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Schooling the 'other': the representation of gender and national identities in Pakistani curriculum texts

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Abstract

Until relatively recently, educational research in developing countries has focused mainly on issues of access for addressing gender inequalities in education. This paper argues that challenging patriarchal relations in schooling and education requires moving beyond access to understanding the ways the curriculum acts as a set of discursive practices which position girls and boys unequally and differently constitute them as gendered and nationalised/ist subjects. Using curriculum texts from Pakistan, the paper explores how gender and national identities intersect in a dynamic way in the processes of schooling. The paper illustrates the ideological power of both curriculum and school experiences in fashioning the reciprocal performance and construction of gender and national identities in Pakistan. It contends that in its current form, education is a means of maintaining, reproducing and reinforcing the gender hierarchies that characterise Pakistan.