Saraya (1986), as cited in Winichakul (1995), views Thai history within the curriculum as 'mainstream' history, that contains 'centralist historical ideology'. This reflects to shorten the problem of historical studies. She describes:

“too much political history, an emphasis on great men, a non-dynamic past, a history without context or perspective or process which was narrow in methods and selection of evidence; a false periodization by capitals or regal years; a history of king, state and nation without the common people and their culture” (Saraya, 1986, as cited in Winichakul, 1995 p.111).

This is another claim of controversy in learning history that ignore the ‘local history’ which is a history of local society where common people who are ‘the masses’ are actors (Saraya, 1986). This means, teachers in Thailand are strictly controlled to teach only particular content and concepts which are not enough to provide knowledge-based understanding of critical issues. On the other hand, teachers in New Zealand are too independent to decide on whether to involve particular content and the state seems not to make any consideration.

The question of purpose regarding history knowledge, and curriculum can be extremely appealing. Sociocultural context is a significant factor one needs to take into account for evaluating the curriculum and teaching practices. Each educational system and curriculum often have different purposes regarding its social and cultural background.

According to the Basic Education Core Curriculum of Thailand 2008, goals set for students’ achievement in all respects – “morality and ethics, knowledge, physical and mental health, patriotism and awareness of responsibility and commitment as Thai citizens and the need to preserve all aspects of Thai culture and Thai wisdom etc.” Moreover, at the end of grade 12, according to the Department of Social Studies, Religion and Culture written in the Students’ Quality, Thai students are required to have “knowledge

about wisdom, pride in Thai-ness, history of the Thai nation; adhere to the way of life and democratic form of government under constitutional monarchy” (Ministry of Education, 2008). These reflect an implication as a great expectation for young Thais to achieve all at once within their basic education and a complete coverage of them is next to impossible

On the other hand, New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) aims to enable students to: “better understand, participate in and contribute to local, national and global communities; engage critically with social issues; and evaluate the sustainability of the alternative socioeconomic, political and environmental practices” (Ministry of Education, 2007). Within the curriculum, a social inquiry approach is highly supported enabling learners to ask questions, gather data, examine appropriate present problems, explore, analyze, reflect and assess the understandings they create and what reaction is needed. By developing these abilities, learners in New Zealand are learning how to address social issues critically (Mutch, Hunter, Milligan, Openshaw & Siteine, 2008).

4. DISCUSSIONS

The Challenges of teaching and learning histories: sensitivity and controversy (that matter?)

Zumwalt, K. (1995) elaborates some possible effects of national curriculum which include: producing a society which knowledge of one group will dominate, diminishing the local autonomy in creating an ‘*appropriate curriculum*’ and restricting their professional decision making. These are relevant to the cases of Thailand and New Zealand history curriculums. Also, risks exist within all curriculum models and the nature of curriculum development is inherently political (Sheehan, 2017).

For Thailand, history curriculum appears to be constructed and based on a

narrow point of view of the selective few. Therefore, students are not able to acquire a well-rounded historical understanding of Thailand's past critically and deliberately. The challenge in teaching and learning history in Thai curriculum context is not only about what to teach but also how teachers can independently and effectively teach students to think critically. Moreover, how to adopt an inquiry approach without being considered against the state's scheme that only focuses on the stability of the three pillars and unity of the nation, is considerably challenging. It is important to acknowledge the fact that there is no easy solution to this challenge. Thinking about changes or reforms without considering sociocultural and political dilemma is only naive.

Furthermore, the challenges of teaching and learning history within Thailand's educational setting can be viewed from two perspectives. The conservative educators, who might wish the curriculum to remain royal-nationalistic, foresee obstacles of the teaching and learning processes by the disruption of globalization and social media. Questioning myths and national narratives, for them, are perceived as disrespectful. It can polarize the society politically. It is challenging for those who favour history to remain royal-nationalist so that learning history does not only exist within the classroom anymore. For instance, Prachatai; an independent online web newspaper, has published several historical articles regarding controversial history like 6 October 1976 written by Nidhi Eowseewong and other journalists.³ There are a few independent writers from different publications who expose such questionable content. This kind of content is rarely exposed and discusses in the textbooks and classrooms but if anyone is curious enough to search, it's always there on an online platform. This particular

concern by the conservative authority resulted in granting history as a separated subject under the learning area of Social Studies, Religion and Culture (Ministry of Education, 2008) claiming that Thai students do not learn national history enough and assuring that all Thai students are required to learn and understand their own national history thoroughly. This reflects the concept of what Gramsci, a critical theorist, would call "hidden curriculum" that is not so hidden. It implies that the challenge of teaching and learning history is so that the powerful authority of the state can legitimately control what to teach and such content is applied to all schools under the national curriculum. Consequently, it resulted in hidden consequences both socially and politically.

The liberal educators, on the other hand, might be facing challenges of trying to engage students with these hidden controversial issues. The controversy is not in the amount of content but the unequal amount between the powerful and the powerless or disadvantaged. Because the history curriculum's objective mainly focuses on pride in Thai-ness, social cohesion and national unity, it can be difficult for history teachers to academically engage students with all different perspectives and open critical discussions in a social context or school environment that is not supportive. It is easier for most teachers to follow the prescribed curriculum and the provided textbooks considering the workload and responsibility teachers have to maintain.

Referring to the conditions and challenges of teaching and learning history in Thailand, it is relevant to include the concept of knowledge and power, according to Young (1971) and Apple (2004) as cited in Deng (2015) that schooling is predominantly a reproductive system for social and economic inequality in which the curriculum, 'the selection of

³ See <https://prachatai.com/english/category/6-october-1976>

knowledge’ , reflects the interests and ideologies of those in authority. This has an implication to the royal nationalist narrative of history teaching that has been in place since the beginning of Thai education until the present time.

For New Zealand, a high-autonomy curriculum of New Zealand is also problematic considering history education. Sheehan (2017) addresses an issue of New Zealand’s high-autonomy national curriculum that leaves the teachers alone to make the decision whether or not to engage their students with controversial issues about the past. Sheehan exposes an insight in his study into the challenges that teachers face in a high-autonomy curriculum setting. Although New Zealand implements a high-autonomy curriculum environment which allows teachers to choose whether to engage their students with difficult questions about history, teachers are still in an awkward perplexity because if the school communities are not supportive, it is unlikely the teachers will do so. The petition presented to the Parliament in December 2015 is one of the embodiments.

New Zealand’s social studies and history educators were criticized for avoiding or simplifying controversial topics (Epstien, 2009; Levstik, 2000). One of the reasons a teacher abstained from teaching the Treaty of Waitangi is due to fear. She’s afraid that it is too controversial and could solidify students’ ignorance and overtly racist views. The challenge of teaching history in New Zealand is placed on teachers to deal with it as independent curriculum makers. The state does not seem to take this challenge on their own. The reason behind teachers distancing themselves from historical controversial issues is rather complex. However, one reason that can be considered is because of their ‘legitimate fear’ of unleashing an emotional reaction that will only harden current positions of students (Harcourt, 2015). In fact, it has been argued by Kitson and McCully (2005) that engaging students

with controversial issues can produce exactly this effect.

Although a culturally responsive and place-conscious history curriculum, according to Harcourt (2015), seems to be a decent initiative solution, but it is not an easy task to enact such curriculum. There are many factors to be required such as history education research and familiarity with the general features of culturally responsive pedagogy. Harcourt address an important requirement of an “agentic positioning”, a dispositional shift firmly in the hands of teachers. Additionally, when adopting a place-based education, teachers still face challenges considering the nature and purpose of their historical programs and how history teaching can contribute to the "twin instructional objective of rehabilitation and decolonisation”.

The controversial histories matter

There is a possibility that ignorance can be presented among society if there is no controversial or difficult questions and topics for young children to learn and understand within an educational historical context. Ignorance, Zembylas (2017) addresses, is a social, political and historical practice rather than a mere absence of knowledge.

Zembylas’s (2017) ‘wilful ignorance’ supports Sheehan’s (2017) argument on the controversial historical issues that have not been mandatory history in New Zealand’s curriculum and Jatuporn’s (2016) hidden controversial history excluded in Thailand’s curriculum. Zembylas (2017) argues that discursive instruction that maintain the other’s vulnerability allow teachers and students to ignore those aspects of history that are uncomfortable, inconvenient and disadvantageous for their own community regarding the context of controversial histories. Additionally, he addresses that the denial of the vulnerability of others – in the name of race / racism, nationalism – invokes specific emotional regimes that

reproduce the ignorance of vulnerability that underlies controversial histories. This concept is relevant to the case of New Zealand Wars, where the 'vulnerable' ones are being disregarded in the history curriculum.

Enright (2012) addresses that discussion, debates, defending contested explanation and analyses give reasons for some of the finest moment and offer the most memorable time of teaching that often appears in discussion with students. According to Lamont (1998), historians make history, and we should look to it for a contribution to debate instead of purely transmitting of certainties. Students, especially the privileged ones, must learn the controversial history to "enable counter assumptions that they are the 'natural' leaders of society, that their problems are universal, that the views of others represent a type of identity politics or a particular type of pleading" (Barton, 2012, p.133).

Lastly, it is crucial to learn about controversial historical issues in order to participate constructively as citizens in a democratic society (Sheehan, 2017). If contemporary democratic societies rely on citizens' capacity to engage in reasoned debates with those whose views vary from their own, it is certainly our task as teachers to develop this capacity in our learners (Barton & McCully, 2007).

Apparently, controversial historical points can show events in a better way than harming the enhancement of students' ability to think critically and take part in difficult discussions. These skills are essential for citizens of democratic societies. It cannot be denied that controversial history can produce controversies itself if not handled, planned and engaged with careful teaching strategies; especially in a country like Thailand where history itself is often complicated and related to deeply controversial historical issues and parties. If not handled wisely, engaging young people with these historical points can affect national stability and its values. Regarding

past evidence of those who have engaged with historical issues, it implies that deep-rooted issues lie in the shadow of history curriculum.

5. CONCLUSION

One of the different notions between Thailand and New Zealand regarding curriculums is the nature of a strong and strictly prescribed curriculum versus a high-autonomy of non-prescriptive curriculum. The curriculums with different focuses on purpose can produce different or similar outcomes and challenges. The strictly prescribed history curriculum of Thailand brings about challenges to the teachers, contesting their autonomy and ability to teach history critically and effectively. The high-autonomy of the non-prescriptive curriculum of New Zealand leaves teachers in fear and hesitation with the challenges of teaching controversial history in their classes. Barton and McCully (2007) and Sheehan (2017) reaffirm that controversial history matters in developing young people in a democratic society. Shemilt (2000) concludes that 'history education should capture the "big picture" through various kinds of narrative structure instead of focusing on individual events that seem disconnected'.

This study has an implication that history curriculum is crucial for socio-cultural and political perspectives. Although divergent national curriculum of the two countries are unlike, there can be similar challenges of teaching and learning history that the states, both Thailand and New Zealand, should take further steps to openly discuss with the public in order to enhance teaching and learning history. In addition, New Zealand can learn a lesson of what a strictly prescribed curriculum implies socially and politically while Thailand can model New Zealand in terms of a high autonomy teachers have for their professions. Curriculum making is a long and continuous process after all. I would like to refer warning, written by Shemilt

(2000), of dangers of having citizens unlearned by history as discipline:

“to subscribe to populist and mythic constructions of the past is to remain trapped in the codes and culture of the street gang, to invoke persuasive and partial histories that reinforce simple truths and even simpler hatreds”

The further studies that could be done, I suggest exploring on these questions: how teachers, both in Thailand and New Zealand deal with the challenges imposed by the states? Who should be responsible or make decisions whether to engage controversial histories in the curriculum? These would be worth exploring and make further contribution in history curriculum issues and development.

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