

**ARE WE A NATION OR STATE; WHAT'S THE STATE OF OUR
NATION?**

Macedonian and Bulgarian national history textbook discourses

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ABSTRACT

Contesting national history discourses in North Macedonia and Bulgaria are a defining characteristic of the countries' bilateral relations. Attempts to revise those discourses as an effort to improve neighborly relation materialized in 2017 the creation of a Joint History Commission, tasked with the scientific interpretation of historical events based on authentic historical sources and creating a more coherent historical narrative. To date, no revisions have been made, and the progress and work of the commission have not been made public. Yet backlash against textbook revision remains as strong as ever. In light of this stalemate, and in hopes to better understand opposition to educational reform, this thesis aims to present a comparative analysis of the Macedonian and Bulgarian historical discourses between the second half of the 19th century and the end of the Second World War using the method of Critical Discourse Analysis. The results point to the significant constructive power of national historiographies in textbooks. The insights on the way discursive strategies are used simultaneously to construct identities, assign or remove legitimacy to/from historical narratives and claims; and (in)validate group actions provide a contribution to the underdeveloped field of interdisciplinary textbook research, and highlight the need for further research in the Macedonian-Bulgarian context.

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To my parents, Makedonka and Toni, to whom I am forever indebted. Thank you for showing me unconditional love.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis sets out to investigate the way discursive strategies are used in Macedonian and Bulgarian high school textbooks to construct identities, assign or remove legitimacy to/from historical narratives and claims, and (in)validate actions of the in-group and various out-groups. The main focus is on us-versus-them discourses in Bulgarian and Macedonian high school history textbooks, a topic that is largely unexplored. As a comparative study of Bulgarian and Macedonian historiography, it breaks into the wider yet scarcely populated field of interdisciplinary textbook research. It is an effort towards adding a holistic layer to the traditional understanding of national historiography as historical truth.

The first chapter of the thesis presents the relevant context and background information needed to understand the discourses covered in the analysis. The second chapter of the thesis presents the relevant literature and theoretical frameworks. This chapter defines the academic context which the thesis hopes to contribute to and position itself in. It also highlights the importance for the development of the field of interdisciplinary textbook research, identifies some of the methodological and theoretical challenges, and provides potential ways in which researchers can tackle these challenges. The third chapter, which is brief, describes the methodology and research objective of the thesis. This method describes the applicability of the analytical framework, which is part of the interdisciplinary approach of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as well as the data selection.

The fourth chapter presents the analysis of the chosen textbooks and constitutes the largest part of the thesis. The analysis is organized thematically in three time-based subchapters (second half of the 19th century to the Balkan Wars; Balkan Wars to WWII, and WWII). These

subchapters are prefaced by a brief discussion on use of terms on group belonging and group identities.

The fifth and final chapter contextualizes the analysis within the relevant literature and theory discussed in chapter two, provides an assessment of the method of analysis and suggests ways in which it can be improved, and considers the thesis' implications for further research and ways in which this study can be expanded.

As the first comparative study of Macedonian and Bulgarian textbook discourses, this thesis is a trailblazing effort in interdisciplinary textbook research in the context of the Balkan. As such, it does not claim to be by any means exhaustive, but is envisioned as a solid base for branching out from what we learn from it.

CHAPTER 1: CONTEXT

1.1 Political context

On August 1, 2017, the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of North Macedonia signed the Agreement for Friendship, Good Neighborly Relations, and Cooperation, which stipulated the creation of a mixed, multidisciplinary expert commission for historical and educational affairs, within three months of ratification of the agreement.¹ The commission was tasked with the scientific interpretation of historical events based on authentic historical sources and creating a more coherent historical narrative as part of the national history curricula for middle and high school students in Bulgaria and Macedonia. By negotiating to settle conflicting claims and inconsistencies in the interpretations and teaching of history, this joint project was envisioned as setting in motion a genuine effort to bridge the existing prejudice and lingering enmity between the people in the two countries. However, increasingly nationalist political rhetoric and political turmoil within the last decade have only exacerbated these feelings, and the initiative to modify history textbooks quickly became a target of criticism and met opposition from both the public and scholars.² Although initially the commission seemed to be making progress, according to press conferences and statements by co-chairs Dragi Gjorgiev (MK) and Angel Dimitrov (BG), the debate reached a stalemate at the very beginning of the discussion of 20th century history, a period which is at the core of identity politics in both countries.³ Furthermore, the formation of this joint commission, as well as many others have historically faced public backlash due to lack of media coverage or any public knowledge as to how they are formed.⁴ There is little information about the process in how members of the

¹ Marusic, “North Macedonia, Bulgaria Celebrate Friendship Treaty Anniversary.”

² Vassileva, “How Friendly Is the Bulgaria-Macedonia Friendship Treaty?”

³ Georgievski, “The Co-President of the Bulgarian Side of the Joint Macedonian- Bulgarian Commission, Angel Dimitrov States That the Commission May Not Work Again.”

⁴ Koulouri, “Teaching on the ‘Balkan Express’ | Perspectives on History | AHA.”

commission receive their roles, thus this ambiguity leads to public distrust of joint-treaty commissions.⁵ After the commission's last meeting in December 2020, both sides stated that no progress has been made due to irreconcilable differences.

Upon resolving its decades-long conflict with Greece over the official name of the country in 2018, Macedonia's hopes of accession to the European Union were heavily dependent on Bulgarian support.⁶ However, Bulgaria does not recognize the Macedonian language as a separate language, but rather as a regional form of Bulgarian, and has made that support conditional on the recognition of this claim by the Macedonian government, which dismissed it.⁷ The most recent political and public debates on the origin, authenticity, and legitimacy of Macedonian national identity and language by the two governments ultimately resulted in Bulgaria's veto to Macedonian accession to the EU and were indicative of the uncompromising nature of both sides' positions.⁸ Another condition was that Macedonia remove from or replace in textbooks and monuments the term "Bulgarian fascist occupation" with "Bulgarian administration" when referring to Bulgarian governance of the current Macedonian state territory in the period between 1941 and 1944.⁹ These two conditions, along with other challenges to and subsequent defenses of Macedonian national identity that were deeply intertwined with interpretations of 20th century history, quickly became the centerpiece of politics and public discourse.

1.2 Historical context

The second half of the 19th century marks one of the most important parts of Balkan historiography, which is characterized by the weakening of the Ottoman Empire, emerging national

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Marusic, "North Macedonia Slates 'Scandalous' Bulgarian Push for Role in Constitutional Change."

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Vasileva, "How Friendly Is the Bulgaria-Macedonia Friendship Treaty?"

⁹ Between March 1941 and September 1944, Bulgaria was in alliance with the Axis Powers

ideologies and movements in the Balkan region. The San Stefano Treaty, signed on March 3, 1878 which concluded the Russo-Turkish War, plays an important role in the Macedonian and Bulgarian historiographies, as well as the Macedonian-Bulgarian relations.¹⁰ The San Stefano Treaty was signed between the Russian and Ottoman Empires and resulted in Bulgarian independence, with a Bulgarian Principality spanning a large territory in the Balkan peninsula, including the territory of Macedonia proper. This treaty therefore had a significant role in shaping the future of Macedonian-Bulgarian relations.

The Berlin Treaty, signed on July 13 of the same year was an agreement of diplomatic nature among European powers, hosted in Berlin that aimed at reversing the terms of the San Stefano Treaty to balance the increase of power and influence of the Bulgarian Principality that came with its territorial gains. The revisions made to the San Stefano Treaty provisions reduced the size of the Bulgarian Principality. The Berlin Treaty reinstated Ottoman rule over the territory of Macedonia, which had a far-reaching impact on the Bulgarian and Macedonian national movements and their activities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The First Balkan War (October 8, 1912 - May 30, 1913) was a conflict between the Balkan League, which was composed of Serbia, Montenegro, Greece and Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire, aimed at liberating the Christian population from Ottoman rule. The war ended with the Treaty of London in 1913, which split the Macedonian territory between Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia. The provisions of the Treaty of London led to a strained relationship and feelings of resentment between Serbia and Bulgaria, as Bulgarians felt betrayed after losing Macedonian territories to Serbia. The Second Balkan War (June 29 - August 10, 1913) was fought between former members of the Balkan League members, as opposed to the Ottoman Empire, namely over territorial disputes from the aftermath of the First Balkan War. Bulgaria launched an offensive operation seeking to reclaim lost Macedonian territories in Serbia and

¹⁰ Jelavich, "Negotiating the Treaty of San Stefano.", 174-6

Greece, however it was met with a counteroffensive by their former allies and Romania, leaving Bulgarian troops defeated. The war ended with the Treaty of Bucharest in 1913. Bulgaria took substantial losses of Macedonian territories to the benefit of Serbia. The aftermath of the Balkan Wars was seen as disastrous for both Macedonia, which did not receive autonomy, and Bulgaria, whose territorial aspirations were crushed for a second time.

During WWII, Yugoslavia was under the occupation of the Axis powers from 1941 to 1945, where the Vardar Banate (Province in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia) was divided between Bulgaria and Italian-occupied Albania.¹¹ The Bulgarian authorities at the time were responsible for the deportation of over 7,000 Jews in Skopje and Bitola.¹² The ideological motivations of the Axis powers led many Macedonians to join the Communist Partisan resistance movement led by Josip Broz Tito.¹³ The defeat of the Axis powers in the National Liberation War gave way for Macedonian autonomy within the Yugoslav Federation in 1945, to which it was a part of until its secession and independence in 1991.¹⁴

¹¹ Thomas and Mikulan, *Axis Forces in Yugoslavia 1941-45*, p. 6.

¹² United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Jewish Community of Monastir: A Community in Flux."

¹³ Pettifer, *The New Macedonian Question*.

¹⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Delegitimization and conflict in textbooks

Daniel Bar-Tal and Phillip Hammock define delegitimization as “the categorization of a group, or groups, into extremely negative social categories that exclude it, or them, from the sphere of human groups that act within the limits of acceptable norms and/or values.”¹⁵ The framework they offer outlines the following four forms of delegitimization: dehumanization, trait characterization, outcasting, and political labels.¹⁶ Ellie Podeh successfully demonstrates how this framework can be applied to textbook analysis, focusing on depictions of Jews, Israel, and the Arab-Israeli conflict in Egyptian textbooks.¹⁷ Likewise, Audrey Bryan and Frances Vavrus applied this framework to an analysis of Nazi-era German textbooks, Rwandan textbooks, and Israeli and Palestinian textbooks.¹⁸ Delegitimization rhetoric is widespread and permeates all areas of public discourse, yet it is rarely considered in academia outside of contexts of active conflict (such as the Israeli-Palestinian). This thesis includes an analysis of rhetoric that falls within the scope of the framework proposed by Bar-Tal and Hammock, so a discussion of that analysis would be incomplete without its consideration.

Daniel’s Bar Tal’s work on delegitimization is important for this comparative study because it offers a of ways in which discourse is used to define the in-group versus the out-group, authorize and validate negative feelings and behaviors versus the outgroup, promotes

¹⁵ Bar-Tal, Daniel, and Phillip L. Hammack Jr. *Conflict, Delegitimization, and Violence*. Edited by Linda R. Tropp. *The Oxford Handbook of Intergroup Conflict*. Oxford Handbooks Online, 2012, 3.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Podeh and Samira Alayan, *Multiple Alterities*.

¹⁸ Bryan and Vavrus, “The Promise and Peril of Education: The Teaching of In/Tolerance in an Era of Globalisation.”

uniqueness of the in-group, and emphasizes distinctness from the out-group based on the outgroup's assigned characteristics and traits.

Because of the extremely negative and exclusionary nature of the forms of delegitimization proposed by Bar-Tal and Hammock, they are rarely, if ever, used as reference in textbook analysis. However, forms of delegitimization are indeed present in educational discourses. In the past two decades Balkan countries have made strides in democratizing, globalizing, and improving bilateral relations. This has created a disconnect between political realities and long-standing discourses within the countries. There seems to be an illusion and a gullible assumption that delegitimization rhetoric has been uprooted and given way to political correctness due to rhetorical shifts demonstrated by the intellectual elites. Taking a glance at older resources (such as these textbooks) is enough to see that this is not the case, and delegitimization rhetoric is not only not obsolete, but it is perpetuated through education, among other agents.

2.2 View of the other: negative stereotyping and identity construction

Forms of othering besides delegitimization, such as negative stereotyping and omission, are even more prevalent in textbook discourses due to their more subtle and sometimes ambiguous nature. This poses a challenge for discourse participants, and applies especially to younger discourse participants such as students, in societies that have been consistently desensitized to prejudice against a specific group or set of groups through various discourse channels. Examples of extreme forms of othering, such as delegitimization rhetoric, can be identified relatively easily in discourses. However, negative stereotyping, biases, and prejudiced discourses exist on a nuanced spectrum, largely dependent on the moral standards,

and cultural and linguistic practices of the in-group. That makes milder forms of othering less obvious and more palatable for members of the in-group.

Jan Germen Janmaat identifies a need for research on the role of history education in identity construction and claims that the limited literature on the subject does not utilize existing theories and frameworks to position itself into ongoing debates within the larger field of nationalism studies.¹⁹ This claim has been repeatedly substantiated by research for this thesis. At present, literature on depictions of ‘the other’ is largely focused on ethnic others within the Macedonian and Bulgarian nations.²⁰ Research on national identity construction in contrast to ‘the other’, and the role of negative stereotyping in identity construction in the Balkan region in general is scarce.²¹ In his attempt to address this gap in scholarly literature, Janmaat presents a study on Ukrainian history textbooks and proposes a framework in which negative stereotyping has four functions for identity construction: (1) distinguishes the in-group from the outgroup by assigning virtues or vices, respectively; (2) contributes to the in-group’s cohesion by stressing the hostility of the out-group and de-emphasizes in-group conflicts; (3) provides justification for a liberation struggle and establishment of a state; and (4) blames current societal problems on a former foreign regime instead of bad management by the new government.²² For this comparative study, Janmaat’s framework is useful in the analysis of depictions of Bulgaria and Bulgarians in Macedonian textbooks, especially in reference to World War II.

In the Bulgarian educational discourse, however, differences between the Macedonian and Bulgarian people are either minimized or omitted. Sami Adwan, Daniel Bar-Tal, and Bruce Wexler claim that “[t]he absence of information of various kinds about the Other serves to

¹⁹ Janmaat, “The Ethnic ‘Other’ in Ukrainian History Textbooks: The Case of Russia and the Russians.”, 308.

²⁰ See Luku 2019; Stefoska 2013; Dimitrova 2008;

²¹ See Torsti 2007; Millas 2017

²² Janmaat, 308.

delegitimize the presence of the Other.”²³ Omissions of information on the Macedonian national liberation struggle and Macedonian opposition to Bulgarian governance, for example, can be interpreted as serving the purpose of delegitimization of the Macedonian nation and state. Omission, although typically used as a form of othering, is important to consider in this context with the exact opposite purpose – to delegitimize the existence (or right to exist) of the out-group. This is in line with mainstream Bulgarian socio-political and educational stances that do not recognize the Macedonian nation and language as distinct and separate, but rather claim them as part of the Bulgarian nation and language, respectively. In this way, delegitimization as a discursive phenomenon gains a passive quality, which will be discussed in further detail in chapter 5.

2.3 On ideology, identity, and prejudice: a glimpse into interdiscursivity

Ideological narratives feature the fundamental information by which group members identify and categorize themselves, such as their membership criteria, group activities, aims, norms, relations to others, resources, etc.²⁴. Since ideological narratives tend to polarize society and often organize and present information in a way that positions the ingroup against the outgroup, van Dijk’s ‘ideological square’, as a strategy, aims to positively portray the ingroup and negatively portray the outgroup. This is done as follows: (1) emphasize the ingroup’s good properties/actions; (2) emphasize the outgroup’s bad properties/actions; (3) mitigate the ingroup’s bad properties/actions; (4) mitigate the outgroup’s good properties/actions.²⁵ As a tool of analysis, the ideological square is useful because it allows us to look at the Macedonian and Bulgarian textbook discourses comparatively, in terms of where they fall on the x/y axis of

²³ Adwan, Bar-Tal, and Wexler, “Portrayal of the Other in Palestinian and Israeli Schoolbooks: A Comparative Study.”, 12.

²⁴ Van Dijk, *Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction*, 395-396.

²⁵ Van Dijk, 396-397; see also Van Dijk, *Ideology : A Multidisciplinary Approach*, 267-276.

the ideological square based on the discursive strategies utilized. But perhaps even more importantly, it allows us to compare textbook discourses to socio-political discourses and dominant political ideologies at the time of publication of the textbooks, as well as now. Even though such comparison is out of the scope of this thesis, this provides an interesting possible direction for a future study.

Katrin Boeckh and Sabine Rutar's *The Balkan Wars from Contemporary Perception to Historic Memory* is a trailblazing effort towards a better understanding of the dynamics between political ideologies, collective memory, and history education.²⁶ Dubravka Stojanović's chapter is especially relevant in this context, since it provides a succinct account of the effects of shifts in dominant political ideologies on Balkan Wars historiography and textbook discourses in Serbia.²⁷ In this sense, it paves the way for similar studies, provides a basis for a better understanding of potential challenges to publishing new, revised textbooks, and stresses the dependence of history curricula on political circumstances.

However, the meaning of discourse is not limited to the meaning of its words and sentences. Discourse also has more 'global' meanings, such as 'topics' - that can be formulated in titles or headlines, or 'themes' - which are broader categories (such as a time period - WWI, or a concept - 'identity') that may encompass many different topics.²⁸ The function of topics follows the strategy of the 'ideological square' explained above. In discourse, the topicalization of information emphasizes the ingroup's good and the outgroup's bad properties, while de-topicalization mitigates the ingroup's bad and the outgroup's good properties. While the themes in this research are the same across discourses and countries, (such as WWI and WWII), the

²⁶ Boeckh and Rutar, *The Balkan Wars from Contemporary Perception to Historic Memory*. see chapter 10 (219-248) by Svetlozar Eldarov and Bisser Petrov, and chapter 13 (290-317) by Petar Todorov, on Bulgarian and Macedonian historiography, respectively. Stojanovic, *The Balkan Wars in Serbian History Textbooks (1920–2013)*

²⁷ See chapter 12, Stojanovic, *The Balkan Wars in Serbian History Textbooks (1920–2013)*, 275-289 in Boeckh and Rutar, *The Balkan Wars from Contemporary Perception to Historic Memory*.

²⁸ Van Dijk, "Ideological Discourse Analysis.", 144.

topics vary. This is important, because as the discussion will elaborate, in the Macedonian textbook discourse, the strategy of emphasizing the actively positive role of the ingroup and actively negative role of the outgroup during this period through descriptive topicalization is more prominent. On the other hand, in Bulgaria, similar information and historical narratives are detopicalized, and are organized and presented more thematically - deemphasizing the negative attributes of the ingroup and the positive attributes of the outgroup.

2.4 Textbooks as socializers. The importance of interdisciplinary textbook research

Pierre Bourdieu argues that textbooks are often primary vehicles and venues through which societies formally, intentionally, systematically, and extensively impart prejudices, stereotypes and national narratives.²⁹ Also in their presentation of curricular content, textbooks impart values, goals, and myths which the society aims to transmit to new generations, foster unity and fuel divisions. Similarly, Allan Luke claims that “like all texts, school textbooks remain potential agents of mass enlightenment and/or social control.”³⁰ Each history textbook tends to propose a certain interpretation of historical events, which tends overall to be a national interpretation, since they are closely linked to official curricula organized on a national basis. The implication is that school textbooks do not provide neutral knowledge but construct a particular social reality.

Since language is the carrier of stereotypes in history textbooks, it “has the capacity to construct reality by directing and limiting our thoughts, observations, and expressions.”³¹ There seems to be consensus on the importance of textbooks for both identity construction and socialization. The existing research, however, does not reflect this assigned importance. The

²⁹ Bourdieu, “Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction.”

³⁰ Luke, *Literacy, Textbooks, and Ideology: Postwar Literacy Instruction and the Mythology of Dick and Jane*, 69.

³¹ Virta, “Historical Literacy: Thinking, Reading and Understanding History.”, 17.

research for this thesis yielded a small number of studies on textbook discourse, and no studies (specifically comparative) relevant to the Macedonian-Bulgarian context. The dire need for textbook research is evident in the work of the Joint History Commission, which like many other similar initiatives has demonstrated little progress. Janmaat's critique that the already limited literature does not utilize existing frameworks and theories and therefore cannot contribute to the ongoing debates within the larger field (be it nationalism studies or a different field) is valid, but we need to remember that textbook research is mainly an interdisciplinary effort. Given that textbook research requires a researcher that is either a native or native-level speaker of the language in which the textbook is written, it becomes obvious that some resources Janmaat refers to would only be of use to an English-speaking researcher.

The reason this presents as an issue in the Balkan context is that interdisciplinary approaches to research are not as widespread in the Balkan countries' higher education systems. This significantly narrows the pool of researchers who could undertake such a task to researchers whose educational background is in an interdisciplinary field such as nationalism studies. Alternatively (and perhaps preferably), this type of studies could be the result of collaborative research by scholars with different backgrounds. The UNESCO guidebook on textbook research and textbook revision, for example, is an outstanding resource which continues to be underutilized in academia, and initiatives such as joint history projects (including public discourses on such initiatives).

Veronika Kalmus presents an excellent overview on the methodological problems of research on socialization through educational media, in which she offers practical solutions and research strategies to these problems, from which this thesis benefited greatly. Kalmus presents a compelling argument for interdisciplinary research of textbooks. She argues that textbooks and other socializers are interconnected and as such, a study that tries to isolate textbooks would be incomplete. The research design should therefore take into consideration the content of the

‘educational media’ as well as the “process by which pupils acquire knowledge, values, and attitudes from those media.”³² Such a research design would then combine various methods such as Critical Discourse Analysis, to analyze the discourse of the textbooks, and interviews and surveys (among others) to gain insight on the process of interaction with the textbooks.

The scope of such a project would be well beyond the scope of this thesis, as such a complex research design would be extremely time and labor intensive. Additionally, it would require knowledge and expertise that would be much better demonstrated in a collaborative study. For that reason, this thesis gladly embraces the criticism that a study which tries to isolate textbooks is incomplete, in hopes that by doing a single piece of the puzzle in a completely unexplored field would pave the way for a more comprehensive body of work.

³² Kalmus, “What Do Pupils and Textbooks Do with Each Other?: Methodological Problems of Research on Socialization through Educational Media.”, 474.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This thesis presents a single-level analysis of primary sources, described below. The chosen method of analysis for this case study is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The specific analytical framework is borrowed from Karin Liebhard, Ruth Wodak, Rudolf de Cillia, and Martin Reisigl, and utilizes five categories of discursive strategies: Strategies of Justification and Relativisation; Constructive Strategies; Strategies of Perpetuation; Strategies of Transformation; and Strategies of Demontage (or Dismantling) and Destruction.³³ Initially used by Liebhart et al. to analyze speeches and interviews pertaining to research on the discursive construction of Austrian national identity, this method provided a wider, more specific framework that is better-fitted to analyze discourses surrounding national and other group identities than the traditional Discourse-Historical Approach. The use of the tropes of metonymy and personification in combination with various strategies is also considered and applied to the analysis.³⁴

The primary research objective of this comparative analysis of Macedonian and Bulgarian high school textbooks is to demonstrate how multiple discursive strategies are used simultaneously to: a) construct identities in relation to various contexts; b) assign or remove legitimacy to/from historical narratives and claims; c) and (in)validate actions of the in-group and various out-groups. Furthermore, it aims to identify how the textbook discourse may affect our perception of the out-group, and shape our interactions with the out-group. Finally, it hopes to demonstrate a need for further research on textbooks in an effort to better understand the

³³Wodak et al., *The Discursive Construction of National Identity*, 36-42

³⁴ Wodak et al. 43-45

relationship between textbook and other discourses and the effects of textbook discourses on political socialization.

Table 1: Textbooks included in the analysis.

Name of textbook	Authors/Country	Year published	Student age
<i>History and Civilization for grade 12</i>	Alexander Zhivov Kertin and Mariana Spasova Yovevska (BG)	2003	18-19
<i>History: for high school year two of gymnasium education</i>	Milan Boshkoski, Nebi Dervishi, Dimko Popovski, Joran Ilioski, Natasha Kotlar, and Silvana Sidorovska-Chupovski (MK)	2006	16-17
<i>History: for high school year three of gymnasium education</i>	Blazhe Ristovski, Shukri Rahimi, Simo Mladenovski, Todor Chepreganov, Stojan Kiselinovski (MK)	2006	17-18

The choice to analyze high school history textbooks over elementary school textbooks is based on four factors:

- a) Target audience is close in age (16-19 years old)
- b) Structural similarities of the high school history curricula: Scope and depth of topics covered and the organization of the textbooks allow for consideration of full chapters/sections without removing context for the sake of comparative analysis.
- c) Lack of research (specifically comparative studies) of textbook discourses given their importance and salience in current socio-political contexts.
- d) Year of publication and time in circulation: the textbooks were published in 2003 (in Bulgaria) and 2006 (in Macedonia), which means that a significant number of people younger than 39 and 36, respectively, who graduated from high school (or are in high

school now), have been exposed to them. Given that most people between the ages of 16 and 39 in the two countries, who are either currently studying or have been exposed to these discourses in the past, are active participants in various socio-political processes such as voting, social media interaction, content creation etc. it is important to analyze these long-standing discourses in light of current socio-political contexts.

The sampling process has identified three main time periods to be at the core of this project: the second half of the 19th century to (but excluding) the Balkan Wars (1912-13); the Balkan Wars to (but excluding) the Second World War, and the Second World War. Within these three time-based categories, I will analyze and compare the different, often conflicting narratives, interpretations of historical events, categorizations of historical figures, discourses on national and ethnic identity formation and legitimacy, definitions of concepts/ideas, and explanations of purposes of political/social movements. The analysis utilizes a time-based, chronological structure instead of thematic categories to compensate for minor structural and thematic differences across textbooks and ensure a logical, cohesive flow. However, in addition to the time periods defined, the analysis includes a section that focuses on the use, and to a limited extent, meanings of terms denoting belonging such as ‘nation’, ‘narod’, and ‘narodnost’. The scope of this study is limited to the time frames indicated above because of a lack of substantial overlap that would be considered relevant for a comparative analysis outside of it.

Quotes and excerpts used in the analysis are direct translations of the original texts by the author of this thesis. While a lot of work and effort was channeled into making sure the translations are as accurate as possible, the author cannot guarantee that some meaning and nuance are not lost in the process of translation. The selection of quotes and excerpts also aims to provide an objective view of the textbook discourses. Quotes and excerpts that were considered misleading outside of the wider context of the textbooks discourse were not included in the analysis.

Various political and public discourses were initially considered to be included in the analysis, but were later discounted mainly due to scope limitations. However, this thesis stresses the importance of research on interdiscursivity and hopes to inspire and provide direction for further studies that would explore it further and deepen our understanding on this topic in the Macedonian-Bulgarian context.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS

This analysis focuses mainly on textual content of the chosen textbooks. Given that not all textbook content is relevant to the scope of this thesis, the content selected is thematically organized around time periods. The first subchapter ranges from the second half of the 19th century up to and excluding the Balkan Wars (1912-13); the second ranges from the Balkan Wars up to and excluding the Second World War; and the third and final subchapter focuses on the Second World War. A brief section preceding the subchapters aims to showcase how the Macedonian and Bulgarian textbooks use different terms that imply belonging to a group, and emphasize the ambiguity related to such use. It also aims to highlight the most commonly used discursive strategies and means of realization.

4.1. Nation, narod, narodnost: differences and similarities

In the textbooks analyzed, the use of the term ‘nation’ is scarce, even when the existence of the nation in question is unquestionably and undeniably clear and accepted – such as when referring to the Macedonian and Bulgarian nation in the Macedonian and Bulgarian textbook, respectively. Instead, the books make use of the term ‘narod’, which translates to ‘people’ or ‘folk’. The understanding of ‘nations as modern phenomena is a position evident in both Macedonian and Bulgarian textbooks. The term ‘narod’, however, carries a certain quality of historical continuity that seems to be preferred by the authors of the textbooks when assigning belonging to persons or groups of people that clearly belong to the Macedonian or Bulgarian nation (and sometimes other groups).

However, the use of Macedonian ‘narod’ and Bulgarian ‘narod’ do not seem to encompass minority groups that the present-day Macedonian and Bulgarian nations do. In the Macedonian textbooks (and wider educational discourse), these minority groups are referred to

as ‘narod’ or people in their own right (ex. The Vlach people, the Albanian people, the Muslim people), but nonetheless, with equal agency in the Macedonian state (and national liberation movement). The question then is, are the ethnic and religious dimensions of the term ‘narod’ more central to its meaning than the national? Unfortunately, the textbooks fail to define what constitutes a ‘narod’. The frequent use combined with vagueness related to the definition of the term ‘narod’ leaves it largely open to the interpretation of the reader. As a lexeme that derives meaning from context, it lends itself as a means of realization of a number of discursive strategies.

The term ‘narod’ in the Bulgarian textbook is much more consistently used in place of ‘nation’ with minority groups being referred to as ‘narodnosti’ or simply minorities. While the terms ‘narod’ and ‘narodnost’ in the Bulgarian language are used synonymously (and are listed as synonyms in several dictionaries, along with ‘nation’ and ‘nationality’), they are used distinctly in the textbook subject to this analysis, even though this distinction is not defined.³⁵ In addition, both the Macedonian and Bulgarian textbooks consistently use a form of metonymy: *country for persons* (ex. “Bulgaria suddenly attacked the Serbian and Greek armies”³⁶). Metonymies in the Macedonian and Bulgarian textbooks are used as means of realization for justification/relativization and constructive (especially autonomization) discourse strategies. As examples throughout the analysis will show, other forms of metonymy such as *institution for (responsible) representatives of the institution* and, *institution for events/actions* are also employed, especially in combination with justification/relativization strategies such as downplaying/trivialization, minimization, casting doubt, and avoidance/euphemizing. Agent deletion (ex. “Macedonia found itself occupied and split”³⁷)

³⁵ While ‘narod’ is used interchangeably with nation and seems to imply a right to statehood/autonomy, ‘narodnost’ seems to have the ethnic, but not national connotation.

³⁶ Boshkovski et al., *Историја за Втора Година на Гимназиско Образование [History for High School Year Two of Gymnasium Education]* p.150.

³⁷ Boshkovski et al., p.197.

also aids these strategies, and along with metonymy is the most widely used means of realization of discursive strategies across the Macedonian and Bulgarian discourses.

4.2. Comparative analysis of textbook discourses

4.2.1. Second half of 19th century to the Balkan Wars (1912-1913)

The second half of the 19th century marks the beginning of one of the most turbulent periods in Balkan history. Unrest in the wider European region, the increasing instability and political decay within the Ottoman Empire, as well as the spread of various forms of nationalism give rise to new movements, ideas, and spread of ideologies. The Macedonian textbook describes the end of the 19th century as follows:

“In the [Ottoman] Empire, especially in its Balkan part, besides the unliberated Macedonian and Albanian people, there were sizable Greek, Bulgarian, and Serbian populations that wanted to unite with their home states, and which aided their [the states’] efforts.”³⁸

In this excerpt the authors employ two main categories of discursive strategies – constructive strategies and transformation strategies. The use of the word ‘unliberated’ demonstrates a strategy of unification and cohesivation of the Macedonian people and Albanian people. Likewise, the wants and efforts of the Greek, Bulgarian, and Serbian populations towards uniting with their home states can be seen as realizations of the same strategies. However, the representation of the Macedonian and Albanian people as unliberated, and the Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian populations as working towards unity with their home states also employs the constructive strategy of autonomization, and the transformation strategy of discontinuating/dissimilation by implying necessary change between the period described and

³⁸ Boshkovski et al., p.148.

the future – in which the Macedonian and Albanian people would be liberated, and the Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian populations would be united with their home states. The Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (MRO) and its activities are at the core of the Macedonian textbook chapters dealing with this time period.

“In the 90s of the 19th century, the necessary conditions were created for the Macedonian people’s struggle for national and political liberation to grow from an elementary and incoherent idea into an organized and mass phenomenon. That was a time when in Macedonia appeared a movement for liberation from the shackles of Ottoman rule and against the harmful activities of neighboring propagandas.”³⁹

This excerpt is an excellent example of agent deletion as a means of realization of the strategy of justification and relativization. The necessary conditions ‘were created’ and the liberation movement is described as to have ‘appeared’ which justifies the means for the creation for both the conditions and the movement, and removes responsibility from the responsible social actors. In addition, the ‘shackles of Ottoman rule’ and ‘harmful activities of neighboring propagandas’ emphasize the need for change and difference, which is simultaneously a transformation and a dissimulation strategy.⁴⁰

Social and political actors important to MRO are often assigned positive qualities through metaphors. For example, Goce Delchev is said to have been “the heart of the organization.”⁴¹ Gjorche Petrov, “the voice of reason of the revolutionary organization. The word was his most powerful weapon.”⁴² Pere Toshev, “the conscience of the organization. One of the few revolutionaries who fought with both a rifle and a quill.”⁴³ Through the use of

39 Boshkovski et al., p.173-4

40 Dissimulation falls under Strategies of Demontage (or Dismantling) and Destruction

41 Boshkovski et al., p.176.

42 Boshkovski et al., p.178.

43 *ibid.*

metaphors the textbook personifies the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization, by assigning it positive human qualities, which is an example of the constructive strategy of vitalization. Moreover, Trajko Kitanchev, the first president of the Supreme Macedonian Committee (SMC) is described as “an honorable and energetic Macedonian”⁴⁴, who is said to have died of a heart attack after seeing how the Committee “became an instrument for the realization of the politics of the government and Bulgarian court [...]. They skilfully manipulated and abused the patriotic feeling of Macedonians for [advancement of] Bulgarian interests.”⁴⁵ Implying causation between the death of Kitanchev and political and ideological shifts within the SMC is a combined use of dissimulation/exclusion and discrediting strategies.

The members of the SMC are depicted as “doing everything to sabotage and incapacitate its [the liberation movement’s] development [in the early 20th century].”⁴⁶ Some of their methods of applying pressure to MRO are listed as “provoked “uprisings” and physical liquidation of distinguished members of MRO”⁴⁷ Earlier, “the rough meddling of the Principality of Bulgaria”⁴⁸ is quoted as the main reason for the failure of the Kresna Uprising. The textbook discourse on Bulgarian politics in relation to the Macedonian liberation movement centers the emphasis of the Bulgarian side’s consistent efforts to harm and/or delegitimize causes and developments that are at the core of Macedonian identity. Such depictions expectedly employ various constructive strategies which aim to define the Macedonian ‘narod’ as intrinsically separate from the Bulgarian (and other neighboring) peoples, and emphasize its uniqueness and right to autonomy.

⁴⁴ Boshkovski et al., p.179.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁶ Boshkovski et al., p.182.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁸ Boshkovski et al., p.162.

The Bulgarian textbook discourse on this period is much more theoretical compared to the Macedonian, with significantly longer theoretical discussions and minimal narration on specific historical events, and social and political actors. Compared to the Macedonian textbook, which is organized chronologically, the Bulgarian textbook is organized thematically. The relevant issues are covered in two sections called The Macedonian Question: Political Aspects (pages 147-153) and The Macedonian Question: Cultural and Psychological Aspects (pages 154-159).

"The Makedonism of the 20th century is not a social movement. This idea is an instrument of Serbian state politics [...] The basic propagandist thesis of the Makedonism is that Macedonians are not Bulgarians, but a "separate historical people."

49

This short and concise excerpt demonstrates the position of the Bulgarian educational discourse on the Macedonian Question very clearly. The noun suffix -ism is strategically used to depict the developments in Macedonia as results of a wider, Serbian idea. The use of quotations around *separate historical people* is an example of a delegitimation strategy. The Makedonism is consistently portrayed as an "ally"⁵⁰ of Serbian nationalism. The idea of the 'Macedonians as a separate historical people' and a 'separate Macedonian dialect' to be used to 'preach this idea' is labeled as 'chauvinist'.⁵¹ "After the defeat in the war against Bulgaria during 1885, Serbian nationalists and the government made themselves busy organizing systematic and far-reaching propaganda aimed at infiltrating and strengthening the Serbian idea in Macedonia."⁵² The main category of discursive strategies in the section on the political aspects is that of montage (or

⁴⁹ Kertin and Yovevska, *История и цивилизация за 12 клас [History and Civilization for Grade 12]*, p.152.

⁵⁰ Kertin and Yovevska, p.150.

⁵¹ Kertin and Yovevska, 152.

⁵² Kertin and Yovevska, 150-1.

dismantling) and destruction.⁵³ Of these, particularly important in relation to the Macedonian national movement are the strategy of heteronomisation (aiming to dismantle myths against one's will) and assimilation (aiming to negate national uniqueness).

The second section on the Macedonian Question, focusing on cultural and psychological aspects, however, focuses on the effects of developments during this time period, yet it makes little to no reference to any factual information such as existing/emerging institutions (such as MRO and its various factions and committees), uprisings/riots (such as the Kresna and Ilinden uprising), or important social and political actors.

“Prepared actions for solving the Macedonian question fail one after the other for one or another reason. And the repressions after the failures fall on the back of the population. The constant heaviness on top of this population's shoulders is actually the awareness of *failure* - something which has meaning not only for the communities, but for the lives of individuals as well. When an individual is obstructed in realizing their goals they fall in a condition which psychologists call frustration. [...] This condition can also cover large groups of people in significant political disruptions such as wars and military defeats [...] Frustrated behavior can be defined as a pain-relieving action or inaction that aims to avoid suffering.”⁵⁴

The textbook goes on to point out the two basic characteristics of frustrated behavior: *conformity* in the form of adaptation and obedience, which mimics loyalty (to a government), and *aimless aggression* which manifests itself through aimless riots. “Sometimes the aggression can be aimed towards members of your personal collective that have been labeled as “traitors”.”⁵⁵ The extreme vagueness of this excerpt (which is part of a larger subsection) can

⁵³ Wodak et al. 42

⁵⁴ Kertin and Yovevska, 158-159.

⁵⁵ Kertin and Yovevska, 158-159.

make it hard and dangerous to interpret, since it can be analyzed in various contexts. However, its placement in a section that aims to discuss the cultural and psychological aspects of the Macedonian Question is a compelling reason to discuss its implications in the context of the Macedonian population. First, the agent deletion and extreme vagueness in the first sentence can be seen as means of realization of various justification/relativization strategies. Second, the political disruptions mentioned can easily be interpreted as referring to the multiple riots and uprisings during the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. The two basic characteristics can be selectively discussed based on the context, for example: *conformity* can be discussed as a trait exhibited by a frustrated Macedonian population under Ottoman, Serbian, or other governance. *Aimless aggression* (especially against members of the ‘personal collective’) can be discussed in the context of the riots and uprisings against Bulgarian governance. In this context, this is an excellent example of a strategy of avoidance and strategy of euphemizing, through the use of agent deletion, extreme referential vagueness, abstraction, and depersonalization, among other means of realization. This is also an important example because its interpretation by students will be dependent on other factors in the context of classroom instruction. Students could have vastly different experiences depending on the profile of the teacher, their style of teaching, the number of practical examples they decide to provide, and length of the discussion on the topic (if any), among many others.

4.2.2 The Balkan Wars, First World War, and the interwar period: socialism vs. nationalism

The Balkan Wars of 1912-13 are considered to be important milestones in Balkan historiography mainly due to the creation of the Balkan League, a shift from guerrilla warfare to more organized military campaigns, and the defeat of the Ottoman Empire.

“The hopes of Macedonians, that by taking part in the allied wars they fought for the liberation of the land, did not come to fruition. [...] The Serbian military occupied Macedonia all the way to Gevgelija, the Bulgarian military occupied the east part of Macedonia, and the remaining part of Macedonia along with the town of Lerin was occupied by Greece. In that way, Macedonia found itself occupied and split in three parts.”⁵⁶

In the Macedonian textbook, the primary motivation for Macedonian participation in the Balkan Wars is autonomy. At this point in the historiography, discursive strategies are realized through stronger language, especially in reference to out-groups, compared to the time period preceding the Balkan Wars. The Macedonian people are portrayed as “ready to take part in the fight”⁵⁷, as ‘volunteers’ who joined the ‘Serbian and Greek armies’ and ‘Bulgarian military’.⁵⁸ Such wording is an example of a justification/relativization strategy, or more specifically, the strategy of downplaying/trivialization of Macedonian participation in the wars. In the excerpt above, these militaries are each said to have ‘occupied’ a part of Macedonia, which demonstrates a strategy of dissimulation/exclusion. A strategic emphasis is placed on the militaries occupying the territories instead of the respective states, which amplifies the occupations as a disaster trope, given that Macedonians are portrayed as volunteers in said militaries. The following excerpt on the Treaty of Bucharest (1913) is an even better example of the discursive shift:

“This agreement and its consequences - territorial, ethnic and economic, put a stop to the unique historical development of the Macedonian people. The Macedonian economy, but also the national liberation movement, were dealt catastrophic blows. In the occupied parts of Macedonia the occupying governments implemented a military

⁵⁶ Boshkovski et al., 197.

⁵⁷ Boshkovski et al., 196.

⁵⁸ Boshkovski et al., 196., the terms ‘army’ and ‘military’ are used interchangeably, with no evident difference in connotation

regime. A harsh policy of systematic denationalization and assimilation of the Macedonian people and language began.”⁵⁹

Several constructive strategies exist simultaneously in this discourse: presupposition/emphasis on intra-national sameness/similarity, unification/cohesivation (Macedonian in all occupied parts are going through the same/shared negative experience), and discontinuation (emphasis on the difference between then and now: ‘unique historical development’ vs ‘catastrophic blows’, ‘harsh policies’). The Bulgarian people are also depicted as hopeful in anticipation of the Balkan Wars. The excerpt below is part of the introduction to a section of the textbook titled “The Balkan Wars: Exercices: A comparative analysis of documents; debate” (pages 172-178):

“The wars of the Balkan states against the Ottoman Empire gave rise to great enthusiasm and hope among the Bulgarians. But the Bulgarian dream, which shone like a meteor, quickly extinguished and the ideals of three generations sank into the darkness. This metaphor is used by the chief of the Army General Headquarters, general Ivan Fichev, in his memoirs during the war. The next military undertaking, which has a direct connection and is a consequence of the first, irreparably violates the Bulgarian national spirit.”⁶⁰

This excerpt utilizes a strategy of justification through the means of euphemistic representation of actions and agent deletion – the Second Balkan War is simply a consequence of the first. The ‘Bulgarian dream’ and ‘the ideals of three generations’ seem to be regarded as known historical truths, since the textbook does not include additional information on the Balkan Wars, yet there is an expectation that the reader knows what is needed to carry out a comparative analysis of documents and take part in a debate, as envisioned for this section.

⁵⁹ Boshkovski et al., 198.

⁶⁰ Kertin and Yovevska, 172.

The section includes 13 excerpts from various documents pertaining to the topic of the Balkan Wars. Of these, the majority are Bulgarian and Serbian primary sources, and one is part of a biography of a Russian diplomat who is considered significant in Bulgarian historiography. In addition, there are two maps, one placard (illustration) and a photograph of the 1911-1913 Bulgarian government. The selection of sources is curated in line with answering questions mainly about Bulgarian involvement in the wars, ideas, challenges, and qualities the people possess. There are references to ‘Serbian territorial aspirations’ and ‘Greek nationalist propaganda’, as well as to the ‘dilemma’ facing Macedonians’ historical memory. This dilemma presents itself in the form of a Serbian Royal proclamation in which Macedonians are presented as worthy descendants of the Serbian heroes Milutin and Dushan, and an open letter in protest to the proclamation, which states that “the day of bloody payback and liberation is at the doorstep, so they [the Macedonians] will have an opportunity to show that they are worthy descendants of Simeon and Samuil, and not of some “Milutin and Dushan.”⁶¹ The use of names ‘Milutin and Dushan’ and ‘Simeon and Samuil’ are *persons for country* metonymies, and are used in combination with the strategy of continuation (by establishing a link between the Macedonians and Serbian and Bulgarian heroes, respectively) and the constructive strategies of presupposition and unification (by emphasizing similarity, unifying features, and political continuity). The sources provided are indeed insightful, yet the section is sorely lacking in content and context. The deliberate omission of a heavily documented movement for Macedonian autonomy in the early 20th century clearly aims to delegitimize its existence.

The discourse on the First World War seems rushed and incomplete in both the Macedonian and Bulgarian textbooks. The Macedonian textbook presents information in chronological order without much regard for the theoretical context or going too deep into the

⁶¹ Kertin and Yovevska, 174.

implications of WWI developments. In contrast, the Bulgarian textbook provides an extensive overview of ideological, political, and organizational shifts and paradigms, without discussing them in the context of political, social, and cultural developments during WWI. The discourse may seem underdeveloped due to a possibly deliberate omission of information on both sides, a strong emphasis on the importance of the pre and post WWI periods, or a combination of factors.

“All variants of nationalism before 1914 have something in common: refusal of the new proletarian socialist movements.[...] During the pre-war period the appeals of nationalism and socialism are seen logically as mutually exclusive”⁶²

The Bulgarian textbook’s claim that nationalism and socialism are seen as mutually exclusive in the pre-WWI period is in line with depictions of Balkan nationalism during this time. It is not unreasonable to deduce that the bases of Bulgarian nationalism of the time are language, religion, and ethnicity, which although not defined, seems to encompass certain traditions, cultural markers, and a continuous, historical presence of a population with a shared language and religion on a certain territory. In contrast, the Macedonian textbooks emphasize a presence of socialist ideas in various political movements in the Balkans in the pre-WWI period, but especially stress its importance to organizational shifts in MRO (the chism between the ‘left and right factions of the organization’). Unfortunately, the Macedonian textbooks make use of various justification/relativization strategies by extreme vagueness in discussing and defining socialism as an ideology. Interestingly, the Macedonian textbook provides examples that would be useful in such a discussion, such as the following excerpt from the Manifest of

⁶² Kertin and Yovevska, 193.

the short-lived Krushevo Republic of 1903, yet it fails to contextualize them in the wider context of the socialist movements of the Balkan:

“Come, Muslim brothers, to rally against your and our enemies. Come, under the flag of an autonomous Macedonia. Macedonia is our shared mother, and it’s calling you to help! Come, to break the chains of enslavement, to break free from the hardships and sufferings of slavery! Come to us, brothers, to merge our souls and hearts, so our children can live peacefully and calmly, to work and thrive.”⁶³

This excerpt employs various strategies of demontage and destruction such as discrediting and dissimulation (simultaneously a transformation strategy) by referring to multiple enemies of groups living on the territory of Macedonia and emphasizing necessity for change, as well as multiple constructive strategies such as autonomization, unification and cohesivation by personification of Macedonia as a mother and an emphasis on shared suffering.

Jumping forward to the interwar period, which is featured in longer sections in both textbooks, makes the divide between Macedonian and Bulgarian historiography even more obvious. The discourse on this period uses emotionally loaded words and strong ethos in the examples and excerpts provided.

“In their efforts to distinguish themselves fully from the bourgeois parties, and on the question of nationality, the communists increasingly force realities in light of achieving the end goal - building a socially just, classless society. The road to it goes through the worker-peasant Balkan federation. The idea for a “full and equal” participation of all

⁶³ Boshkovski et al., 186.

nationalities in the governance of a future Balkan federation leads to the invention of new nations - Macedonian, Thracian, Dobrudzhan.”⁶⁴

The ‘invention’ of the Macedonian nation is depicted as a project of the Komintern.⁶⁵ In a sense, this is an evolved ‘Makedonism’, which is earlier described as an instrument of Serbian nationalism and state politics. The Macedonian national idea is seen as something that does not originate from within, but is imposed on the population by foreign actors and slowly takes root, unlike the Bulgarian, Serbian and other national ideas which are presented as having developed more organically, from the bottom up. The discourse surrounding the Macedonian national idea consistently uses justification/relativization strategies to downplay, trivialize, and minimize the socio-cultural aspects of it.

In contrast, the Macedonian discourse presents the political aspects of the Macedonian national movement as directly resulting from socio-cultural activities and the existing national consciousness of the Macedonian people and minority populations living on Macedonian territory. In the interwar period, the right-wing autonomist faction of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO previously MRO), which envisioned an “autonomous, united Macedonia, but with Bulgarian ‘narod’ in it,”⁶⁶ is portrayed as having “afflicted serious harm to the Macedonian liberation movement, committing numerous political murders which appalled the European public.”⁶⁷ The discourse surrounding the autonomist faction of IMRO (VMRO) uses the strategy of emphasizing the difference between ‘us’ and ‘them’ through the use of *institution for (responsible) representatives of the institution* metonymy. It also uses a

⁶⁴ Kertin and Yovevska, 196.

⁶⁵ Kertin and Yovevska, 195

⁶⁶ Ristovski et al., *Istorija za treća godina gimnazisko obrazovanje [History: For High School Year Three of Gymnasium Education]*, 79.

⁶⁷ Ristovski et al., 69.

strategy of defense (perpetuation strategy) and a strategy of dissimulation by emphasizing the negative actions of the outgroup.

“The autonomist VMRO of Todor Aleksandrov and then Vancho Mihajlov continued its revolutionary-terrorist activity mainly for the benefit of Bulgarian revanchist politics. The progressive Macedonian movement however, following in the centuries-long efforts of the Macedonian people, saw its perspective in the unification of liberating powers on a national basis, but in the framework of a programmatic orientation with a Balkan connotation and international support.”⁶⁸

The ‘terror’ of the autonomist faction of IMRO (VMRO) is mentioned several times throughout the discourse.⁶⁹ Construing the ‘progressive Macedonian movement’ against a backdrop of ‘revolutionary-terrorist activity’ of the autonomist faction serves simultaneously as a transformation strategy (positive self-presentation) and a strategy of demontage (dismantling) and destruction (discrediting opponents and negative presentation of others).

4.2.3. Second World War: Occupation versus Liberation

As the concluding subchapter of this analysis we have the Second World War, the conflicting historiographies of which are arguably the single most defining characteristic of modern day political, social, educational, and media discourses on Macedonian-Bulgarian bilateral relations. The textbook discourses present two opposing, mutually exclusive understandings of this period. The Macedonian discourse defines the Second World War as a period of occupation by the ‘Bulgarian fascist occupier’ who “wanted to present themselves as liberators of “their national territories”.”⁷⁰ The immediate post-war period is depicted as the

⁶⁸ Ristovski et al., 80.

⁶⁹ Ristovski et al., 70, 80.

⁷⁰ Ristovski et al., 113.

hard-fought liberation and autonomy of the Macedonian people. The Bulgarian discourse defines WWII as a period of unity of the ‘Bulgarian lands’ and the liberation of Macedonia from the rule of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. These two positions highlight existing seemingly irreconcilable differences between the Macedonian and Bulgarian historiography.

The WWII period is characterized by “the most ruthless denationalizing and assimilationist politics of the occupying forces.”⁷¹ These policies are vividly described both in the original textual content of the Macedonian textbook and in excerpts of documents included in the WWII section.

"The occupiers and their servants, the executioners of Macedonia, from the first day began to pursue a policy that aims for force and violence to take the most unbearable, bloodiest form, to destroy everything that is the people's. [...] Hundreds of wagons of wheat, rice, etc. were taken to Bulgaria for Hitler's hungry barbaric hordes."⁷²

Extremely pejorative attributions (destruction) and labeling (‘executioners’, ‘Hitler’s hungry barbaric hordes’) in this excerpt serve as a means of realization for three demontage (dismantling) / destruction strategies – discrediting opponents; negative presentation of others; and dissimulation. The use of these strategies is consistent across the discourse. In contrast to the frequent earlier use of agent deletion in reference to actions of the out-group, emphasis is placed on the agent (the occupiers) in accounts of developments in which there is perceived harm to the in-group.

"By opening new production facilities and mines and building roads, etc., the occupiers systematically worked to rob as much as possible of the occupied areas at the expense

⁷¹ Ristovski et al., 113.

⁷² Ristovski et al., 116 Document II, 311-312.

of the Macedonian people. And along with that economic plunder, the Macedonian population was exposed to mass terror, looting and persecution, trials, and interments."⁷³

Similarly to the example above, this discourse is consistent with the use of the abovementioned strategies. However, it is important to add that while the actions of the out-group(s) are emphasized, the actions of the in-group are either omitted or surrounded by significant ambiguity. The discourse relies heavily on the strategy of avoidance and strategy of emphasizing in reference to representations of activities of the in-group (justification/relativization strategies). "The fascist occupiers behind them left desolation - burned villages, towns, bridges, railroads etc. in ruin. The number of fallen soldiers and victims of fascist terror is around 25.000 persons."⁷⁴ The consistent and frequent use of the synecdochal anthroponym 'occupiers' aids discursive strategies across categories, and is accompanied by actions that imply harm to the in-group ('behind them left desolation').

The Bulgarian discourse on WWII is not as expansive in terms of content (compared to the Macedonian), but the strategic use of discursive strategies and omission is nonetheless insightful. Similarly to the Macedonian textbook, in reference to actions of the in-group, the discourse relies on strategies of justification/relativization through vagueness and ambiguity, and in reference to actions of the out-group, which is at the end of WWII clearly defined as separate (as a result of communist efforts before and during the war), it uses demontage (dismantling) / destruction strategies and transformation strategies.

"The ethnonym Bulgarian is turned into a 'screen' on which the Macedonian national consciousness can project all evil from the past of the Macedonian population, and the

⁷³ Ristovski et al., 116.

⁷⁴ Ristovski et al., 127.

history of the Socialist Federative Republic of Macedonia and its manipulated pre-history are construed as a receptacle of the good part of that past.”⁷⁵

The ‘screen’ metaphor aids the strategy of discrediting opponents/certain pillars of identity because it implies that negative representations of Bulgaria and Bulgarians could simply be projections of the Macedonian national consciousness, regardless of the ‘truth’ of these representations. Similarly, it acts as a strategy of devaluation of political continuation by emphasizing that the pre-history of the SFRM has been manipulated.

The Holocaust in the context of WWII is just briefly discussed in the Macedonian discourse. The section includes an overview of major developments pertaining to the Holocaust such as the building of concentration camps; the deportations, forced labor, and mass murder of Jews, and a short discussion on the Jewish population in Macedonia. The Macedonian discourse overlooks the ideological dimensions of WWII, and is lacking information on and discussion of fascism, nazism, and antisemitism, which are all briefly mentioned. In light of frequent use of the adjective ‘fascist’, the scarcity of information on ideological motivations behind the developments presented seems like a significant shortcoming.

The Bulgarian textbook treats the subject of the Holocaust as the elephant in the room, and threads carefully around it as it discusses the war crimes that define WWII.

“Ethnic cleansing - A term used to describe radical methods and measures that one ethnic group uses to eliminate another ethnic group with which it lives on a shared territory. [...] The phenomenon gained a particularly dark popularity in the 1990s during the fratricidal conflicts in the former Yugoslavia.”⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Kertin and Yovevska, 198.

⁷⁶ Kertin and Yovevska, 194.

The only part that alludes to the Holocaust and the Bulgarian government's role in it is a brief segment called "Night and fog." While clearly named after the short documentary film of the same name which takes place 10 years after the liberation of the concentration camps, the textbook unfortunately does not establish this connection.⁷⁷

"The softer methods for achieving cultural homogeneity, such as assimilation, give way to mass murder and forced displacement of populations. Although such methods have been encountered before, ethnic cleansing is now practiced on a much wider scale. Led by a feeling of revenge and believing in the victory of "Great Germany" the Bulgarian government also carry out a policy of ethnic cleansing in some areas of the so-called "newly liberated" lands."⁷⁸ The extreme referential vagueness (ethnic cleansing against whom, and in which areas?) and agent deletion ('give way', 'have been encountered', 'practiced') serve to significantly downplay and trivialize the role of the Bulgarian government in the Holocaust. Moreover, the 'feeling of revenge' and belief in the victory of 'Great Germany' are additional examples of a justification strategy.

4.3. Conclusion of the analysis

The scope of this analysis ends in the mid-20th century. The reasons for this are twofold. First, post-WWII national historiographies are significantly less conflicting due to fewer examples of overlap after the Republic of Bulgaria recognized the Macedonian nation as separate and the Socialist Republic of Macedonia as an independent republic within Yugoslavia in 1945. Second, as a result of this, post-WWII national historiographies rarely, if ever, cause political tensions or put strain on the bilateral relations. The next chapter will discuss the results

⁷⁷ *Night and Fog (Nuit et brouillard)* is a 1956 documentary short by Alain Resnais depicting the horrors of the Nazi concentration camps. More information can be found at the following link: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0048434/>

⁷⁸ Kertin and Yovevska, 198.

of this analysis in the context of relevant theoretical frameworks and literature presented in chapter 2, challenges to textbook research, and will aim to answer the research questions outlined in chapter 3. It will also point out the limitations of this study, as well as implications for further research.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Delegitimization and negative stereotyping

The analysis shows that delegitimization through omission and negative stereotyping are central to identity construction in both the Macedonian and Bulgarian textbook discourses. Negative stereotyping of ethnic others in the Macedonian discourse fulfills Janmaat's four proposed functions for identity construction, covered in chapter 2.⁷⁹ In this sense, the Macedonian educational discourse's aims to establish absolute distinction between the Macedonian and other neighboring people/nations (including but not limited to Bulgaria) and emphasize the uniqueness of the Macedonian nation against a backdrop of significant cultural, religious, and linguistic overlap in the region, primarily by highlighting the overarching differences between the in-group and different out-groups. Delegitimization rhetoric in the Macedonian discourse was especially salient in sections covering WWII, and demonstrated through the use of synecdochal anthroponyms such as 'occupiers' and 'fascists'.

Van Dijk's ideological square offers an interesting insight in the context of the analysis, which is that the Macedonian and Bulgarian textbook discourses fall on different sides of the square. Using the analysis, we can conclude that the Macedonian discourse aims to emphasize the ingroup's good, and the outgroups bad properties and actions, while the Bulgarian discourse aims to de-emphasize the ingroup's bad and the outgroup's good properties and actions. This is not to say that either side uses exclusively these strategies, but that the discourses analyzed are more consistent with this pattern. Building on this, the strategy of emphasis is consistent

⁷⁹ (1) distinguishes the in-group from the outgroup by assigning virtues or vices, respectively; (2) contributes to the in-group's cohesion by stressing the hostility of the out-group and de-emphasizes in-group conflicts; (3) provides justification for a liberation struggle and establishment of a state; and (4) blames current societal problems on a former foreign regime instead of bad management by the new government.

with topicalization - which is a structural characteristic of the Macedonian textbooks in which information is presented in smaller sections referring to a single historical event or development, like for example, a section titled “Paris Peace Conference.” The strategy of de-emphasis, on the other hand, is consistent with detopicalization, which means that the Bulgarian textbook’s structure features larger themes which include several topics. An example of this is a section titled “Crisis of parliamentary democracy” which encompasses various topics between the end of the 19th century and the end of WWI.

The practical implication of these strategies is important. Macedonian students are made aware of many of the out-group’s bad and few of the bad properties/actions in the past, which may significantly affect their perception of the out-group in the present. Bulgarian students are faced with little information about the out-group’s good and no information about its bad properties/actions, at least until after the Balkan Wars. This may seem counterintuitive, but is actually in support of the claim that Macedonians are not an out-group at all, but rather members of the in-group. What could be seen as their bad properties/actions are portrayed as direct results of either Serbian nationalism/propaganda, the Komintern, or other institutions. This further proves that the Bulgarian discourse aims to delegitimize through omission. The Macedonian discourse also uses propaganda as a diversion and a way to mitigate the in-group’s unfavorable properties. Disruptions in the functioning, emergence of different factions in the revolutionary organization, instability, and failed uprisings are all examples of shifting responsibility from the in-group to outside forces.

5.2 The socio-political context: moving forward

We can speculate as to why this is: it may have to do with different stakes when it comes to defining the national identity. North Macedonia is a comparatively ‘younger’ state that has had to receive recognition from the Bulgarian states three times over so far. Initially, after WWII

as a federal republic within Yugoslavia, then as an independent state, and finally, at present, as the start of its EU accession talks are contingent on Bulgarian support, which is in turn contingent on North Macedonia accepting a condition which is in direct conflict with the national ideology – the acknowledgement that the Macedonian language is a dialect of Bulgarian.⁸⁰ In comparison, Bulgarian national identity seems to be much ‘safer’ and the discourse in less need of defending or justifying. Can we then expect these narratives to be slowly substituted by more neutral and comprehensive accounts as these states democratize and grow more confident and secure in their identities? This question would be best revisited in the future.

Historical continuity is at the core of the national discourse in both countries. The legitimacy that the nation derives from the existence of the states is seemingly miniscule compared to the legitimacy states derive from the historical presence of the people on the territories proper. That is why the use of the term ‘narod’ is so important in the analysis. This is also why Bulgarian recognition of the Macedonian nation as separate only from 1945 onwards is seen as problematic; it interferes with Macedonian’s right to interpret history as well as their right to self-determination, as it portrays Macedonian national identity as something that was politically invented at the dusk of WWII. The question then presents itself: how do we move past, and forward? The revision of history textbooks and the educational discourse is a step in the right direction, but only as a part of a larger socio-cultural movement.

Deconstructing myths and narratives are counterproductive because it treats them as solely cognitive and ignores deep feelings that might be associated with them and triggered by revisionist efforts. In turn, these feelings activate opposition to reform, as we have seen in the

⁸⁰ Nevena and Koneska, “Europeanization without Europe: The Curious Case of Bulgarian–Macedonian Relations. *European Politics and Society*.”, 234.

backlash aimed at the work of the Joint History Commission.⁸¹ Based on this analysis, this thesis would suggest that including more information about the out-group to alleviate the existing delegitimization and othering strategies is the best course of action. Furthermore, including alternative interpretations of history, even if they are conflicting, without aiming to delegitimize them, would challenge the perception of national history discourse as historical truth.

5.3 Methodology assessment. Implications for further research.

Critical Discourse Analysis as a method is well-fitted for the analysis of textbook discourses. The primary research goal of this thesis is to demonstrate how multiple discursive strategies are used simultaneously to: a) construct identities in relation to various contexts; b) assign or remove legitimacy to/from historical narratives and claims; and c) (in)validate the actions of the in-group and various out-groups. As a framework of analysis, the chosen method was successful in providing insightful answers to these questions.

As Kalmus points out though, due to the interconnectedness of discourses, it is difficult to assess the effects of the textbook discourse without considering how it interacts with classroom instruction, and the more temporal and pliable political and social discourses. On the question of how the discourse may affect our perception and shape our interactions with the out-group, the method offered limited insight, and conclusions based solely on the analysis of the textbook discourse would be speculative in nature. If anything, the realization of this shortcoming reinforces the final research goal: demonstrating a need for further

⁸¹ Panov, Cacanovska, and Panova, "Macedonian Nation between Self-Identity and Euro-Atlantic Integration: Implications of the Agreements with Bulgaria and Greece.", 225-6.

interdisciplinary textbook research to contribute to our understanding of the role of textbooks as socializers and their role in identity construction.

One way in which this study could expand is by incorporating elements of Multimodal Discourse Analysis in the method that would allow for an analysis of visuals in the textbooks. Another is by conducting surveys, focus groups or semi-structured interviews with students to evaluate the interaction between textbook discourses, teaching practices, and other educational processes. The research design of this thesis could also be extended to encompass intertextuality and interdiscursivity through a critical discourse analysis of other textual discourses such as media. All these combinations, however, would benefit from an initial textbook analysis, which was lacking.

As an extension of the need for interdisciplinary research, this thesis also emphasizes the need for an interdisciplinary perspective in reference to historical conflicts across discourses. Traditionally, historians tend to monopolize the public discourse in times of historical conflict in the context of Macedonian-Bulgarian bilateral relations. When actors of various backgrounds work together to analyze, critique, and debate certain social and political phenomena, they add new layers to the discourse and uncover potential solutions to problems.

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