



PALGRAVE STUDIES IN EDUCATIONAL MEDIA

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**Diagrams in Civic  
Education**  
Visuospatial  
Models of Society in  
Textbooks and Teaching

Janne Holmén  
Ann-Sofie Jägerskog  
Daniel Schumann  
Malin Tväråna

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# Palgrave Studies in Educational Media

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There is no education without some form of media. Much contemporary writing on media and education examines best practices or individual learning processes, is fired by techno-optimism or techno-pessimism about young people's use of technology, or focuses exclusively on digital media. Relatively few studies attend – empirically or conceptually – to the embeddedness of educational media in contemporary cultural, social and political processes. The **Palgrave Studies in Educational Media** series aims to explore textbooks and other educational media as sites of cultural contestation and socio-political forces. Drawing on local and global perspectives, and attending to the digital, non-digital and post-digital, the series explores how these media are entangled with broader continuities and changes in today's society, with how media and media practices play a role in shaping identifications, subjectivations, inclusions and exclusions, economies and global political projects. Including single authored and edited volumes, it offers a dedicated space which brings together research from across the academic disciplines. The series provides a valuable and accessible resource for researchers, students, teachers, teacher trainers, textbook authors and educational media designers interested in critical and contextualising approaches to the media used in education.

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## PREFACE

This volume contains three empirical studies that have their roots in different research projects. Two of them are studies of textbooks and one is a classroom study. Chapter 2, “Connecting the Nation: Diagrams of Unity and Diversity in Civics Textbooks,” is based on a study by Janne Holmén. It gives examples from ten different countries of how diagrams are used in nation-building by combining a display of unity with recognition of diversity. These examples are then analyzed with the help of theories of spatial cognition. Chapter 3, “Diagrammatic Othering: The Logics of Visualizing Migration in Civic Education Textbooks,” adopts a discourse-analytical perspective and investigates how migration is visualized in diagrams in contemporary German civics textbooks. It is a development of ideas presented in Daniel Schumann’s PhD thesis. Chapter 4, “Teaching Civic Visual Literacy: Four Principles,” is based on a classroom study led by Ann-Sofie Jägerskog and Malin Tväråna. It investigates reasoning with scatterplots and flowcharts in Swedish civics education. All authors have been involved in giving feedback on and rewriting all chapters in the book, but Holmén has had the main responsibility for Chaps. 1, 2, and 5, Schumann for Chap. 3, and Jägerskog and Tväråna for Chap. 4.

The book project has its origins in the workshop “Diagrams—Interdisciplinary and Historical Perspectives” which was arranged by Holmén in Uppsala 13–14 October 2022. Holmén, Jägerskog, and Tväråna presented their research there, and while Schumann was unable to attend, he also became connected to the group at the time. At the workshop, we found that the four of us had similar interests in the use of diagrams in civic education and decided to write a common publication.

Alice Green, Lara Glueck, and Raghupathy Kalynaraman from Palgrave Macmillan helped us publish the book in their pivot format. Although this publication is focused on diagrams in civic education, the workshop where it originated was interdisciplinary, and we benefitted from getting feedback on our articles from Barbara Tversky, Yuri Engelhardt, Clive Richards, Ayelet Even-Ezra, Petter Hellström, and Matthew D. Eddy.

Valuable comments on Chap. 2 were also given in the session “Educational Media and Society” at the ISCHE 2022 conference in Milan. For help with the sources for Chap. 2, we are also in gratitude to the staff at Uppsala University Library, the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala, and the Georg Eckert Institute in Braunschweig. For Chap. 3, we would like to thank the colleagues from the interdisciplinary research group “(De-)constructions of Difference in Teaching Contexts” at the University of Göttingen, and we are grateful for the support of the Center of Educational Studies (CoES) at Ruhr University Bochum. For Chap. 4, we have received valuable comments from the research group Civics Education Design Lab (CEDEL) at Uppsala University, and we would also like to thank colleagues attending and commenting on a presentation of the project at the Nordic Conference in Social Science Education 2024. Chapter 2 is an outcome of the research project “Figuring Politics,” which is funded by the Swedish National Research Council. Chapter 3 is based on research conducted as part of the project “Schlözer Programme Teacher Education,” which was funded by the German Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF). The project presented in Chap. 4 was funded by the Swedish national organization for research collaboration between schools and academia, ULF, and co-financed by Stockholm Teaching & Learning Studies (STLS), where higher education institutions and school principals collaborate on mutual research interests to promote and develop teaching and learning in various school subjects.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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**Ann-Sofie Jägerskog** is an associate professor at the Department of Teaching and Learning, Stockholm University. Her main research interest is learning through visual representations in the social sciences. In her research, she investigates the relationship between how a subject content is visually illustrated and how students understand the content visualized. She also has an interest in the relationship between the design of a visual representation and what teaching-learning practices are established in the classroom and thereby what learning is made possible.

**Daniel Schumann** is a research associate at the Institute for Educational Research, Ruhr-University Bochum. Previously, he has been a guest scholar at GHI Pacific Office at the University of California, Berkeley, and a visiting fellow at the Research Institute Social Cohesion (RISC) in Leipzig. His doctoral thesis at the University of Göttingen focused on the politics of knowledge in postmigrant Germany by analyzing

representations of migration and integration in Civic Education textbooks. Schumann's research interests include diversity research, the sociology of education and knowledge, and discourse and dispositif research.

**Malin Tväråna** is Associate Professor of Education, specializing in social science and citizenship education at the Department of Education, Uppsala University. Her thesis in didactics, from the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences Education at Stockholm University, focused on critical reasoning about issues of justice as a case of contested concepts in civics and social science. Tväråna's research is mostly conducted as education development research in collaboration with practicing teachers, exploring theory and methods of citizenship and democracy education, as well as critical thinking and civic agency.

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## CHAPTER 1

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# Introduction

**Abstract** Earlier research on educational content in civics has mostly focused on texts. This volume aims to remedy the lack of earlier studies on the role of diagrams in civic education. With the help of theories on spatial cognition, Chap. 2 gives a global overview of diagrams used for nation-building purposes in civics textbooks, illustrated by examples from ten current and historical societies. Chapter 3 focuses on textbooks from one country and period, present-day Germany, and the question of how migration is represented in diagrams in a process described as diagrammatic othering. Chapter 4, which is focused on the visual literacy of students, builds on iterative learning studies in Swedish civics classrooms. It presents four principles for teaching critical reasoning about complex social issues and systems with the help of diagrams. Finally, Chap. 5 brings together the conclusions from the three different studies. It discusses how and why diagrams are used in civic education, analyzes the possibilities and pitfalls associated with that use, and suggests how the advantages can be optimized while the risks are mitigated.

**Keywords** Civic education • Spatial cognition • Peirce, Charles Sanders • Diagrams, history of • Symbols • Images • Normative education