Multiperspectivity in lesson designs of history teachers: The role of schoolbook texts in the design of multiperspective history lessons

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ABSTRACT

Textbook narratives of a nation's past often present a limited frame of reference, which impedes the aim of teaching history from multiple perspectives. This study aims to explore the use of multiperspectivity in teachers' lesson designs for 10th grade students based upon a text that includes multiple perspectives (HP) (N=8) compared to a text that hardly includes multiperspectivity (LP) (N=10). The lesson designs were analyzed on multiperspectivity regarding aims, instruction, materials and learning activities, and also on actors, elements of scale, dimensions, historians interpretations and students' perspectives. We found that different dimensions (for example, political, economic) were more often incorporated in the lesson designs based upon text HP, but that students' perspectives were more often included in the designs based upon text LP. Only one fifth of the lesson designs reflected a high overall level of multiperspectivity. Nevertheless, text HP generated more multiperspectivity with respect to aims and instruction, dimensions, scale and historiography than text LP. Interviews with the teachers showed that the interpretation of the exam program – either a focus on learning historical reasoning or acquiring a chronological overview of knowledge – seemed decisive in the design of the lessons. This study calls for careful incorporating multiperspectivity in textbook by authors, and in their lessons by teachers who seek to do justice to multiple perspectives.

KEYWORDS

History education, History textbooks, Historical thinking, Multiple perspectives, Historical narratives

CITATION

Introduction

The ability to discern multiple perspectives in history is an important goal in secondary history education. However, history textbooks do not always include multiple perspectives. Since teachers rely on textbooks for their lessons, the question is how this influences teaching practices. This study aims to explore the role of presenting multiple perspectives in history textbooks on the use of multiperspectivity in teachers' lesson designs.

In many countries, textbooks are by far the most accessible sources of historical information for both students and teachers. The texts therein can be considered historical narratives that follow traditions in academic historiography (Foster, 2011; Sakki, 2014). History textbooks represent a narrative wherein specific historical actors, events, developments and perspectives are represented. Several researchers argue that the narratives about the nation in textbooks often represent a limited, nationalistic perspective (Sakki, 2014; Van der Vlies, 2017). Textbooks presenting a more closed narrative do not seem to be in line with the goals of history education that stimulate learning to reason about multiple perspectives. In the Netherlands – as in many other countries – the aims of history education include that secondary school students develop their historical thinking and reasoning abilities. Students are expected to understand the positionality of historical actors and the interpretative nature of periodization, historical explanations and narratives about the past. By doing so, students learn that a historical narrative is not a 'given' but a construct about the past (College van Examens, 2015). Put differently students not only have to acquire knowledge about historical narratives but also need to know that these narratives are constructed and written from a particular perspective. Making this complex and difficult issue of narrative and multiperspectivity transparent and comprehensible for students is a challenging task for teachers. There is a growing body of research on the teaching of historical thinking and reasoning, with a main focus on the role of tasks, explicit instruction of strategies or second order concepts, the use of historical sources and whole-class discussion (e.g. Fogo, Reisman, & Breakstone, 2019; Havekes, 2015; Huijgen, 2018; Stoel, 2017; Van Boxtel & Van Drie, 2018). However, not so much attention is paid to the narrative representations of the past and accompanying perspectives – for example in textbooks – that are used as resources for teaching historical thinking and reasoning. When history textbooks hardly contain multiple perspectives and present only one specific perspective, to what extent do teachers address multiple perspectives in their lessons? Scholars have stated that history teachers tend to rely heavily on the textbooks in their teaching (Foster, 2011; Lee, 2013; Paxton, 2002; Stoddard, 2010). We aimed to shed light on the role of the type of text (with multiple perspectives or not) in the subsequent lesson design of the teachers and their considerations when designing the lessons.

Theoretical framework

Multiperspectivity and history textbooks

One goal of history education is learning to identify different perspectives in all kinds of sources (such as, texts, or museum exhibitions) and historical accounts and to contextualize these perspectives about the past. Multiperspectivity implies the admission of perspectives of various historical actors, historians, or contemporaries and, as a consequence, the admission of possible alternative narratives – each with their own narrational voices and perspectives (Munslow, 2016). Lately, the Council of Europe (2018, p. 26) stipulated the importance of a multiperspective

approach and that national narratives are "responsive to sociocultural diversity rather than being mono-cultural". Stradling (2003) stressed the necessity to relate and compare different perspectives to enable a deeper understanding of historical relationships between nations, majorities and minorities in and outside national boundaries, as it can enhance historical thinking as well as democratic citizenship. Scholars have argued that multiple perspectives are needed to transform more 'closed' narratives about a nation's past into narratives that better express the interpretative character of history (Barton, 2012; Carretero, 2017).

Different forms of historical perspectivity can be discerned. Each historian constructs his or her own historical narrative by asking particular questions. This includes the selection of historical actors and their perspectives. These perspectives are shaped by social class, gender, age, ability, race, and ethnicity (Grever & Van Boxtel, 2014; Stradling 2003). Historians, and also history textbook authors, select particular sources or a scale (for example, local, national or global) and they order events and chronologies in some kind of plot (such as, progression and decline) (Lévesque, 2008, Zerubavel, 2003). They also choose to emphasize particular dimensions (e.g., political, economic, social or cultural) (Grever, 2020; Grever & van Boxtel, 2014; Stradling, 2003). These dimensions can be understood as forms of historiography wherein the choice of a particular form of history is of influence on the representation of agency, plotlines, and order of events (Grever, 2020). Multiperspectivity can be achieved, for example, when actors from different social groups are part of the narrative (e.g. workers and entrepreneurs), when more than one type of scale (e.g. local and national) and more than one historical dimension (e.g. in addition to the political dimension, the cultural dimension) is part of the narrative. Historiographic perspectives change over time due to developments in society and among historians as active participants in society. For example, the perspective on Columbus and the 'Discovery of America' has changed over time (Carretero, Lopez, González, & Rodríguez-Moneo, 2012; Grever & Adriaansen, 2019). Textbook authors and history teachers can also be seen as vocalizers of historiography (Parkes, 2009).

Although there is rich literature on history textbook research that analyzes the historical, comparative and pedagogic approaches in textbooks (Mittnik, 2018), little is known about how teachers use textbooks when designing lessons, particularly with respect to including different types of perspectives. It is in the classroom that different forms of perspectivity could be realized. However, this might be a problem when textbooks hardly include multiple perspectives, as was found in a previous study on the topic of the Dutch Revolt in two textbooks (Kropman, Van Boxtel, & Van Drie, 2020). This might be even more the case when history lessons are strongly based on the content presented in the textbook. A survey in the Netherlands showed that only five percent of the teachers in upper secondary history education did not use a textbook and only used their own materials (Van der Kaap, 2014).

If we take into consideration that the majority of history teachers use schoolbook texts, how do teachers teach multiperspectivity using these texts? There are various possibilities for teachers to include multiple perspectives in their teaching. For example, when multiple perspectives are already included in the textbook itself, teachers can elaborate upon these perspectives together with the students. When the text does not include much multiperspectivity, the teacher can provide students with source materials stemming from opposing perspectives of historical actors (Fogo, Reisman, & Breakstone, 2019; Reisman, 2012; Yeager & Doppen, 2002).

Gesttsdótir (2018) defined how historical thinking and reasoning can be taught by, for example, communicating objectives, demonstration, the supportive use of sources, explicit instruction on historical thinking strategies, and engaging students in individual or group tasks or whole-class discussions that require historical thinking and reasoning. Focusing on multiperspectivity, this would mean that understanding that there are multiple perspectives is part of the lesson objectives, that teachers discuss multiple perspectives, that they use sources to address multiple perspectives and that they engage students in assignments or whole class discussions in which different perspectives are explored. Stradling (2003) formulated as the most important requirement for teaching multiperspectivity, that students have ample opportunities to engage in

analyzing and comparing an assortment of diverse historical sources stemming from a wide range of origin. Furthermore, students should have the opportunity for in-depth studies of particular topics, even if the curriculum is focused on acquiring chronological overview knowledge. Last, teachers have to be aware that source-based history teaching goes beyond extracting information form sources and that one has to "tolerate discrepancies, contradictions, ambiguities, dissenting voices, half-truths and partial points of view, biases and preconceptions" (Stradling, 2003, p. 60). Seixas and Morton (2012) have suggested that teachers pay attention to the fact that different historical actors have different perspectives on events in which they are part of. Wansink, et.al. (2018) added that multiperspectivity can be achieved through including the interpretations of different historians. However, in observed lessons in the Netherlands and Iceland, multiperspectivity was one of the least observed elements of teaching historical thinking and reasoning (Gestsdóttir, Van Boxtel, & Van Drie, 2018).

How teachers design their lessons is – among other things – influenced by their views. Research showed that teachers' views play an important role in their teaching – as part of what is called Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) (Shulman, 1986). This concept brings together what teachers perceive as important content to teach and what classroom activities to use. Furthermore, it takes into account the teachers' knowledge about the curriculum, next to preconceptions and common areas of conceptual difficulty of students (Tuithof, 2017). How teachers use their personal PCK in their lesson designs in relation to a given narrative depends on their own epistemological assumptions concerning historical representations (Voet & De Wever, 2016; Wansink, Akkerman, & Wubbels, 2016). In addition, several researchers suggested that teachers who are well versed in historiography are more inclined to organize their teaching around the constructedness of history (Parkes, 2009; Yilmaz, 2008). Despite these findings, other research shows that there are discrepancies between history teachers' views and actual teaching (VanSledright & Limón, 2006; Voet & De Wever, 2016; Wansink et al. 2016). This raises the question, in what way is teaching multiperspectivity shaped by teachers' beliefs?

Research questions

This study aims to shed light on the role of the type of text (with multiple perspectives or not) in the lesson designs of teachers and their considerations for their design. The first research question is: to what extent do teachers include multiple perspectives in their lesson designs based upon a text that includes multiple perspectives compared to a text that hardly includes multiperspectivity? Our second question is: what are considerations of teachers for the lessons they designed?

Method

Eighteen history teachers were asked to individually design a lesson for upper secondary education based upon a provided text about the Dutch Revolt. Half of the group received a text with high multiperspectivity, the other half received a text with low multiperspectivity. The texts were randomly assigned. Subsequently, a semi-structured interview about their lesson design and their considerations was conducted.

Dutch context and participants

We recruited our participants using a professional media network (LinkedIn™). This resulted in the contributions of eighteen teachers (12 male and 6 female). The participants had no prior information of the research project and the goals of this study. All gave active consent for participating. We asked participating teachers to design a lesson for the upper levels of Higher General Secondary Education [HAVO, Hoger Algemeen Voortgezet Onderwijs], the intermediate track that prepares students for universities of applied sciences. In Dutch upper secondary

education, it is common practice that students read a paragraph in the textbook in preparation for the lesson, that the teacher elaborates upon the content of the paragraph in a presentation or whole-class discussion, and that students engage in one or more assignments in which they further investigate the topics in the text or apply the key concepts. The participants indicated that they used the following textbooks in their classroom: the textbook *Geschiedeniswerkplaats* [History Workshop] was used by 44% of the participants, followed by *Feniks* (28%) and *MeMo. Geschiedenis voor de Bovenbouw HAVO* [MeMO. History for upper level HAVO] (17%). In earlier research we found that the textbooks *MeMo* and *Geschiedenis Werklaats* are characterized by a low level of multiperspectivity (Kropman, Van Boxtel, & Van Drie, 2020).

The participants held jobs at schools in all parts of the Netherlands. Fifteen of them were fully qualified history teachers with an MA in teaching history and three had a BA in teaching history. None had special expertise on the topic of the Dutch Revolt. The teachers did not recently follow a post-graduate course on teaching history or history didactics. The teachers were not member of a professional learning community. Their general teaching experience in upper-level secondary education varied from less than a year to more than 15 years (M = 3.4, SD = 3.2). Teachers at the beginning of their careers were relatively overrepresented in our sample. One teacher came from a Turkish family background, and the others came from Dutch family backgrounds. Table 1 provides an overview of the background information of the participants.

Table 1. General background information about the participants, N = 18

Condition*	Name**	Interview, minutes	MA/BA	Graduation year	Specialization, century	Years of teaching	Experience upper levels, years	Location/ part of NL
HP	Caspar	64	MA	2011	19th/20th	8	7	regio / N
HP	Evert	69	MA	2012	20th	6	5	urban-regio /W
HP	Hugo	70	MA	2015	20th	1	none	urban /N
HP	Jaap	67	MA	2010	20th	12	10	regio /M
HP	Jelle	66	MA	2015	20th	3	2	regio /W
HP	Maher	65	BA	2018	none	7	5	urban /W
HP	Rafael	101	BA	2015	none	3	2	regio /W
HP	Simon	82	MA	2015	20th	3	3	urban /N
LP	Anouk	89	MA	2015	20th	4	none	regio /W
LP	Alma	90	MA	2008	19th	9	7	urban /S
LP	Celine	59	MA	2011	20th	23	7	regio /E
LP	Els	73	MA	2016	19th	2	2	urban /W
LP	Hans	50	MA	2016	20th	1	1	urban /S
LP	Hanne	86	MA	2018	20th	1	none	regio /M
LP	Linda	95	MA	2008	17th	10	8	regio /NW
LP	Nout	47	BA	2017	none	2	none	urban /S
LP	Roel	77	MA	2016	19th & 20th	2	1	regio /S
LP	Sam	80	BA	2016	20th	1	1	none /na

* HP: text with high multiperspectivity; LP: text with low multiperspectivity; **pseudonym

Materials and data collection

The history school textbook

Participants received either a text with low multiperspectivity or a text with high multiperspectivity that was especially written for students in the upper levels of HAVO (HAVO, 10th grade, ages 15 to 16). HAVO stands for the intermediate track preparing students for applied sciences universities.

We choose the Dutch Revolt as topic since it is a defining episode in the dominant narrative of Dutch history (Pollmann, 2009). This topic is part of the compulsory program in the upper levels of HAVO and is defined as 'the conflict in the Low Countries that resulted in the founding of a Dutch state' and is considered as especially salient to teaching multiperspectivity (Wansink et al., 2017).

Both texts were especially written for this research by the first author, who has over fifteen years of experience in writing history textbooks. (See Appendix A for the translated texts). The accessibility of the texts was inspired by the guidelines for teachers and syllabus designers who wish to establish text difficulty in selected texts for their students (Fulcher, 1997). The length of the texts was comparable (in Dutch 1306 words vs 1325 words). To contribute to the equivalency and ecological validity of the text, two focus groups – one of expert teachers and the other of novice teachers – were asked to comment on the content and level of the texts. Some minor revisions were necessary, such as the incorporation of headers for each section. Next, the readability was confirmed by an independent expert on Dutch language in education. Both texts were checked on-line to ensure that their technical difficulty and readability conformed to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (Stichting Accessibility, 2019 June 19). Both texts were classified as level B2/C1. B2 indicates that the reader can understand the main ideas of a complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in their field of specialization, and C1 indicates that the student can understand a wide range of demanding, longer clauses and can recognize implicit meaning. The readability of the texts was additionally confirmed by running on-line the Flesch Reading Ease Level test and the Flesch Kincaid test on both translated texts (Flesh, 2019, retrieved 5th of June 2019). The multiple perspectivity text scored 57.4 in the Flesch Reading Ease Level test and 9.58 in the Flesch Kincaid test. scored 57.4. The low perspectivity text scored 54.08 in the Flesch Reading Ease Level test and 10.65 in the Flesch Kincaid test. The tests indicated that the texts were suitable for 15/17 year olds (9th and 10th graders) (Flesch, 1948; Kincaid, Fishburne, Rogers, & Chissom, 1975) which corresponds with the age group in upper levels HAVO.

The first text had high multiperspectivity (referred to as text HP) and included a larger variety of perspectives of historical actors, different scales, different dimensions and more explicitly referred to the perspectives of historians (historiography). At the level of historical actors, next to the internationally operating high-nobles, the roles of lower, non-noble women, soldiers on both sides of the conflict, citizens and peasants were included. The role of Catrijn van Leemput – a prominent female citizen of Utrecht – was described in the text. Economic and social dimensions were included. Political developments were more embedded in an international context. Historiographical perspectives were explicitly expressed by three historians to show that textbooks are part of the historiographical debate. For example, historian Parker (1977) emphasized the international dimensions of the conflict, whereas Van Nierop (1999) focused on chaotic regional and local dimensions and Els Kloek (2013) brought women's voice into the narrative framework.

The second text had low multiperspectivity (text LP) and presented fewer perspectives. It described the conflict from the perspective of William of Orange and his successors. The events followed the traditional narrative that is also present in existing Dutch school history texts (Kropman, Van Boxtel, & Van Drie, 2020). The conflict was presented as the result of the religiously inspired political and military deeds of individuals or collectives such as the Calvinists confined to the boundaries of the Low Countries. Margareth of Parm was presented as the

Governess of the Netherlands at that time. Social and economic dimensions were not incorporated in the text. No comparison with or references to international developments were made. The perspectives of historians and/or historiography were left out completely.

Designing lessons

Participants were asked to design one or two lessons for grade 10 students (aged 15 -16) of the upper track of secondary education HAVO. The task description indicated that students had followed lessons about the origins of the Reformation and the rise of the ideas of Luther and Calvin. No instructions were provided on how to use the text in their lesson design. Participants were asked to answer eleven questions, that guided them through the design process (Table 2). These were derived from the PCK model of history teachers (Tuithof, 2017) Some participants added additional materials, as lessons plans (3x), worksheets (3x), or digital presentations (2x), which were included in the analysis. The participants handed in their lesson designs by e-mail.

Table 2. Questions guiding the design process

1. What do you want students to learn about this topic?
2. Why is this important to them?
3. Describe your instruction.
4. What kind of difficulties do you expect your students to encounter?
5. What is your knowledge about your students that influences your approach teaching this topic?
6. Are there other factors that affect your approach to teaching this topic?
7. What kind of lesson activities would you use?
8. How much time do you expect to need to execute these activities?
9. Describe two or three key assignments.
10. What kind of materials would you use along with the text?
11. How do you assess the understanding of the topic by your students?

Interviews

After receiving the lesson designs, the first author interviewed the participating teachers face to face. In these semi-structured interviews, they were asked to clarify the objectives, teaching and learning activities, materials and assessments in their lesson designs; how their lesson designs aligned with students' understanding; how they would prepare themselves; and what kind of materials they recently studied about the topic of the Dutch Revolt. Furthermore, they were encouraged to share more about the educational context (e.g., the features of the class and/or curriculum) they had in mind when designing their lessons. At the end of the interview, we confronted each participant with the other text, which they had not seen before and asked to read through it and to reflect on whether they preferred the latter text or the one they had used for their lessons.

Analysis of lesson designs

The lesson designs were coded in a twofold manner. First, we binary coded all lesson designs on whether multiperspectivity occurred in different parts of the lessons: Aims, Instruction, Additional materials and Learning activities (See Table 3).

Table 3. Coding scheme for multiperspectivity related to Aims, Instruction,
Additional materials and Learning activities

Category	Definition	Example
Aims	Includes aims related to multiple perspectives	Students realize that there are different points of view about the origins of the Dutch state in the 16th century.
Instruction	Explicit instructions on the presence of multiple perspectives	The teacher discusses multiple perspectives following up a question like "What if you were writing a Spanish textbook?"
Additional Materials	Materials presenting alternative perspectives	Providing sources materials representing opposing perspectives e.g. Ban edict of Philip and the Apology of William of orange
Learning activities	Engaging students in individual, group tasks or whole-class discussions that explicitly require the exploration of multiple perspectives	Discuss in duos a painting illustrating the antagonistic Catholic and Protestant points of view.

Table 4. Coding scheme for multiperspectivity of Agency, Scales, Dimensions,
Historiography (historians' perspectives) and Students' perspectives

Category	Definition	Example
Agents	Addressing the perspectives of opposing agents.	The perspectives of protestant William of Orange opposed to catholic Philip II.
Geographical scale	Incorporating more than one scale of events or developments (local, regional, international).	"I pay also attention to the geography of *Heiligerlee* that is nearby our school." [The Battle of Heiligerlee (1568) is the traditional starting point of the Eighty Years' War]
Dimensions	Addressing more than one dimension.	How to categorize the causes of the Dutch Revolt/Eighty Years' War: centralization (politics), tax burden (economic) and persecution of heretics (religious)?
Historiography	Alternative narratives or the work of specific historians are explicitly referred	Offering articles present day interpretations of such as *Filips II (1527-1598) Katholieke technocrat*, an article based on the works of Geoff Parker.
Students' perspectives	Students are explicitly asked to formulate their own perspective on the Dutch revolt.	Debate with each other the claim: "The Dutch can be justifiably proud of their achievements against the Spaniards".

We coded how the Aims and Instruction contributed to enhancing the learning of multiperspectivity if aspects of perspectivity were explicitly mentioned in the participants' formulation of the lesson aims and clarified with proper examples. For example, that students realize what 'our' Dutch perspective is and what the Spanish perspective is by asking the students what they would do in case of writing a Spanish textbook. Added materials were scored as contributing to multiperspectivity if these materials presented another perspective than the perspective(s) provided in the text. The Learning activities were analyzed as contributing to multiperspectivity if the Learning activity explicitly addressed multiple perspectives. For example, a task wherein students were asked to compare perspectives. Second, we coded which type of perspectives appeared in the lesson designs: the perspectives of Agents, Scales, Dimensions, Historiography (historians' perspectives) and Students' perspectives (Table 4).

Actors were coded as contributing to multiperspectivity if the perspective of more than one Actor was incorporated in the lesson design when different agents were mentioned such as William of Orange and/or Philip II. We scrutinized the lesson designs on how the participants incorporated geographical scale and dimensions as constituting elements of a narrative. This includes events that illustrated a specific dimension such as a tax levy that highlighted the social-economic dimension besides the other dimensions mentioned. When a another scale was explicitly addressed, for example, local history next to the Netherlands as a geographical space, we coded multiperspectivity for Scale. Historiographic elements were coded as contributing to multiple perspectives when they explicitly referred to alternative narratives to the text provided or to the work of specific historians. Lastly, Student perspectives were coded when students were explicitly asked to formulate their own perspective on the Dutch revolt.

To improve reliability, all lesson designs were coded by the first author and a researcher with expertise in teaching history. Codes were compared and discussed until an agreement was reached. Most of the discussion was about historiography and it was decided that the proposed use of another textbook was considered a form of multiperspectivity regarding historiography.

A lesson design was labelled high on multiperspectivity if the lesson design met the following three requirements:

a. In their description of the aims and instruction of the lesson, the teacher explicitly mentioned looking at other or multiple perspectives. For example, "My goal is to make students understand that various historical figures can have a different perspective on the events of which they are part.";

b. In the designed lesson, the teacher paid attention to different dimensions or scale levels. For example, not only political developments are addressed in the lesson design but also religious and/or socioeconomic events and developments. For elements of scale a comparison could be made between countries such as "At the international level, I look in my classes at the relations between countries. For example, the centralization policy of Philip II compared to the response that takes place in the Netherlands."

c. In the designed lesson, the teacher paid attention to different interpretations of historians or brings in students' perspectives. For example, "after analyzing in depth historical cartoons (first in class and then in groups), the students will create a cartoon themselves." Or, the teacher will show a film from a Spanish cinematographer that explicitly envisions the Spanish perspective. We considered multiperspectivity on the level of historiography and student perspectives to be less obvious forms of multiperspectivity.

A lesson design was labelled as low on multiperspectivity if multiple perspectives were not explicitly mentioned in the description of the Aims and Instruction or if the teacher did not pay attention to one of the following forms of multiperspectivity in the designed lessons: dimensions, scale, historiography, or students' perspectives. All lesson designs – with the exception of one, contained the perspectives of multiple actors. Therefore, we restricted our evaluation to the three forms of multiperspectivity mentioned above.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim. A member check was carried out by the participants. They only offered minor corrections on date and spelling of their names. The interviews were summarized per question to analyze the differences and similarities between the participants and to relate their answers to their lesson designs. Furthermore, we categorized the considerations about the curriculum, the examination program and knowledge of preconceptions and common areas of difficulty for their students (Tuithof, 2017).

Findings

First, we present the results of the analysis of the lesson designs. Based upon this analysis, we identified four ways in which the lesson designs addressed multiple perspectives. Next, we discuss considerations of the participants related to their lesson designs.

Perspectives in lesson designs

Our first research question is about the extent to which teachers include forms of perspectivity in their lessons and whether these are different for one of the two texts. In both groups teachers included multiperspectivity on the level of historical agents, dimensions, scale, historiography, and students' perspectives. Most teachers except one (94.4 %) included multiperspectivity on the level of historical agents. 50% of the teachers (text HP 62.5%, text LP 40%) incorporated elements of scale. Perspectives related to different dimensions were more often incorporated in the lesson designs based upon text HP (75%) compared to text LP (40%). The historiographical perspective was included in 37.5% of the lesson designs of text HP users, compared to 10% of the design based upon text LP. Students' perspectives, however, were more present in the designs based upon text LP (30%), compared to 12.5% of the designs of text HP. Only four teachers included activities in which students were asked to verbalize their perspective.

Overall, the majority of the lesson designs included several perspectives in different parts of their lessons (see Table 5). All teachers used the text to inform the students about the Dutch Revolt. When comparing the lesson designs of teachers using text HP and text LP, we found that lesson designs based on text HP included more often multiple perspectives in Aims and Instructions (87.5% and 62.5% respectively) compared to designs based on text LP (60% and 40% respectively).

In sum, 22.2 % of all lesson designs met the criteria for high multiperspectivity and 77.8 % was labelled as low on multiperspectivity, as they did not include historiographical and/or student perspectives. Three lesson designs based upon text HP were labelled as high on multiperspectivity and one lesson design based on text LP.

Four variants of lesson designs

We can discern four variants in the form and degree of multiperspectivity. Variant A represents a lesson design with high multiperspectivity and is based upon text HP, variant B represents a lesson design with high multiperspectivity and is based upon text LP, variant C represents a lesson design with low multiperspectivity based upon text HP, and variant D represents a lesson design with low multiperspectivity and the text LP is used. We will illustrate each variant with an example. It thus appeared that both texts prompted lesson designs that had high and low multiperspectivity.

Table 5. The occurrence of multiple perspectives in parts of lesson designs and overall level of multiperspectivity.

Text*	Name**	Aims	Instruction	Materials	Learning activities	Perspectives					Level multipersp.
						Actors	Dimension	Scale	Historiography	Students' perspectives	
HP	Caspar	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		high
HP	Evert					x					low
HP	Hugo	x		x***	x	x	x	x			low
HP	Jaap	x	x			x	x		x		high
HP	Jelle	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	high
HP	Maher	x				x	x	x			low
HP	Rafael	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			low
HP	Simon	x	x			x					low
Subtotal % HP:		87.5	62.5	50.0	50.0	100	75	62.5	37.5	12.5	
LP	Anouk							x			low
LP	Alma			x	x	x	x	x			low
LP	Celine	x				x					low
LP	Els	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	high
LP	Hans				x	x					low
LP	Hanne	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			low
LP	Linda		x	x	x	x	x				low
LP	Nout	x				x					low
LP	Roel	x	x	x	x	x				x	low
LP	Sam	x		x	x	x				x	low
Subtotal % LP:		60	40	60	70	90	40	40	10	30	
Total %		72.2	50.0	55.5	61.1	94.4	55.5	50.0	22.2	22.2	

* HP: text with high multiperspectivity, and LP: text with low multiperspectivity. ‡pseudonym ***added after interview

Variant A: Text HP – Lesson designs with high multiperspectivity

As an example of this design, we describe the lessons designed by Jelle. In the Aims for the lessons, Jelle included 'What is "our" Dutch perspective and the Spanish perspective on the conflict?' He also mentioned as themes the leadership of Filip II and women's history.

His instruction and the accompanying learning activities focused on these three topics. Jelle suggested comparing modern Spanish school history textbooks with Dutch textbooks to highlight the existence of contrasting perspectives on the conflict. As a follow-up, he proposed a debate between two opposing parties in defending/attacking the statement 'Dutch people are rightfully proud of their performance against the Spaniards' to enhance the learning of perspectivity and positionality of the main actors. Another activity was an enquiry task about the dominance of men in history textbooks, with reference to Catrijn van Leemput, one of the local actors in the text. He suggested that students researched other 'forgotten' women in history and to present their results in the classroom.

Additional materials were provided for each theme, emphasizing a particular perspective. The different perspectives of actors were part of his lesson design where he brought Catrijn van Leemput to the forefront next to Filip II and William of Orange. Furthermore, he incorporated a different scale by paying attention to the whole empire of Filip II. Not only the political-military dimension was addressed, but also religious and gender specific dimensions. Students' perspectives were challenged by a task to change perspective as he formulated: 'What if you were writing a Spanish textbook.'

Typically, in this lesson design variant – using text HP – was that multiperspectivity is explicitly part of the Aims, Instruction, Student activities and Materials. Multiple perspectives of Agents are addressed and different dimensions, scales, historiography or students' perspectives are incorporated.

VariantB: Text LP – Lesson designs with high multiperspectivity

An example of this variant is the lesson designed by Els. Els argued that there are different historiographical views on the origins of the 'Dutch state'. She combined lecturing with open enquiry tasks in groups. With respect to Aims, she explicitly formulated in her introductory task that students should get acquainted with the concept of 'perspective'. Els spurred her students to explore the attitudes of the main characters regarding a series of given events wherein she emphasized the importance of the Dutch Revolt as the first episode in the development of an independent state/nation. Afterwards, the perspectives of the main actors involved in the same historical events were explicitly discussed.

The materials added were (fragments of) different kinds of sources, representing all kinds of perspectives and dimensions. However, her choice of materials was not only to emphasize the perspective given in the source material but was also intended to provide more factual information. She also offered the students historiographical materials (internet articles of historians) to clarify the perspectives of the main agents.

As learning activities, students were asked to discuss in duos a painting illustrating the antagonistic Catholic and Protestant points of view, followed by group work where the class was divided in two opposing groups representing the positions of Filip and William. Each group had to reconstruct how their main character would have acted given a prescribed series of events. Each member of the group had to do some research into the motives and responses of their assigned person, after which they had to reach conclusions as a group. Then, they had to defend their positions in a whole-class discussion.

In this variant of lesson design – using text LP – a wide variety of forms of multiperspectivity are addressed with respect to Aims, Instruction, Actor, Scale, Dimensions, Historiography and Students' perspectives.

Variant C: Text HP – Lesson designs with low multiperspectivity

An example of this variant is the lesson design of Simon. In the Aims, he stated that it is relevant for students to know the origins and the different factors that contributed to the independence of 'our country'. He deemed this relevant because these factors, such as the struggle for liberty, justice, and autonomy, are 'embedded in our DNA'.

In his instruction and accompanying learning activities, he introduced tasks that focus on generating an overview of chronologically ordered events, which is followed by a discussion in duos of the reasons why an event is included in the overview and what the possible consequences could be. After a short lecture, he would ask a compound question: 'Explain, by giving two reasons, why the struggle against Philip II hardened; give two consequences and the names of two persons who played a role in this struggle.' No additional materials were used. In his lesson design, a range of actors and events were presented as being 'important' to the development of the Dutch Revolt. The perspectives of the actors or the relative weight of the event were not further discussed. The conflict was strictly confined to the Low Countries without references to international aspects of the conflict. Only the political-military dimension was present in his lesson design.

Typical for these kinds of lesson designs are aims such as appropriating a chronological overview of events, including dates and the possible causes and consequences. The central dimension in the lesson designs is the political military dimension. Other dimensions are hardly taken into account. Additional materials (with other perspectives) are not provided. Historiography and students' perspectives are not part of the lesson designs.

Variant D: Text LP – Lesson designs with low multiperspectivity

An example of this variant is the lesson design of Celine. In her aims, she formulated that her students could explain the rules of Charles V and Filip II, the role of the Augsburg Settlement (1555) and the role of William of Orange in the origin of the Dutch Republic. In her lessons, she focused on the chronology of events of the Dutch Revolt. Students were asked to take notes during the lectures, after which they were given time to elaborate these notes and to use sources – such as the Ban edict of Philip and the Apology of William – in these notes. Celine used these sources to provide more content information and not to highlight different perspectives as was the case in variant C. Students were asked to make assignments to enhance their understanding of the historical substantive concepts. The dimension central in this lesson design was the political-military dimension.

Typical for these lesson designs are aims such as learning to acquire chronological knowledge about the Dutch Revolt and understanding the meaning of related historical substantive concepts. Taking and comparing notes, summarizing the text, and ordering events on a timeline are common activities in this variant. No attention is paid to historiography or students' perspectives.

Considerations of the teachers in their lesson designs

Our second question is related to the considerations of teachers for their lesson designs. During the interviews, we asked the participants to read the alternative text that they had not used for their lessons and had not seen before. They were asked which text they preferred for their own teaching practice and for what reasons. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Text preference compared to used text

Used text Preferred text	HP	LP*
HP	3	5
LP	5	4

* Missing preference: Nout

Of the eight participants working with text HP, three preferred this text whereas five preferred text LP. Regarding the nine participants who used text LP, four preferred this text and five preferred text HP. So, in sum eight teachers preferred text HP and nine preferred the LP text. The majority of the participants both preferring the text HP and text LP argued that the exam program demanded too much reproduction of factual knowledge and that – particular to this topic – the allotted lesson time is too short to master the great amount of facts for a part of their students. Participants using text LP and preferring text HP indicated that text HP better fitted their ideas of what teaching historical reasoning entails. None of these participants argued that text HP was too difficult for their HAVO-students.

Specific to the preference of text LP two main reasons were given (both reasons mentioned 8 times). First, this LP text followed a more traditional narrative structure, with the more recognizable person of William of Orange as the main actor, which is better suited for HAVO students (8 times). Second, the LP text is less complicated and better suited for HAVO-students, given their presumed relatively lower cognitive capabilities compared to their fellow students following the pre-university track (VWO). This is illustrated by arguments such as poor vocabulary or reading ability of their students, abstract concepts and the complexity of political, economic or religious dimensions are difficult to learn for students HAVO, these students 'love structure' or have problems to relate their own contemporary perspective to the perspectives of the historical agents.

Conclusion and discussion

We examined the lessons teachers designed using either a text with more, or a text with less perspectives. Our first research question was where and how teachers include forms of perspectivity in their lessons based upon a text that contains multiperspectivity compared to a text low on multiperspectivity. We can conclude that almost all participants provided multiple perspectives on the level of historical actors; however, less on dimensions, scale, historiography, and students' perspectives. Both texts elicited lesson designs that reflected a high level of multiperspectivity and lesson designs that reflected a low level of multiperspectivity. Nevertheless, the results showed that the text with high multiperspectivity generated more multiperspectivity with respect to Aims and Instruction, Dimensions, Scale and Historiography than text LP. To confirm that texts with high multiperspectivity indeed generate lessons with more multiperspectivity, additional research is necessary. Lesson designs that contained more and different forms of perspectives may contribute to studying a more 'open' narrative of the Dutch Revolt, whereas lesson designs that had low multiperspectivity seemed to follow the traditional, 'closed' narrative. Despite the topic being suitable for teaching multiple perspectives (Wansink, et al., 2016), we did not find that this topic in itself inspires the design of lessons with multiple perspectives, as both using text HP and LP resulted in lessons that scored low on multiperspectivity. After all, only one participant using text LP incorporated different and more perspectives in her lesson design.

When confronted with the other text after they had designed their lessons, some of the participants realized that they preferred this alternative text. It seems that some participants were inclined to follow the texts that were available to them, while others preferred the other text. Although we found that the designs of teachers using the text HP included more perspectives of a particular kind, we found lesson designs with high and low multiperspectivity for both types of texts. These findings contradict a strict dependency of teachers on textbook information, as is stated by Foster (2011) and Wansink et al. (2016), or the authoritative status of textbooks, as argued by Stoddard (2010). How a given text is used, also depends on teachers' pedagogical content knowledge and beliefs about the subject.

Our second question was about the considerations of teachers when they are asked to design lessons given a history text that has high or low multiperspectivity. Our findings support theory about the important role of teachers' beliefs about the objectives of history education (Wansink et. al., 2016; Yilmaz, 2008). Teachers' considerations related to requirements of the curriculum and exam program, reflect different beliefs about the objectives of history teaching. Furthermore, we found considerations related to teachers' knowledge of preconceptions and common areas of conceptual difficulty of their students.

The same considerations play a role when participants were asked to justify their preference for the text with high or low multiperspectivity. Participants preferring text LP argued that this text was more suitable for their HAVO students, given their supposed difficulties learning the chronologically ordered events, poor vocabulary or reading abilities; difficulties relating their own, present perspective to the perspectives of historical agents; and difficulties with causal complexity. Additionally, these participants argued that text LP was more recognizable for their students in general. The assumed emphasis on the reproduction of factual knowledge in the exam program was a further consideration when preferring the text LP. However, the participants who preferred text HP argued that this text matched their ideas about teaching and learning historical reasoning. This finding is comparable to findings of Voet and De Wever (2016) with respect to views about teaching history in relation to contextual circumstances wherein sufficient time and the alleged student capabilities decide whether or not to engage students in historical enquiry. The interpretation of the exam program – either a focus on learning historical reasoning or acquiring a chronological overview of knowledge – seems decisive in the preference for one of the texts, as if these two elements of the exam program are necessarily excluding each other.

Our conclusion should be handled with care as we used a limited number of teachers, and one topic. Although we used an important topic in Dutch history other topics might yield other results. We analyzed lesson designs based upon two texts especially written for this research. One of the restrictions of the texts was the allotted number of words to expose the complexity of multiperspective history. Other texts or formats – for example, two contrasting narratives or a collection of sources – could yield other results. Furthermore, teachers were provided with one of the two texts that they had to use as participant in this study. A free choice of text could make our findings more robust because this would better fit their teaching preferences. Finally, further research is needed to investigate the inter-rater reliability of the coding of multiperspectivity in lesson designs using a Cohen's Kappa. In this study, lesson designs were coded by two researchers and codes were compared and discussed until an agreement was reached.

The teachers in this study had on average three years of teaching experience and teachers with relative limited experience (less than five years) were overrepresented in our sample, whereas in general, the majority of the upper level HAVO teachers are 45 years or older (Fontein, et al., 2016). The question raises whether a more representative sample, with more experienced teachers, would result in different findings. For example, would experienced teachers show more elements of interpretational history and multiperspectivity in their beliefs and in their classroom practices? Furthermore, we analyzed only lesson *designs* and did not analyze actual teaching practices, for example by observing lessons. Further research is thus needed to explore what teachers offer in their lessons to their students with respect to multiple perspectives. Future research could also take into account teachers' perceptions of their students' identities and background along lines of

race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or class (in addition to their being in the HAVO stream). Would they teach the Dutch Revolt differently to students coming from a multifarious cultural, ethnic, and social background compared to teaching it to students who come from families with a long history in the Netherlands? And if so, why? Although several teachers explained their choices regarding their lesson design making reference to the track students were taking (HAVO), their poor vocabulary and reading capabilities, teachers did not bring in students' identities and background as a factor. Hence, teachers' training and professionalization could benefit from more explicit attention being given to teaching multiperspectivity since it is certainly not self-evident to do so. For example, this may include developing and using learning activities wherein historiographical perspectives and students' perspectives are integrated and discussed. Finally, authors of textbooks could pay more attention to multiple perspectives, including historiographical perspectives, dimensions, scale, and gender specific perspectives.

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Appendix

Appendix A

Text HP (translated from the Dutch original) Philip II and the Low Countries

Philip II was the ruler of a great empire since 1555. He was sovereign of the Low Countries, lord of Castile and Aragon., Naples, Mexico and Peru. In his biography of Philip II Geoffrey Parker describes how Philip II governed his empire from the Escorial, his palace outside Madrid. The Escorial was built as a cloister. Even Philip's bedroom had a view on the main altar of the palaces church. The catholic altar inspired him in his exercising his power and solving the two main problems inside his immense empire. First he had to face an enormous money deficit, second he had to face political disturbances. The wars of his father Charles V against the French, the pope, the German lords and the Duke of Gelre in the Low Countries brought eerily close the bottom of the treasure. Trade and industry suffered severely from the many wars. Epidemics caused many victims. Crop failures caused rising food prices. This made that raise of taxes to solve the money deficit quickly spurred political and social disturbances.

The Turks and Philip II

Historians have pointed out that the biggest problems to Philip arose from outside his empire. It was Geoffrey Parker who argued that the power of Philip was threatened by the Turks in the region surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. Philip needed all his troops and ships to withstand the Turkish threat. Added to this was that news out his empire took sometimes days or weeks to reach him in Madrid. On top of that Philip wanted to take all important decisions by himself in his empire. This had as a consequence a thorough centralization of government. The movement of troops from one end of his empire to the other took very much time. Money deficit, the Turkish threat, slow communication and restricted military means made it therefore Philip difficult to act decisive when there arouse troubles elsewhere in his empire.

Crisis in the Low Countries

It was bad timing when in the Low Countries a serious crisis came to the surface that resulted in a prolonged state of civil war. This crisis had several causes. First Lutheran and above all Calvinist religious ideas were widely spread. Philips father Charles V had acted severely against these. But local governors took more and more a lenient position towards the adherents of these religions. The harsh way wherein Philip acted against these – in his eyes – heretics was begging for trouble. Second, the inhabitants of the Low Countries agreed all on one subject namely that the provinces should mind their own business. Topics that concerned all provinces should be taken care of by the nobles who had been doing this from way back and not by officials put in charge by Philip. Although none of these noblemen were Calvinists, still they felt irritated by Philips style of government. Philip wanted to continue the persecution of the heretics and did not want to concede. The situation grew worse when became apparent that the nobility called for mitigation of the measures against the heresy. When also members of the high nobility amongst them William of Orange, refused to obey to the orders of the King, Margret of Parma – the deputy of Philip in the Low Countries – could do nothing other than to agree with the demands of the noblemen. This opened the floodgates.

Iconoclasm

During the early summer sermons took place everywhere in the open field, whereupon in Western Flanders on the 10th of August 1566 all statues in the Catholic churches were smashed to smithereens. The Iconoclasm was a fact. A complete revolt against the king seemed to be set in motion. Now Philip decided to intervene by force. Compared to the years before the situation had improved to Philip. The Turks had withdrawn their Mediterranean fleet, the sultan had died whereby insurgencies occurred throughout the Turkish empire and above all a treasure fleet from America had arrived in Spain which replenished the treasure box. Philip II could focus himself by now on the situation in the Low Countries. He himself stayed in Spain, but he sent his most valued commander in chief with an army ten thousand men strong from Italy to the Low Countries.

Dog eat dog. Alva and Orange

And so the Duke d' Alba arrived in Bruxelles in the early Spring of 1567 to the house in order. Alva took immediately strong measures against all who were under the suspicion of rebellion or heresy. Over thousand protestant believers were sentenced to death, another ample 10.000 banished. The most important leaders like William of Orange swerved to Germany. A prolonged struggle for power in the Low Countries followed. It became a civil war between supporters of William of Orange and the troops of Philip. To peasants and commoners it was not always clear which side deserved their support. To Philip it was one battle of many for the sake of the Holy Roman creed. To William of Orange and his supporters it was a struggle for the sake of their belief, but certainly also to mind their own business in the Low Countries.

Poor People

In the mean while the population suffered from all military operations. The historian Van Nierop describes that one day the locals were sieged by Spanish troops, another day they had to give quarters to the soldiers under command of William of Orange. And what to think of those areas that became inundated to prevent that Spanish troops could invade Leiden, for example? Or of the soldiers of Orange who lived of the country and plundered the farmers? Soldiers from both sides had to wait and see if they were paid their wages.

The Spaniards chased away from Utrecht

When it arrived that Philip II was again in financial trouble and his troops did not received their wages for over two and half years they mutinied and plundered Antwerp. Philip was not able to prevent that the provinces under the leadership of William of Orange united against Philip's

troops. The provinces concluded the Pacification of Ghendt, a treaty by which the Spanish troops would leva the Low Countries. That departure was not gone easy as may be seen from the events in Utrecht. For a long time Utrecht has been on the side of the Spaniards. Spanish mercenaries helped these feelings to continue. They refused to leave the city with their wives and children after the Pacification of Ghendt. This to the great annoyance of the townsmen of Utrecht who already three years paid for the maintenance of the mercenaries. The mercenaries took refuge inside the towns castle Vredenburgh and even aimed their guns at the town and fired at townsmen of Utrecht. An exchange of shots took place. At the end the mercenaries and their families left the town.

With mop and pick-axe

The Spaniards just left or disagreement arose in town. Some were Afraid that the castle would be occupied soon enough by foreign mercenaries. The citizens wanted to demolish the castle as soon as possible while members of the States of Utrecht hesitated on this. Historian Els Kloek described the role of the Utrecht's woman Catrijn (Trijn) Leemput in these events. On the 2nd of May 1577 the Utrechts townspeople under the guidance of Catrijn van Leemput decided to demolish the castle by themselves. Catrijn leaded a group of women under the banner picturing a mop. She was the first person who started to break stones from the borough. Soon other citizens followed and the walls were grounded with axes, hammers and pickaxes. By this feat Utrecht became definitively into the hands of the supporters of Orange.

Act of Abjuration

At the end the resistance of war tired citizens as Catrijn and of the faith fanatic Calvinists under the leadership of William of Orange resulted in the proclamation of the Act of Abjuration by which the Low Countries declared themselves independent. Of course the support of mighty allies such as the English queen Elisabeth and the Turkish sultan Selim II was also helpful in this. The conflict dragged on until 1648 when also the Spanish king acknowledged the independence of the Low Countries.

Appendix B

Text LP (translated from the Dutch original) The King and the Prince. Philip II and William of Orange

On the 10th of July William of Orange died as result of attack on his life by a spy in Spanish service, Balthasar Gerards. William would just have uttered Lord Almighty have mercy to my soul and my poor People. And with that the life ended of a man who was the indisputable leader of the battle of the Calvinists in the Low Countries against the Spanish catholic overlords. Soon he was regarded as "the father of the fatherland".

William of Orange inherited a great fortune and the noble title of Prince of Orange when he was very young (1544). He was raised in a family that centered around the Lutheran beliefs in matters of religion. But he spent most of the time at the catholic court of Charles V in Bruxelles during his youth. In those years William became the loyal supporter of the emperor. Charles V pursued to centralize governmental institutions and to impose regular taxation and to eradicate any form of deviation of the catholic faith. After a long period of strife this question of faith ended in an understanding whereby the ruler of a region determined what his underlings might believe. The subjects of a catholic sovereign were compulsory catholic, those of a protestant sovereign compulsory protestant. In the Low Countries this meant that any form of Protestantism was forbidden. Just to participate in an open air rally where was preached against the pope and the Holy Roman church, could give cause to arrest and trial on heresy.

Beggars

Philip II continued the rule of his father Charles V. He pushed through the centralization of the governmental institutions at the cost of the jurisdiction of the nobility in matters of government. On top of that he demanded that the heresy of Calvinism would be eradicated. As a consequence on New Year's Eve 1564 William of Orange held a speech on the poor state of the country. Harshly he raised two questions. First, he demanded that foreigners would be expelled from the government of the Low Countries. Second, he distanced himself from the religious persecution and said: "Although I am of Roman Faith, I cannot condone that sovereigns wish to reign over the conscience of theirs subjects." This was the moment of the split between Philip II and William of Orange, a rift that could not be repaired and gradually became wider.

Radical Calvinists had returned from exile to the Low Countries in the early summer of 1566. In the meanwhile the lower nobility filed a request with Regent Margret of Parma (the highest representative of Philip II in the Low Countries) to mitigate the persecution of the heretics. This request was denied and the noblemen were called mockingly Gueux, French for beggars. Soon the adversaries of Philip II used this as an honorific title 'geuzen'. When also members of the high nobility amongst them William of Orange, refused to obey to the orders of the King, Margret of Parma could do nothing other than to agree with the demands of the noble men and the persecution of the protestants became less vigorous.

Iconoclasm

After a series of radical sermons in the open field a storm of iconoclasm broke out in Steenvoorde (Flanders) on the 10th of August 1566. This opened the floodgates. Margret could do not otherwise than to comply to the demands of the iconoclasts and little by little there was peace again. William himself helped to restore the peace. He putted three iconoclasts on trial in Antwerp, but at the same time he allowed Calvinist worship. Therefore, to him it was freedom of religious worship, not of disorder.

Nevertheless Margret was of the opinion that she had to concede to the Calvinists under duress. As soon as it was slightly possible she acted with force against the heretics in spring 1567. She demanded an oath of fealty to king Philip II from the high nobility (including William of Orange). William of Orange refused and foresaw this was an attempt of the king to condemn him as the leader of troubles. William of Orange deemed it better safe than sorry and fled to Germany. With that Philip seemed to be in control again in the Low Countries. The moderate policies of William had failed although he was still of the opinion that Protestants and Catholics could live in peace together. Philip sent the Duke d'Alba to make short work with the Calvinist heresies. Over thousand protestant believers were sentenced to death, another ample 10.000 banished. On top of that Alba tried to raise the taxes in order to be able to pay his troops. It might be that the peace was restored, but underground the resistance was brewing.

William, prince of Orange

William has been up to that moment the leader of a small group of high noblemen who kept a keen eye on their traditional liberties. By now he became more and more the campaigner for religious forbearance and political independence. In his capacity of prince of Orange he had gained an international standing as a diplomat who negotiated with the European sovereigns on an equal footing. At the same time he gained a lot of devotion amongst his supporters of peasants and commoners whereas he took into account that the great majority of the population was Catholic. Until he heard of his spies that Philip found that Margret was too soft and that he had send his most important commander in chief d'Alba with a Spanish army of ten thousand men strong to the Low Countries, he decided to engage in armed combat with Filip. William of Orange had the right to raise troops and to sign letters of marque on his own behalf as a prince of Orange. The latter meant that with these letters a see captain and his crew had the right to attack enemy vessels.

In the following years especially these privateers proved to be successful, more so than the mercenaries hired by William of Orange.

Sea Beggars in Den Briel

In this manner these privateers or 'Sea Beggars' as they have been called could get hold on Den Briel at the Maas. This way they controlled the waterways of Holland. When this became known Calvinists seized power in several towns of Holland and Zealand, such as Leiden and Alkmaar. Soon after William of Orange was accepted as their stadtholder by the provinces of Holland, Zealand and Utrecht. Stadtholder means in other words the deputy of the king, therefore in this case of Philip. A harsh battle for every town in these provinces ensued. Step by step the abyss between William and Philip grew wider. Even when was decided in the Pacification of Ghendt (1576) that the Spanish troops would leave the country, the negotiated freedom of religion raised again new problems and conflict. The Calvinists gained freedom of religion also in the regions where they were not in power. But they were not willing to allow freedom of religion to the Catholics in Holland and Zealand. Opposing this Philip stood his ground on restoration of the authority of the Holy Roman church. In short, the problems continued.

Act of Abjuration

During the following years the antagonism between Philip and William grew and grew and the battle over the Low Countries was enforced by any means. Philip decided to ban the prince, putted a price on his head and accused of being an adulterer, drunkard, atheist and above all someone whose was only chasing his own ambitions. William defended himself and called the king every name under the sun. In the end the conflict resulted in a definitive break up when in 1581 the Act of Abjuration was accepted whereby the Low Countries declared independence of Philip. Nevertheless the battle over the Low Countries dragged on until in 1648 also the Spanish king acknowledged the independence of the Low Countries.