Symbolic Nation-building through Images in Post-Yugoslav History Textbooks

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Abstract • The use of history textbooks in order to instill particular images of the nation and national identity has been widely recognized, with a proliferation of studies focused on the problematic content in textbooks. Yet, history textbooks rely on a range of other media like maps, graphs, illustrated timelines, and photographs, which also play an important role in visually signposting the nation. While some of these images serve primarily as a form of representation aligned with the text itself, other aspects of visual content distinctly and autonomously construct national identity. In this piece, relying on qualitative visual analysis, we point to the function played by images in symbolically constructing the nation in contemporary primary school textbooks in five post-Yugoslav republics, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia.

Keywords • history textbooks, national identity, nation-building, symbolic geography, visual analysis, Yugoslavia

The use of history textbooks in instilling images of the nation and national identity, particularly in places where the government controls the textbook publishing process, has been widely recognized.1 The importance given to material printed in history textbooks and the role textbooks played leading up to and during the Yugoslav wars has been demonstrated by an extensive body of work.2 These studies have demonstrated how history textbooks construct nationhood narratives, inject ethnic stereotypes, and draw boundaries. Scholars of these works have persuasively pointed to the common themes across these nationhood narratives. These themes include: an early and uninterrupted statehood; a Golden era of national grandeur typically in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; a lens of victimization/victimhood and innocence, by which the nation was always a victim and never an aggressor; territorial boundaries always drawn at the expense (never the benefit) of one’s nation; neighborly relations as a state of perpetual conflict; and simultaneous national heroism in the face of unbeatable odds. In these studies, the focus of the analysis is the problematic content, discursive strategies and semantic techniques used to impart particular images of the nation through the text itself.

Yet textbooks also contain a range of other media, including photographs (of people, events and artifacts), maps, images, and illustrated...
timelines, all of which both overtly and implicitly play an important role in visually signposting the nation and national identity. The intricate connection between visuality and nationhood has been demonstrated by many studies that point to the visual as a key element in flagging nationhood. Studies focusing on visual culture demonstrated the visual aspect of constructing the nation via media such as calendar art, commemorative coins, political caricatures, maps, photographs, advertisements, fiction film, and propaganda, as well as in the physical visual landscape, such as street signs and colors of benches and trashcans.

Where textbooks are concerned, Peter Carrier’s review of changes in textbook analysis over time shows trends in the visual analysis of textbooks: when images are analyzed, they frequently provide a “subtext” or hidden intentionality of authors and are mainly used in the context of exposing stereotypes of external/internal others. Other aspects of visual content distinctly and autonomously construct national identity. Research has shown that pupils remember images more vividly than texts and that images, by virtue of their emotive and reality-evoking nature, act as “carriers of social knowledge” over generations. Norman Fairclough argued that a full understanding of the text (what is “said”) includes necessarily understanding what is “unsaid,” which can be uncovered using visual semiotic analysis in order to decode conventions, while a focus on the entire visual framework (including angles, lines, and frames) can also reveal meanings. Photographs have been found to carry the most weight, as they are perceived by pupils as objective reality with authority and influence and provide “memorable, implicit messages” that authoritatively shape pupils’ perceptions of groups in society. More broadly, visual narratives provide a tool for inducing narrative empathy in a way that text cannot.

As visual and textual content are always in dialogue, we place the assumed relationship between the text and visuals in textbooks at the center of our analysis. Instead of simply analyzing images as representations or sub-meaning of the text, we analyze the visual imagery in textbooks in their entirety, including graphic design. Relying on qualitative visual analysis, we examine contemporary history textbooks in five post-Yugoslav republics (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia). We first examine how different types of images are used in the textbooks, presenting a nuanced way to analyze them as elements that may contribute to nation-building. In the second part, we analyze the relationship between the text and the image, which ranges from fully confirming the narrative to various forms of dynamic relations between the text and image. We conclude with a discussion of the role of visual content in textbooks in constructing the nation, particularly regarding the relationship between the textual and the visual.
Literature Review: History Textbooks and Visual Nationhood

Previous studies on nation-building have emphasized the relevance of textbooks as the extended “arm of the state” because their content is often perceived to be “impersonal, objective and above criticism.” Particularly in places where the state controls textbook production, the role of state-run media and education (and textbooks in particular) are found to play a critical role in producing ethnic and national ideologies. In the Balkans, the role of ethnic entrepreneur-historians has been especially highlighted as a major factor that contributed to the flaring of animosities that brought about the bloody ethnic wars of the 1990s, and an extensive body of literature has been devoted to analyzing the ethnic stereotypes, boundary-drawing, and symbolic nation-building that not only led up to the wars but continue to persist in history textbooks in the former Yugoslav countries.

At the same time, many studies have established the importance of the visual environment in constructing the nation. In studies of other printed media, scholars have persuasively demonstrated the added value of examining both the visual and the textual. For instance, an analysis of political campaign posters combines visual and textual analysis in order to examine how the posters construct a sense of place and inform everyday lives and material realities. The authors argue that a focus on just the text overlooks crucial visual markers, since “because they are socio-linguistic, images and texts do more than represent, they (re)create messages, ideals and ideologies.”

While the expansion of the field of visual methodology has not yet fully reached textbook studies, and most analyses of textbook material are limited to the text, there are nonetheless several excellent studies that have included visual alongside textual analysis. Not surprisingly, most textbook studies that analyze images have focused on representations of gender and racial or ethnic minorities. Examples include images of Black women in US textbooks, ethnic minority groups in China, indigenous cultures in Norway, images of Islam and Arab societies in Western textbooks, images of Palestinians in Israeli geography textbooks, and so on.

Methodology

In the following study, we relied on Gillian Rose’s guide to visual methodology. We conducted two layers of analysis. The first was focused on the visual material itself, and the second dealt with the interaction between the image and the text. Since we focused on the variety of ways in which visual symbols are employed and on the interplay between
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For the first layer of analysis, which focused on the visual material itself, we predominantly applied semiotic analysis in order to examine the use of national emblems and geographic maps, including all of their graphic elements (color and arrows). In the analysis of primary sources (such as photographs of people and events, newspaper reprints, artifacts and documents) we paid particular attention to how these visual elements are used to construct a particular “regime of truth.” The selection of the visual material was led not by a logic of rigorous sampling, but rather by the logic of what “caught the eye” of the authors, bearing in mind their decade-long research of history textbooks and processes of national identity reproduction in the countries of former Yugoslavia. Such an approach is common and justified within the tradition of semiotic studies, since it focuses on the processes of meaning-making that are socially significant. Therefore, we selected those images that are illustrative of the processes of building national identity.

For the second layer of analysis, which focused on the interaction between the visual material and the textual narrative, we paid particular attention to captions of images in order to identify their intended function (in relation to the text) and/or the desired meaning(s) these images were supposed to communicate. Because we assume that visual and textual content are always in dialogue, in this step, we place the relationship between the text and visuals in textbooks at the center of our analysis. We thus examine the relationship between images and try to identify the function of the image in relation to the text. In some cases, the image is complementary to the text itself, while in others, it conveys meaning independently of, and in some instances even in opposition to, the text.

The sample in the analysis includes twenty-three history textbooks for years eight and nine in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia, representing all of the textbooks approved for the 2020/2021 school year in these five countries. We chose textbooks for years eight and nine because this is when national and twentieth century history is taught as part of the compulsory curriculum in all primary schools. The history textbook market systems in most of these countries are open, meaning that several editions by different publishing houses and authors are approved by the respective ministry of education in each country every year, from which schools have a choice. The exceptions are Montenegro, where there is just one approved history textbook, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which has an ethnically segregated educational system. One should note, however, that each country has its specific system and policies of textbook approval, which change over time and are recuringly a subject of controversy and public discussion (which are intertwined with political divisions in post-Yugoslav countries). Since
there is no precise information on the distribution and use of the textbooks in each country, we included all approved textbooks into our sample.

**Types of Visual Imagery in Post-Yugoslav History Textbooks**

The most straightforward way of visual “national marking” of the textbooks is printing national flags and coats of arms on the pages of the publication. The most overt strategy includes printing national symbols on the cover page of the textbook, as in the case of the Bosnian textbook, where the coat of arms from different historical periods (medieval, socialist, wartime, and current state) are presented in a repetitive, wallpaper style. Such visual marking represents not only a “routine flagging of nationhood” but also a strategic political statement, since it represents a particular historical narrative that is promoted by Bosnian unitarist political forces but rejected by Serb and Croat ethno-national political leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Juxtaposing coats of arms from different historical periods creates an imagined statehood continuity from medieval times until today, emphasizing a unity of the state that is actually severely challenged in the ongoing political disputes. A less overt strategy is to include national symbols as elements of graphic design that are seemingly invisible, yet recur as “mindless markers of the nation.” This includes, for instance, a small picture in a page header, containing the recognizable red and white chessboard coat of arms symbolizing the Croat nation, which recurs on all thirty-two pages of the chapter dedicated to “The creation and development of independent Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina” in the textbook for Croat schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina. While this textbook should formally adhere to the standards of the Guidelines on Textbook Writing issued by the Office of the High Representative (which insist on taking Bosnia and Herzegovina as a frame of reference instead of Serbia or Croatia), it is in fact a reprint of a textbook from Croatia with only minimal changes. The small picture in the header is the flag of the President of the Republic of Croatia. It therefore puts a clearly ethnic mark on a chapter that should otherwise thematize the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the postwar creation of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

However, in contrast, some textbooks take a reflective approach to presenting national symbols, for instance, by focusing attention on how the national flag changed over time. For example, a Croat textbook and its Bosnian-Croat adaptation present, respectively, the flags and coats of arms of the Socialist Republic of Croatia and Yugoslav era Bosnia and Herzegovina, and ask pupils to compare these symbols to their contemporary counterparts. Presumably, pupils should notice that some elements repeat (such as the red-white chessboard), while the communist symbol
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of the red star is gone. The answer is given in the next chapter of the textbook, where information is provided on when and how the new national symbols were adopted and gradually changed. The interpretative potential of such an approach is to make evident that national symbols (as well as nations) are socially constructed, contingent to historical settings, and therefore changeable rather than fixed. However, the textbook may also narrate the story of how national symbols changed in a way that reifies an essentialist understanding of the nation. This is the case with the previously mentioned Croat-Bosnian textbook, which narrates that the socialist symbols were “imposed” while the contemporary ones are “traditional.”

Geographic maps are the type of image with the longest history of usage in history textbooks. They were used long before the color print era and have been considered an essential didactic element in the teaching of history. A specific characteristic of geographic maps when accompanying historiographic text is that they may contain several historic layers at the same time, effectively superimposing one map atop another, while geographical visual elements illustrating natural features of the area (isohypses, greenery, water flows and accumulations) are usually absent. Geographic maps are used for presenting a (historical) world order (maps of the entire planet or continent), national and regional history or singular historical event (for example, a battle), or period (for example, a protracted border dispute). Visual signposts relevant for nation-building may be present in all of them (not only the ones with a nation-state zoom level) and are communicated to the reader via several visual tools, including colors and shading, different types of lines (normal or broken, bold, dotted, color) and arrows (which may also be graphically diverse).

Color is most frequently employed to represent something unified or, alternatively, something bordered. For instance, Serbian textbooks tend to represent Bosnia and Herzegovina as a divided country, while they show Serbia as a unified one. In both cases, color is used to illustrate a particular interpretation of recent history and an imagination of what (and where) Serbian nationhood is. Therefore, all textbooks published in Serbia (and the one for Serbian classes in Bosnia) represent the map of Serbia by using one single color to designate the entire area of Serbia proper, the autonomous province of Vojvodina and the province of Kosovo, whose 2008 independence is recognized by the majority of the international community but not by Serbia (though it lacks effective governance over the area). On the other hand, the Bosnian-Serb textbook and some of the textbooks published in Serbia visually emphasize (via the use of contrasting colors) the administrative division of Bosnia and Herzegovina into two entities, one of them (Republika Srpska) with a predominantly Serb population and a political leadership with separatist/irredentist aspirations.
Colors in maps can be also used by employing different shades of one color to represent a “gradation of belonging,” or the difference between a desired and an attained territory. For instance, a Croatian and Serbian textbook present the difference between territories of the Austro-Hungarian Empire wanted by South-Slav politicians before the First World War and those actually attained in the process of creating the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in 1918. Therefore, the more intense and paler shades of the same color illustrate the gradual difference between what belongs to and what should have belonged to “us.”

Further, geographic maps might use color to present the ethnic or religious composition of a population, as in two Serbian textbooks. The interpretative potential of this is twofold. It creates an image of ethnic groups as firm and closed (an approach Rogers Brubaker terms “ethnic groupism”) and portrays ethnic groups as “owning” or “belonging to” a particular territory. In these kinds of representations, particular colors may be associated with particular ethnicities. Most notably, green is associated with the Muslim community or the regions (for example, Bosnia) where Muslims constitute a majority. The use of green for the Muslim community can be found in Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, and even Bosnian textbooks.

Another visual element frequently used in geographic maps accompanying historiographic texts are arrows. Arrows are an important interpretative tool, as they add a dynamic dimension to a static picture. They may indicate movements of military units, visually implying penetration and/or attack, as in the case of the “German-Italian attack on Slovenian land in April 1941.” Sometimes the size and width of an arrow may indicate the size of the military units or severity of the attack, hence not only conveying information but also symbolizing a narrative interpretation. Through this lens, we may observe the symbolical and interpretative differences made by marking the point of an aerial attack as opposed to the line of attack (that is, the line between the plane’s point of departure and the place it dropped the bomb). In this way, two Slovene textbooks create two different impressions about the Ten-Day War that ensued after Slovenia declared independence from Yugoslavia in 1991. One is that the conflict took place within Slovenia (pointing to places where Slovene forces took over border control from the Yugoslav federal authorities, causing Yugoslav aerial forces to attack, see Figure 1); the other image creates the impression that Slovenia was attacked from the outside (emphasizing flight routes of the Yugoslav Army air forces from the neighboring republic to the locations in Slovenia, see Figure 2). In a similar way, the starting point of the attack can be presented as the position of the military forces (before the attack) or as the origin of the military forces (where they were initially stationed). The latter approach is used, for instance, in a Croatian and Bosnian-Croatian textbook in
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Figure 1. Marking the point of an aerial attack (Bregar Mazzini et al., Zgodovina 9, 160) (© Ivan Mitrevski).

Figure 2. Marking the line of an aerial attack (Razpotnik and Snoj, Raziskujem preteklost 9, 136) (© Monde Neuf d.o.o.).
which the arrow shows that the attack of local Serb forces on Croat populated territories started from Belgrade, capital of Serbia (and Yugoslavia), where the decisions for the Serb war effort were actually made.

Arrows in maps may also suggest entities being “drawn together” or “falling apart,” thus emphasizing a particular framing for historical interpretation of the complex stories of creation or disintegration of composite states (or any state for that matter). For instance, Serbian textbooks present how the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was created in a way that territories previously part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (organized as a State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbia) and the Kingdom of Montenegro came to join (arrows pointing toward) the Kingdom of Serbia in November and December 1918 (see Figure 3 for example). In one case, this visual design is further amplified by the question posed to pupils, who are invited to “make a list of the areas of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire that were united with Serbia” (emphasis added), creating a historical interpretation that frames Serbia as a Piedmont of Yugoslav unification.

Figure 3. The unification of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in a textbook from Serbia (Simić and Petrović, Istorija 8, 124) (© Predrag Simić and Ivan Potić).
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The visualization of the same historical process in a Croatian textbook presents the same territories coming together in the form of puzzle pieces, with no use of arrows (see Figure 4). This kind of visual representation treats territorial units as equal actors in the process of creating the common state. On the other hand, arrows in maps may emphasize a sequence of stages in the process of creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (as in the case of a Croatian and Slovenian textbooks), rather than who was drawn to whom. In a similar way, arrows in maps can present the process of Yugoslav disintegration as a matter of a country falling apart into (equal) pieces, or alternatively as a process of territories separating from the (supposed) center (that is, Serbia), as it is represented in a Serbian textbook.

Finally, we turn our attention to the reproduction of primary sources, which has become the most common type of imagery used in textbooks since higher quality color print became the norm in the late 1990s. These...
include photographs, newspaper and magazine covers and articles, artifacts (such as currency or stamps), and reproductions of illustrations (caricatures, comics, propaganda posters). Primary sources as visuals bear a quality of “material proof” and create a documentalist impression, while often not adding informational value. The overall effect and meaning of such images is usually underscored by an instructional text, which suggests what the pupil should look for and see in the photo and provides an overall conclusion to a narrative frame. In rare cases, we found what could be referred to as a quasi-primary source. For instance, an excerpt from a historiographic text (written by a national historian) is presented as an authentic memory of an individual (a memoir). Since history textbooks are intended to be an interactive and multilayered didactic tool, the graphic design on their pages has more than an aesthetic function. For instance, placing two groups on different sides of a page juxtaposes them as opposites or counterparts. This is most evident in the equalization, in Serbian textbooks, of the communist (partisan) and royalist (Chetnik) movements as two “side by side” resistance movements, which are visually given the same weight (see Figure 5 for example). Indeed, the gradual revisionism in the Serbian historiography narrative, whereby the Chetnik movement (which, during the Yugoslav era, had
been defined as a movement of fascist collaborators) was reframed as an anti-fascist domestic resistance movement that had fought side by side with the partisans, began precisely via this kind of visual placement, and was only later accompanied by a text that reflected the new historical narrative.77

The Relationship between Images and Text in Post-Yugoslav History Textbooks

In this section, we provide an analysis of the function(s) performed by images in symbolically constructing the nation, in view of their relationship to the text itself. When the relationship of the image to the text is considered, images can perform one of the following functions: fully confirm and thus conflate the narrative; amplify the narrative; symbolically present the message the narrative is conveying; be in some form of communicative interaction with the text; or send a silent message that is not explicitly stated in the text. For a full understanding of the relationship between the visual and textual content, however, one first needs to pay attention to the captions and how they moderate the image and the narrative. Does the caption create a dynamic relationship between image and narrative, and if so, of what kind? As mentioned in the previous section, images in textbooks may come with or without interpretation and instructions regarding what pupils should learn from a photograph. In our analysis, we find that images are in many cases the only element of the textbook that actually bring up questions for discussion or interpretation by pupils. However, while questions and instructions for discussion are a chance to open up a multi-perspective discussion, in the textbooks we analyze, the captions tend be normative and/or prescriptive in their interpretation through a national lens. The caption may be more or less suggestive in what it wants the pupils to “see” in the photograph. The question beneath the image may be posed in a way that aims for a concrete or straightforward answer, or it could be open ended.

Regarding the relationship between the images and the text, first, images may convey a message that is actually absent from the text itself. For instance, a Bosnian textbook provides an image of Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian political leaders signing the Dayton Peace Agreement, which ended the Bosnian war in 1995, asking pupils in the caption to observe “who is and who is not smiling on this photo?”78 Elsewhere, the text invites pupils to look at another historical photo, which depicts Serbian and Croatian politicians of the interwar Kingdom of Yugoslavia making an agreement on the administrative reorganization of the country (by which the historical region of Bosnia was divided into two parts, each gravitating toward Serb or Croat dominated centers).79 Again, in this photo, the
picted politicians are smiling. The suggested interpretation is implied by the text beneath the first image (though this message is not explicitly spelled out in the text itself); namely, that Serbian and Croat politicians always had the intention to divide Bosnia and Herzegovina between their two nation-states.

Second, images may amplify a theme that is minor in the narrative but receives greater attention if accompanied by an image. For instance, while the Montenegrin textbook only contains one sentence about the Montenegrin role in the siege of Dubrovnik (“In the attack of the JNA [Yugoslav People’s Army] on the region of Dubrovnik, reserve forces from Montenegro also participated”), this information is amplified by the accompanying image of the burning medieval town, with the caption “The destruction of Dubrovnik.” However, the complete message is conveyed when one considers also the illustration on the previous page, which shows a reprint of a newspaper front page with the bold title “War for Peace” (a propagandistic slogan of the Montenegrin wartime leadership, by which they legitimized what in fact was a war of aggression). In this example, the political importance of the image, even though it is accompanied by only one sentence in the text, is immense, since it took decades for the Montenegrin leadership to admit (and apologize for) its culpability in the destruction of the historical city of Dubrovnik, which was not justified by legitimate military aims.

Third, images can symbolically present a message in place of the narrative. For instance, also in the Montenegrin textbook, the narrative of Yugoslav dissolution is accompanied by an image of the last Yugoslav president, Josip Broz Tito, taking a walk, photographed from behind. The image has no informative quality, but it conveys the symbolic message that the “father” of Yugoslav nation “left behind” the country in disarray when he died in 1980, suggesting that his death was the reason for Yugoslavia’s dissolution a decade later. Another example, found in a Slovenian textbook, is a caricature in which Slovenia is anthropomorphized as a rag doll (wearing a typical Slovene folk headpiece) that is being squeezed and shedding drops (that is, money) into a bucket labeled “fund for underdeveloped [Yugoslav regions].” The caricature originates from a Slovene newspaper article that criticized 1980s Yugoslav federal policy, under which Slovenia, as the economically most advanced Yugoslav republic, was supposed to redistribute part of its budget to the fund for economically less developed Yugoslav regions (Kosovo and Macedonia). The image suggests what is omitted from the text; namely, that Slovenian economic success (sweat) was “exploited” in the former Yugoslavia. In this vein, reproductions of original illustrations (caricatures, comics, propaganda posters) are particularly apt for communicating via visual means what would be too divisive or politically incorrect to be explicitly spelled out in words.
Conclusion

In this article we focused on the significance of images in representations of nation-building in history textbooks. While textbooks have traditionally been a focus of nationalism and nation-building research, most textbook analyses have focused on textbook content, discursive strategies, and semantic techniques used in symbolically constructing the nation, generally ignoring the visual content of the textbooks. In our qualitative visual analysis of history textbooks in five post-Yugoslav republics, we point to the range of other media used to symbolically construct the nation. These media play an important role in visually signposting the nation and national identity, which they can do either overtly (for example, via the description accompanying the image that instructs how pupils should interpret the image) or implicitly (for example, by representing territories as unified or divided in geographic maps). While some of these images serve primarily as a form of representation aligned with the text itself, other aspects of visual content distinctly and autonomously construct national identity. The use of images is what allows the text to engage in the “routine flagging of nationhood” as well as to provide “mindless markers of the nation” to the reader.

In our analysis of the visual content of post-Yugoslav history textbooks, we first systematized the various forms of imagery and the visual elements of the examined history textbooks. These elements include national emblems and symbols (flags, coats of arms), geographic maps, primary sources (photographs of people, events, newspapers, artifacts, documents), and reproductions of artistic works (caricatures). The visual elements we identify include graphic design (placement of visuals) and the use of bold text, colors, and arrows. Next, we examined the relationship between the text and the image and analyzed the role of the visual content in the symbolic construction of the nation. In addition to the caption, which can overtly point to the message of the image, we find various relationships between and functions of the images. Images may confirm and thus conflate the narrative, amplify the narrative, symbolically present the message the narrative is conveying, or send a silent message that is not explicitly stated in the text. Since text and visuals inherently interact with each other, we suggest, by focusing on images both as representation and as autonomous signalers of national identity, the relevance of examining visual content in constructing the nation in history textbooks, even when their positioning is not intentional. We show how image captions, as well as graphical positioning on the page itself, can frame and negotiate the relationship between the visual and textual content.

We find no clear correlation between the degree of (anti-)nationalistic discourse and the use of particular kinds of images. As our analysis
shows, images may be used for both a nationalistic and a multi-perspective reading of history. Visual content may add nuance to the historical narrative or amplify problematic simplifications of complex historical issues, including stereotypes about the own group or the “other”. Nevertheless, certain visualizations are prone to reifying nationalistic ideology, as in the case of “ethnic maps” (visual representations of the ethno-national composition of the population on geographic maps), which by definition contradict the concept of multiethnicity as cohabitation, and the intermixing and fluidity of ethno-national identities. Another case is when the textbook authors use images (usually in combination with highly suggestive captions) to underscore particular elements of the narrative that would not be tolerated if stated outright in the text, as they would border on hate speech. Counterintuitively, when compared to the majority of history textbook studies (including ours), which cluster source material by states/nations/ethnic groups during analysis, we did not find any significant evidence for making conclusions on commonalities (relevant for visual analysis) among textbooks coming from any one particular country. Forcing such inference would be an act of “methodological nationalism,” while the main aim of this article has been to offer tools for visual and graphic analysis of imagery and to show modalities of their usage for nation-building purposes.

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Notes


9. Michael Skey, “‘Mindless Markers of the Nation’.”


34. Rose, Visual Methodologies.
37. In this article we do not cover textbooks currently in use in Serbia and Croatia since they were published throughout 2021, when we had already completed the analysis.
38. The educational system is segregated according to language (Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian), and for Serbian- and Bosnian-language schools, only one history textbook has been approved. Trošt and Mihajlović Trbovc, “Identity Politics in History Textbooks,” 204–205.
41. Skey, “‘Mindless Markers of the Nation’.”
42. Ibid.


46. The Office of the High Representative (OHR) is an ad hoc international institution responsible for overseeing implementation of civilian aspects of the Peace Agreement ending the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

47. Stjepan Bekavac and Mario Jareb, *Povijest 8: udžbenik za osmi razred osnovne škole* [History 8: Textbook for year nine of primary school] (Zagreb: Alfa, 2014). In this textbook the same national symbol marks the chapter dedicated to the present-day Croatia.


60. Đurić, *Vremeplov* 8, 86.


64. Bregar Mazzini et al., *Zgodovina 9*, 160.


66. Bekavac and Jareb, *Povijest* 8, 158; Bekavac et al., *Povijest* 9, 158.


72. Đurić, *Vremeplov* 8, 85.


sa istorijskim kartama i odabranim istorijskim izvorima [Mosaic of the past 8: History textbook for year eight of primary school with history maps and selected history sources] (Beograd: BIGZ, 2016), 115–116, 127.


78. Šabotić and Čehajić, Historija, 188.

79. Ibid., 144.


82. Burzanović and Đorđević, Istorija, 130.

83. Miranda Razpotnik and Snoj, Raziskujem preteklost, 9, 131.

84. Skey, “‘Mindless Markers of the Nation’.”


Textbook Bibliography

Bosnia and Herzegovina


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**Croatia**


**Montenegro**


**Serbia**


**Slovenia**


