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"Minorities", the nation and Europe in the history textbooks of Germany, Spain and Turkey

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Abstract

A feature of the concept of "minorities" is the invisibility and stigmatization of communities, more so within the idea of the nation. This article analyses the representation and construction of the concepts of "Europe", "Nation" and "Minority" in eight German, Turkish and Spanish secondary school history textbooks, particularly 16th-21st century (7th-10th grade). In times of strengthening nationalism, it is also discussed here whether the representations convey essentialist ideas and imperialistic structures hidden between the lines, or whether they reflect the concept of "minorities" as a component of a pluralistic and hybrid European society. The research is divided into two areas: A comparative quantitative research will be carried out on the representation of 'minorities' in German, Turkish and Spanish history textbooks and a qualitative hermeneutic analysis. Key findings indicate that each country predominantly imparts a history curriculum with a strong national focus, with the pronounced emphasis found in Turkish history textbooks. European-centered history is often portrayed and based on myths as emblematic of modern civilization in comparison with other civilizations or countries, especially in Spanish and German history textbooks. Similarities in the portrayal of "minorities" tend to be either nonexistent or negative, further reinforcing a sense of belonging for national identities.

Keywords: minorities, nationalism, Europe, textbooks



Introduction

History textbooks have played a fundamental role in the construction of a democratic Europe in the last century, which had been battered by the legacies of nationalism. The aim of all countries that suffered the two World Wars was to create a solid foundation for a democratic and pacifist society (Corm, 2010; Morin, 1988). To this end, multiple national and supra-national societies and organizations were founded, such as the European Project. The member countries identified that the basis for this lay in education, and, above all, the importance of history education and textbooks was emphasized (Pingel, 2010; Şimşek, 2018). The revisions of textbooks were not only intended to eliminate representations in the content of "otherness", but also to incorporate a desirable complementarity space dedicated to Europe and thus to find a way to de-ethno-centralized history (Pöggeler, 2003; Prats, 2001). Europe should be conceived as a borderless space of a pluralistic, liberal, hybrid, and diverse makeup, representing multiple "identities" within the national histories of European countries, and divorced from territorial identification.

In this framework, this research, which is a part of a broader study (Durna, 2022) has been conducted to analyze the historical context (Krippendorf, 1980) and the historical narratives creating spatial categories, to be able to understand the perspectives, notions, and the purposes of the didactic materials.

The aim is to illuminate the historical education provided by these countries, particularly concerning the concepts of "Nation", "Europe" and "Minorities" in their history textbooks in secondary schools from Germany, Turkey, and Spain, spanning the 16th to the 21st centuries. Complementing this primary aim, the study encompasses secondary sub-aims that involve conducting in-depth analyses. These sub-aims revolve around:

- Geographical (spatial analysis) and National History Weight: This involves an examination of the geographical dimension of historical content from the three countries, with specific attention to essentialist and nationalist conceptions.
- Geographical (spatial analysis) Weight of "Europe": This investigation examines the space and historical themes students are expected to learn about Europe.
- Visibility and Representation of Minorities: This sub-aim is to assess the visibility of minorities within national and European geographical and temporal contexts as depicted in the textbooks.

Literature Review

As Prats (2012) points out, history textbooks serve not only as teaching or pedagogical instruments (Wiater, 2003) but also as a political instrument. Historians' alignment with nation-building has been a major factor in the manipulation of history and history education (Todorov, 2008; Pöggeler, 2003; Smith, 2001).



Regarding the European context in textbooks, López Facal (2010) identifies that the complex construction of identities leads to compatibility issues between a European identity and a national identity. While the concept of the nation, characterized by "banal nationalism" (Billig, 1995), aimed at achieving cultural and religious homogenization within a nation-state (Gellner, 1983; Anderson, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1989), the construction of European citizenship required more flexibility in defining borders and embracing a "liquid society" (Bauman, 2010/2006), particularly against the backdrop of globalization and decolonization. Many countries saw Integration into the European *laissez-faire* capitalist market (Smith, 2007) as an attractive opportunity, even if they retained a nationalist ideological charge, as seen in the cases of Spain and Turkey in history textbooks (Çayır, 2016; Sáiz Serrano, 2015; Batalla Adam, 2013).

Facal (2010) suggests that history textbooks, instead of discarding national myths and promoting national identities, have reinforced the national territorial space vis-à-vis the European one. Thus, the European Union often appears as a supra-nation in history textbooks. Results from studies (Kühberger, 2006; Bellatti, 2018) on geographical and temporal spaces, from regional to global, reveal similar narrative patterns filled with nationalist and ideological content. Kühberger (2012) also emphasizes the extent of national and European history content in the textbooks, highlighting a lack of simultaneous interconnections and a disproportionate focus on Europe and contemporary history. This centralization of contemporary history causes a disconnect in terms of time and periodization (space-time). The distribution of the content as Thonhauser (1992) and Kühberger (2012), is undeniably hegemonic, from local to global spaces (Middel, 2003). Spaces and territories carry ideological significance and purpose (Tomadoni, 2007). This focus on tensions concerning national spaces is also noted in Clemen's (2011) observation regarding peripheral nationalism in Catalan textbooks.

Europe, as per Kühberger (2006), often appears as an invented and instrumentalized concept in history teaching, reflecting a Eurocentric and imperialistic perspective (Schissler, 2003) when compared to other spaces beyond Western countries. In that context, Şimşek (2013), who conducted a comprehensive international study comparing Europeanism in history textbooks, concludes that the content related to "Europe" largely relies on myths (Dussel, 1992; Said, 1978) and undefined concepts and demarcations (Prats, 2002). Furthermore, Kühberger (2012) and other authors (Bellatti, 2018; Prats, 2012) arrive at similar findings in their geographical and temporal-spatial analyses of "Europe", "Western Europe", and "Eastern Europe" in history textbooks in Austria, Spain, and Germany.

In the context of Eastern European countries and spaces, contradictory narratives have been identified, particularly regarding "Holocaust Education" (Carrier, 2013; Popp, 2010), as well as concerning the memory of "minorities" and victims of European nationalism and fascism (Guixé et.al., 2019; Corm, 2010; Calduch, 1998). After the pivotal fall of the Berlin Wall, the integration of some post-Soviet Eastern European states into the



European Union represented the inclusion and integration of these spaces and their history in textbooks (Prats, 2001).

In this context, in recent years, studies examining the presence and representation of non-national and socio-cultural communities in history textbooks have also increased (Malloy & Vizi, 2022; Şimşek & Ee Young Cou, 2019; Bundesministerium, 2015; Arslan, 2014; Atienza Cerezo & Van Dijk, 2010; Crawford, 2000). This is primarily driven by the historicalpolitical context of migration and colonial heritage in European countries (Repoussi & Tutiaux-Guillion, 2010).

The term "socio-culturally other" is used to describe these communities from the field of Pedagogy and Education. Capotorti's (1977) definition of "minority", as outlined in the United Nations' "Study on the Rights of Persons Belonging to Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities", provides further clarity.

A group that is numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State and in a non-dominant position, whose members – being nationals of the State – possess ethnic, religious, or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language. (Capotorti, 1977: 5).

In that context, Bengoa (2003) describes in his theories the development of these communities, categorized into *four generations of minorities*. Drawing on theories and definitions (Kymlicka & Straehle, 2001; Bengoa, 2003; Roeck, 1993; Hobsbawm, 1989; Caportorti, 1977;) with sources in international and European laws, six main groups of "minorities" are outlined:

- National "minorities": These groups are defined as people with a nation-state who share distinct cultural, ethnic, or linguistic characteristics that set them apart from the majority population. They exhibit a sense of belonging to another nation, whether explicitly stated or not (Capotorti, 1977). The historical emergence of national minorities is closely related to the formation of nation-states especially in the 20th century (Calduch Cervera, 1998; Bengoa, 2003).
- **Religious "minorities":** Refers to individuals and communities who hold religious belief practices or affiliations that differ from the dominant or majority religious tradition within a given society (Ferrari, 2021; Geoff, 1997).
- "Minorities" of indigenous/ ancestral/ aboriginal peoples: This definition encompasses native groups whether in the minority or majority, who possess distinct ethnic cultural, and often linguistic characteristics. The term emphasizes their distinct cultural identities, often rooted in traditions and practices that predate the arrival of colonizers or settlers in a given territory (Castellino, 2010).
- Linguistic and cultural "minorities": refer to individuals or communities whose primary native language differs from that of the majority in a given region or country. These groups often share a sense of cultural common identity and solidarity based on their language (Churchill, 1986).

- "Minorities" through migration: This aggrupation refers to individuals or communities with migration and geographical movements' background, voluntarily or forced due to climate catastrophes, economic, social, or other crises and conflicts (Bengoa, 2003).
- "Minorities of minorities": This concept refers to subgroups within minority communities that face marginalization and vulnerabilities due to their specific distinct identity or belonging (LGBTIQ+, people with disabilities, etc.) (Kymlicka & Strehle, 2001).

Studies on minoritized groups in history textbooks show the persistence of stereotyped and stigmatized images (Çayır, 2016; Özsüer, 2012), as well as Europeanist imperial narratives within history textbooks (Bernhard, 2013; Atienza & Van Dijk, 2007). Studies reveal (Cajani, 2008; Räthzel, 1997) that Islam, in particular, is often depicted as the "Other" (Chapman, 2011), reinforcing a stronger sense of "us" and national belonging. However, Prats (2012) points out a positive development in Spanish history textbooks as the Muslim World now receives more attention than before. Nevertheless, Samper and Garreta (2011) also note that since the 9/11 attacks, associations between Islam and terrorism have increased in history textbooks. A broader study from the Ministry of Education reveals similar findings also in German history textbooks. In this context, Migration and Refugees are portrayed as a thread, particularly in Europe (Markom & Weinhäupl, 2013, Bauman, 2006; Said, 1978).

Finally, this depiction of minorities as sources of internal or external danger has also been observed in studies of Turkish history textbooks (Durna & Bellatti, 2018; Şimşek, 2013; Özsüer, 2012). Çayır (2016) emphasizes that the main reason for this portrayal is the weight of the national narrative which persists. Nevertheless, in recent years, Turkey has shown significant improvements in its educational approach, particularly in fostering the development of historical methods and critical thinking skills among students (Şimşek, 2008; 2018; Çayır, 2016; Aydın, 2001).

Method

This cross-cultural research (Von Borries, 2009) poses a challenge due to its comparative and multi-perspective nature. It is an adaptation of a previous instrument, combining frequency-absence analysis with a mixed method (Krippendorff, 1980). However, this study involves the comparison of three different concepts from three distinct countries (Repoussi & Tutiaux–Guillon, 2010; Nicholls, 2006).

To empirically support the arguments with the results, a hermeneutic-semantic analysis with nominal data has been applied a posteriori. The comparative method is a monothematic procedure (Haupt & Kocka, 2009) aimed at identifying common features and causal connections within a single phenomenon. The goal was to create a historical method applied in educational research (Sáez-Rosenkranz, 2016) within the field of History of Didactics.



The Sample

The study has been guided by specific criteria aimed at selecting the most widely used and popular educational and history textbooks in each country (Durna, 2022). This approach ensures that the chosen textbooks are representative of the typical educational materials employed in each context.

The Spanish sample is drawn from textbooks used in the third and fourth ESOs of Catalonia. The German textbooks are from the seventh to tenth grades of Realschule Bavaria, and the Turkish textbooks are from the eighth and tenth grades of high school. The sample is outlined in the following table (1):

Table 1

Country	Editorial	Authors	Title of Textbook	Publishing Year	Place
Turkey	MEB Devlet Kitapları Saray Matbaacılık	Başol, S. Yıldırım, T. Koyuncu, M. Yıldız, A. Evirgen, Ö.	İlköğretim Türkiye Cumhuriyeti İnkilap Tarihi ve Atatürkçülük 8. Sınıf Ders Kitabı	2016	Ankara
	Tuna Matbaacılık	Tüysüz, S.	Ortaöğretim Tarih 10. Sınıf Ders Kitabı	2015	Ankara
	Cornelsen Verlag	Vohenstrauss, D. Bruchertseifer, H. Rieger, J. Wein, G. Zissler, J.	Entdecken und Verstehen 7. Realschule Bayern	2016	Berlin
	Cornelsen Verlag	Thammer, D. Bruchertseifer, H. Rothenberger, K. Wein, G. Zissler, J.	Entdecken und Verstehen 8. Realschule Bayern	2015	Berlin
Germany	Cornelsen Verlag	Vohenstrauss, D. Billinger, S. Bruchertseifer, H. Ehrmann, A. Fritze, M. Janker, C. Wein, G. Zissler, J.	Entdecken und Verstehen 9. Realschule Bayern	2016	Berlin
	Cornelsen Verlag	Eichstätt, F. Buchloe, H. Gärtner, M. Iberl, M. et al.	Entdecken und Verstehen 10. Realschule Bayern	2014	Berlin
	Editorial Vicens Vives	García, M. Gatell, A.	Geografia i Història 4. Educació Secundaria	2016	Spain
Spain	Editorial Vicens Vives	Garcia, M. Gatell, C. Riesco, S.	Geografia i Història 3. Educació Secundaria	2015	Spain

Sample of the Textbooks



Data Collection

The research conducted a content analysis methodology to investigate the presence and distribution of specific variables within a corpus of texts, consisting of books, chapters, units, or paragraphs. This methodological approach is designed to provide empirical insights into the textual representation of selected concepts, which includes the abovementioned variables and categories.

- 1. Data Collection:
 - A defined corpus of the sample was selected as the primary data source. This corpus consisted of eight history textbooks (2013-2016) and a data recollection of 1678 paragraphs.
 - Each text (paragraph) represents data and was subjected to a thorough assessment to identify individual paragraphs for further analysis.
- 2. Variable Identification:
 - A set of predetermined variables was established to represent the concepts of interest, including categories defined in previous studies.
- 3. Data Recording:
 - A comprehensive dataset was created, where each row represented a distinct paragraph from the corpus, and each column corresponded to a specific variable.
- 4. Percentage Calculation:
 - The percentage of paragraphs containing each variable was calculated.
 - The formula used for percentage calculation was: Percentage Presence of Variable X=Number of Paragraphs with Variables X; Total Number of Paragraphsx100%.
- 5. Quantitative Analysis:
 - The data were converted into quantitative representations using data analysis software like SPSS/EXCEL
- 6. Analysis and Interpretation:
 - The resultant quantitative data were subjected to rigorous analysis to discern patterns, trends, and variations in the representation of the studied concepts within the corpus.
 - Conclusions and insights were subsequently drawn based on the findings.

This methodological approach, rooted in content analysis (Bardin 1996; Krippendorf, 1980), provides a systematic and objective means to investigate variables' presence and



distribution of specific variables in textual material, facilitating empirically grounded insights and scholarly contributions.

Data Analysis

The Analysis of the Textbooks from Different Countries: The Construction of the Variables

To make a large-scale international and cross-cultural study of the textbooks possible, variables were created from the textbooks themselves in this study. In total 64 variables have been analyzed, of which five are dedicated to the structural analysis of the books (page, unity, chapter, paragraph, and content), 17 to the geographical space (Germany, Turkey, Catalonia, Spain, etc.), six to the space-time (sixteenth to twenty-first century) and 34 to the spatial analysis of "minorities" (Christians, Muslims, Jews, indigenous peoples, etc.). This magnitude of variables allowed us to cover and analyze a large amount of data (Durna, 2022).

How to Analyze "Nation", "National History" and Other Spaces?

The creation of the geographic-space variables permitted us in this study to identify the geographic space where the historical narrative is presented in the textbooks. All variables were continuously reviewed, and aligned with the theories and results. The dynamical significance of the variables (Van Borries, 2009) in the particular context of other countries has also been analyzed and examined in detail. Thus, the variable has been adapted in cases of different meanings or interpretations. For each spatial variable (geographical spaces) abbreviations have been used, to be able to organize and code them in the EXCEL sheets. Various spatial variables have been utilized, each represented by an abbreviation for organization and coding within EXCEL sheets. The spatial variables, along with their respective abbreviations, are as follows:

Table 2

· · ·		and of Geographical valuetee.		
	Α	Germany	EC	Spain-Catalonia
	AB	Germany-Bavaria	EU	Europe
	AM	America	HG	Global History
	В	Bavaria (Freistaat Bayern)	R	Russia
	BA	The Balkans	Т	Turkey
	С	Catalonia	USA	The United States of America
	Ε	Spain		

Abbreviations of Geographical Variables.¹

How to Identify "Minorities" In History Textbooks?

To identify and examine the representation of "minorities", we developed a method for the construction of the variables, based on relevant theories and definitions (Bengoa,

¹ Çitar bellattti y a ti.



2013; Kymlicka & Straehle, 2012; Capotorti, 1977). This method involved the construction of six primary variables (National minorities, religious minorities, linguistic minorities, minorities through migration, minorities of minorities" and 34 sub-variables (Jews, Sinti & Roma, LGTBIQ+, etc.). These variables served as key criteria to evaluate the content of each paragraph in the textbooks. In each paragraph, we analyzed the presence or absence. This approach allowed us to systematically assess and document the portrayal of "minorities" within the textbooks, providing a structured and comprehensive methodology for our study.

Results

Organization and Structure of the History Textbooks

The analysis involved a total of 1,678 paragraphs extracted from eight history textbooks. One of the most notable differences between the textbooks concerns the content: 54, 47% (n=907) of the content is derived from German textbooks. The textbooks with the lowest content are those from Spain (19,58%/n=335), while those from Turkey books occupy a quartile (25,95%/n=436) of the distribution. This difference, on the one hand, is due to the criteria of analyzing the historical time abovementioned, on the other hand, since history teaching starts in Germany-Bavaria already in the sixth grade. History began in Spain one year later and in Turkey even two years later. Thus, the break in chronology in the Turkish textbooks stands out. While students in the eighth grade study deeply the foundation of the Turkish Republic and the First World War at the beginning of the twentieth century, one year later in the ninth grade, the students study Ancient and Medieval History. This unusual break in the chronological in textbooks happens especially between the eighth and ninth grades, where the education of secularism and "Kemalism" are the main historical themes. In the tenth grade, the textbooks deal with Modern History (sixteenth century) and Contemporary History (twentieth century), connecting chronological with the ninth grade.

The Dominance of "National and Contemporary History" Over Others

The dominance of national history over other historical content is quite evident in the following table (3) and graphic (1). This table encompasses the entire sample and historical content from all three countries combined. Remarkably, nearly one-third of the sample is dedicated to the variables "Germany" and "Bavaria" together, while the variable "Europe" represents even less at 20%. The variable "Turkey" also holds a significant position at 22%, indicating a highly ethnocentric narrative. On the other hand, the variable "Spain" (5%) suggests a more evenly distributed approach to historical content.



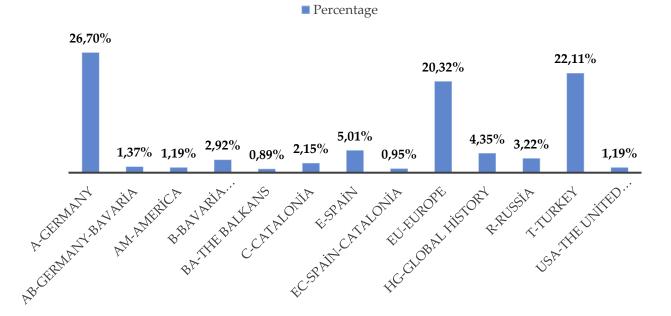
Table 3

Geographical Spaces	Frequency	Percentage
A-Germany	448	26,7%
AB-Germany-Bavaria	23	1,37%
AM-America	20	1,19%
B-Bavaria	49	2,92%
BA-The Balkans	15	0,89%
C-Catalonia	36	2,15%
E-Spain	84	5,01%
EC-Spain-Catalonia	16	0,95%
EU-Europe	341	20,32%
HG-Global History	73	4,35%
R-Russia	54	3,22%
T-Turkey	371	22,11%
USA-The United States of America	20	1,19%
Total	1678	100%

Results from the Geographical Analysis of the Textbooks

Figure 1

The Geographical Distribution of the Historical Content from Germany, Spain and Turkey



It is noteworthy that World History (5,3%) and Global History (4,35%) in the twentieth century are present in German and Spanish textbooks, but notably absent in Turkish textbooks.²

² Since the 2000 curriculum reform, exists an elective course like "Contemporary Turkish and World History", which focuses on modern historical events, transformations, and Turkey's global role (Öztürk, 2011).



The variable America (1,19%) has a lower representation compared to regional history such as Bavaria (B+ AB: 4,29%) or the history of the autonomous community of Catalonia (3,1%). This suggests, that regional or autonomous history is more frequently emphasized than the fragmented represented variable America. Textbooks tend to associate this variable with colonization, but Turkish textbooks do not address it.

The variable Balkans first emerged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and is barely represented at all in the sample (0,89%). In German and Spanish textbooks, it is linked with the Balkan Wars and the division of Europe, while in Turkish textbooks, the history of the Balkans as a province of the Ottoman Empire is strongly emphasized. This highlights a differentiated historical perspective regarding the Balkans between Turkish, German, and Spanish textbooks.

The Middle East (2,32%) has a higher presence compared to the variable America, but less than Russia (3,22%). Both variables are associated with conflicts and wars in the historical context.

The United States (1,19%) is weakly represented in the sample, but as strong as America and stronger than the Balkans countries.

In terms of temporal distribution, all three countries primarily focus on contemporary history, especially twentieth-century history. The distribution of the other historical periods and time conceptions besides the Europeanist perspective is considerably low. It is noteworthy that twenty-first-century history does not appear in Turkish textbooks.

Turkish and Spanish textbooks cover the most extensive unit in the final year of secondary school, the same does not apply to Germany. In the case of German textbooks, the unit "Die nationalsozialistische Diktatur"³ (7,27%) is the most extensive unit of all. However, as Carrier (2013) points out, the historical theme of dictatorship and National Socialism is also repeated in other subjects, potentially leading to a sense of saturation among the students since it is covered again in upper secondary education.

The history of the Reformation and the wars (3,22%) caused by religion in Europe is the one most covered in the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries. Similarly, it can be noted in the last course, that the Cold War and the division of Europe (4.59%) is the second highest unit across the entire secondary school analyzed.

In Spanish textbooks, it appears that the largest unit is not focused on nationalism or fascism but rather on the subsequent stage, the transition to democracy, including autonomy (1,61%) in the fourth ESO. As Díez Gutiérrez (2013) points out in his research, Spanish students have little knowledge of nationalism and fascism from textbooks and only a fragmented picture of the Spanish Civil War.

The largest unit is titled "The Longest Century (1800-1922)" in Turkish textbooks and predominantly deals with the construction of the Turkish Republic. This topic places a

³ Translation by the author: *National Socialist Dictatorship*.



significant emphasis on nationalism and national identity without a negative or critical view of this concept.

Moreover, none of the textbooks, including the Spanish and German ones, explore the international and European cooperation between the nationalists and fascists in the early twentieth century.

In the subsequent paragraphs, we will delve into the specific content of the textbooks regarding Europe and explore any crossovers in their content.

Europe in history textbooks

Europe occupies a significant place in history textbooks in all three countries, second only to national history. Western Europe, in particular, holds a dominant position, accounting for more than half (55%) of the historical content in total. The presence of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe is negligible (6%), even less than a generic representation of Europe (7%). One-third of the content (32%) refers to other spaces (e. g. Asia, Africa, Australia, etc.). In the following table, we can observe how this distribution is separated by the three countries:

Table 4

EUROPE	Frequency	Percentage
Germany	176	51,61%
16 th century	34	9,97%
17 th century	33	9,68%
18 th century	47	13,78%
19 th century	31	9,09%
20 th century	31	9,09%
Spain	121	35,48%
17 th century	29	8,5%
18 th century	33	9,68%
19 th century	29	8,50%
20 th century	24	7,04%
21 st century	6	1,76%
Turkey	44	12,9%
16 th century	3	0,88%
17 th century	17	4,99%
18 th century	13	3,81%
19th century	5	1,76%
20 th century	6	1,76%
Total General	341	100%

Temporal Distribution of Europe in the history textbooks of Germany, Spain, and Turkey

Notably, none of the textbooks provide a clear definition or delimitation of Europe. As a result, according to Prats (2001), Europe could be described as an elusive or undefined concept in these textbooks. While German and Spanish textbooks place more emphasis on



Western Europe, Turkish textbooks hardly cover other spaces, due to the strong focus on Turkey and the history of the Ottoman Empire.

Therefore, as Kühberger (2006) points out, the aim should no longer be the further expansion of Europe in textbooks, but to clarify the term by defining it and making clear the overall context of the European dimension. Eastern Europe shows itself in a conflict-ridden relationship, the *trouble spot* of Europe. Despite this, German textbooks refer to it as the only multicultural area of Europe. This conveys the image that multi-ethnic coexistence would not be possible peacefully.

According to Kühberger (2012), there is a *Parade-of-Civilization-Approach* at the European level. This means the European dimension is used to develop one's national history. Therefore, the national space itself is presented with more power and Europe has a more additive function (Prats, 2001; López, 2010).

Spanish textbooks have more of a homogeneous distribution in terms of the European dimension, although they tend to have a Western European emphasis. However, Europe appears as an opponent of Eastern Europe, and, especially the Middle East. Ancient roots are sought, which lie in Greek history or ancient Rome, perceived as the sources of a Christian and modern culture. The boundaries of Europe are blurred in textbooks and other cultures, especially indigenous, African, Oriental, and Asian, are subordinated and appear as a function of the subject matter.

In Turkish textbooks, the *Europeans* or *Westerners*, who represent Europe, are represented as a fixed entity. The term *Western*, however, has a positive connotation in the secular view of history, especially about the reforms carried out by Atatürk after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

German textbooks most often refer to covenants, treaties, etc. Moreover, Spanish textbooks also refer to the concept of the European Union, although this concept is ultimately depicted as an administrative and bureaucratic organization, and above all an economic organization. The multicultural, liberal, democratic, and pluralist concept is less highlighted.

Commonalities and crossovers showed up mainly in historical topics, especially in German and Spanish textbooks: Modernity, the Discoveries, Colonization, and Decolonization, the Reformation, the House of Habsburg, The Age of Revolutions, The French Revolution, The Industrial Revolution, The First and Second World War, The division of Europe, The Cold War, Globalization, etc. The differences are most evident in the Turkish textbooks: on the one hand in the amount of material, on the other hand, in the perspectives presented. Eastern Europe is treated as part of the Ottoman Empire, the Second World War is not covered, but the Cold War is mentioned. Globalization, however, is not a historical topic in Turkish textbooks.



The visibility of "Minorities"

"Minority" representation accounts for 15% of the entire sample. In particular, the distribution of textbooks from Spain has almost no visibility of "minorities" (>3%). Textbooks from Turkey have the highest representation of "minorities" in the sample with 6.28%. Notably, German textbooks have the highest amount of content, but concerning "minorities" the visibility is lower compared to Turkish textbooks (5,92%).

However, it must be stressed that a high representation of "minorities" is not necessarily a sign of an inclusive representation of them. It is rather a manifestation of the textbooks that the concept of "minority" plays a significant role in the narrative construction of the historical context (Grawan, 2014; Krippendorf, 1980. This also is the case when there are almost no images of "minorities", especially in multicultural countries and societies, such as Spain. It indicates that cultural and religious representations are mainly inherited in the national "majority" of the country and of the autonomous community of Catalonia.

The fact that two variables ("minority") take up a share of 73% of all six variables also indicates a large discrepancy. These two variables are "religious minorities" (41%) and "national minorities" (32%). While Jews and Muslims are highlighted as sub-variables in German textbooks, we could identify in Spanish and Turkish textbooks the sub-variables concerning Christians and Jewish people. The Holocaust is the main and consistent topic where especially, but not just, the Jewish people are associated with it. In German and Spanish textbooks, the sub-variable Sinti and Roma appear alongside the Jewish people as secondary victims during the Holocaust.

Besides the Holocaust and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Jewish community does not appear anymore in national or European history. Turkish textbooks show an extremely picturesque, cliché-full, but peaceful coexistence in a multicultural society during the Ottoman Empire. The Holocaust as a topic does not appear in Turkish textbooks, since after the historical period 1923, other topics appear on a case-by-case basis.

However, this colorful representation of "minorities" turns in the historical content suddenly into the opposite also in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially concerning "national minorities". These centuries could be also named the age of "minorities" conflicts (or creation), as German and Spanish textbooks also have similar negative portrayals of "minorities", but are less openly hostile.

Still, German and Spanish textbooks also paint a negative image regarding Muslims, migrations, or refugee communities. While in German and Spanish textbooks the Ottoman Empire is portrayed as a threat to Europe, during the twentieth century this image is still current. The Balkan Wars, the Middle Eastern conflicts and wars, and the terrorist attack on



9/11 are the topics when Muslims appear in textbooks. Islam and the Islamic states are highlighted and associated with fundamentalism and terrorism.

Extracts in German Textbooks in the seventh grade about the invasion and terror from Ottoman Turks during the fifteenth century:

Türken vor Wien

Ab dem 15. Jahrhundert stellten Österreich und besonders dessen Hauptstadt Wien das Hauptangriffsziel der Türken dar. Mehmed II. ließ seine Akindschi*-Soldaten Verwüstung und Terror ins Donauland bringen und das Gebiet auskundschaften. (...) Mehr als 150 Jahr später, 1683, versuchten die Türken erneut Wien zu erobern. Durch die ständige Angst vor der Bedrohung durch das Osmanische Reich hatten die Kaiser aber vorgesorgt.⁴ (Cornelsen, Realschule 7, 2016: 169).

Extracts in German Textbooks in the tenth grade about "Islamic terror organizations":

Kampf gegen den Terrorismus

Terroristische Vereinigungen operieren international, vor allem islamische Fundamentalisten haben internationale Netzwerke aufgebaut. Sie fordern die Rückkehr zu den Werten des Korans und lehnen die westliche Lebensform ab. Im Kampf gegen die Ungläubigen rufen islamische Fundamentalisten immer wieder zum Heiligen Krieg auf. ⁵ (Cornelsen, Realschule 10, 194).

Extracts of a Spanish history textbook and treatment of "Islamic terrorism" and the world's conflicts.

El Fonamentalisme islàmic

La denominacio de fonamentalisme islàmic inclou diversos corrents religiosos islàmics que s'oposen a la propagació del laïcisme i dels models socials occidentals als seus països. (...) A partir del 2003 els moviments fonamentalistes van crear organitzacions terroristes islamistes que actúen a escala mundial.⁶ (Vicens Vives, Geografia i Història 4, 327).

⁶ Translation by the author: *Islamic Fundamentalism*. The term Islamic fundamentalism encompasses various Islamic religious movements that opposes the spread of secularism and Western social models in their countries. (...) Starting from 2003, fundamentalist movements created Islamist terrorist organizations that operate on a global scale.



⁴ Translation by the author: *Turks before Vienna*. From the 15th century onwards, Austria and especially its capital, Vienna, became the main target of the Turks. Mehmed II ordered hist Akinci* soldiers to bring devastation and terror to the Danube region and to sout the area. (...) More than 150 years later, 1683 the Turks attempted to conquer Vienna once again. Due to the constant fear of the threat from the Ottoman Empire, the emperors had made preparations.

⁵ Translation by the author: *War against Terrorism.* Terrorist organizations operate internationally, especially Islamic fundamentalist who have established international networks. They demand a return to the values of the Quran and reject the Western way of life. In their fight against non-believers, Islamic fundamentalist repeatedly call for a Holy War.

However, the mistrust and hostility against Armenians, Greeks, and Roma stand out in Turkish textbooks. This variable "national minorities" has less presence in the other countries but is of higher importance in Turkish textbooks. These "minority" communities are mainly associated with and referred to the content as "the Armenian case", which pertains to the "allegations" of a genocide that purportedly took place during the First World War. The repeated presence of this historical event during the eighth and tenth grades in Turkey.

Extracts of Turkish history textbook and treatment of "minorities" and Armenians in tenth grade:

Yabancı okullarda eğitim gören gençler milli kültürlerden uzaklaşıyor ve içinden çıktıkları topluma yabancılaşıyordu. Bunların önemli bir bölümü, eğitimlerini, tamamladıklarında okullarının bağlı bulunduğu ülkenin anlayışı ve yarar doğrultusunda çalışmaya hazır kişiler haline geliyorlardı. Ayrıca Hıristiyanlığı yaymak ve azınlıkları ayaklanmaya tasvik ederek Osmanlı Devleti'ni parçalamak da bu okulların amaçları arasındaydı.⁷ (TUNA, Tarih 10, 2015: 192.)

In Spanish textbooks, the variable of "indigenous" minorities (13%) is more prominent when compared to "migrant minorities". The presence of "indigenous minorities" is most notable in the sixteenth century, particularly about issues such as colonization. This presence is once again highlighted in the twentieth century, particularly in the context of decolonization in America and Asia. However, it is important to note the historical text in German and Spanish history textbooks often emphasizes the Europeanist-influenced perspective rather than focusing on indigenous or ancestral cultures. This emphasis is reflected in the units and chapters like "Die Neue Welt" wird europäisch"⁸ (Cornelsen, Realschule 7, 152), "Europa und Amerika"⁹ (Cornelsen, Realschule 7, 146), "Wem gehört das Land?"¹⁰ (Cornelsen, Realschule 7, 114).

Extracts of Spanish history textbook and treatment of American history and Colonization.

La colonització del territorio

Els nours territoris es van incorporar a la corona de Castella. D'aquesta manera, es van introducir a Amèrica i les Filipines la lengua, la cultura, la religió católica i les lleis castellanes. Un gran nombre de clergues i funcionaris van participar en aquesta

¹⁰ Translation by the author: *Who is the Owner of the Land?*



⁷ Translation by the author: Young people receiving education in foreign schools were growing distant from their national cultures and becoming estranged from the societies they came from. A significant portion of them, upon completing their education, were prepared to work in line with the understanding and interest of the country to which their schools were affiliated. Furthermore, the goal of these schools included spreading Christianity and encouraging minorities to revolt, thereby fragmenting the Ottoman Empire.

⁸ Translation by the author: "The New World" becomes European.

⁹ Translation by the author: *Europe and America*.

procés d'evangelització i en la colonització.¹¹ (Vicens Vives, Geografia i Història 3, 264.)

This description of colonization and indigenous peoples also applies to German textbooks. However, it is remarkable how the Holocaust is highlighted in German textbooks while the genocide of the Herreros (1904-1908) from the German Empire receives minimal mention.

The variable "minorities of minorities" has almost no representation (3%). While this variable is missing in the Turkish textbooks, it appears in German and Spanish textbooks, primarily in connection with the Holocaust. Therefore, the Holocaust could also be viewed as a "catch-all" representation of various minority groups.

The variable "minorities through migration" does not appear in Turkish textbooks, but it is present in German and Spanish textbooks during the 20th century, relating to migration from Africa, the Middle East, or Asia, and referring to the European colonists.

Conclusion

This comparative analysis of history textbooks from Germany, Spain, and Turkey provides valuable insights into the role of history education in shaping students' perceptions of their histories, the world, and their place within it. While each of these countries has its distinct historical narratives and educational priorities, there are notable similarities and differences in how they address key themes in their history textbooks.

In terms of the geographical and temporal analysis of history textbooks, the results consistently show that all three countries prioritize national history as the primary focus, particularly in terms of the distribution of geographical variables (Bellatti, 2018; Şimşek, 2013; Kühberger, 2012;). This reflects a shared goal of fostering a strong sense of national identity and historical consciousness among students (Çayır, 2016; Rüsen, 2001; Crawford, 2000). We could also identify hegemonic and imperialist influence (Bernhard, 2013; Şimşek, 2013) from the local and national spaces (Kühberger, 2012) in the historical context of the analyzed textbooks.

Additionally, as indicated by other research findings (Yildirim, 2016; Gómez Carrasco et al., 2014; López Facal, 2010; Cajani, 2008; Özbaran, 2003), ideological, nationalist, mythological elements have not been eliminated from history textbooks, particularly Spain and Turkey (Yıldırım, 2018; Yalı, 2016), but also it has been identified in German textbooks (Hinz & Kühberger, 2019).

¹¹ Translation by the author: *The colonization of the territory*: *The new territories were incorporated into the Crown of Castile. In this way, the Spanish language, culture, Catholic religion, and Castilian laws were introduced to America and the Philippines. A large number of clergy and officials participated in this process of evangelization and colonization.*



Notably, in Spanish-Catalan textbooks, there appears to be a presence of peripheral nationalism, as previously demonstrated by Clemen (2011). In this research, we identified that Spanish and German textbooks allocate more space to local or autonomous history compared to World or Global History. In general, the most notable commonality is the "ethno-centralization" in history textbooks (Bellatti, 2018; Kühberger, 2012).

Furthermore, the connotation of nationalism differs between German history textbooks and Turkish textbooks. German history textbooks portray nationalism negatively (Von Borries, 2009), while Turkish textbooks depict it positively (Yıldırım, 2016). Furthermore, it is noteworthy that German textbooks tend to avoid using the term "nation" when referring to Germany, whereas the concept of the "nation" is prevalent in Turkish textbooks. Therefore, in Turkey, one of the most extensively researched topics revolves around the portrayal of nation and national identities in history textbooks, with a focus on promoting peace, understanding, and multiculturalism (Kibar, 2019; Yıldırım, 2016; Çayır, 2015; Şimşek & Alaslan, 2014; Bahaban, 2014).

In Spanish textbooks, there is an ambiguous approach to this term. It is viewed negatively and as associated with racism in the context of National Socialism or Francos' Dictatorship (Diéz Gutierrez, 2013). However, when it comes to Catalan or Basque nationalism, there is no questioning or negative connotation.

A huge difference is about the treatment of "nation" and national or regional and autonomous history/ spaces. While the topics about Europe in Spanish, and German overlap, the same level of integration does not occur with the national history narratives.

Regarding to non-national history, there is limited coverage of global history in all three countries' history textbooks, with a general lack of emphasis on global interactions and the interconnectedness of nations and regions in shaping historical developments (Kühberger, 2012). According to Mirálles and Gómez (2017), there is a significant connection between homogeneous history education and the construction of national identity, particularly in Eastern and Southeast Europe and the Middle East (Prats, 2012; Facal, 2010). These regions are consistently depicted in a very demeaning and stigmatized manner, often as spaces marked by recurring conflict (Todorov, 2008; Bernhard, 2013).

About the Americas an appropriation of this space in German and Spanish textbooks, as the process of colonization is highlighted more at the expense of treating the history of the Americas itself (Bernhard, 2013). Furthermore, as previous research results have demonstrated before, America in Spanish and German history textbooks contain discriminatory elements and a "Europeanism" but also "Hispanism" (Morales & Lischinksy, 2008; Bernhard, 2013).

In examining historical themes within "Europe" in history textbooks, we find a mixture of commonalities and differences that shed light on the overarching narrative. One of the most striking commonalities is the prevalence of Eurocentrism as shown in other



research results (Şimşek, 2013; Kühberger, 2012; Prats, 2012; Facal, 2010), a perspective that prominently places European history at the forefront while occasionally marginalizing the contributions of other regions and cultures to global historical developments.

In terms of historical themes, it is remarkable that the historical narratives of the three countries converge and base their conception of Europe on existing myths (Bernhard, 2013; Bauman, 2006). These myths include topics such as the discovery of America, colonization and decolonization, the identification of European identity with Greek and Roman history, the emergence of modernity, and the Industrial Revolution, among others. Another commonality is the absence of a clear definition of Europe in all three countries. None of the textbooks provide a precise definition or demarcation of Europe (Şimşek, 2013). Consequently, "Europe" appears as what Prats (2001) describes as a "Phantom" in these history textbooks.

A significant distinction is evident in Turkish textbooks, warranting separate consideration. The majority of their content revolves around the history of Turkey and the Ottoman Empire, with a notable focus on promoting Turkish ethnocentrism, tracing its roots back to Central Asia. Consequently, the space dedicated to the variable "Europe" is minimal in Turkish textbooks. Another noteworthy difference pertains to the term and variable "Eastern Europe" which does not appear in Turkish textbooks and is scarcely present in Spanish textbooks as well. Instead, the geographical variable in Turkish textbooks, referring to the Balkans, is predominantly discussed within the context of the Ottoman Empire, rather than being closely associated with Europe. Nevertheless, as Şimşek (2013) points out, even the limited space dedicated to "Europe" also adopts Europeanist perspectives, relying on the same myths as seen in German and Spanish textbooks and lacking a clear definition or demarcation of this geographical and political concept.

Regarding the representation of "minorities", one of the most important findings is that "minorities" hardly appear in the history textbooks of all three countries, even less nowadays "minorities" in their national history. While "minorities" account for 15% of the entire sample, their visibility and portrayal vary significantly.

Furthermore, this study has shown a prevalence of two main variables: "religious minorities" (41%) and "national minorities" (32%). These categories are often associated with historical events like the Holocaust and alleged genocides, or other conflicts and wars. The Holocaust, in particular, serves as a central topic in the representation of minority groups, particularly Jewish people (Carrier, 2013). Another shared characteristic among the history textbooks of these three countries is the omission of current minority communities in both national and European history. This omission reflects a historical perspective that tends to focus on past events and narratives while neglecting the multicultural and diverse societies that exist in the present day (Çayır, 2016; ; Van Dijk & Atienza, 2010; Kymlicka & Straehle, 2001).



However, the study also highlights substantial differences in how "minorities" are depicted. Turkish textbooks, despite having the highest overall content, portray "minorities" more prominently (6,28%) compared to German textbooks (5,92%), while Spanish textbooks allocate less visibility to "minorities" (>3%). It is essential to note that a high representation of "minorities" does not necessarily imply an inclusive representation but rather underscores the significance of the concept in shaping historical narratives.

Furthemore, while Jewish and Muslim communities feature predominantly, other minority groups receive limited attention, and their representation outside of context like the Holocaust is rare. In Turkish textbooks, there is a notable shift from positive portrayals of multiculturalism during the Ottoman Empire to negative depictions in more recent history, especially regarding "national minorities". In this sense, particularly in recent years could has been observed a deeper analysis and improvements in the representation of other cultural and ethnical communities in Turkish textbooks (Şimşek & Ee Young Cou, 2019; Yalı, 2016, Çayır, 2016; Çayır, 2015; Arslan, 2014; Özsüer, 2012;). Nonetheless, minorities are stigmatized and depicted in all countries as an internal or external thread, especially Islam in German and Spanish history textbooks as previous research has demonstrated too (Durna, 2018; Samper & Garreta, 2011; Cajani, 2008; Räthzel, 1997).

However, when there are representations of these minority groups, they often relate to national and European narratives, such as "indigenous minorities" in the European context as entities involved in global colonization (Bauman, 2006; Ferro, 1981). In German and Spanish textbooks, a hierarchical, dominant, imperial, and hegemonic position of Europeans against "minorities" has been observed (Bernhard, 2013). Apart from this perspective, the "indigenous minorities" do not appear. The same applies to "minorities" in other African or Asian spaces.

Therefore Prats (2012) suggests that history and history textbook education continue to have an impact on contemporary society and are closely related to the social, political, and cultural context. Above all, the analysis of national and European geographical spaces confirms the tendency towards a homogeneous education about "minorities".

Finally, in this era marked by the rise of populism and nationalism, the rejection of minoritized communities, Europeanism, and ethno-centralization in history textbooks underscores the critical role of history education in countering such divisive ideologies. History teaching should evolve, becoming more open to contemporary perspectives and embracing the contributions and experiences of current minoritized groups, but also including the place of women's history in current history textbooks (Alpargu & Çelik, 2016). It is imperative, according to Chakrabarty (1998), to move away from the shadows of nationalism and explore new avenues for research and pedagogy in the field of social sciences, including the history of minorities, particularly in history education. By doing so, we can pave the way for a more inclusive and relevant understanding of history that aligns with the complexities of our modern, multicultural, and "liquid societies" (Bauman, 2010).



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