Historical Thinking Culture and Education

HTCE

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Address editorial office

University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland (FHNW)
School of Education
Center for Citizenship Education and History Didactics
Kuettigerstrasse 21
5000 Aarau, Switzerland
htce.ph@fhnw.ch

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History education in transition – transcultural dialogue on historical thinking, learning, and culture
Editorial

*Sebastian Barsch** iD *, Monika Waldis** iD

University of Cologne, FHNW School of Education

Keywords

Historical thinking and the teaching of history in times of transition and in times of crisis

We are living in a time of change and instability. This raises the question of how history education can respond and what theories, goals, values, and learning objectives should guide future directions. Global challenges such as the Corona pandemic, wars in different parts of the world, migration and the emerging consequences of climate change seem to make international cooperation and dialogue more necessary than ever. The digital age of interconnected communication channels provides scholars, teachers, and students with access to a variety of narratives and discourses across national borders. Access to knowledge, at least at first glance, has never been easier. This brings many benefits, but also many challenges. For example, better connectivity does not automatically translate into better information. On the contrary, it has been shown that not only learners but also experts have difficulties in recognizing the fullness of information (McGrew et al 2018). And in terms of history education: the processing of the most diverse theoretical approaches and empirical information does not necessarily contribute to the clarification of pedagogical questions that arises in a specific classroom context. But of course, despite the challenges, academic exchange benefits greatly from the expansion of international networks. In the face of a global, networked community, the international exchange of ideas, theories and concepts, as well as empirical findings about the teaching of history, has intensified over the past thirty years. Concepts such as historical thinking, historical reasoning, historical literacy, historical competencies, and historical consciousness have become standard in the theory and practice of history education in Western Europe and North America (Berg & Christou, 2020; Harris & Metzger, 2018). However, the primacy of a Western perspective on history and historical culture and its influence in formal and non-formal educational settings must also be critically examined. Are there universal mechanisms of historical thinking? Do the same demands apply everywhere to the concrete operations of historical thinking and learning (Rüsen

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* **Contact:** Sebastian Barsch ✉ s.barsch@uni-koeln.de, University of Cologne, Historical Institute, Cologne, Germany; Monika Waldis ✉ monika.waldis@fhnw.ch, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland (FHNW), School of Education, Aarau, Switzerland.

2008; Rüsen 2012; Körber 2024)? Do we experience an equal construction of knowledge, or do the economically and politically strong regions of the global North set the standards for what can be understood as "plausible" historical knowledge or desirable competencies (Wilschut 2019; Brett & Guyver 2021)? Finally, in pluralistic societies, people's needs for history and the opportunities it provides to explore and reflect on the past, interpret the present, and shape the future have become more diverse. Consequently, questions such as "What is history?" and "What stories should be passed on to the younger generation?" are by no means trivial.

Challenges of teaching and learning history today in the context of scholarship, education, and public history

The challenges are at least partly due to developments in historical scholarship, which we will briefly outline here in three points. Firstly, history has never been the only epistemic authority producing historical knowledge for society, but its influence on commonly accepted narratives has recently declined. On the contrary, a growing number of actors in the culture of remembrance and public historiography, such as media professionals, filmmakers, authors, museum curators, and engaged citizens, etc., are contributing to new perspectives and a new understanding of history. It is worth noting the boom of museums, exhibitions and commemorations in many places around the world, as well as the widespread introduction of historical themes into the audiovisual media, which undoubtedly address new questions or bring newer historiographical insights to a broader audience. However, the new interest in history could also be viewed critically as an obsession with the past that exploits the market value of history and obscures rather than illuminates historical knowledge (Rousso 1998). Thus, historiographical narratives and scientific knowledge do not have a monopoly on the interpretation of history; rather, they are perceived as possible perspectives with their underlying values and norms (Ammert et al., 2017), which in turn are bound to time, space, political and social power relations, and public debates. In parallel with these developments, scholars have become more conservative in their consideration of grand themes. Many historians work in specialized areas of research fields that contribute to very specific questions, while abandoning the need to provide answers to overarching questions. Moreover, reflections on intercultural or transcultural programmes thus take on a new relevance for practical work in school and extracurricular history education institutions (Nordgren & Johansson 2014).

Secondly, a "moral turn" in historiography can be observed more recently in the sense that "historians have sought to use questions of justice, injustice, and right and wrong as guiding categories in their work" (Gibson et al. p. 50; see also Barton & Ho 2022). Such examples are easy to find, e.g. in the reappraisal of the forced care measures taken by state authorities in Switzerland, in the residential schools in Canada, in the postcolonial reflection on the past in many countries, and so on. However, the negotiations are often in full swing here, so that historians become advocates for the victims and historical research inevitably involves a political point of view. This leads to the question: What is the overall aim of learning history? Is it to learn formal thinking skills? Or is it about larger social issues, such as embedding the teaching of history in social challenges and contributing to the common good? In fact, these references to the common good and the importance of historical learning for social cohesion have recently been found on a theoretical and normative level (e.g. Assmann & Assmann 2024). However, the educational practice often still follows mechanistic principles based on traditional forms of teaching that focus on the acquisition of established knowledge (Barton & Levstik 2004).

Thirdly, with regard to non-Western and indigenous cultures, the question arises as to whether Western concepts and intellectual traditions are suitable as a starting point for establishing universal concepts of learning history. Several scholars critically note that concepts of historical thinking are rooted in Western traditions of Enlightenment philosophical thought, and thus presuppose a certain concept of knowledge and specific methods for producing and evaluating that knowledge. Levesque and Clark (2018), for example, ask whether it is possible to understand other ways of dealing with the past against this background. The explicit or implicit normalization of a Westernized philosophical framework for defining what knowledge is and the ethical codes associated with it can also be seen as another example of the continuation of colonial structures with their own forms of temporal orientation, perspectives on the relationship

between past, present and future, and standards and methods for evaluating knowledge claims, ethical decisions and actions. The hitherto dominant focus on Western knowledge production has recently been increasingly questioned in the face of global crises, as this knowledge - from a planetary perspective - is held responsible for many crises in the first place. It is therefore more important than ever to bring together diverse knowledge practices. Keith Barton and Li-Ching Ho, for example, seek to combine Western thought with various philosophical and cultural traditions, including Confucianism and indigenous philosophies, to create space for a vision of global education that supports students in their quest for social justice and harmony, while recognizing the diversity of crises and the need for collective action. They reconsider the "why of learning history" with a clear plea for the normative level, according to which civic engagement and ethical and moral behavior must be the goal of teaching social sciences and humanities, including history:

> Beyond the vague goal of preparing young people for public participation, social and civic educators show little agreement on what students should be learning or what it means to take part in public life. […] We should make it clear at the outset, however, that by public action we mean collective engagement with matters of public concern. This involves acting to improve the world by addressing poverty, violence, discrimination, and other societal issues, or working to preserve important elements of the world we already have, such as In-digenous languages or the environment. (Barton & Ho 2022, 2–3)

However, this demand does not clarify how a common agreement on norms and ethical standards could be achieved, or to what extent deliberative processes and liberal-democratic values should guide the discourse.

Alongside these considerations, the challenges facing the teaching of history in migration societies, such as the question of which content, approaches and learning objectives should be chosen, are becoming increasingly pressing. There sometimes seems to be a wide gap between the history that is taught and debated in academia, in the public sphere, and the history classrooms. Or, to put it more pointedly, schools can be seen as "complex sites of historical consciousness and historical learning where public expectations of what is important to learn, memory practices, personal narratives and the historical discipline all collide" (Gibson et al. 2022, p. 49). Teachers are increasingly required to diagnose their students' prior knowledge and historical consciousness, and to further develop and classify their own knowledge in the context of current debates and discourses. Thus, the expectation to not only impart knowledge, but also to stimulate historical thinking, and in particular to foster historical orientation and ethical judgment in the classroom is overwhelming for many educators. Not only have heterogeneous student populations and increasingly polarized public debates made these tasks more challenging, but so have the demands for self-reflective historical awareness. As a result, discussing controversial issues becomes difficult. Only recently, there have been increasing calls for teachers to initiate the development of discursive skills, discussions about collective belongings, and historical understandings of interwoven structures, worldviews, and institutions in the classroom in order to strengthen the promotion of civic engagement and the democratic development of peoples (Barton & Levstik 2004; Carretero & Perez-Manjarrez, 2019). This is a call that should be addressed not only to students and teachers, but probably to all those who deal with history.

The need for transcultural dialogue

In the light of the global, epistemological, moral and social challenges outlined above and the notion of transition, we propose to strengthen a transcultural academic dialogue on concepts of historical thinking and history education embedded in different educational contexts, linked to state policies, societal values and norms. Deliberative dialogue, social justice, inclusion and agency can serve as starting points for new theoretical developments and practical approaches. Considering current challenges, it is important to consider whether established approaches such as inter- and multiculturalism should be complemented by a transcultural perspective. Andreas Körber describes transculturality as a concept that goes beyond the traditional notions of multiculturalism and interculturality (Körber 2018). It sees cultures not as homogeneous and separate entities, but as mental complexes to which people refer when they conceptualise their identities in the multidimensional space of shared and divisive differences. Culture is understood as

a complex and multifactorial construct that connects rather than separates individuals from different groups. The goal is to create cultural connections across cultural boundaries, thereby reducing diversity and otherness without eliminating them altogether. Transcultural history education would therefore be challenged to understand and teach the complexity of cultural interdependence, with teachers and students reflecting on their own cultural interconnectedness. The goal would then be to develop openness to the perspectives of others, to learn to appreciate different forms of knowledge, and to develop an enduring willingness to talk about history. From a social constructivist perspective which also draws on the work of collectivist cultures (Vygotsky 1978), we argue here that basic narratives and ways of thinking, as well as methods for gaining new insights into the past, should be learned through interactional exchange in order to be able to ask further questions on a well-founded and, wherever possible, deliberatively negotiated knowledge base. Only those who have structures of historical thinking at their disposal can expand, question, reflect, criticize and rethink them. It goes without saying that such structures are not only based on language and textual work but can also include a wide range of human forms of expression, including visual representation, symbolic action and artistic expression, all of which have long traditions of mixing and blending leading to entanglement, intermixing, and commonality (Welsch, 1999), e.g., the history of architecture or the world of music, dance, or technological artifacts such as films, digital games or AI-generated images.

Aims of the new journal Historical Thinking, Culture, and Education (HTCE)

With the new journal Historical Thinking, Culture, and Education (HTCE), we aim to provide a critical space for reflection and exchange on the above-mentioned aspects. For the first issue, we were looking for theoretical and empirical publications that contribute to a transcultural and transnational dialogue on the current state of history education and its needs for future developments. On the academic side, the hope is to broaden perspectives and find solutions to emerging political and societal problems. Our goal is to support the development of theory and the expansion of research towards a more comprehensive understanding of the preconditions, contexts, and processes of historical thinking and learning around the globe. Related to this is the hope that translation and scholarly dialog, combined with a heightened awareness of power relations and hierarchies, can lead to mutual understanding and the resolution of tensions. Interdisciplinary research practices with their characteristic "work on transitions", their "readiness for translation" and "logic of transition" (e.g., gender studies, postcolonial studies, global citizenship education) can offer starting points. Academic discourse is often dominated by those with high economic or social resources. These are usually scholars from the "Western" world. As a result, relevant perspectives are lost or not even noticed. Therefore, we especially encourage scholars from non-Western backgrounds to submit papers and contribute to the discussion.

The first issue of the HTCE journal contains a collection of research articles, and miniature papers designed to stimulate an international dialogue among scholars and educators in the field of history education.

Research papers

Continuing post-colonial debates, *Andrea Brait* presents an analysis of Austrian textbooks on discovery, imperialism, and colonialism. The article examines Austrian curricula and 61 textbooks from the Second Republic since 1945, focusing on how they present the consequences of European colonial policies. The state requirements are clearly Eurocentric, but the textbooks have considerable freedom in the selection of thematic aspects. This freedom allowed for the inclusion of topics that were not explicitly mandated, such as the impact of European conquests on indigenous populations. However, it was also found that the long-term consequences of colonialism were often omitted, and racist concepts persisted in textbooks well into the 2000s, influencing contemporary social discourse in Austria.

Kyriaki Fardi's study explores the perspectives and beliefs of prospective and currently employed educators on the appropriate age for introducing children to history education in kindergarten and primary school. Using thematic analysis, the qualitative research reveals

that educators' views are influenced by their social representations of history education, as well as their own educational experiences. These factors shape their perceptions of the appropriate age for introducing history to children. The paper outlines the theoretical background, research objectives, methodology, results, discussion, and conclusions.

The study by *Katharina Totter*, *Wolfgang Wagner*, and *Christiane Bertram's* study examines the standardized assessment of historical competencies in German history classes. They developed a test to measure epistemological understanding and methodological skills and validated it with 354 students before administring a revised version to 1,301 high school students. The final test contained 38 items with different stimuli such as interview excerpts and cartoons. While the methodological test showed sufficient reliability, the epistemological test had limitations, indicating a need for revision. The study also found that students' grades, cognitive ability, and socioeconomic status predicted their performance.

Miniatures

Several authors have decided to write a short article. The miniatures are between 1,000 and 5,000 words in length and are designed to stimulate discussions about history education in a broad sense. They include suggestions and ideas for pedagogical innovations, new theoretical concepts, cross-cultural research, interdisciplinary approaches, etc.

Helen Kaufmann and *Thomas Metzger's* article, "Crossing Borders in History Education," is based on an international summer school in Prague and St. Gallen, part of the "Train to Freedom" project of the Pädagogische Hochschule St. Gallen and Charles University in Prague. Student teachers and teacher trainees developed didactic concepts and materials for a virtual tour (IWalk) based on the life of the Holocaust survivor Petr Fiala, who was among the 1,200 prisoners on the "Train to Freedom" to Switzerland in February 1945. The article analyzes audio recordings of participants' discussions about their own history education and didactic approaches, and links these reflections to research findings and theoretical concepts in history education.

Alison Bedford and Naomi Barnes provoke reflection on how and why different perspectives are taught in history classrooms across nations, and their relationship to citizenship in liberal democracies. Using initial survey data from Australian history teachers, they highlight the inconsistent understanding of the concept of perspective. They emphasize the urgent need to focus on multiple perspectives, especially as right-wing conservatism seeks to promote a monovocal grand narrative, reverting to a 'victor's history' approach that undermines multicultural, democratic societies.

The term "Anthropocene" is widely discussed today, not only in scientific circles but also in the media, popular culture, and the arts. It is discussed as a turning point in Earth history, a geological epoch, and a cultural metaphor. However, as *Andreas Hübner* points out, some scholars argue that the term reinforces anthropocentrism, Eurocentrism, and global inequalities and contributes to depoliticization. This discussion will explore how the Anthropocene is supposedly depoliticized. The author argues that a critical examination of temporality and timescales can reveal the politics of the Anthropocene, promote new historical thinking, and challenge the foundations of history education.

Lili Zeng asks about the perspectives and contexts of historical learning in historical games. Traditional concepts of history framed within linear narratives are currently facing significant challenges and are being largely replaced by digital media. Historical games offer significant pedagogical potential by addressing the limitations of traditional history education through experimental learning. Their value lies in open-ended storytelling, self-directed exploration, immersive personal experiences, and the ability to contextualize historical events through interactions with virtual avatars.

Interviews

Finally: We want to be a scholarly journal. At the same time, we want to move away from established paths and offer more open formats for knowledge transfer. Most people from an academic context are probably aware that many conversations in the informal times of conferences, for instance, open up a high degree of knowledge transfer. Therefore, in addition to traditional papers, we want to give space to experimental settings and informal forms of knowledge exchange. In this first issue, Sebastian Barsch interviewed Kenneth Nordgren, Carmen Gloria Zúñiga and Johannes Meyer-Hamme, who were presenters in the first HTCE lecture series on the question "Is there something that connects the diversity of historical narratives?". They all

provide an overview of their experiences with transculturality, travel knowledge, and history education from their respective regional perspectives. Overall, we are excited to see how research and dialogue on historical thinking in formal and non-formal contexts will develop. We hope that the new open access journal will provide a positive impetus for disciplinary and interdisciplinary discourse.

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ORCID iD

Sebastian Barsch iD https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6715-1466

Monika Waldis iD https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5157-0968

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Colonialism and imperialism in Austrian history curricula and textbooks (1945–2023)

*Andrea Brait** ID

University for Continuing Education, Krems

Abstract

The article considers the depiction of colonialism and imperialism in Austrian textbooks (n = 61) and curricula issued since the commencement of the Second Republic in 1945. The analysis indicates that textbooks made use of the freedom afforded them by state stipulations, which, while evidently taking a distinctly Eurocentric point of view, give textbook authors scope for taking decisions on the inclusion or exclusion of particular topics. The textbooks studied covered various aspects of this area of history that curricula did not list expressly, such as the impact of European colonial aggression on Indigenous populations. Simultaneously, the analysis showed a long absence from textbooks of colonialism's implications throughout history to the present day, and demonstrated that textbooks reproduced racist ideas well into the 2000s, with corresponding effects on perceptions of history among Austrian population today.

Keywords

1. Introduction and current state of research

The teaching of history in schools, as Kühberger (2020, p. 83) rightly observes, has always found itself instrumentalised for political ends. History education emerged alongside, and in close interconnection with, the building of nation states during the nineteenth century; analogously, in numerous European countries, the concept of national histories to be taught in schools came into being in parallel with the establishment of history as an academic discipline (Popp, 2002). The way in which scholars and educators studied and taught the history of their own state endowed that history with political legitimation and, at the same time, created distinctions between that state and other states. Today, various historians continue to consider that history education should communicate to learners some form of national historical canon (Mayer, 2010). History didacticians have increasingly begun to critique ethnocentric approaches to school history and the centring of a state's national past, advocating instead for an emphasis on global history (see, for example, Grewe, 2016a; Bernhard et al., 2021). In so doing, they make particular reference to the issue of colonialism, noting its continued coverage in schools, despite general references to the European context, from the viewpoint of national commemorative cultures (Grindel, 2008), and the fact that, alongside this, "not insignificant numbers of students with non-European or

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*   **Contact:** Andrea Brait ✉ andrea.brait@donau-uni.ac.at
      University for Continuing Education Krems, Center for Culture and Technologies of Collecting, Krems, Austria

non-Western backgrounds find themselves confronted with diverse racial stereotypes, many of which are reminiscent of colonialist patterns of thinking" (Popp et al., 2019, p. 10). It is evident that textbooks produced in Europe are, realistically, never going to completely renounce a Eurocentric view (Koselleck, 1977). Nevertheless, it spears reasonable to expect, at least, that European textbooks will reflect critically, and self-critically, on the perspectives they take (Eberth & Röll, 2021). Various researchers therefore consider that, in this spirit, history textbooks should move from a colonial representation of the world to a representation of the colonial world, which would entail an increasing focus on the history of colonialism and its recognition as a central challenge of and to commemorative cultures (Macgilchrist & Otto, 2014).

The arguments put forward by history educationalists correspond with those advanced within postcolonial theories and societal discourse (Grewe, 2016b). These made an impact somewhat later in Austria than in other European countries, likely due to the persistence, after 1945, of the myth that colonialism had not been an Austrian affair. This served both to distance Austria from National Socialism and the positioning of the neutral republic towards the colonies which had become independent. It is not until approximately twenty to twenty-five years ago that substantial research on the colonial history of Austria, or Austria-Hungary, commenced (Sauer, 2017, p. 420). The effectiveness of colonial, racist and orientalist patterns of thinking, which persisted into the Second Republic (Burton, 2021, p. 332), thus found little attention in research. Recent years, however, have seen a shift in sociopolitical discourses in Austria (Sauer, 2022), in interaction with more general political debates on racism, such as those sparked by the negligent homicide of the asylum seeker Marcus Omofuma by three Austrian policemen (Spanbauer, 2022). One strand of discourse in this area refers to the act of scrutinising the language of colonialism and its replacement with anti-racist language use (Kunz, 2021). The "N-word" (Dell, 2015) now carries strongly racist, pejorative connotations; and the term "Indians" ("Indianer" in German) similarly attracts a highly critical view (AntiDiskriminierungsBüro Köln, 2013) despite its current use by members of indigenous cultures, such as the American Indian Movement. Mounting attention to and critique around Austria's colonial heritage is evident, for instance, in the current (2023) government's agenda for its tenure, which defined that research into the provenance of artefacts collected during colonial times as an area of work and action; this led to the initiation of a first academic reappraisal of Austrian museums' colonial heritage (Schölnberger, 2021). In 2022, the Austrian Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, the Civil Service and Sport appointed a committee of experts to draw up recommendations for the management of artefacts from colonial acquisitions currently held by Austria's federal museums (Bundesministerium für Kunst, Kultur, öffentlichen Dienst und Sport, 2022). The production of postcolonial maps of Vienna (Hacker, 2018) and Innsbruck (Burton & Kuhn, 2023) likewise testify to the discursive currency of the colonial past.

In contrast, the latest annual report by the campaigning association ZARA (2023) indicates that racism remains a serious issue in various contexts of Austrian life. Societal critiques identifying the persistence of colonial discourse in Austria also point out its ongoing traces in the materials used to teach the nation's children history; a "petition for a referendum" issued in 2022 and entitled "Black Voices", called for "[t]extbooks, teaching and learning materials […] [to] be reviewed for discriminatory, racist, colonial and [E]urocentric continuities and, if necessary, modified. The diversity of the population and the inclusion of Black people and people of colour as equal must be portrayed and represented in all educational media, teaching and learning objectives" (Verein Black Voices Austria, 2022, p. 2).

The initiators' attention to textbooks in this regard is logical; these media provide a channel for the incorporation of current academic discourses and new research findings into what is taught in the classroom (Popp, 2008, 112) and for the exertion of influence on societal historical consciousness, given the most widely used teaching media in the teaching of history (Foster, 2012, p. 50), as studies have evidenced textbooks' central value to and regular use in Austrian history teaching (cf., inter alia, Bernhard, 2018, p. 50; Kipman & Kühberger, 2019, p. 61–63). Although the content of textbooks is subject to curricular stipulations, they generally enjoy freedom of their interpretation, to a greater or lesser degree, which involve reflection of the prevailing social and political discourses (Hellmuth, 2021, p. 42). A number of studies, pertaining to various nation states, have explored representations of colonialism in textbooks, with a notable preponderance of work on history textbooks published in Europe. This research (an international overview appears, inter alia, in Müller, 2018; Popp et al., 2019) has found tendencies, in numerous nation states, for textbooks to initially ignore the history of colonialism, and long periods of time during which critical reflection on the topic was absent from these publications. Notwithstanding the emergence in more recent years of narratives that have begun to engage

with these issues, the depiction of particular historical events and the attribution of agency to various groups involved in them remain closely intertwined with specific national point of view. The extent to which textbooks have considered current postcolonial discourses likewise varies from nation state to nation state. In France, for example, textbooks have featured in sociopolitical discourses around appropriate postcolonial politics of memory (Otto, 2013). In Austria, by contrast, neither sociopolitical debates nor research in history didactics pay particular attention to this subject: some studies, however, have taken place on selected textbooks and aspects of these issues. A quantitative comparison of the content of three textbooks published in the period 2001–2004 (Kühberger, 2015) found strongly Eurocentric representations of historical events and limited coverage of the history of areas outside Europe. Analysing six Austrian textbooks for upper secondary school students published between 2004 and 2008, alongside books from Germany and the US, Bernhard (2013) identified numerous subject-specific errors in accounts of the history of Hispanic America, alongside popular historical myths such as the one on the flat Earth. The textbooks' narratives on the conquest of Mexico depict the Spanish as heroic and as superior to the Indigenous Mexicans, frequently figured as passive. A Master's thesis on Austrian history textbooks (Haaf, 2017) noted divergencies among representations in a sample of six textbooks for upper secondary schools issued between 2006 and 2013: a Eurocentric perspective clearly predominated in one of the books, while another reflected critically on Eurocentric terms and stereotypes, centring postcolonial discourses and those relating to global history. A linguistic analysis of textbooks for Austrian lower secondary schools approved under the curriculum of 2008 (n = 14) illuminated representations of the colonised world as a generalisable entity, as if individual pre-colonial histories and cultures had never existed in these areas (Porstner, 2020). Another Master's dissertation, by Martin Spechtenhauser (2023), analysed representations of colonialism appearing in a significantly larger sample of textbooks, with dates of publication ranging from 1960 to 2019, used at various times in South Tyrol, whose German schools draw their textbooks from both Germany and, significantly for our context, Austria. Spechtenhauser's work demonstrated the dominance of a European perspective – as manifest in the preeminent depiction of European figures, sources, and so on – throughout the sample, with the addition, from the 1970s onward, of a critical consideration of Europeans' actions, and the advent of contextualisation with reference to the present day around the turn of the millennium. Textbooks in use until and into the 1970s frequently "othered" Indigenous people, stereotyping them as, for instance, "savages" or "barbarians"; the research noted instances of the use of racist terms, albeit without conducting a systematic analysis of this point.

However, an extensive historical-didactic study on Austrian textbooks has not been conducted yet. Moreover, it can be noted that the state guidelines, which are the basis of the books, are rarely taken into consideration. The lack of engagement with textbook narratives is surprising, as students express major interest in the thematic field (Ammerer, 2022, p. 269 f.) and textbooks are considered objects of the postcolonial politics of memory by research (Fuchs & Otto, 2013).

Considering the fact that even states which were not "colonial powers" per se still have a colonial heritage that encompasses, yet extends beyond, artefacts of material culture in institutions, such as museums, that collect such objects an analysis of the transmission of colonial narratives and mindsets is also relevant for Austria. The study set out in this article attempted to reduce this research gap by examining (1) which guidelines on colonialism and imperialism can be found in Austria's history curricula (1945–2016), (2) how textbooks currently in use deal with these topics[1], and (3) which differences can be observed between these books and textbooks[2] published during Austria's Second Republic (commencing in 1945)[3]. To this end, I combined a synchronic, categorical textbook analysis of textbooks whose state approval was in place during the 2022/23 academic year (n = 12) with a diachronic analysis of textbooks issued during the period 1945–2015 (n = 49). I intend the analysis that follows as a contribution to a process of reflection with the aim of uncovering the structures that have emerged from colonial logic and that manifest in various spheres of societal life, including in schools and the teaching of history.

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1   As section 3 below details, the current Austrian curriculum schedules the topic for year 7 of schooling; I therefore limited the analysis of current textbooks to works for use in this year.
2   Section 3 below likewise sets out how earlier curricula scheduled the topic. I analysed textbooks for the school years in which the topic was treated at the time the textbook in question was issued.
3   I chose this period because of the continuity of the political system and due to the existence of publications on the development of history teaching during this period (Brait, 2022).

2. Sources and methods

The Austrian state school system came into being through the reforms instituted by Maria Theresia at the end of the eighteenth century and has traditionally featured a centralistic organisational structure. Curricula, and their stipulations on the knowledge and skills learners are to acquire (Schönemann, 2014, p. 119–122), therefore cover the entire Austrian state; I identified them using the federal legal information system (RIS). Chapter 3 provides a descriptive overview of the legal framework which is the context for the treatment of colonialism and imperialism in Austrian textbooks and thus for the analysis that follows.

State approval issued to textbooks is valid for the entire country of Austria. On the basis of an agreement between the Ministry of Education and the Austrian professional association of the book and media industry, textbooks, once they have received state approval, spend ten years on the list of approved textbooks which doubles as a system for the ordering of class sets provided to students free of charge. I used this list, which is reissued and published online annually, to identify the Year 7 textbooks with current approval at the time of the research (n = 12). To find the textbooks which held approval for use at some point 1945 and 2015 (n = 49), I referred to the collection of textbooks put together by the Austrian Ministry of Education and handed over to the University of Vienna's library in 2016 (Jahresbericht 2017). Some series of books treat the topic of colonialism and imperialism across multiple volumes, as one volume always covers one specific school year and curricula may stipulate the topic's teaching in more than one year. In these cases, I counted these volumes together, as a single work. I selected a textbook for analysis either if it was a completely new publication, issued after 1945, or if it was a new edition of an existing publication whose text and/or graphics differed from previous editions. I did not include workbooks issued as companion volumes to some textbooks, be these current or older books. To limit the volume of data included and to restrict the analysis to those topics that appear in all books from 1945-2015, I analysed only chapters that explored colonialism or imperialism in the modern period. Chapters or passages in the books on topics such as the American War of Independence, colonial wars, and twentieth-century processes of decolonisation did not occur in all books, so I did not include them in the analysis.

I used MAXQDA to conduct a categorical analysis of scanned textbook chapters on the topic of colonialism and imperialism (on the methodology used, cf., inter alia, Schreiber, 2016); where a topic appeared in more than one volume of a textbook, I incorporated these chapters or passages into a single PDF file Following the criteria for analysis proposed by Hinz und Meyer-Hamme (2016, 137), I included in the analysis the text written by the textbooks' authors, historical sources, representations of historical content, and tasks set for learners, in all cases where these referred to the topics of colonialism or imperialism. The length and number of the relevant passages in the textbooks varied greatly, as is evident from the codings; the lowest quantity is 23, the highest 128. The system of categories I created, using an inductive process, ultimately encompassed 110 codes, emerging from two rounds of coding; the exceptions were seven principal codes, which I defined in advance of the coding process on the basis of the inclusion criteria set out above, of my knowledge of Austrian curricula in this area, and of the findings of previous work (Spechtenhauser, 2023). These categories were: 1: Eurocentrism and "othering"; 2: the direct impact of colonialism and imperialism; 3: the present-day impact of colonialism and imperialism; 4: the depiction of Indigenous cultures; 5: historical sources; 6: representations of historical content; 7: tasks for learners. Categories 1 to 4 refer to text written by the books' authors.

I excluded from the analysis any text, representations of historical content[4], historical sources and tasks for learners which made reference to the so-called "discovery" ("Entdeckung") of non-European territories, or to their "discoverers" or European nations' policies relating to voyages of "discovery". This exclusion covered, for example, all images and information about Columbus' voyages to the Americas and his arrival in the Bahamas; all maps only showing various voyages of "discovery" (Columbus, da Gama, Magellan, etc.); details of later expeditions to non-European places and the people who undertook them; and the impact of imperialism on the global geopolitical situation, including such issues as nationalism and the outbreak of the First World War. A further criterion for exclusion was the impossibility of allocating a passage of text, a task, a historical source or representation of historical content to any of the categories,

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4   Like sources, these representations of historical content are distinguishable from authorial text by their distinct graphic design.

either because they appeared only sporadically in the textbooks or because no particular category unambiguously matched the data. One example of such an instance occurs in *Zeit-bilder 3* (2018, p. 35), which sets learners the task of composing a talk about Columbus in which they "describe [their] feelings" ("Schreibe eine Rede über Kolumbus, in der du deine Gefühle beschreibst."), but does not stipulate whether they should refer to his voyages, to Indigenous people, to his return home, and/or to other aspects of his life. There were similar difficulties in categorising images that, due to missing captions or descriptions, I was unable to identify as either a historical source or a representation of historical content. An instance of this is an illustration showing Hernán Cortés with Indigenous people in *Unsere Vergangenheit 3* (2020, p. 47).

I permitted the double coding of data, provided the codes were not mutually exclusive with regard to the excerpts' content. Content was the determining criterion for coding; instances of content related to one another were recorded under one code. The smallest coding unit was one sentence. For example, I coded the sentence "Imperialistische Staaten machten fremde Länder zu politisch und wirtschaftlich abhängigen Kolonien." ("Imperialist states turned foreign countries into politically and economically dependent colonies.") in the textbook *Zeiten Völker Kulturen 2* (1987, p. 125) under the categories "Aufteilung der Welt" ("Dividing up the world") and "Wirtschaftliche Ausbeutung" ("Economic exploitation"). I allocated a total of 3710 codes to excerpts of data; this count includes some passages of text which I had to code in two parts due to layout issues, such as the text extending across two columns or a double-page spread. For some topics, I coded textual and visual sources separately, one example being 38 images relating to the category "Dividing up the world" (37 cartoons and one drawing on the Berlin Conference of 1884/85).

I made particular use of the MAXQDA functions "Code Matrix Browser", "Crosstabulation" and "Interactive Segment Matrix", as they enabled me to compare, quantitatively and qualitatively, textbooks produced in line with various different curricula (Brait, 2022). As an example of the analysis made possible by these functionalities, the code matrix browser for the code "AT Rassismus 20./21. Jh." ("Text on racism, 20th/21st centuries"), categorised under the principal code "Folgen bis heute" ("Consequences to the present day"), the code Q "Rassismus 20./21. Jh." ("Sources on racism, 20th/21st centuries"), under the principal code "Quellen" ("Sources"), and the code AA "Rassismus 20./21. Jh." ("tasks for learners on racism, 20th/21st centuries"), under the principal code "Arbeitsaufträge" ("tasks for learners"), shows that the only works to raise issues of present-day racism in text written by the books' authors and in historical sources were those published following the issuance of the 2008 curriculum, whereas learners' tasks on present-day racism appeared in a textbook approved for use under the 1985/86 curriculum. Due to the large variety of textbook content, only the codes which occurred the most frequently were taken into account in the following analysis.

3. Curricular stipulations

This section discusses only those curricula for the years of schooling in which colonialism and imperialism occur. Austria's first post-Second World War curricula for lower secondary schools, attended by learners aged 10 to 14, were provisionally passed in 1946 (Zl. 28.520-IV/12). The content stipulated for the teaching and learning of history consisted in a chronological sequence of historical events and developments, listed using keywords. The list for Year 7 contains the term "discoveries" ("Entdeckungen"); the Year 8 list includes the "aspiration of Great Powers for international standing" ("Streben der Großmächte nach Weltgeltung"). These words and phrases bear witness to a distinctly Eurocentric perspective in this curriculum, which additionally appears to limit its consideration of colonialism's impact to competition among the European Great Powers', omitting any reference to slavery or to the acts of destruction committed against Indigenous cultures. This, however, would not necessarily have prevented textbooks from addressing such facets of the issues, given the brevity of the wording in the lists.

The curriculum issued in 1963 (BGBl. 134/1963) for a particular, non-academically selective type of lower secondary school (Hauptschule) stipulates the treatment of of "discoveries and their consequences" ("Entdeckungen und ihre Folgen") in Year 7, albeit without following up on this apparent introduction of nuance by providing a more detailed definition of these "consequences"; the use of the term "discoveries" demonstrates the persistence of a Eurocentric point of view. The Year 8 syllabus incorporates the topic of "imperialism, colonialism and global trade", similarly expanding to a degree on the coverage of this area stipulated in 1946, yet re-

fraining, like the Year 7 list, from expressly specifying aspects of the topic, such as the impact on Indigenous cultures. This lack of detail gives the textbooks room for interpretation as to the topic's teaching. The Year 7 curriculum for academically selective lower secondary schools (Allgemeinbildende höhere Schulen), issued one year subsequently (BGBl. 163/1964), offered still greater freedom of interpretation, referring only, and distinctly Eurocentrically, to "conquests of new continents" ("Entdeckung neuer Kontinente"). The impact and implications of the so-called discoveries, then, were not explicitly prescribed as a topic for academically selective schools (Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule, AHS). As in 1946, the Year 8 AHS curriculum references "the aspiration of Great Powers for international standing".

The curricula issued in 1985/86 for both types of lower secondary school referenced above (BGBl. 78/1985, BGBl. 88/1985, BGBl. 441/1986, BGBl. 591/1986) called for history lessons to "awaken historical and political consciousness" in learners, drawing on the fundamental tenets of democracy. These curricula are the first to incorporate principles for the teaching of history which have retained their validity to the present day, including the pointing out of correspondences between past events and the present. The curricula require, for the first time, the use of historical sources, selected visual material, audio-visual resources and eyewitness accounts in Austrian history classrooms. They remain chronologically structured, and evince some changes in the years of schooling in which particular periods or topics are treated. The Year 6 syllabus includes the topic of "discoveries and their political, economic and social consequences" ("Entdeckungen und ihre politischen, wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Folgen"), in a fashion somewhat more specific than in previous curricula, albeit maintaining a Eurocentric angle on the matter. The list of topics for Year 7 features "colonialism at the beginning of the modern period – mercantilist colonial policy" ("Kolonialismus am Beginn der Neuzeit – merkantilistische Kolonialpolitik"); "causes and types of imperialistic colonial policy" ("Ursachen und Formen imperialistischer Kolonialpolitik"), "consequences of European rule for the colonised people" ("Folgen der europäischen Herrschaft für die Kolonialvölker"), "the Europeanisation of the Earth" ("Die Europäisierung der Erde"), and "imperialistic power policies and national tensions as causes of World War I" ("Imperialistische Machtpolitik und nationale Spannungen als Ursachen des Ersten Weltkrieges"). This is the first explicit reference, in Austrian lower secondary school curricula, to the impact on Indigenous cultures of the European appropriation of lands. This curriculum is readable as a response to calls, first raised in Europe-based academic discourses in the 1970s (Conrad, 2015, p. 14). for a renunciation of Eurocentrism and for the dedication of equal coverage, in history education, to the history of all cultures.

Curricular reforms undertaken in the year 2000 (BGBl. II 133/2000, BGBl. II 134/2000) assigned the study of an extensive period, commencing in the early modern age and concluding at the end of the First World War, to the seventh year of schooling, which is year 3 of lower secondary school. One topic scheduled for this school year was "encounter and confrontation – Europe and the world from discoveries to the European expansion in the Age of Imperialism" ("Begegnung und Konfrontation – Europa und die Welt von den Entdeckungen bis zur europäischen Expansion im Zeitalter des Imperialismus"). This curriculum contains, in comparison to the curricula of the 1980s, significantly fewer prescribed topics related to the European "discoveries". A new curriculum for all lower secondary schools, which came into effect in 2008 (BGBl. II 290/2008), expanded the subject of history and social studies to incorporate civic education. It was also the first curriculum to set out stipulations for the subject-specific skills learners are to acquire, in line with the advent of competency-based education. In a manner similar to the curricula of the 1960s, these curricula do not delineate the topics to be covered in detail. The list of topics scheduled for Year 7, for instance, features the phrase "discoveries that have changed the world" ("Entdeckungen, die die Welt verändert haben"); the word "discoveries", as previously, entails a clear Eurocentric perspective. This curriculum differs from previous iterations in that it does not require the treatment of imperialism during the study of the later modern period – which of course, does not mean that textbooks were not permitted to cover the topic.

The lower secondary school curriculum which became effective at the commencement of the 2016/2017 academic year (BGBl. 113/2016) departs from the chronological structure of prior curricula, setting out its content by topic, and going into greater detail on this content than did previous curricula. The topics included likewise underwent changes, notably including a shift of emphasis from Austrian history towards European and global history (Brait, 2022). One of the nine topic areas scheduled for Year 7 is dedicated to "encounters between us and the Other", literally "[our] own and the foreign" ("Begegnungen zwischen dem Eigenen und dem Fremden"); one of the stipulations pertaining to this topic is that learners discuss the impact of colonialism and imperialism on the present time, while another stipulation calls for students to learn to per-

ceive and critique racist conceptions stemming from the age of imperialism. Distinguishing itself from the broad space for interpretation that previous curricula supplied, this curriculum requires teachers and learners more unambiguously to address, in detail, the impact of modern European colonial aggression, and makes the first express stipulation that students engage with the issue of racism in the present day and its connection to the colonial past. The curriculum's wording further indicates clearly an expectation that students engage actively with the topics listed.

4. Colonialism and imperialism in Austrian textbooks

The sections that follow explore the depiction of colonialism and imperialism in current textbooks (4.1) and compare it with depictions in books from the period 1945–2015 (4.2). Both of these sections follow the same structure, commencing with exploration of how the books depict Indigenous cultures and following this with examination of the immediate and then the longer-term impacts of colonialism; this pattern corresponds to the arrangement of these themes in some textbooks, one example being *GO! Geschichte 3* (2021). In other words, most of the excerpts coded under the overarching topic of Indigenous cultures tend to occur towards the beginning of the relevant narratives, while most of those categorizable as relating to long-term impacts appear towards their end. These sections conclude with considerations of the extent to which the textbooks in question can be considered Eurocentric, referring back to concepts that were central to prior studies (Spechtenhauser, 2023). I cover the findings in relation to their themes on the basis of the codings, discussing – where they supply examples of the phenomena under analysis – text written by the books' authors, historical sources and representations of historical content, and tasks for learners. I supply charts to supplement to the textual analysis. Before discussing the findings of the analysis, it is useful at this juncture to note the marked changes, over time, in the design of textbooks; while books published until the mid-1970s were in black and white, largely consisting of text supplemented by some historical sources and representations of historical content, subsequent publications successively increased the proportions of the latter and significantly expanded the tasks intended for learners, that had previously been more isolated and very brief.

4.1 Colonialism and imperialism in current textbooks

Textbooks in current use, in line with curricular stipulations, give extensive coverage to the issue of colonialism and imperialism. All the textbooks currently in use discuss what discourse frequently terms "advanced civilisations" ("Hochkulturen") and the immediate and long-term impacts of the European policies implemented subsequent to Christopher Columbus' arrival in the Bahamas in 1492. Pertaining to each theme, I found text written by textbook authors, historical sources, representations of historical content, and tasks for learners.

4.1.1 Depictions of Indigenous cultures

Six textbooks contain text written by their authors that describes Indigenous cultures; some of these books do so in brief summary pieces. *Genial Duo 3* (2020, p.1) is one instance of such a summary treatment; it states that in Central and South America, the foremost civilisations were the Aztecs, the Incas, and the Maya, who grew corn, potatoes and cocoa, used irrigation systems and built large cities, although the wheel was unknown to them. Other textbooks consider Indigenous cultures in more detail, with the largest number referenced in *Meine Geschichte 3* (2018, p. 16), which lists the Incas, Maya, Native Americans (of the North American regions), the Himba and Herero. The books always mention these civilisations' technical achievements and distinctive characteristics; *Geschichte für alle 3* (2018, p. 13), to name an example, tells learners that the Aztecs used pictography, lived in large cities and venerated many gods. Six textbooks use reconstructive drawings for the purpose of illustrating particular Indigenous cultures; five of these feature Tenochtitlan, the Aztec capital city. Eight textbooks include a map showing the settlements that existed on the American continent prior to European colonisation.

Historical sources in the textbooks provide additional material from which pupils can learn about Indigenous cultures. Two books incorporate contemporary pictorial sources as examples of the Aztec codices: an excerpt from the illuminated manuscript Codex Magliabechiano appears in *Unsere Vergangenheit 3* (2020, p. 47), and excerpts from the Codex Mendoza in

GO! Geschichte 3 (2021, p. 16f.). Both of them are historical sources which came into being with the involvement of Indigenous people or are based on pre-Columbian illuminated manuscripts. Other sources used in the books on the lives and customs of Indigenous peoples are more evidently European in their points of view, originating from European creators; the authors chose sources that had a lasting impact on Europeans' image of Indigenous cultures. An example here is a woodcut appearing in *querdenken 2* (2023, p. 28), taken from the travelogue of Hans Staden and showing an act of cannibalism; learners are set a task on this source that asks them to evaluate the long-term impact of its depiction of this scene. The extremely controversial discussion taking place in academic research around the extent and significance of cannibalism among the Aztecs (Wilkosz, 2015) would undoubtedly go beyond the scope of the task for 10- to 14-year-old pupils.

Nine textbooks publish textual sources written by European authors on life in Indigenous culture; *GO! Geschichte 3* (2021, p. 19), for instance, cites three passages from a report by Amerigo Vespucci, with accompanying tasks, one of which prompts learners to identify the author's stance on Indigenous people. Indigenous textual sources occur in seven textbooks. One of these sources, in *überall Geschichte 3* (2018, p. 64), is an account by an Indigenous African man ("Afrikaner") of the construction of transport routes in nineteenth-century Tanzania. Eight books reproduce illustrations showing Indigenous works of art. Four of these feature an Aztec feather headdress, considered the only existing artefact of its type in the world and currently on display in Vienna's Weltmuseum, having arrived in Austria by a route and means as yet unidentified by researchers. Yet just two of these books reference the artefact's history (Weltmuseum 2023). Eight textbooks incorporate pictorial sources which focus on Indigenous people's appearance.

4.1.2 Direct or immediate impacts of European colonial policies

All textbooks that are approved for current use (at the time of writing) cover the immediate implications of colonialism for Indigenous cultures and detail the subjugation and forced migration of Indigenous peoples and the devastation inflicted on their cultures. Eight textbooks detail the destruction of the Aztec empire, and six do the same in relation to the Inca empire. Only one textbook speaks of a "tribal genocide"; two books apply the term "genocide" ("Völkermord") exclusively to the violent suppression of the Herero uprising, and these are indeed the only two books to refer to this event at all. Likewise, the Boxer uprising features in only two textbooks. Four textbooks in total provide a general discussion of resistance to colonialism offered by Indigenous people. *Unsere Vergangenheit 3* (2020, p. 57) states that, during the "conquest" ("Eroberung") of Africa, British troops repeatedly faced opposition, and that "several wars arose" ("[e]s kam zu mehreren Kriegen"). All textbooks supply tasks on the direct impact of colonial policies on indigenous people.

All twelve textbooks include pictorial sources showing the peaceful or conflictual encounter between Europeans and the Indigenous population. Ten of them feature the well-known copper engraving by Theodore de Bry, which purports to depict the landing of Columbus; not all of these ten, however, provide learners with all the information they would require to be able to interpret and analyse the source. While *Geschichte für alle 3* (2018, p. 11) notes the source's date (1594), it does not tell readers that the artist did not experience the event at first hand; *Unsere Vergangenheit 3* (2020, p. 46) does give this key information. Seven textbooks provide contemporary pictorial sources, created in the colonised territories, on the encounter of the Aztecs with the Spanish; one example, appearing in *querdenken 3* (2021, p. 18), is a detail of an illustration from The History of the Indies of New Spain by Diego Durán, a Dominican monk who emigrated to Mexico as a child. I note here that only two textbooks contextualise the use of sources created by Europeans by telling learners that the colonised societies had largely maintained oral cultures and traditions and that most of the Indigenous sources that did exist had suffered destruction in the course of European colonial activities.

Textual sources included in four textbooks include justifications for European policies of land appropriation. *Geschichte für alle 3* (2018, p. 22) incorporates a source by the British imperialist icon Cecil Rhodes in 1877 to the effect that the British were "the finest race in the world and that the more of the world [they] inhabit the better it is for the human race". To accompany this source, the textbook offers a task which asks students to identify the arguments the text makes and create their own counter-arguments. Alongside this evidence of European policies of appropriation and "conquest", four textbooks contain textual sources which express criticism of colonialism, imperialism and the treatment of Indigenous people. One of these, given in *Zeitbilder 3* (2018, p. 36), is a report by Bartolomé de Las Casas, an emigrant who belonged to

the Dominican order and became one of the Conquista's foremost critics, which describes and deplores the treatment of Indigenous people. In omitting to supply details of how Las Casas' writing was received, however, the textbook contributes to the reproduction of myths (Bernhard, 2013, p. 210) around the Conquista.

As well as discussing the violent subjugation of Indigenous peoples and the suppression of their cultures by colonial aggressors, all textbooks explain that numerous Indigenous people died from diseases imported from Europe. Ten textbooks additionally reference the forced Europeanisation and conversion to Christianity of Indigenous populations. *Was? Wann? Warum? 3* (2019, p. 19), mentions the banning of Indigenous traditions, customs and rites and the coercive imposition on Indigenous people – via methods such as the establishment of schools – of the Christian religion and European cultural practices.

Economic factors related to colonialism make various appearances in the textbooks, with ten books discussing the economic exploitation of the colonies and eight the transfer of goods between the colonies and Europe and the triangular trade. Five textbooks feature maps and tasks on this aspect of the topic. All books make reference to forced labour and slavery or the slave trade. Nine of these feature pictorial sources. *Zentrum 3* (2022, p. 22) contains a photograph from 1900 showing a man from South Africa pulling a carriage with two young women in it, and sets learners an extensive task on this image, asking them to describe the picture, to think about the purpose for which the photograph might have been taken and what it might intend to communicate to the viewer, to set out the grounds upon which the image can be considered racist, and to draw up some questions to ask the people that appear in the photograph. In total, eight textbooks provide tasks on the themes of slavery, the slave trade, or forced labour.

With one exception (*Unsere Vergangenheit 3*), the main text of all textbooks addresses the roots of racism in the colonial period and the contribution made by science and research to racist notions. Two textbooks advise learners that schools taught racist theories up until, and in the early years of, the twentieth century. The text of four textbooks incorporates explicit refutations of racist assumptions. Seven books supply sources on various forms of racism; *Bausteine 3* (2018, p. 55) prints a racist poster from Frankfurt Zoo, produced in 1885 and advertising "Male and Female Australian Cannibals" as an attraction. In relation to the zoo poster, the book asks learners to discuss the reasons why such forms of advertising were possible at this time, consider the poster from a present-day perspective, identify whether such advertisements would still be permissible today, and – in an instance of what we might call meta-reflection on the authors' part – judge whether such sources should appear in textbooks. In total, nine textbooks contain tasks on the thematic field of racism during the colonial period.

The implications of European colonial policies, such as the transformation of power relations in Europe, are covered in six textbooks. All books discuss competition among European states to build colonial empires, mostly titling this content "division of the world" ("Aufteilung der Welt"; as in, for example, *Genial Duo 3* (2020, p. 13)). Eight textbooks contain pictorial sources on this topic, including twelve caricatures. The Rhodes Colossus, originally published in the British satirical magazine Punch in 1892 and depicting Cecil Rhodes as a towering figure standing astride the entire continent of Africa, occurs in five books, making it the most frequently depicted pictorial source on this subject. Eight textbooks set tasks pertaining to these issues, and all books show maps to make learners aware of the colonial empires' locations and extent.

4.1.3 Long-term impact of European colonial policies

All textbooks refer, in one form or another, to the long-term implications, into the present time, of European colonial policies. The general political and economic situation in former colonies is a topic in nine books. *Genial Duo 3* (2020, p. 20) explains that many erstwhile colonial territories are now developing countries, that significant proportions of their populations live in great poverty, and that their economies frequently depend on a small number of products or sectors. Nine textbooks supply tasks on these long-term impacts. Seven make specific reference to the linguistic situation in previously colonised states; *Zeitbilder 3* (2018, p. 48), for instance, notes that, in most cases, the language of the former colonial powers has remained the official language of these countries as independent states. Two textbooks additionally show maps of the languages spoken in present-day Africa, accompanying them with tasks for learners. Tasks on the lives of Indigenous peoples today appear in four books; *Zeitbilder 3* (2018, p. 3), for example, asks pupils to compose an article for a youth magazine on the circumstances in which Native Americans currently live and the problems they face.

Six textbooks engage with the persistence of racism in the present day. *querdenken 3* (2018, p. 22) tells readers that the racist Ku Klux Klan still has thousands of members. *GO Geschichte 3* (2021, p. 23) includes a strikingly recent instance of modern-day racism, the killing of George Floyd by a policeman, and the consequent rise of the Black Lives Matter protest movement. Two textbooks contain textual sources on current events motivated by racism. Eight textbooks set tasks on present-day racism; one of them, *überall Geschichte 3* (2018, p. 66), prompts learners to cite racist statements they have seen or read and to discuss why they are racist and how they might be responded to.

The traces of colonial heritage in Europe feature less prominently in the textbooks than does the enduring impact in once-colonised countries, appearing in the text of only two books in connection to the Aztec feather headdress on display in the Weltmuseum in Vienna, with one book providing a task on this subject. Three books show monuments in Europe which refer to the colonial period and set tasks on them to aid learners' engagement with cultures of commemoration. Only one book covers modern forms of slavery; this may be due to the fact that the year 6 history curriculum schedules a module on this topic.

4.1.4 Eurocentrism and "othering"

As present-day textbooks draw substantially on existing and known (or translated) sources, a European perspective on historical events tends to permeate them. Few of the textbooks point out that the process of European colonial aggression destroyed most Indigenous sources that had existed; the books do not communicate to their readers that their presentation of the events they discuss takes an almost exclusively European view. Tasks repeatedly occur that aim at encouraging students to critically scrutinise historical sources or to write about the points of view they transmit; the analysis suggests that it may be of use for textbooks to emphasise the issue of Eurocentricity more clearly, by means, for instance, of explanations in the text, appropriate descriptions of images, and additional tasks. This said, the books do make various attempts to illuminate their Eurocentricity or call it into question. These endeavours manifest in two forms: drawing attention to Indigenous cultures, the direct impacts of colonial policies on Indigenous populations, and longterm effects such as racism, or, instead, critiquing the Eurocentricity that works its way into the books' narrative style and vocabulary; one instance of this latter method appears in the five textbooks that use, on occasion, distancing quotation marks for the term "discoveries" (Entdeckungen). *querdenken 3* (2023, p. 17) and *Zentrum Geschichte 3* (2022, p. 16) explain that the use of "discovery" ("Entdeckung") in this context necessarily implies a Eurocentric view of events.

Textbooks currently approved contain very few terms considered racist today, aside from their occurrence in textual sources and explanations of their offensive usage. Two instances of potentially racist language are evident: *Zentrum Geschichte 3* (2022, p. 16) includes a map referring to "North American Indian cultures" and "South American Indian cultures". *Genial Duo 3* (2020, p. 16) contains a textual source from 1878 alongside an explanation stating that it is a letter from an "Indian chief" to the US government; the purpose or utility of this term's inclusion is unclear, despite its presentation in "scare quotes" and given the explanation, appearing on the same page, that the term "Native American" is now in common use. Two textbooks give explanations of the term "Indian" as racist language, and two do the same with the "N-word".

4.2 Colonialism and imperialism in history textbooks from the period 1945–2015

4.2.1 Depictions of Indigenous cultures

The sections that follow include a number of graphs illustrating changes in the materials and depictions included in the various generations of textbooks this part of the study encompasses. I define a "generation" of textbooks as those textbooks approved in accordance with a particular curriculum. The number of textbooks relating to each curriculum is different in each case; three textbooks were approved according to the 1945 curriculum, nine according to the 1963/64 curriculum and so on.

Austrian textbooks' treatment of colonialism and imperialism has long included depictions Indigenous cultures. Until, and including, the curriculum of 2008, this material appeared in 80 % or more of all history textbooks approved; this figure fell to 50 % with the curriculum of 2016, likely due to new requirements to cover a multiplicity of other topics.

These depictions, in history textbooks of previous decades, were not free from value judgements. The practice of human sacrifice among the Aztecs made an appearance in all textbooks published at the beginning of the Second Republic and in about half of those issued subsequently; these works did not discuss the religious faith that formed the context to these actions. The first Austri-
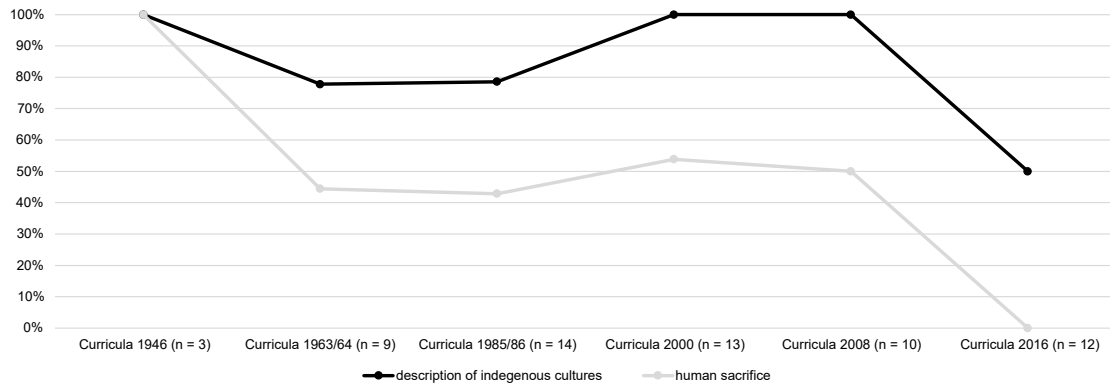
Figure 1: Depictions of Indigenous cultures

an textbook not to make mention of human sacrifice has a publication date of 1967; the topic still continued to appear in half of the textbooks approved in accordance with the curriculum of 2008. There is no similarly clear trend in evidence with regard to the sources on Indigenous cultures. In general, early post-war textbooks made sparser use of sources than more recent ones. Images of Indigenous art, buildings and artefacts appear throughout the textbooks; textual sources written about Indigenous cultures from a European perspective, by, for example, Columbus or Cortés, also feature. Textual sources produced by Indigenous people – or claimed to be such by the books – have made increasing numbers of appearances, but remain less frequent
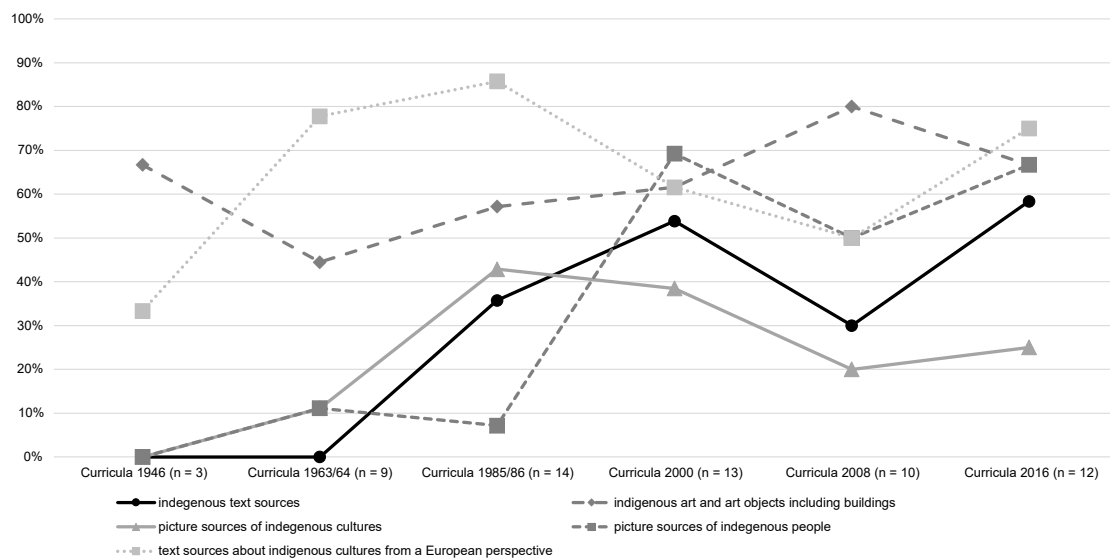
Figure 2: Sources on Indigenous cultures

than European sources, even in current books; the same is true for pictorial sources focusing on Indigenous people. Most of the pictorial sources in the textbooks that purport to illustrate the lives or customs of Indigenous people take a European point of view. In total, only four textbooks include contemporary pictorial sources categorised among the Aztec codices.

Maps showing the regions in which Indigenous peoples lived prior to colonial aggression appear in one-third of current textbooks. The first map of this kind is in *Lehrbuch der Geschichte 2* (1967, p. 58); like most others, it detailed various seafaring activities conducted by Europeans. Reconstruction drawings rose in popularity in textbooks until 2000, after which their use declined.
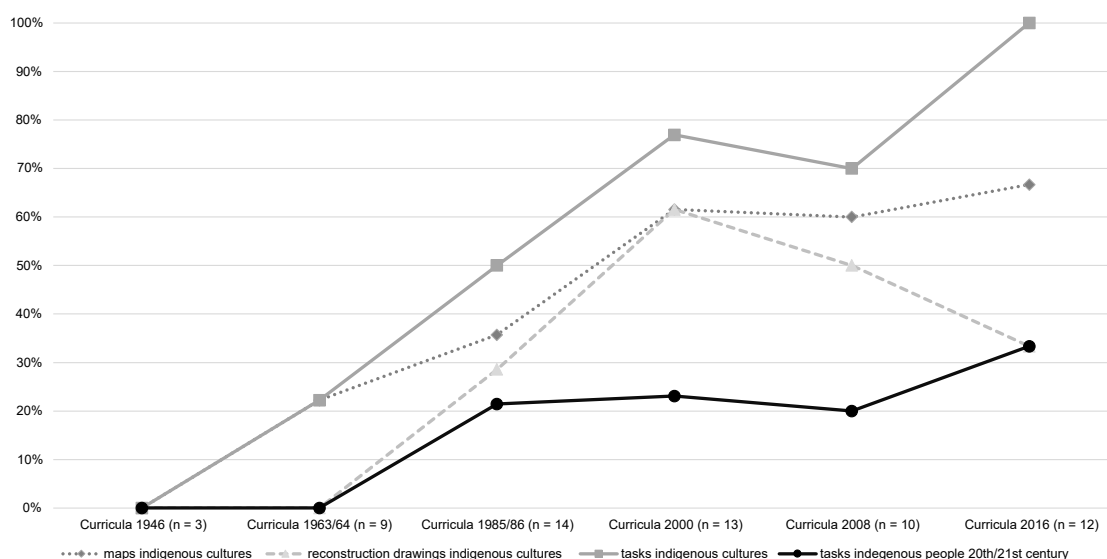
Figure 3: Representations of historical content (maps and drawings) and tasks on Indigenous cultures

The number of tasks set for learners increased over time, with a particularly notable rise in those asking pupils to explore aspects of Indigenous cultures. Tasks on how people in Indigenous cultures lived at the time of the books' writing, that is, in the present as referenced by the books, never occur in more than one-third of these textbooks across all the generations analysed.

4.2.2 Immediate impact of European colonial policies

Notwithstanding the omission of this aspect of the topic from curricula, all textbooks cover the subjugation and displacement of Indigenous people by European colonisers; approximately 79 % of all textbooks discuss the destruction of the Aztec empire in detail, as do 70 % with regard to the Inca empire, although only a small number of textbooks refer to these acts as genocides. Some books provide distorted accounts of the motivations behind the colonial invasions and
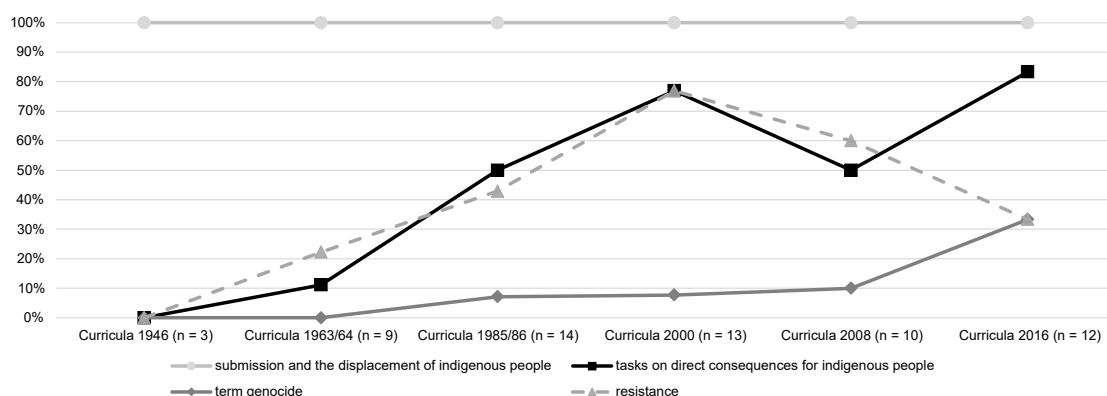
Figure 4: Immediate impact of European conquests on Indigenous populations

the destruction of Indigenous cultures. *Wie? Woher? Warum? 1* (1986, p. 145) asserts that hostilities broke out between the Spanish and the Aztecs because the latter did not want to renounce their religious beliefs. The increasing tendency of textbooks to set learners tasks on these issues reflects the general trend towards more tasks in textbooks and the increasing focus on competency-based learning in Austria. Indigenous resistance to European conquests and the destruction of Indigenous ways of life found increasing numbers of mentions up until the generation of textbooks approved under the curriculum issued in 2000; references to this aspect of the topic have declined in number since then.

Rising numbers of textbooks have engaged with the various impacts of European colonial policies on Indigenous populations over the decades. The slave trade and the subjection of In-
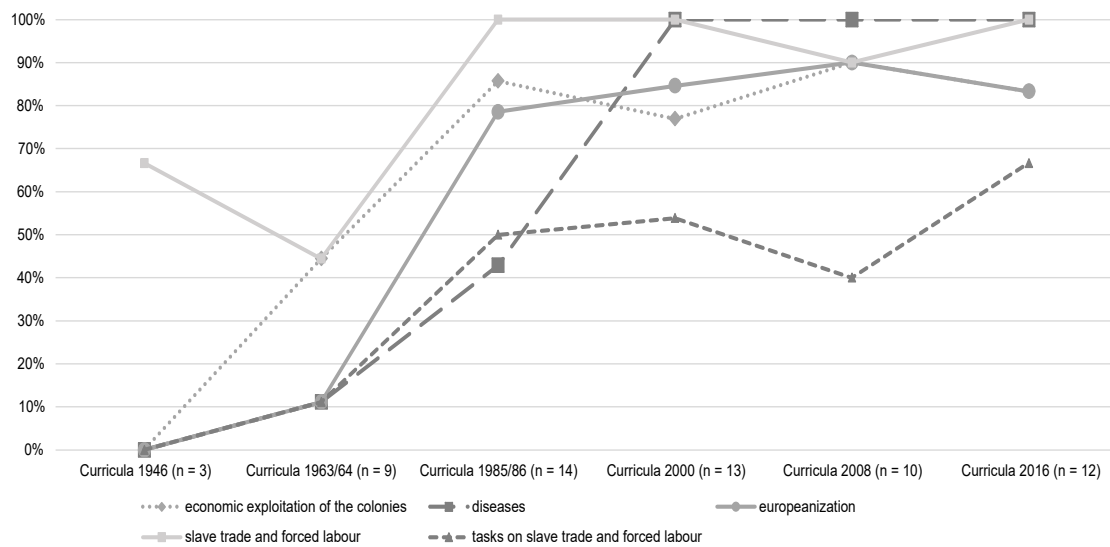
Figure 5: Impacts on Indigenous populations

digenous people to forced labour occurred as topics in two-thirds of the textbooks approved at the beginning of the Second Republic. A total of 36 textbooks issued at this time include pictorial sources relating to this subject; the first of these appears in *Geschichte und Sozialkunde 2* (1986, p. 154). Reconstruction drawings appear in seven books, and tasks requiring learners to work on this topic can be found in a total of 27 textbooks.

Pictorial sources on the encounter between Europeans and Indigenous peoples occur relatively frequently in textbooks throughout the whole time, with a generally rising trend. Textual sources legitimising European policies of colonial conquest occur in a total of 31 textbooks; in contrast to the current textbooks, tasks on this topic that call on pupils to critically reflect
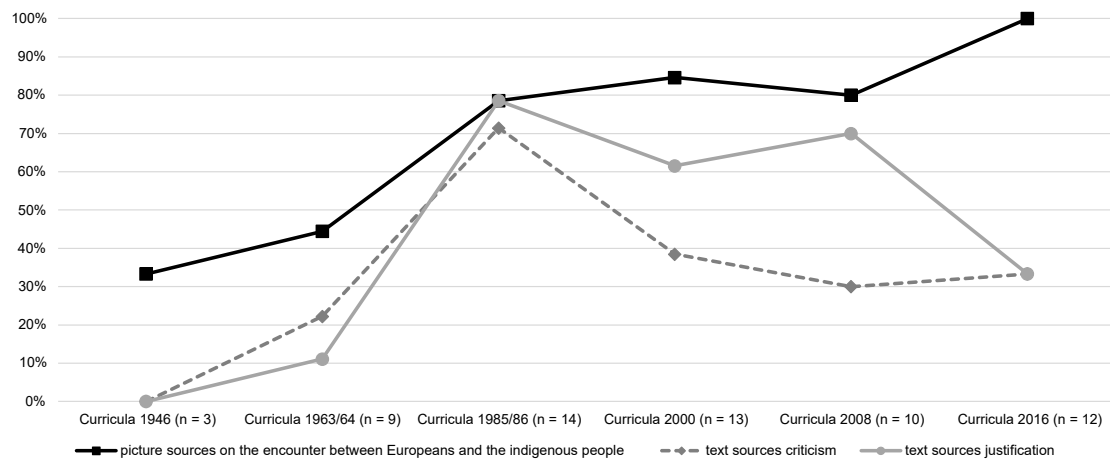
Figure 6: Sources on the impacts of European colonial policies

rarely appear in earlier textbooks. *Zeitbilder 2* (1995, p. 100 f.), for example, carries two textual sources that justify imperialism on the grounds of the Europeans' supposed racial superiority, but does not accompany them with a task requiring critique of the sources, instead asking learners to identify the text's reasoning in each case. The same is true of the textual sources, appearing in 24 of the textbooks, that are critical of colonialism, imperialism or the treatment of Indigenous peoples. The most frequently used source in this regard consists in excerpts from a report by the Dominican monk Bartolomé de Las Casas denouncing the treatment of Indigenous populations. Most textbooks that include this source fail to note that Las Casas suggested using people from Africa to carry out hard labour in the colonies. None of the books mention the problematic reception of the text.

More than half of textbooks address the impact of colonialism on Europe. Tasks on this topic occur in increasing numbers over time. At least two-thirds of textbooks issued from the mid-1980s
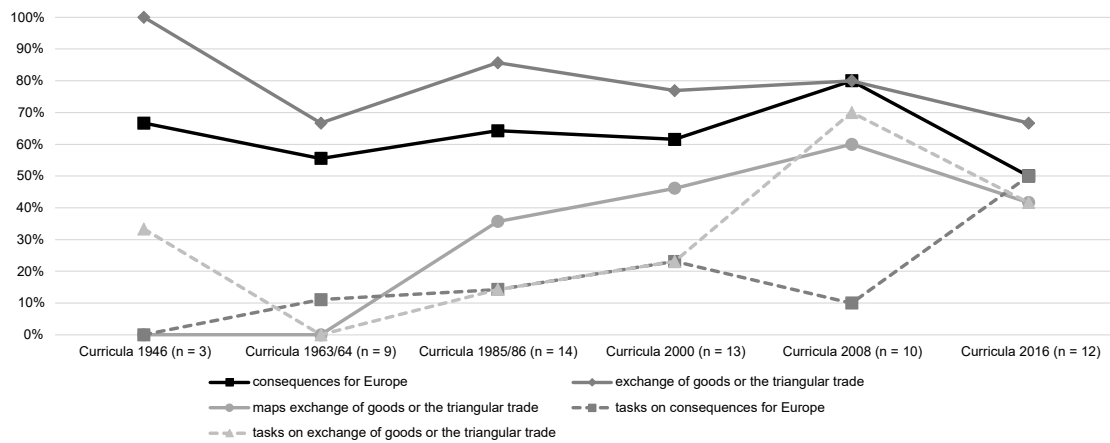
Figure 7: Implications of European colonial policies for Europe

onward include details of the exchange of goods between Europe and the colonies or the triangular trade, and maps and tasks on this aspect of colonialism have become more popular. The drop in coverage of the implications of colonialism for Europe (with the exception of tasks), and in the use of maps and assignments on the transfer of goods and triangular trade, between the 2008 and 2016 curricula is presumably linked to textbooks' increasing concern with the impacts on Indigenous populations. 28 of them use pictorial sources, mostly caricatures, with the first book to do so being *Geschichte miterlebt 3* (1987, p. 125). 58 of the books include maps depict colonial possessions, and 23 set tasks on this topic.

Racism resulting from the colonial era emerged as a theme as the period progressed. Early textbooks make very little mention of it, while almost all current textbooks discuss this phenomenon. From the mid-1980s onward, sources begin to occur in the books; one example is an image
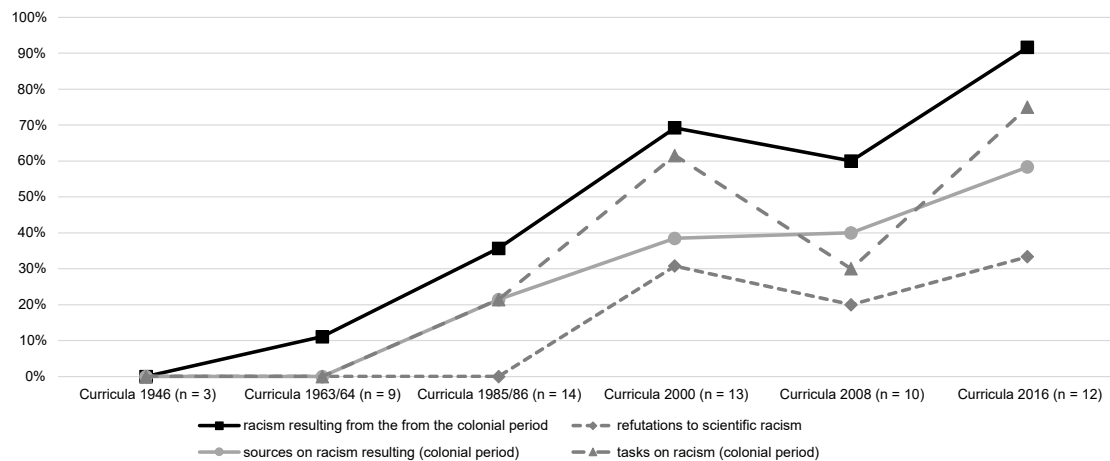
Figure 8: Racism

used in a school to teach "scientific racism" that features in *einst und heute 3* (2002, p. 30). However, tasks and/or more detailed explanations of sources cannot always be found in textbooks. Explicit refutations to "scientific racism" appear in *Geschichte live 3* (2001, p. 117).

4.2.3 Long-term impacts of European colonial policies

The older the textbooks are, the more markedly their presentation of the long-term implications of European colonial policies differs from that in textbooks currently in use. Two-thirds of the textbooks with current approval supply textual explanations of long-term political and economic impacts of colonialism on previously colonised territories and tasks on this for learners to complete. In early Second Republic textbooks, by contrast, the topic made effectively no appearances, only entering these publications as time passed. It is not until after the year 2000
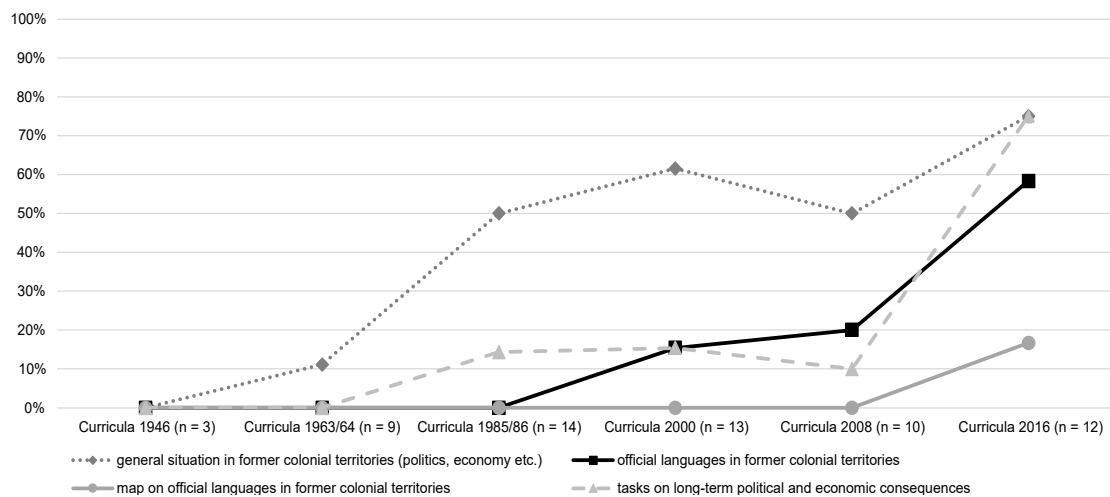
Figure 9: Long-term political and economic impacts of colonialism

that textbooks begin to inform pupils about the influence of European colonialism on the official languages of numerous formerly colonised states across the world; half of books currently
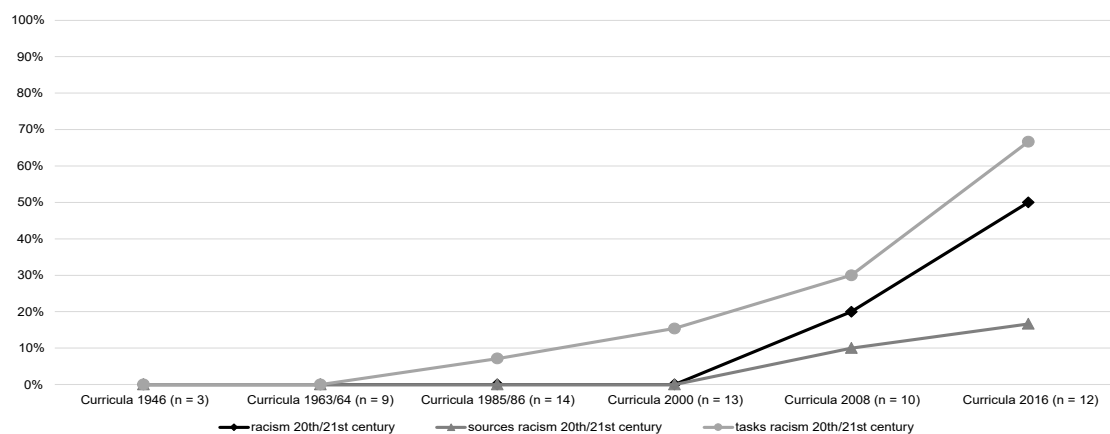
Figure 10: Twentieth- and twenty first-century racism

in use reference this impact of colonial appropriation, and two of them use maps to illustrate the point.

The situation with regard to the coverage of present-day racism in consequence of colonial policies is highly illustrative. Prior to the year 2000, only tasks for learners engaged with this issue; it is not until the curriculum issued at the turn of the millennium that the corresponding textbooks began to include main text and sources that did likewise.

Even present-day textbooks show little to no engagement with academic discourses on post-colonialism; this is still more the case in older books. Only four textbooks in the study, two each approved under the curricula of 2008 and 2016 respectively, cover the heritage of the colonial era in museums. While images relating to cultures of commemoration find entry into textbooks at a relatively early stage, appearing in publications of the 1960s onward, only two textbooks considered in this study, each approved under the 2008 curriculum, include tasks to prompt critical reflection on the part of learners.

It is noteworthy in this context of long-term impacts that, until the 2000s – and indeed, in some instances, to this day –, textbooks dismissed the issue of colonialism as not affecting or concerning the Austrian population; where these works did address long-term and ongoing impacts of the colonial era, they tended to frame them as problems pertaining to other regions of the world. Five textbooks assert expressly that Austria took no part in imperialism; one example of this occurs in the text of *Zeitfenster 3 Duo* (2015, p. 113), which claims that Austria-Hungary "did not participate in the dividing up of the world".

4.2.4 Eurocentrism and othering

The predominance of a European point of view is evident in both current and past textbooks, from early Second Republic books to those approved for use today. Whereas two present-day textbooks explain that the reconstruction of events from the colonial era can take place only on the basis of European sources due to the destruction of many Indigenous sources, just two earlier textbooks mention the destruction of Indigenous sources at all, and they provide no detail on the resulting implications for historiography. A critical reflection of sources created from a European perspective is missing, due mostly to the emphatic focus on content – as opposed to competencies – which predominated in Austrian history education for a long period. The textbooks contain tasks that ask pupils to summarise, yet not critique, depictions of Indigenous cultures from a European perspective or accounts that seek to legitimise European colonial policies. *Zeitbilder 3* (1982, p. 53) directs learners to read a report by Cortés on the royal court of Moctezuma and reproduce what they learn from it about the wealth and the culture of the "Aztec emperor" – transferring the European term for a ruler to an Indigenous culture. Similar terminological Eurocentrism emerges in the use – as in the curricula – of the word "discoveries"("Entdeckungen"). The term appears without quotation marks in all textbooks; seventeen of them place quotation marks around the word in some instances, the first to do so being *Geschichte kompakt 3* (1995, p. 90). Twenty books make an attempt to qualify the myth of Columbus' "discovery" of America, noting that the Vikings had also reached the American continent. *Lehrbuch der Geschichte 3* (1961, p. 70) is the first publication to raise this issue.

Terms now considered racist made frequent appearances in past Austrian textbooks. All books approved under the curriculum of 1946 included the word "Indians" and the German equivalent of the "N-word". The latter word occurred in a heading – that is, a particularly prominent place – in *Meilensteine 2* (1992, p. 184). As late as 1995, it was still making appearances in text written by textbook authors, as in *Zeiten, Völker und Kulturen 3* (1995, p. 148) and *Zeitbilder 3* (1995, p. 49); its last use occurs after the turn of the millennium, in the caption of a map in *einst und heute 3* (2002, p. 24). Because textbooks hold state approval in Austria for a period of ten years, learners were confronted with this word in textbooks until well into the
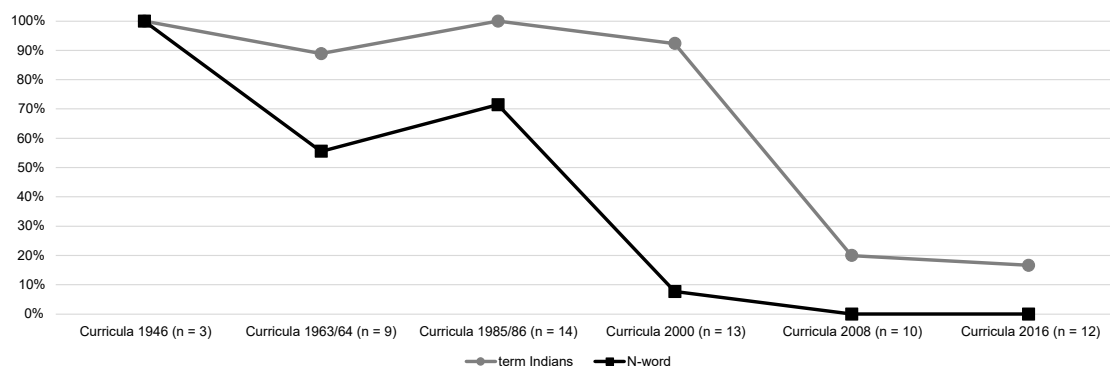
Figure 11: Use of racist terms in textbooks

2000s and may well have assumed, on this basis, that its use was legitimate. This generation of pupils is now, in the mid-2020s, active in the workplace, with the corresponding capacity to influence societal discourses. The term "Indians" has persisted longer still, appearing, as noted above, even in textbooks in current use. It is notable here that, in some instances, textbooks' content raises learners' awareness of discrimination through language while simultaneously using some discriminatory terms. Some books, with one example being *ganz klar Geschichte 3* (2007, p. 89), use the term "Indians" multiple times while also stating that the term "indigenous populations" is the correct one.

Racism emerges in the textbooks in areas beyond the use of specific language; seven textbooks from the earlier periods incorporate concepts extrapolated from "scientific racism". *Geschichte in Tafelbildern und Zusammenfassungen* (1961, p. 184) refers to the "yellow race", whose members came to America. All seven of these textbooks, explaining that various races live in America due to emigration from Europe and the slave trade, speak of the emergence of what they call "half-castes" ("Mischlinge"). The most recently published book with a corresponding explanation – in the form of an infographic – is *Genial Geschichte 3* (2014, p. 57), which could, theoretically, still be in current use.

5. Conclusion: a look ahead

The analysis of the topics of colonialism and imperialism in history curricula for lower secondary schools in Austria, and their realisation in textbooks, has retraced evident developments and trends over time, with specificity of curricular stipulations increasing while Eurocentrism, albeit persisting, found itself called somewhat more into question. While the first post-war curricula provided relatively ample scope for interpretation, yet proceeded from a clearly Eurocentric perspective, the curricula of the 1980s called explicitly for pupils to learn about the impacts of European conquests on Indigenous people. Strikingly, the curricula issued in the years 2000 and 2008 appear to represent a backward step, as they only required students to engage with the so-called discoveries; this stipulation did not exclude consideration of the perspective of Indigenous peoples and cultures, but did not explicitly include it either. This apparent regression may be attributable to the fundamentally more general wording of these curricula. The 2016 curriculum, placing a greater emphasis on global history and evidently engaging with recent research, requires history teachers to address the consequences of colonialism and imperialism, to make references to the present, and to encourage students to reflect critically on racist notions.

A further finding of the analysis relates to the persistence within Austrian textbooks, as apparent from the first works approved after 1945 onward, of themes and topics which curricula do not expressly prescribe, such as depictions of Indigenous cultures and the impact of European conquests. I also observed that, for a long period, textbooks in Austria, as in other states (Popp et al., 2019, p. 13), focused on immediate impacts of colonialism, framing European colonial policies as issues of the past and omitting to explore their reverberations into the present time. Notwithstanding the gradual change in this respect in the 2000s, current topics of postcolonial academic discourse only occur sporadically, in past and current books alike, while myths about European conquests persist on occasion. The long-standing and, to a degree, ongoing predominance of the European point of view, encompassing the inclusion of racist terms and elements of "scientific racism" in textbooks until well into the 2000s, encounters only intermittent attempts, in the books' text or in tasks for learners, at encouraging pupils to critical reflection. It is evident, then, that research findings may take a very long time to find their way into textbooks.

This study could provide only an initial overview of depictions of colonialism and imperialism in Austrian textbooks; this notwithstanding, the findings may serve to guide textbook authors and others who face the challenge, as is frequently the case in Austria, of covering topics in textbooks on which they do not necessarily have the specific expertise. Further, they may prompt the inclusion of academic expertise in textbook production, thus aiding the process of overcoming historical conceptions which have long been under the influence of "othering" and of perspectives centred on individual nation states.

As a closing note, I would wish to emphasise that the scope of this analysis has limited it to only those chapters or passages of textbooks that revolved around colonialism and imperialism; I was unable to additionally take issues such as political or formal decolonisation into account. Future work might usefully pay attention to such aspects of the topic, alongside considering textbooks' setting out of historical interconnections among events, such as the links between imperialism and the First World War. Work in this area going forward that makes particular reference to Austria might also wish to study the manifestation in future textbooks of the stipulations given in the new history curriculum that will take effect from the commencement of the 2024/25 academic year.

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ORCID iD

Andrea Brait https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7970-913X

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Should history education begin in kindergarten?

Investigating the social representations of prospective and currently employed educators regarding the introduction of children in early childhood to history education

*Kyriaki Fardi** iD

University of the Aegean

Abstract

This paper presents research related to the perspectives and social representations of both prospective and currently employed educators regarding the introduction of kindergarten and primary education children to history education. The research was carried out using the Thematic Analysis method, and comprises qualitative data. The results of this research study show that educators are influenced by their social representations regarding the type and form of history education, as well as by their education. Social representations shape their perceptions on the appropriate age for introducing children to history education. This paper presents the theoretical background of the research, its purposes, research strategies, methodology, the results and their analysis, and a final section for discussion and conclusions.

Keywords

early childhood education, history education, social representations, educators

*   **Contact:** Dr. Kyriaki Fardi ✉ k.fardi@aegean.gr
     University of the Aegean, Department of Primary Education, Greece

Theoretical framework

History education for children in early childhood: Is it a controversial subject?

Introducing *history education* to kindergarten and elementary school children[1] can be a controversial issue depending on what we mean by the term "history education". In a history class that might be perceived as a memorization of dates and facts and a difficult historical discourse with a complex vocabulary, history education is not considered to be appropriate for children in early childhood. In the international literature, perceptions on this subject within the scientific community are linked to at least two significant factors: a) the type of history taught in schools (Cooper, 2002, 2018; O 'Harra & O 'Harra, 2001; Skjæveland, 2017) and b) perceptions about kindergarten and elementary school children's skills and ability to understand the historical past (Bruner, 2003).

The Annales School (Burke, 2007; Forster, 1978) and the New History (Munslow, 2014) movement, during the early 20th century, shaped alternative perceptions that marked a shift away from traditional stereotypes regarding the meaning of history and the way in which it should be written and taught. The focus of the study of the historical past shifted from political and military history to the history of people and everyday life, in accordance with the New History perspective. The familiar past, which connects our stories in the present with the stories of the people in the past, came to the forefront of the epistemological debate of historiography and history education (Wineburg, 2010).

Therefore, new topics of interest were added to the existing ones; the history of human cultural activities and everyday life started attracting the attention of researchers as much as national history. Fields such as art history, economic history, history of childhood, history of education, local history, and many others, expanded the horizons of 20th-century historiography. This diversity of thematic approaches in historiography enriched historical narratives with a discourse that addressed topics close to the children's interests, making it more accessible to early childhood, and expanded the repertoire of educators teaching history from kindergarten to elementary school.

Teaching history through the lens of New History, however, has not universally dominated all educational systems in the Western World. It could be argued that traditional approaches coexist with alternative approaches in the way history is taught, even within the same educational system. Moreover, Rüsen (2017, 2012a, 2012b, 2008) identified four forms of historical narrative in history teaching: *traditional*, *exemplary*, *critical*, and *genetic*. The first two consider the historical past as unchangeable and unquestionable, with children having to accept and learn it without doubt. In these forms of historical narrative, the aim is to learn the traditions it brings to the present and to learn from its examples. The other two forms of historical narrative, critical and genetic, accept that the historical past is open to criticism and can be discovered by children and adolescents through scientific approaches to history education.

Furthermore, cognitive psychology has contributed to shaping specific perceptions regarding what a child can learn about the historical past. Piagetian theory (Zaccaria, 1978) was skeptical about children's ability to perceive concepts such as time and historical time in early childhood, and even in adolescence. Neo-Piagetian cognitive psychologists (Case & Okamoto, 1996) argued that children understand much more than Piaget and his followers, such as Hallam (1969, 1967), believed. According to these newer theories, children's social environment and their ability to discern significant events in their social and family life and personal history, are factors that facilitate the perception of time and historical time.

Bruner's theory (2003) that all children can understand all cognitive subjects as long as they are taught in an intellectually appropriate manner, paved the way for introducing young children to historical education. Additionally, Vygotsky's theory (1993) regarding the contribution of the social and cultural environment to the cognitive development of children and their education (*Sociocultural Theories-SCT*) (Cole, 2003; Lantolf, 2000; Lima, 1995; Wertsch, 1998) enhanced posi-

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[1] In this article we will use the term "children" instead of "pupils". This is done for the following reasons: 1) because in some educational systems, including the Greek one, the term "pupils" is used more for elementary school children and less for kindergarten children, 2) this article refers in some cases to "kindergarten children" and in some cases to "elementary school children", so in order to avoid confusion with the use of the same term "pupils" for different groups of children, it is analyzed each time according to meaning, 3) the term "children in the early years" is, also, used for kindergarten children and children of the first two grades of primary school.

tive perceptions about children's abilities to comprehend the historical past, provided that their everyday sense of time has developed to a satisfactory degree in their thinking.

Sociocultural Theories (SCT) influenced many history scholars, who claimed that children's historical understanding is shaped by their environment (Barton & Levstik, 2009; Barton & McCully, 2005; Cooper 1992, 2002, 2018). These scholars are historians and educators who study the teaching of history in schools, institutional educational policy, as well as the way in which children understand and learn history. This approach connects history and its teaching with cognitive psychology and forms a new field of scientific research regarding the perceptions, representations, and interpretations that students and educators apply when approaching the historical past.

Apart from background knowledge, contemporary studies and research in the field of cognitive psychology also focus on the way in which children learn. Thus, scientific research has turned towards children's *metacognitive knowledge* and *metacognitive skills*. The term metacognitive knowledge (McK) is associated with people's awareness of themselves, of the cognitive being, of the completion of certain given tasks and their requirements, as well as their strategies and ways to deal with situations created by problem-solving efforts (Prins et al., 2006; Whitebread et al., 2007). Recent research findings show that children, since early childhood, have the ability to develop metacognitive knowledge; they are in other words able to monitor and control the learning process (Larking, 2015; Shamir et al., 2009). Furthermore, children aged 3 to 5 have *metacognitive awareness* regarding the way that their mind or other people's minds work, as well as the requirements of cognitive tasks and the application of strategies, provided that the framework (academic and pedagogical) within which these tasks are developed is appropriately configured for their age and personal characteristics (Marulis et al., 2016). Children's contact with the historical past, through their social and cultural environment and through the execution of assignments, provides many opportunities for self-regulation, socialization and adaptation. In other words, children can develop metacognitive skills through history education. For this reason, it is important for educators to be aware of this theory and its adaptation to the practice of designing and implementing educational programs with a historical orientation.

One of the first studies on young children's historical understanding examined the relationship between narratives and educational approaches to the historical past (Levstik, 1983). One of the conclusions of the study was that the historical past can be approached by children in early childhood without the use of school textbooks, but in a reliable way, with educators utilizing historical sources and properly organizing them. Therefore, as traditional forms of history education become disentangled from strict adherence to the textbook, general perceptions about history teaching become more liberated. Moreover, these perceptions include educational programs aimed towards children in early childhood.

Barton and Levstik (1996) conducted research on the understanding of historical time (one of the fundamental scientific concepts regarding history education and historical epistemology), involving 58 children from kindergarten and every grade of elementary school. They concluded that dates have no meaning for kindergarten children, but they do perceive some elements of historical time, therefore the introduction of this concept to their education makes sense under certain conditions (i.e. in a way that is appropriate for their age). De Groot-Reuvekamp et al. (2014) claimed that it is logical for the educational approach to historical time to start early (even in kindergarten), because it is a concept whose development does not depend on the development of language, but remains an autonomous part of children's thinking. Therefore, the earlier the teaching of this concept begins, the more time and opportunities children get to develop it.

Cooper (1992, 2002, 2018) investigated the approach of the historical past by children in early childhood, using sources coming from their environment (monuments, buildings of historical value etc). Cooper (2002) claimed that language plays an important role in approaching historical time and creates limitations in young children's understanding of this concept, since language is not sufficiently developed in these ages. This, however, does not preclude that young children can approach historical time and the historical past; if done appropriately, this process can aid the development of other skills, such as vocabulary, verbal expression, narrating etc. Therefore, Cooper (2002) argued that we can introduce children to history education through the utilization of historical sources in kindergarten teaching and the use of appropriate chronological vocabulary and expressions. Historical sources are traces of past human activity and, in the case of educational programs with a historical orientation in kindergarten, they are drawn from the environment (examples: photos from the children's personal history, toys from their parents' and grandparents' childhood, objects from museums, from squares and streets with historical names and so on).

There is not much research on educators' perceptions, ideas and representations concerning the teaching of history in early childhood. A handful of researchers have published notable research on this subject in the past 20 years. A recent study (Skjæveland, 2017) showed that educators applying programs of historical orientation employ a series of methods to create an experiential approach of the historical past, such as: personal testimonies from adults; family history; and children's personal history. In 2018, Levstik and Thornton summarized their studies and research on international trends in history education in kindergarten and arrived at the following four directions:

(1) a field associated with historical content and declarative knowledge, but through first order concepts (historical concepts that carry social experiences in historical speech such as "nation", "society", "family", "childhood" and so on), (2) the field of mental tools used by students to create their own documented representations of the past through second order concepts (concepts that make up historical discourse, such as historical time and space, causality, continuity and change in time [Seixas 2017a, b]), (3) the concept of similarity and difference in time, and (4) inclusive and equitable history education for the common good (Barton & Levstik, 2009)

This brief review of modern international tendencies, directions, and requirements provides evidence that history education can indeed start in kindergarten. This can be achieved through compensatory and differentiated education; in relation to public uses of history (museum and monument visits etc); alternative and creative teaching methods (experiences of children and of those familiar to them, teaching through art, utilizing comics etc); or through the use of historical sources in the educational process. In modern societies, children are aware of the historical past in multiple ways (through stories they hear from their family and social environment, through children's literature, and through public uses of history). In kindergarten and elementary school, however, this connection should be more systematic and developed with proper planning.

These various perspectives highlight both support for the introduction of young children to history education and skepticism towards the idea. This is, therefore, a reason to look at the views of the teachers themselves on an issue that is likely to be of concern to them during their careers in education, and which may be a factor in their professional and scientific development.

Social representations

Social representations are very important in the orientation of teaching. Educators' beliefs and representations affect their way of thinking and the methods in which they approach history teaching. Maggioni et al. (2009) showed that the scientific beliefs of prospective and currently employed educators (students and active educators) influence the way they approach and apply the historical past in teaching, as well as their use of critical thinking in their teaching (such as posing questions, using historical sources, the causality of historical facts and the interpretation of people's actions). Social representations are mental frameworks shaped in the minds of individuals through the influence of social norms, stereotypes, socially acceptable perceptions - essentially through the interaction of individuals with their immediate and broader social environment. Educators working in schools and prospective educators studying to become teachers are individuals who strive to deepen their knowledge of their subject. They possess social representations and furthermore, their thinking is intricate on matters related to their field. They have a repertoire of symbols, metaphors, and examples that may interact with their social representations (Wilson & Wineburg, 1993). Therefore, there is a particular interest in exploring their social representations, as they constitute a specialized audience, and their views may differ from the so-called common sense.

Bronfenbrenner's theory (1992) greatly affected contemporary scholars of education and helped elucidate the complexity of the systems that are responsible for the development of children's personality. Specifically, Bronfenbrenner described systems having the child in their center and developing around it, as the following concentric circles: the *microsystem* (the child itself is in the center of this circle, specific educational programs, peer groups, the neighborhood); the *mesosystem* (family, school, educational policy); the *exosystem* (such as the parents' social and financial status, mass media, the environment surrounding the school); the *macrosystem* (ideology, values and customs, social representations and stereotypes); and the *chronome-*

ter (changes in the environment referring to life in school and every subject separately) (Darling, 2007; Duerden & Witt, 2010; Spencer, 2008). Children's history education is part of their general education, and their historical culture is about broad aspects of their personality. Therefore, it is also shaped by complex environmental and social factors, as stated in Bronfenbrenner's theory. After all, modern scholars have pointed out the importance of children's social and family environment in their history education (Barton & Levstik, 2009; Cooper, 2002 2018).

The investigation of the relation between social representations and the perceptions of current and prospective educators certainly needs to be enriched with new research and studies. As made clear from the review presented, however, this issue has been of considerable interest to the researchers who have worked on it. Furthermore, scholars like Moniot highlighted the importance of social representations in history teaching 30 years ago (Moniot, 1993). It has been claimed that historical thinking comprises an amalgamation of social representations, personal knowledge, and attitudes, as well as validated historical knowledge (Lautier & Allieu-Mary, 2008). The theoretical foundation of the studies on the subject of social representations and their connection to historical thought traces its roots to the theories of Vygotky and Moscovici (Vygotky, 1993; Moscovici, 2001; 1994; 1988). Social representations are ideas that shape forms of reality which we could associate with the term common sense and could be examined with regard to their dynamic relation to everyday and social life (Moniot, 1993).

History education and educators in Greece: Description of the educational system and references to the curricula

In Greece, institutional history education begins in the third grade of elementary school. History as a cognitive subject is assigned 90 minutes per week, one school lesson corresponding to 45 minutes. It is defined by a nation-wide special curriculum and school textbook, one for each of the six grades of elementary school. The institutional history is taught in the third, fourth, fifth and sixth grades. History is focused on the nation, while there are some references to European and World history. Familiarizing children with the past is developed through many historical periods, ranging from ancient to modern times.

Greek kindergarten curricula define the parameters of history education and suggest that educational programs of a historical orientation should be applied starting in kindergarten. The 2003 curriculum, which is valid to this day, mentions familiarizing children with the past (OGG of H.R. 304/v2/2003, p. 4322) through the concept of time, through distinguishing between present, past, and future, and through concepts of change in time (observation of changes in their lives, in school, local and community history, in everyday habits and in various customs). Furthermore, this curriculum connects familiarization with the past to environmental studies and language itself, and supports interdisciplinary approaches to the educational process.

A new curriculum concerning every level of education was published in 2021 and applied initially only in specific "experimental" schools; its general application across the country is planned for after the 2022-2023 school year. In the kindergarten curriculum there are specific references to history education (OGG of H.R. 5961/v2/2021, pp. 76290–76294). In this curriculum, history education is connected to school performances, feasts and memorial days, to art, to the nation and national symbols (Greece and other people), the world, culture, tradition and the development of critical attitudes. It is also connected to the introduction to the concept of time and chronology, continuity in time, forming questions and collecting data associated with historical events. For the first two grades of elementary school no autonomous history curriculum exists, but in the framework of continuity in education, history-oriented educational programs make up a part of school performances and other special programs, such as those about the environment, culture, visits to museums, landmarks and other cultural institutions.

In spite of the references to introducing children to the historical past starting in kindergarten, which are made in the Greek curricula, scholars and professional historians interested in the teaching of history in the school environment in Greece are focused on secondary education or on the epistemology and theory of history (Avdela, 1998). Furthermore, due to a lack of relevant studies or research, there is a gap in the literature concerning the views of teachers

and trainees on the introduction of history education in kindergarten; we also do not know how they themselves perceive the importance, nature, and form of historical education for children in early childhood. This is a gap worth exploring.

Research questions

This study examines the working hypothesis that educators support introducing children in early childhood to history education, and that they would plan and apply educational programs with a historical orientation. The research questions of this study are the following:

1. What factors shape the views of the participants concerning the introduction of young children to history education, and what is their relation to social representations?
2. How do social representations about introducing history to children in early childhood relate to the nature and form of history taught in schools?
3. Which specific elements of the design and application of educational programs with historical orientation would be the main interest of the educators who participated?

Identity of the research

This research was carried out on university students studying to become educators, and currently employed educators. The students attended a course during the spring semester of the 2021-2022 academic year at the Department of Primary Education of the University of the Aegean, which aims to prepare educators to work in elementary school as teachers. The title of the course is: "Introduction to History Education for children in early childhood (in kindergarten and the first two grades of elementary school)". In the context of this course, students had the chance to become aware of theoretical issues regarding the introduction of children to history education and the concept of historical time, historical culture, cognitive theories on history education, and other relevant issues. They also had the opportunity to interact with a reasonable number of educational programs appropriate for children in early childhood that have been implemented in Greek kindergartens and published in scientific magazines and conference proceedings. It is important to note that this university course was first taught during the academic semester when the present research study was conducted (2021-2022).

Methodology

Thematic Analysis was the methodology used for the collection and processing of the data of this study. This method was chosen because it was deemed appropriate for the task of investigating social representations of the target groups, since it is a qualitative analysis related to Grounded Theory, which examines the influence of social structures on human thinking (Corbin & Holt, 2005; Cohen et al., 2007). According to Braun and Clark (2006), this method focuses on identifying the main topics in a data source, aiming to analyze and comment on what participants in a study mention. The interpretative repertoires that are included in the themes identified in the data analysis represent a pattern that appears when all the data collected is codified and classified at the second and third levels (creation of codes, grouping and searching for patterns, repertoires). The study's main goal is to analyze the participants' answers in order to discover common themes and identify the elements that give meaning to their views and feelings (Braun & Clark, 2006). Thematic analysis is a flexible method, because it is compatible with numerous epistemological positions (such as realism, constructivism and phenomenology). The topics that arise from the answers given in the open-ended, semi-structured interviews could come from data (inductive coding), be based on specific characteristics that researchers show interest in (productive method), or even come from a combination of the two aforementioned methods (Issaris & Pourkos, 2015). This study relies mainly on the productive method of data coding, while combining it with the inductive method when called for, depending on the answers given and the way the participants answer (single-word answers, complex, analytical, etc).

Sample and research process

The research sample consists of 26 participants, 19 of whom were university students and 7 were currently employed educators. Participants were randomly selected from two major metropolitan areas of Greece, namely Athens and Thessaloniki, as well as the island of Rhodes (urban and island areas); all those who systematically attended the course participated in the survey. Regarding their educational background, we can mention that active educators were graduates of a four-year BA program at the Department of Sciences of Preschool Education and Educational Design and the Department of Primary Education in Greek Universities, while prospective educators had completed high school and were attending the Department of Primary Education of the University of the Aegean. All participants were female. The total number of participants (currently employed and prospective educators) was deemed sufficient to conduct qualitative research using Thematic Analysis, because content analysis research can focus on a small sample, small-sized groups, or even on specific points of a text (Cohen et al., 2007). Despite the volume of the content resulting from the interviews, adequate time was dedicated to studying and analyzing them, to conducting the data collection carefully, and to analyzing them in a systematic way.

The data collection was carried out using an interview form which was uploaded to an internet cloud service (Google Forms). The interview plan can be found in the Appendix of this text. The purpose was for currently employed educators and students to have access to this plan regardless of location and to allow them to choose how much time to allocate to answering. They could concentrate on the plan in a quiet place of their own choosing and take as much time as they wished to answer the plan questions in writing, without external influences. It is estimated that the response time for participants to answer the plan questions is from twenty minutes to an hour approximately.

Reliability and validity

The validity of this research was based on Maxwell's (1992) model regarding the criteria for assessing the validity of qualitative research (Mills et al., 2017). These criteria are as follows: 1) Descriptive validity, 2) Interpretive validity, 3) Theoretical validity, 4) Generalizability (Internal and External), 5) Evaluative validity. As this model was adopted to ensure the reliability and validity of the research, this paper provides a holistic and multifaceted approach to the theoretical framework, without expressing the subjective opinion of the author. For this reason, extensive reference is made in the theoretical part of this article to the different perspectives on this subject found in the international literature. Furthermore, the identity and methodology of this research is accurately described, and the author emphasizes the perspectives of all those who participated in the research. Data collection and analysis was conducted by carefully studying the research results using the rigorous methodological approach of Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006), which aims to codify the content of participants' answers, and express this coding through specific classification of the responses into themes and super-themes. Themes were not predefined prior to data collection, but formulated based on the initial coding of the response content. Namely, the final framing of the analysis and discussion of the results was only done once the responses had been studied at three levels: 1) coding of the verbal elements of the responses from which meaning can be derived (creating codes); 2) classification of the codes into broader categories (themes); and 3) classification of the themes into broader categories (super-themes). The data analysis that follows, as well as the discussion and results sections, will explain the degree to which the present study responds to the working hypothesis and research questions. Also, issues concerning the generalizability of the research results will be discussed. In qualitative research, the results are not generalizable, because their sample is small. In the present research study there is an internal generalizability of its results, which forms a framework (general internal scheme) that organizes the social representations of

the participants. This framework comprises the basic answers to the research questions. At all stages of the research study the author of this article remained emotionally detached and did not express personal opinions on the subject. The researcher and the author of this article are the same person because it was not possible to find a collaborator or external evaluator of the research and a critical reader of this article.

Data analysis

The opinions of the participants were organized into 241 codes (one code is the smallest unit that can still contain meaning and express social representations, views and interpretations), which were further classified into seven themes and three superthemes. The themes and superthemes of this study can be found in Table 1:

Table 1: Superthemes and Themes

Superthemes	Themes
The child	• Skills and abilities • Challenges • The child's place in the educational process • Learning benefits
The educator	• The educator's "profile" • Challenges • Their training regarding history education
The educational process	• Ethics (what must be done) • The process of introduction to history education • The educational methodology

The final classification of research data shows that prospective and currently employed educators who took part in this research view the introduction of children to history education as a process that is characterized by a three-sided relationship between the educator, the child, and institutional education (kindergarten and elementary school) (Figure 1). No currently employed or prospective educator made any reference to the children's close environment (family, kinder-
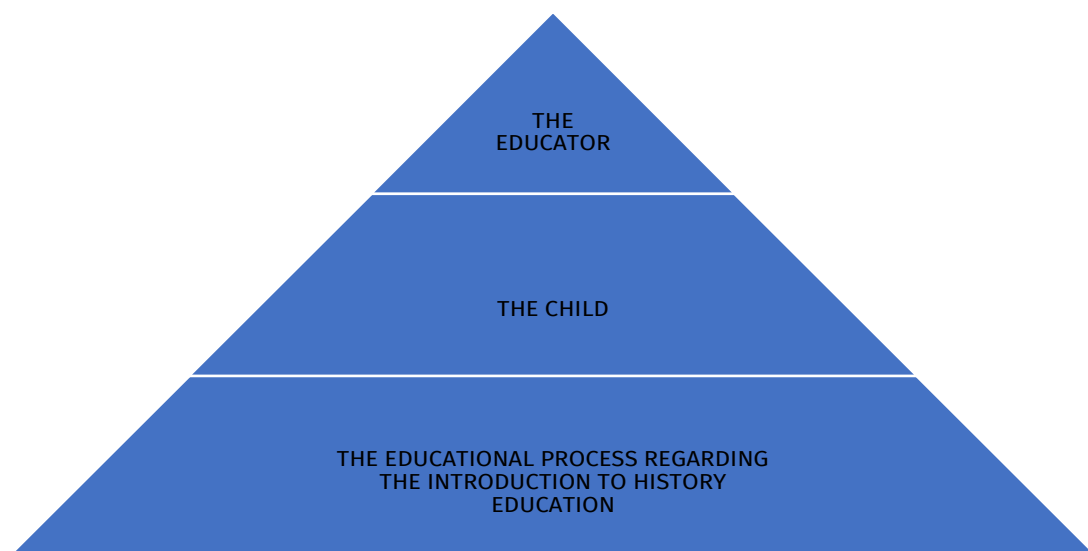

Figure 1: Representation of the "educator-child-educational process" relationship

garten/school environment, friends) regarding the creation of representations about the past and the historical past, nor did they mention educational policy on children's introduction to history education (curriculum, instructions for educators, the influence of local authorities and the school and kindergarten management).

Figure 1 contains a pyramidal representation of the "educator-child-educational process" relationship, as it emerged from the opinions expressed by the participants in this research. The educational process is placed at the base of the pyramid, since it included the largest number of codes and references (182 codes) among the participants' answers. The smallest concentration of codes (23) was found in supertheme 2 ("*The educator*") and for this reason it was placed at the top of the pyramid. Several references correspond to supertheme 1 ("*The child*") (36 codes), but significantly fewer than supertheme 3 ("*The educational process*"). Therefore, it was placed in the middle.

Supertheme 1: "The child"

In this section we will gather the views of the current and prospective teachers who participated in the study about supertheme "The child". In the present study, the teachers' responses have been grouped into four categories (themes): "*Skills and abilities*", "*Challenges*", "*The child's place in the educational process*", and "*Learning benefits*". Coding the study of the responses in line with the previous themes, it can be noted that participants mentioned both difficulties and benefits arising from the child's participation in the process of introduction to history education. The difficulties brought up by the participants include: children's difficulties in understanding concepts such as historical time and causality up to and including the first two grades of elementary school; difficulties understanding the complexity of historical narrative, historical language, political and military history, as well as historical trauma. These views associated the introduction to history education with a traditional teaching method. According to the interviews, the main elements of this method are historical events and historical narratives with a focus on national, political and military history.

Participants' verbal expressions that carried more optimistic views and representations, mentioned that children can indeed understand elements of the historical past in early childhood. These elements can be found in the children's immediate environment and can be adjusted to suit the educational process and the children's age. Specific elements that were mentioned included local history, family history, personal history, and the comparison of elements between the past and the present.

The educational benefits that children gain from history education in kindergarten was classified. The answers given by the participants further strengthen that it is beneficial for children of an early age to be introduced to history education. Specifically, they believe that children who are introduced to history education during the first stages of their school life gain critical thinking skills, are introduced to historical thinking, begin to form a historical consciousness, can comprehend some historical concepts, and enrich their knowledge. They also believe that the introduction to history education contributes to the development of broad cognitive and linguistic skills. Furthermore, they believe that it helps children develop empathy, especially when history education is used together with anti-racist education and the creation of an anti-racist consciousness. Therefore, children develop a sense of acceptance towards diversity, of peace, equality and freedom, of mutual respect and acceptance of "others" history.

Supertheme 2: "The educator"

All participants in this study mention the role of educators in the introduction of children to history. Therefore, a separate supertheme called "The educator" was created. Classifying all the answers that were relevant to this supertheme resulted in the following three themes: "*The educator's profile*", "*Challenges*", "*Their training in history education*".

To summarize the classification for this particular supertheme we can note that the participants in this study consider the role of the educator significant. Specifically, educators are seen as a fundamental element in designing and implementing educational programs with a historical orientation. Educators who took part in this research believe that the role of a kindergarten or elementary school teacher, who implements such programs, is to be a leader, someone who helps, supports, and encourages. The educator must be an intuitive, active, objective, and open-minded (free of prejudice) coordinator of the educational process. All the above means that they recognize the role of the educator in introducing children of an early age to history

education, its value and importance. In one of the questionnaires, the educator is actually referred to as a "role model" for children. Regarding their views on the profile of the educator, they fall within a spectrum that ranges from instructional to open-minded. In other words, everyone supports a democratic profile of the educator, who is very close to children and encourages, advises, and helps them, does research into what and how to teach and is innovative so as to solve problems.

Regarding the difficulties the educator faces with regard to introducing children to history education, those mentioned are limited class time, lack of time for self-education, difficulty managing controversial and traumatic issues, lack of historical knowledge, lack of knowledge regarding the methodology used in applied programs of historical orientation and the difficulty of planning an educational program according to the principles of history education. They also mention a lack of relevant educational material and the gap that exists in the Greek educational system when it comes to aiding the educator in their search for relevant material (lack of funds, lack of guidance and seminars regarding special educational issues like history education). Another reference is made to historical discourse, since it presents certain difficulties (terminology difficult to understand, complex narration) and the difficulty in simplifying it, so as to make it more understandable to children. They also mention the difficulty in implementing specialized methodological approaches such as differentiated teaching, especially in the cases of classes which include students who can easily comprehend the subject of history, while others cannot perform so well. Moreover, they mention the difficulty the educators face in putting into practice everything they have planned.

Based on all the above, we can point out that educators who took part in this study believe that as early as kindergarten, Greek teachers are willing to help their students in all aspects of school life, including history education. They also believe in the value of the educator's work and that teachers can research, innovate and take initiatives to implement educational programs of historical orientation. However, they face many challenges posed by the educational system, which does not provide them with the appropriate means to advance into new or alternative teaching methods. What's more, they point out "gaps" in the system, which they associate with lack of special seminars, lack of funds and educational material, and lack of updated knowledge on the principles of history teaching.

Supertheme 3: "The educational process"

Participants in this research study claim that the educational process holds fundamental meaning when it comes to introducing young children to history education. Since this subject was mentioned by all participants, a supertheme dedicated to the educational process was created, and divided into three themes: "*Ethics (what should be done)*", "*The process of introduction to history education*", "*The educational methodology*".

All participants argue that the educational process has great significance in changing beliefs about this issue. It seems that they are influenced towards assuming a skeptical point of view by their experience of the Greek educational system, which does not encourage the planning and implementation of educational programs with historical orientation in kindergarten and elementary school. This, however, does not mean that they are dogmatic with regard to such programs or that they refuse to implement them; neither does it mean that they do not recognize their usefulness and importance within the educational process.

At this point, we will examine in more detail the viewpoints, the social representations, and the interpretations of the participants, regarding the educational process (supertheme 3). As shown in Table 1, the answers can be classified into three thematic units:

- "Ethics", meaning what is considered ethical, what is appropriate to do. This concept has a double meaning for the participants. On one hand, they believe that there is an ethical aspect to history education, and in turn to the introduction of children of an early age to it (what are the limits separating the historical past as expressed in historiography, and how it can be taught in kindergarten and the first two grades of elementary school). On the other hand, they wish to see history education added to the educational system, so as to create the ideal conditions for the introduction of children to it. This aspect could be called the desired outcome, what they wish to see happen.
- "The process of introduction to history education". In this thematic unit, it becomes clear that the educators who took part in this research perceive the introduction to history education as a complex pedagogical process that needs to be developed in stages over

the course of several years, before using a school textbook. They see it as a preparatory process for school history, which is systematically taught in Greek schools starting in third grade.

- "The educational methodology", in which they reported a variety of methodological approaches considered appropriate for the introduction of children to history education.

In the thematic unit of "Ethics", one finding that can be considered important are the opinions of the participants regarding the age limits of the introduction to history education and the criteria that inform their views. Since this finding goes to the heart of the present study, it will be analyzed at this point, separately from other findings. Furthermore, while the methodology of this research does not include quantitative characteristics, some which are considered essential will be mentioned at this point, in order to help readers better comprehend the analysis that follows, without affecting the systematic analysis and presentation of the research data.

Discussion

The background of social representations

In their majority, the educators who took part in this research were positive towards the introduction of children to history education in kindergarten. A negative attitude towards this was found in the answers of only four participants, a small number when compared to the total number of participants (26).

Specifically, one of the students mentions: "...They (the children) could do so (be introduced to history education) from a young age, and with short and specific references, but I would say that mostly, the preferred age would be 11 or 12 years old, when they start to develop a more critical stance towards the world and begin to become more aware of the world around them and what they read". In other parts of this interview, references to stereotypical beliefs about history are made such as "history repeats itself", "people learn from the past", "there is a way to associate history with books, traditions and the arts". In this interview, it becomes quite clear that there is a connection between views on the age limits of introduction to history education, and social stereotypes about the characteristics of teaching at school, which correspond to a paradigmatic form of historical consciousness.

In another interview, a currently employed kindergarten teacher mentions that among the goals of history education is that "they (the children) should live in the present while having the knowledge and information of the past, so they can move on (in life)". In another part of her answer, she mentions: "I guess that my answer is in contrast with the goal of the course (she means the academic course, within whose framework this study took place), but that is what we are here for, to learn. Personally, I think that the third grade of elementary school is appropriate for children to start learning about historical facts, or maybe even the fourth". It is yet another interview that confirms the association of a form of historical consciousness with paradigmatic and traditional beliefs and social stereotypes regarding history education. There are similar findings that emerge from the other two interviews that identify with this point of view.

As mentioned in the "sample and research process" section of this paper, seven currently employed educators took part in this research. Therefore, it is important to examine their views on this issue compared to the group of students who took part in the same research. No currently employed educator confirms the opinion of the four students who were negative towards introducing children to history education in kindergarten or the two first grades of elementary school. The currently employed educators confirm the opinion of the majority of the students, who are in favor of introducing young children to history education. Furthermore, one kindergarten teacher mentions that: "Of course (she means that children can of course, even in kindergarten, be introduced to history education), in kindergarten we already work with educational programs, for example "museum cases" which are of historical orientation ("museum cases" are specially created educational material from museums, that can be transported in the form of a "suitcase" to the school grounds and is frequently borrowed by some kindergartens). In another part of the interview, she mentions: "The experiences they gain (from history education) have long-term benefits for children"; in another part she points out that "(if introduced to history education at a young age) they will know how the history they study is created". This percep-

tion is associated with social representations of history as "living" or "alive" and the educational process as an investigative, experiential, cooperative and team process through which the young child comes into contact with the methodology of becoming familiar with the historical past, in a way appropriate for their age. This refers to the association between history education and the genetic form of historical narrative as per Rüsen's classification (2012b; 2017), which has been explained in the theoretical part of this paper. This view argues that the introduction of young children to history education is part of the knowledge to be received by children. The rest of the educators (22 prospective and currently employed) who were positive towards the introduction of children attending kindergarten or the first two grades of elementary school to history education, associate this view with children's development of critical thinking and ability, as well as the development of historical thinking and consciousness.

Another point worth studying comparatively, was the association of opinions that were negative towards the introduction of young children to history education, with question C3: "What are your thoughts regarding the connection between the curricula about the historical past and history, and daily life in kindergarten and the first two grades of elementary school? Do you believe that the curriculum is compatible with the educational programs of historical orientation that are being applied in kindergarten?" (see Appendix). This question refers to the connection between everyday life in the kindergarten and history education of a formal or informal type (meaning either that references to official curricula in history education are used to support educational programs implemented in kindergarten or that references to the historical past are made through school life activities, such as national holidays and anniversaries, local festivals etc). The four students who were negative towards the early introduction of children to history education, answered this question by saying that: "Indeed, everything is possible, as long as we know the way", "I am not sure it would be feasible for them to be just of historical orientation", "Indeed, it is feasible if the educator can combine them and properly manage it (this issue)", "Children must be slowly introduced to educational programs". All four of these answers reveal a lack of awareness regarding the kindergarten curriculum, which is not entirely unexpected coming from prospective educators who have no teaching experience and have not been specifically informed about this curriculum. However, it should be pointed out that this study took place within the framework of a specific course, which did include relevant information; therefore, the remaining 22 students did not share the same opinion about this topic. It is evident that this was information that the four students in the specific interviews had missed. Based on the previous observations then, it becomes obvious that in this study, the views of educators on the appropriate age of introduction to history education are associated with their personal social representations about the aims of history education, their beliefs about the kind and shape of historical narrative that must or should be cultivated in schools, as well as the awareness they possess regarding the historical orientation of educational programs in kindergarten and elementary school.

The interviews with the participants also reveal information about their views on the appropriate age of introduction to history education, that concern ethics; in other words, what they believe should be done regarding young or older children's history education. These elements refer to the skills of children which the participants in this research believe should be developed, and to the content of history education. We could classify this data into two categories which agree with the previous analysis of educators' views regarding the appropriate age for history education. These are the following: A) Educators who believe that history education can start in kindergarten. This category comprises the majority of participants (22). B) Educators who believe that history education should start in the third grade of elementary school. This comprises four participants, a minority in this sample.

Introduction to history education and the nature of history and learning

According to the views of participants in this research, as studied and presented in the previous section, opinions on the appropriate age for the introduction to history education correlates with social representations about the nature of school history and the relative learning outcomes. Participants who argued in favor of introducing young children to history education also indicated that this educational process may help children: develop critical and historical thinking and consciousness; be more accepting of "others" and "diversity"; strengthen their sense of mutual respect; broaden their horizons comprehend historical concepts; enrich their existing knowledge, create new knowledge, and develop the skills to explore it; develop linguistic skills; develop empathy and historical empathy; develop their personality and gain moral and mental

development. According to this perspective, the content of history education is, or should be oriented towards the development of historical thinking, consciousness, literacy, and historical empathy; it also emphasizes the pedagogy of peace, that is the development of concepts such as freedom, equality, and peace, as well as a turn towards the history of "others" and anti-racist education. Additionally, these participants mention that history education should be oriented towards creating the active and democratic citizens of the future, the development of a set of principles and values for children, and towards their socialization. Furthermore, they mention the need for history education to be oriented towards the development of a cultural identity and to be conducted in an age-appropriate way.

According to the participants who argued in favor of the introduction of historical education in the third grade of primary school, history education must or should focus on historical facts, search for causes behind them, develop a national consciousness, and help people "learn" from the historical past. These participants identified history education with historical facts and ignored the multiple functions history education has in our days such as the development of historical thinking, consciousness, culture and empathy, its effect on creating an identity for individuals, its relationship with modern civilization etc. The results of this research showed that the participants in favor of the introduction of young children to history education perceive history education and young children's introduction to it as a complicated process which is associated with different aspects of children's personalities, such as the development of skills, the creation of an identity, being acceptive of "others" and of "diversity" etc. On the other hand, participants that were negatively inclined towards the introduction of young children to history education identify history education with its content, which they believe should be shaped according to national history and focus only on historical facts.

Design and applications of educational programs

Based on the above, it stands to reason that the 22 participants in favor of the introduction of young children to history education account for the most of the elements (182 codes) distributed in the thematic sections that correspond to the application and methodology of the educational process (Table 1, "The educational process"). Regarding the educational process of introducing young children to history education, the opinions given confirm the previous data and help showcase its multimodality. The process is, for instance, associated with acquainting young children with their family history, local history and anniversaries, visits to cultural and educational institutions, and with public uses of history. It is also mentioned that provisions need to be made for adequate class time so that appropriate activities can progress, and meta-cognitive functions can be targeted, and for the appropriate awareness of educators. Another view expressed is that the introduction of young children to history education prepares them for the subject of history, which they will be taught at a later stage, namely the other grades of elementary school as well as secondary education.

Regarding the thematic unit of methodological approaches to the educational process, a variety of methods is mentioned which greatly reinforces the view that it is possible to introduce young children to history education, as long as it is done appropriately. It is also a complicated process from which everybody has something to gain (including the educational system, the educators and the children). Furthermore, the frequent mention of the educator's methodological approaches is further emphasized by the variety of suggestions, which indicates that the participants believe in the value of a proper educational process. Also, the appropriate methodological approaches, with their variety and complexity, are frequently mentioned, even repeated within the same interview; this indicates that the participants believe that a superficial approach to the historical past based on a one-sided narrative, is not sufficient when it comes to the modern school. It seems that most of the participants in this research share a common view on the value and importance of history education for young children. Furthermore, they believe that there are multiple benefits from introducing young children to history education, provided this can be achieved through the combination of multiple and varied educational actions and activities.

Participants mention the following methodological approaches: utilizing historical sources in the educational process; planning and applying projects; cooperative teaching and working in groups; using computers and interactive white boards; creating timelines and decoding data found in them; the reverse approach to time (from the past to the present); utilizing appropriate books; using audiovisual media, movies and documentary films; using images and photos. Furthermore, they mentioned the methods applied in the educational process should, in their views, include classroom visits by persons such as: "experts"; familiar people (such as chil-

dren's relatives, their grandparents); people belonging to local authorities (clergymen, people working for the local government); as well as artists etc. Other appropriate educational methods mentioned by participants include visits to historical and archaeological sites, institutions and museums, as well as cultural and educational institutions. Methodological approaches were also mentioned that facilitate the educational process, enhance inquiry-based learning and help with issues that have to do with comprehension; these approaches include: tracing children's existing knowledge and representations, dealing with cognitive conflicts, using concept mapping, brainstorming, creating workshops, developing discourse, fostering a democratic classroom environment, creating motives and finally, reflection. Participants also mentioned the interdisciplinary character of educational programs with a historical orientation, and their practical implementation in kindergarten, the involvement of institutions with scientific prestige in the educational process, such as universities, and abolishing the practice of learning the history textbooks by heart from history education. Regarding the interdisciplinary character of history education, they mentioned that the introduction to history education can be done through the following fields: Psychology, Sociology, Geography, Literature, Economy, Music (songs with historical content), Theater (dramatization, puppet shows, theater games), Arts, Environmental Education, Museum Education.

Conclusions

The educators who took part in this research study pointed out specific benefits that they believe children will gain by being introduced to history education in kindergarten and elementary school. These benefits were: development of critical and historical thinking; forming historical consciousness; comprehending certain historical concepts that can be characterized as difficult or complicated, such as the concept of historical time; enhancing their background knowledge; developing broad linguistic skills; fostering and developing empathy and historical empathy; being acceptive towards the differentiation of "others"; coming in contact with and getting to know about "others" history, and combining history education with anti-racist education. Furthermore, participants who were positive towards introducing young children to history education also mentioned the development of children's personality and creating a framework of values such as peace, equality, freedom and mutual respect. They also claimed that the introduction to history education increases children's moral and mental capacity and broadens their horizons.

This study showed that participants' education and experience affect their social representations. Specifically, it is ascertained that 22 participants in this research suggest that the introduction in history education is possible and beneficial to the children. The number of negative opinions is small (only four participants). Furthermore, the research showed that active educators who were aware of history education for young children and knew the curricula, shared the belief that it was possible and beneficial for children aged four to eight. All the above leads us to conclude that teachers' education and familiarity with the subject is positively associated with their views on introducing young children to history education. Despite the fact that the Greek kindergarten curriculum includes references to the historical education of young children (OGG of H. R./5961/v2/2021, pp. 76290–76294), and despite the existence of a relevant academic course (in the context of which the present research was conducted), there are some skeptical opinions on the issue. These views are in line with traditional approaches to history teaching, and with the focus on historical facts and dates.

The findings included in the Data Analysis section of this article make it clear that participants believe that the introduction of young children to history education is associated with 3 factors: the child, the educator, and the educational process. This derives from the study of all the interviews, and from their comparative examination. It is evident then that all the educators who took part in this research believe that young children's introduction to history education is a systematic educational and pedagogical process. However, the participants limited the various factors of this systematic approach to institutional history education to only three: the educator, the child and the educational process. Neither the children's environment (family, social) nor the educational policy regarding history education were mentioned - the latter being shaped by the central government through curricula or by more localized factors such as the educational administration of a region or prefecture, the management of a school, the local authorities and unofficial forms of education (cultural institutions, clubs, museums, etc.).

This research, despite its important findings, has some limitations. It is a small-sample research, utilizing the research methodology of qualitative analysis (thematic analysis), without quantitative characteristics. Therefore, its results and conclusions cannot be generalized. For this to happen, the research should be conducted on a large sample, with its data capture and analysis adapted to quantitative analysis methods. All these changes practically mean a new research design and implementation with different characteristics. This specific methodological approach was chosen in order to study the social representations, interpretative repertoires and forms of historical consciousness of educators who participated in this research, and to make a connection with their mindset. We hope that future research will be able to study expanded samples, to allow for both qualitative and quantitative characteristics to be extracted.

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Peer Review

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ORCID iD

Kyriaki Fardi https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9379-7757

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Appendix

Interview questionnaire

Introduction:

This questionnaire comes in the form of an "interview on paper" regarding the appropriate age for introducing children to history education. The main purpose of this questionnaire is to examine for the first time the perspectives and social representations of students attending an academic course on history education and young children. The perspectives put forward in the framework of this research study must be independent and personal. Please present your views in a brief paragraph, as if providing a spoken answer. The questionnaire will be answered anonymously.

Questions:

- A1. Please present yourself briefly. What is your formal education?
- A2. What is your connection with education? Do you have any experience, personal or professional, regarding preschool and elementary school education? (Is there a child in your family who is attending kindergarten or elementary school and shares their experiences with you? Have you ever been in the kindergarten or elementary school environment (for work experience during your studies, to attend school performances or any other reason)?

- B1. What do you think is the importance of history education today for children of all grades?
- B2. Which educational benefits do you believe modern history education is associated with?
- B3. What should the main goals of modern history education be and what purposes should it serve?

- C1. What is the age you consider appropriate for children to come in contact with the historical past and why?
- C2. What are your thoughts on the importance of introducing children attending kindergarten or the first two classes of elementary school to the historical past?
- C3. What are your thoughts regarding the connection between the curricula about the historical past and history, and daily life in kindergarten and the first two grades of elementary school? Do you believe that the curriculum is compatible with the educational programs of historical orientation that are being applied in kindergarten?
- C4. If you have experience implementing educational programs with historical orientation in kindergarten or the first two grades of elementary school, which issues concerning such programs do you consider significant?
- C5. Which methods would you use to apply educational programs of historical orientation in kindergarten or the first two grades of elementary school?
- C6. If you were to design and apply an educational program of historical orientation, how would you organize the educational process?
- C7. What do you think would be the role of the teacher in an educational program of historical orientation in kindergarten or the first two grades of elementary school, and how would the children participate?
- C8. Can educational programs of historical orientation be connected to other cognitive fields in the kindergarten or elementary school curriculum?
- C9. Would you involve other individuals or institutions in the design, organization and implementation of educational programs of historical orientation? If so, who would they be, for what reason and how?
- C10. What kind of knowledge, information, topics, concepts and processes do you think that kindergarten children are capable of understanding regarding the historical past?
- C11. What elements of the historical past do you believe kindergarten children or those in the first grades of elementary school are unable to understand?

- C12. What difficulties do you believe you would face in the design and application of educational programs of historical orientation in kindergarten or the first grades of elementary school?
- C13. What benefits do you believe children gain from attending educational programs of historical orientation in kindergarten or the first two grades of elementary school? (short term: while attending these programs; long-term: when approaching historical knowledge throughthe school textbook later in elementary school)

Standardized assessment of historical thinking competencies in an intervention study using perspectives on German history

*Katharina Totter** ⓘD *, Wolfgang Wagner* ⓘD *, Christiane Bertram* ⓘD

University of Tübingen, Tübingen

Abstract

To assess the efficacy of an intervention study on the German post-1990 transformation targeting historical thinking, this paper presents the development of a standardized test designed to measure epistemological understanding and methodological competencies. Following a validation study (*N* = 354 students), we employed a revised test in an intervention study with *N* = 1,301 high school students in Baden-Württemberg. The newly developed tests underwent analysis concerning their psychometric criteria. The final test contained 38 items with various stimuli (e.g., interview snippets, cartoons) utilizing closed-format responses. The methodological test exhibited sufficient reliability and extensive overlap with a selection of items from an established test. However, the epistemological test showed some limitations in both reliability and validity, suggesting a potential opportunity for improvement through revision. Students' grades in history and German, cognitive skills, and socioeconomic status predicted their ability scores based on two-parameter logistic (2PL) item response models for both tests.

Keywords

1. Introduction

Germany's latest historical seismic event, the merging of two states—the East and the West—into the German Federal Republic, occurred nearly 35 years ago. To this day, the former divide is still noticeable when looking at not only the distribution of wealth or election results but also perspectives on the transformation that followed from 1989/1990 (see, e.g., Großbölting, 2020). A recent project ("Generation 1975" see Bertram, 2020) with eyewitnesses who grew up on opposite sides of the "Iron Curtain", which divided Germany into two countries, the FRG and GDR, during the Cold War, revealed that views in the East and West are still fundamentally different. Whereas the interviewees in the East experienced a complete change in their everyday lives, little had changed for those in the West (Bertram, 2020). Due to their predispositions from how

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they were socialized in the competing systems (Großbölting, 2020), their accounts of historical events were influenced by and remembered differently across cultural and social groups (Körber & Lenz, 2014). These differences have not necessarily smoothed out over the years but rather developed into contradictory narratives (Rensmann, 2019). For instance, the East's perspective of being "taken over" by the West and being treated as second-class citizens contrasts with the West's perspective, where East Germans "lament their fate instead of being grateful for the (…) political and economic opportunities" (Rensmann, 2019, p. 33) that the West offered them. An ongoing debate about the past, representations, and relevance for the present is a strength of democratic societies, provided that citizens can participate and contribute to the discussion (Körber & Meyer-Hamme, 2015). However, this means that they need to be aware of and equipped with epistemic beliefs to appropriately handle conflicting perspectives on complex issues (VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016), such as reunification. Rather than assuming there is only one objective truth or that all viewpoints are merely subjective opinions that can be accepted or rejected depending on an individual's worldview, they should recognize that while different narratives must be critically examined for validity, they can certainly exist side by side (VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016). This directly aligns with a core concept in history teaching: multiperspectivity (Körber & Lenz, 2014).

A recent large-scale randomized controlled field trial (RCT) in Baden-Württemberg, Germany, applied this approach to foster historical thinking by having students engage with different perspectives on the topic of the time of the transformation with eyewitnesses of the aforementioned "Generation 1975". Classes were randomized into three conditions: two that received the intervention and one waitlist control group. During a three-lesson unit, the intervention students first prepared for interviews with eyewitnesses, one from the East and one from the West. The classes then differed in the second lesson regarding whether the students worked with the accounts obtained from videos or in-person interviews. Afterward, students in both conditions drew connections to both recent and historical contexts from the statements made in the interviews to address the core question of the lesson unit: "Has what belongs together grown together?" The intervention was designed to expand students' knowledge about the topic, addressing motivational aspects and historical competencies. Although learning with in-person eyewitnesses holds great potential to motivate students, it also poses a risk for students' historical learning (Bertram et al., 2017). Therefore, one of the main goals of the project was to foster historical thinking. To answer the core question of the intervention, students were constantly asked to use their historical thinking abilities. They had to engage with a variety of historical sources and accounts to develop the questions they wanted the eyewitnesses to answer and to contextualize their answers later. Furthermore, they were not only confronted with two opposing perspectives on German reunification but also had to sharpen their understanding of what conclusions can (and cannot) be drawn from the materials studied, particularly the eyewitness accounts.

One challenge of this large-scale study with over 1,000 students was how to assess the impact on the acquisition of historical thinking competencies. We applied standardized tests in our study for two reasons. First, standardized measurement procedures, in general, enhance the "clarity of communication" (Gelman & Hennig, 2017, p. 973) about the study results because they are carried out and evaluated in a clearly specified manner. Second, standardized tests are typically quite time- and cost-efficient, at least with regard to the coding of correct versus incorrect responses, in particular when closed answer formats are used. Currently, only a limited number of standardized test items that capture historical thinking are available (e.g., the HiTCH test; Trautwein et al., 2017). Even though the HiTCH test can capture historical competencies independent of specific topics, additional instruments more closely related to the intervention's topic and aims were missing. Therefore, we developed two new historical thinking tests to assess specific competencies we aimed to foster during the intervention: students' understanding of epistemological principles and methodological competencies. After providing a theoretical background, we present and discuss the tests in two steps, focusing on their validity and reliability. First, we used the empirical results of the newly developed items (k = 58) from a small sample in a validation study to eliminate or refine those that did not perform well on psychometric or content criteria. Next, we examined the performance of the final tests in the large sample of ninth-grade students in the intervention study.

2. Theory

In Western democracies, it has been declared that the main goal of history education is to foster students' historical thinking competencies and historical consciousness (see Lévesque & Clark, 2018). Although definitions and models of historical thinking – sometimes also referred to as historical reasoning (Van Drie & Van Boxtel, 2008) – differ (see, e.g., Van Drie & Van Boxtel, 2008; Wineburg, 1991), there are huge commonalities in the literature in the Western world (Lévesque & Clark, 2018). Seixas (2017) condensed a broad consensus among historians about these epistemological underpinnings into three main principles: differentiating between the past and history, the coexistence of multiple historical narratives, and the necessity to critique them in terms of their plausibility. Based on these key aspects, the current test development focused on the epistemological understanding of the nature of history and the methodological implications that arise in approaching these narrations. The next section outlines the epistemological understanding and methodological competencies and discusses their measurement.

2.1 Understanding epistemological principles of history

Epistemology deals with the nature and justification of knowledge (Hofer & Pintrich, 1997). The essence of history is essentially its narrativity (Rüsen, 2005). The epistemological principles of history are formed by a theory of history consisting of construction and narratives (Rüsen, 2005). A narration connects the past and history by transforming one into the other (Rüsen, 2005). Inevitably, this means history must be constructed by assembling past fragments to create a meaningful narrative (Rüsen, 2005, 2017). Directly linked to these foundational aspects of history are the principles of retrospectivity, selectivity, and particularity (Rüsen, 1989, 2005; see also VanSledright, 2014). Furthermore, history is narrated from a particular perspective (Rüsen, 1989), and multiple narratives coexist based on, for example, the narrator's perspective on the events, and there is no such thing as one, true history (Rüsen, 2005; Seixas, 2017).

People's views about the nature of knowledge (i.e., what, how certain, and how interrelated knowledge is) and the process of acquiring knowledge (i.e. the sources from which knowledge comes and how to evaluate and justify knowledge claims) are often referred to as their "epistemological beliefs" or "understanding" (Hofer & Pintrich, 1997). They can be mapped in development models and influence the cognitive processes of learners (see Hofer & Pintrich, 1997). VanSledright (2014) considers epistemological misunderstandings about history to be the greatest obstacle to historical understanding.

It is evident that these epistemological principles constitute an essential part of students' understanding of history. In the model developed by the FUER group, an international consortium whose acronym stands for the promotion and development of a reflective and (self-)reflexive historical consciousness (in German: Körber et al., 2007; English translation: Körber & Meyer-Hamme, 2015), insights into epistemological principles act as the foundation of historical thinking (Sachkompetenzen). In the international discussion, epistemological principles are referred to as second-order concepts (Lévesque & Clark, 2018). Previous publications on the development of epistemological ideas (e.g., from Kuhn & Weinstock, 2002) were consolidated by Maggioni et al. into a staged model (Maggioni et al., 2009; overview in Stoel et al., 2017). In the initial stage, students hold novice beliefs, perceiving historical knowledge as "fixed and a singular copy of the past" (Stoel et al., 2017, p. 122). The Copier holds beliefs such as that history equals the past, and historians are mere chronologists (Maggioni, 2010). The Subjectivist, on the other hand, views knowledge as a matter of personal opinion and perspective (Maggioni, 2010). Students' beliefs can progress to a more advanced level (Maggioni et al., 2009) until they reach the final development stance, Criterialist (Maggioni, 2010). In an expert stage, historical knowledge is viewed as constructed, interpretative, and changeable, and claims about the past need to be approached with disciplinary criteria (Maggioni, 2010). Stoehl et al. (2017) emphasize this value that students place on the methodological approach to historical knowledge as an important part of advanced historical thinking (as opposed to naïve beliefs).

2.2 Using methodological competencies: reconstruction and deconstruction

Derived from an understanding of the epistemological principles of history, the necessity to work with and critique narratives becomes evident; therefore, operating with adequate disciplinary criteria is essential (Seixas, 2017). In such a context, Rüsen's dimensions of plausibility are frequently utilized (Rüsen's Triftigkeiten (1989, 2013), in English, see also Körber, 2016; Seixas, 2017).

The elaboration of the Historical Thinking Standards, published by the National Center for History in Schools UCLA (1996), describes students' abilities "to create historical narratives and arguments on their own" and "thoughtfully read the historical narratives created by others (…) with conceptual analysis drawn from all relevant disciplines" (Historical Thinking Standards section). Sometimes referred to as methodological, these competencies involve working with historical material to engage in a constructional process involving either reconstructing or deconstructing historical narratives (Körber, 2011). To reconstruct a historical narrative, one locates pieces of information about the past and assembles, interprets, and integrates them to synthetically construct historical statements. The process of deconstruction starts with a given historical account, finds its narrative structures, and locates and evaluates the pieces of information given and the relationships made. In comparison with other international works, great similarities can be found in works by, for example, Wineburg (1991) and Van Drie and Van Boxtel (2008).

In both constructional processes, Rüsen's disciplinary criteria (1989) needs to be applied to assess the empirical, normative, and narrative plausibility of the historical narrative. When evaluating the empirical plausibility, the focus lies on the narrative's reliance on past information and the quality, quantity, and relevance thereof (Körber, 2016). Are verifiable facts mentioned, and if so, how many? Can the claims be fact-checked using evidence from the past? Both of these questions are answered by critically evaluating the source material the narrative holds (Rüsen, 2017). Concerning the normative plausibility of a historical narrative, the assessment focuses on the values and norms conveyed (Körber, 2016). The perspective of the narrative holds meaning and orientation for the present, and multiple narratives can contradict each other on the basis of their perspectives (Rüsen, 2017). In practice, questions about the validity of the perspectives should be answered along the lines of: What are the values and norms conveyed, and do they match the audience and beyond? Are they acceptable (to all)? (Körber, 2016). Lastly, narrative plausibility focuses on the structure of the narration. Are the construction and the elements used therein convincing and logical? (Körber, 2016).

In summary, when reconstructing the past in a historical narrative, students, or anyone who deals with history, should consider the three plausibility criteria. These criteria are also applied when deconstructing given narratives. It is evident that understanding the epistemological underpinnings of history and applying disciplinary criteria to both reconstruct and deconstruct narratives are complex historical thinking competencies. Ways to assess these competencies and their consequences for the development of the test on epistemology and methodology are discussed in the next section.

2.3 Assessment of competencies of historical thinking

Numerous studies have used qualitative data to assess aspects of historical thinking mostly involving the ability to reconstruct and deconstruct historical narratives (e.g., see Waldis et al., 2015; Wineburg, 1991) and students' epistemological beliefs (e.g., Iordanou et al., 2020). Most of these assessments were based on students' writings, where a detailed evaluation of their abilities regarding these complex historical competencies was conducted (Ercikan & Seixas, 2015). When experts evaluate students' answers, even though there is considerable potential for high measurement validity, there is a lack of objectivity (Radinsky et al., 2015), and disentangling the relationship with basic literacy poses a challenge (Ercikan & Seixas, 2015). As students are often required to read and produce full paragraphs in these assessments, the question that arises is to what extent the bycatch of students' literacy is being assessed versus their historical thinking competencies (Ercikan & Seixas, 2015). Moreover, the length of the texts, especially considering the time it takes to produce and evaluate them, poses an issue (Bertram et al., 2021). For the purpose of assessing average achievement, assessing the distribution of achievement within groups, and comparing achievement between groups, qualitative approaches are not (yet) suitable (Körber & Meyer-Hamme, 2015). Suitability might lie in the future possibility of analyzing qualitative data in large-scale samples via artificial intelligence (e.g., see Bertram et al., 2021), although there are still major disadvantages (e.g., unreliability and the length of the

test for the students). At the moment, it is not yet possible to assess the content accuracy of the students' answers without a differentiated manual rating (Bertram et al., 2021).

Therefore, large-scale assessments call for quantitative approaches (Körber & Meyer-Hamme, 2015). There are many merits of having a highly standardized measure capable of assessing historical thinking competencies with high reliability and validity. With the lack of large empirical studies in mind (Körber & Meyer-Hamme, 2015), the test would be easy to use and evaluate in these large-scale settings (Wagner et al., 2023). Such tests are usually objective with no difference between raters, and there is usually a clear interpretation and replicability of the results, in contrast to open formats (Radinsky et al., 2015). Moreover, highly standardized and closed formats are more time- and cost-effective for both students and researchers (Smith, 2017).

Standardized assessment and the development of quantitative measures regarding epistemic beliefs have been proposed using items that are bare of concrete historical context that capture the degree of which participants (teachers or students) agree or disagree with them (e.g., Maggioni et al., 2009; Stoel et al., 2017; Wiley et al., 2020). The results regarding aspects of validity and reliability seem promising (see, e.g., Wiley et al., 2020), but limitations arise with regard to the lack of historical context (Stoel et al., 2017), and in some studies with students, the scores that were obtained were not related to students' abilities (Wiley et al., 2020).

Utilizing a scenario-based approach with a concrete historical context, Barzilai and Weinstock (2015) employed multiple-choice items to assess epistemic thinking. Students responded to statements that mirrored epistemic perspectives derived from a model by Kuhn and Weinstock (2002), whose categories (absolutist, multiplist, evaluativist) map onto the stances Maggioni (2010) proposed. Barzilai and Weinstock (2015) aimed to assess students' application of their epistemic assumptions rather than asking specifically about their epistemic beliefs in the form of a self-report. Results revealed that measuring students' epistemic thinking was generally possible across, yet influenced by, the historical topics and problems presented.

Standardized assessments of a variety of students' historical thinking competencies and students' attitudes toward history have already been employed in large-scale studies such as the European-wide study in 1997 by Angvik et al. or by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which has been assessing students' historical thinking since the 1960s but has been criticized for mainly assessing declarative knowledge (VanSledright, 2014). In 2017, Smith encountered severe validity problems with multiple-choice items used in the NAEP to measure historical thinking processes. Think-aloud protocols revealed that the items were not able to represent the complex thinking processes they were constructed for. The conclusion was that students did not engage in historical thinking processes but instead relied on their abilities to read, answer strategically on tests, and recall factual knowledge. In a follow-up study, Smith (2018) showed that newly developed multiple-choice items focusing on Wineburg's (1991) historical thinking constructs (sourcing, contextualization, corroboration) outperformed sample items from established standardized U.S. tests (e.g., the NAEP) in terms of validity. Aiming for large-scale use, the FUER group (Körber et al., 2007) developed a standardized test in German to measure a variety of historical thinking competencies in 2017 (Trautwein et al.) with closed formats. The HiTCH test is one of the few standardized tests that captures the various facets of historical thinking competencies, although the facets are not yet equally represented in the inventory, and the test is under constant development (see Wagner et al., 2023).

In summary, there are several main challenges specifically related to the standardized measurement of historical thinking competencies. How can one introduce the topic/context without it influencing the results of the assessment too much? Does the test measure the specific competency, and is it able to reflect the historical thinking process, or does it assess only factual knowledge or reading skills, for example? Most importantly, the valid assessment of competencies such as historical thinking competencies is especially difficult due to their complexity (Smith, 2017). The inherent nature of history, consisting of (multiple coexisting) narratives (Rüsen, 2005), often challenges the notion of having a single correct answer (VanSledright, 2014). However, aligned with a focus on competence rather than factual knowledge, the goal is not to, for example, produce a given narrative as a correct answer but rather to demonstrate the ability to think historically (Körber & Meyer-Hamme, 2015). Smith (2018) also entertained this idea, suggesting that, in general, multiple-choice items can measure complex competencies when concrete skills are assessed. Moreover, tasks should typically have a historical context without assessing merely factual knowledge, and the competencies being assessed should be transferable to different topics (Körber & Meyer-Hamme, 2015). Given the disciplinary challenges, especially in striving for high validity of measurement, we focused on two main aspects during item development. Answering the items correctly should not heavily rely on students' applica-

tion of their reading skills or factual knowledge. Furthermore, the correct answer to each item should primarily depend on the application of a specific historical thinking skill rather than a complex set of competencies.

In addition to these content-related criteria, we designed the tests using methodological approaches from psychology. Alongside constructing items that meet the usual criteria for test quality (e.g., see De Leeuw et al., 2008), we employed models from Item Response Theory (IRT; see De Ayala, 2009). This enabled us to empirically test the relationship between a latent variable assumed to represent the specific construct and the items, assess their difficulty, and judge them based on their performance to distinguish between students with low and high competencies.

In the following paragraphs, we outline the approach of developing two new tests on specific aspects of historical thinking. Our aim was to develop tests that aligned with the topic and objectives of the intervention study. The tasks needed to be designed to measure epistemological understanding and methodological competencies precisely, validly, and in a manner that was as closely related to the topic as possible. Utilizing the HiTCH test's logic as a blueprint seemed most fitting because it already addressed some of the disciplinary challenges. Tasks were designed to be independent from the topic but linked to the material; therefore, finding the correct answer should not necessarily require factual knowledge. Whereas the test may occasionally provide extra information, its aim is to keep the student's time and effort focused on the historical thinking task rather than, for example, requiring excessive reading (Trautwein et al., 2017). Our aim was to construct tasks with short questions and prompts that mainly use concrete historical material in the form of pictures (e.g., cartoons) or texts that require little reading. The materials included all additional factual knowledge necessary to solve the task. We presented the students with several possible answers from which to choose to solve the task.

Our aim was to construct a test using only closed-response formats and to ensure that testing, scoring, and result interpretation adhered to rigorous standards of objectivity. Consequently, during the development process, the emphasis was on achieving high levels of reliability and validity. One way to minimize measurement errors and thus ensure high reliability would be to match the items' difficulties to the ability distribution of the sample, thus preventing items from being too difficult or too easy (De Ayala, 2009). Moreover, the items need to be able to distinguish between students with high or low ability (De Ayala, 2009). We further aimed to motivate students to put effort into answering this nonmandatory test by incorporating items with interesting tasks and materials. Missing responses are a recurring issue in educational and psychological assessments (Rose et al., 2016), and unmotivated students' answers are a threat to an assessment's validity (Eklöf, 2010).

With the validity of the test being the most discussed in the literature and representing the most challenging aspect of test construction, the central question is: Do these items measure what we think they measure? (Kaliski et al., 2015). Here, different methods can be used, one of which employs models from IRT to represent the relationship between the items and the construct (De Ayala, 2009). A second method that helps assess the validity of the construct involves a priori assumptions about the theoretical interrelationships that are being empirically tested (Kaliski et al., 2015). Regarding other ability measures, when exploring relationships between the newly developed tests and established tests, Kaliski et al. (2015) emphasized that the scores obtained by students on the new test should demonstrate a robust correlation with established tests assessing the same construct. Furthermore, the expected correlation between the test scores and factual knowledge should be "substantial" (Kaliski et al., 2015, p. 198), yet not overly pronounced, as this could imply that students' test performance is heavily intertwined with their knowledge of the factual context of the items.

Students' perception of and motivation toward the subject of history should overall also be positively linked to their performance regarding historical competencies. The relevance students attribute to history (i.e., what it has to do with themselves, society, and human existence as a whole) seems to be linked with their development of epistemological beliefs (see Van Straaten et al., 2018). Moreover, as part of students' relevance of history (Van Straaten et al., 2018), their self-reported approach to forming opinions and justifying judgments should positively relate to their performance in methodological tasks as well as their epistemological understanding.

Students' expectancy beliefs in how much they think they're able to succeed (which includes their self-concept of how they assess their own competency) and their reasons for engaging with a subject (i.e., value beliefs) are closely related to their academic performance (see Eccles et al., 1983; Gaspard et al., 2015). This also holds for the subject of history, where Arens et al. (2016) found that students' self-concept in history was only substantially positively related to their performance in history, in contrast to their performance in other subjects like math or German.

Moreover, it has been shown that students' ability to evaluate the trustworthiness of historical sources is predicted by the value they place on this competency (Van der Eem et al., 2023). Additionally, students with more advanced epistemic beliefs held higher value beliefs (Guo et al., 2022). Therefore, students' performance in the two newly developed tests should be positively related to their value beliefs and self-concept in history.

In essence, it is crucial to explore whether the test effectively measures a construct such as historical thinking, unintentionally measures another construct, or does both (Kaliski et al., 2015). Another more practical aspect of validity lies in the test's ability to predict a person's behavior (Wiley et al., 2020). Student performance on the new tests should, to some extent, be predictable from their history grade. Prior research by Stoel et al. (2017) showed a positive relationship for nuanced epistemological beliefs. Reading is known to play a role in tests on historical thinking, and the challenge of minimizing the extent to which the test assesses reading rather than the construct was highlighted by Ercikan and Seixas (2015). Therefore, we also anticipate that some additional variance in the test scores can be attributed to basic cognitive and reading abilities (Kaliski et al., 2015). The number of books at home is a commonly used indicator of students' socioeconomic status and has consistently been shown to relate to student achievement (for an overview, see Heppt et al., 2022). Student characteristics (gender and age) should not contribute significantly to further explanation of variance, as performance on a test designed for all 9th-grade high school students in Germany should not depend upon these characteristics.

In conclusion, the development of a standardized historical thinking measure presents numerous challenges that need careful consideration. We endeavored to address these challenges as an interdisciplinary team comprising educational researchers, psychologists, and history education researchers by utilizing an interdisciplinary approach. The subsequent sections delve into the test's development and its evaluation with psychological standards. The research questions focus on the reliability and validity of the newly developed epistemological and methodological tests.

2.4 Research questions

1. Do the newly developed tests measuring historical thinking competencies adhere to psychometric standards regarding item discrimination and score reliability?
2. How are the newly developed tests associated with the selection of items from an established standardized test instrument used for assessing historical thinking, a factual knowledge test, and an evaluation of the perceived relevance of history and motivational variables associated with the subject of history?
3. To what extent do student characteristics (grades, abilities…) predict students' ability as measured by the newly developed tests?

3. Methods

The intervention study the tests were developed for was preregistered at the Registry of Efficacy and Effectiveness Studies (REES) prior to analysis (#14881.1v1). The intervention study on eyewitnesses was funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) and approved by both the Ethics Committee of the University of Tübingen, Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, and the state ministry of culture in Baden-Württemberg. In Germany, the grade levels can differ by 1 year based on education time (8 years being the G8-track, 9 years being the G9-track) in high school. The grade level the intervention was designed for was ninth grade (G8-track) and 10th grade (G9-track) because the topic of the intervention connects to the educational plans at the respective level. For easier reading, we refer to both levels as the ninth grade. The same logic applies to the validation study that we carried out in grade 10 (G8-track) and grade 11 (G9-track) and refer to as the 10th grade.

3.1 Development of the test inventory

3.1.1 Development phase

The operationalization of the two constructs – epistemological understanding and methodological competencies – and the selection of tasks for the items were based on the format of the HiTCH test (Trautwein et al., 2017). Through an iterative process, experts in history didactics, psychology, and education sciences collaboratively selected a total of 58 items for the initial draft. The closed-format items for both tests had to adequately represent the constructs, be answerable in a reasonable amount of time, and be understandable and motivating to the students. These items were organized into seven tasks, all presented as either simple multiple-choice (MC) items (where only one of several answers needed to be selected for the correct solution) or in a complex multiple-choice (CMC) format (where one or more of several answers needed to be selected for the correct solution).

3.1.2 Validation study and analysis strategies under IRT

In a validation study, a total of N = 354 10th-grade students answered the newly developed tests along with other items. At this time, they were mostly 15 to 16 years old (M = 15.59, SD = 0.72) and had already completed the topics of the 9th-grade curriculum, which deals with German division and unification. As preregistered, all test answers were coded dichotomously (0 = false, 1 = correct) or coded as missing for invalid answers or nonresponse. The CMC items were scored as correct only if the student selected the correct pattern of answers. We wanted to assess the difficulty of the items and the extent to which the items allowed to differentiate between students' ability level (RQ1). We therefore analyzed the items using two-parameter logistic (2PL) IRT models (De Ayala, 2009; for an introduction in German, see Wagner, 2020). In IRT, a latent variable (e.g., historical competence), which means a variable that cannot be observed directly, corresponds with observable behaviors or manifest variables (De Ayala, 2009). This relationship can be depicted with a logistic regression function, where individuals' abilities are mapped onto the probabilities of solving the item correctly. In the simplest model, the items vary on only one parameter (one-parameter logistic [1 PL] model), namely, the item difficulty (b), which is equal to the location on the ability dimension (i.e., the latent variable in a unidimensional model) where individuals would be expected to have a 50% chance of solving the item correctly. Commonly, the parameter's range is -3 to 3 with items with b < -2 being "easy" and b > 2 being "hard" (De Ayala, 2009). We aimed for items that were within this range of difficulty for our student population (i.e., not too difficult, not too easy) and have some variance among the range (i.e., items that we expect to be solved by most, and some by fewer students). Most importantly, we wanted to assess the items' performance to differentiate between students with different competency levels (i.e., students with higher abilities should solve the item correctly, whereas those with lower abilities should not). We therefore applied 2PL models, where items are assumed to vary not only in their difficulty but also in their discrimination (a). Discrimination is the slope of the item characteristic curve and translates into the ability of the item to differentiate between individuals with different abilities. Desirable values range from 0.8 to 2.5 (De Ayala, 2009), which refers to the steepness of the slope (i.e., how sharply the item draws the line between higher and lower-ability students). Values that approach zero translate to the ability of the students less and less playing a role in their probability of solving the item correctly and negative values indicate that individuals with lower ability have a higher probability of solving the item (De Ayala, 2009; Wagner, 2020). A statistically significant positive discrimination of a ≥ 0.5 was defined as the psychometric selection criterion for the items. These items should all be helpful in determining a final score for students that reflects their latent ability (here: historical competencies). We also revised tasks that did not yet adhere to our criteria, but where we saw the potential to improve them by revising the task description or the wording of the item. The final inventory for the intervention study was therefore selected on the basis of both psychometric and content-related criteria.

The original 58 items were clustered in seven different task formats (e.g., analyze cartoons, work with eyewitness quotes). Among these, 42 items exhibited statistically significant positive discrimination (with 29 above the threshold of a = 0.5). However, one task format from the methodological test comprised 24 items, nearly half of which did not exhibit statistically significant positive discrimination (i.e., did not contribute to the ability score they intended to

measure). We extensively redesigned the task format, resulting in 12 items being revised and another 12 items being excluded. Overall, based on the results of the validation study (see the overview in Table 1), a total of 14 items required revision (one item from the epistemological test and 13 from the methodological test). Additionally, 19 items were excluded (three items from the epistemological test and 16 from the methodological test). Overall, 25 items remained unaltered. The final inventory consisted of 39 items and can be found in the appendix as supplementary material (graphical material and interviews not included). The details and examples of the items from both tests, including the modifications and exclusions, are elaborated upon further in the subsequent sections. For additional details on the 2PL models referred to below, see the Statistical Analysis section and the Appendix.

Table 1: Psychometric quality of the items in the validation study

Item discrimination a	Frequencies split for tasks that cluster the items "z": Work with eyewitness quotes	All other
A statistically significant positive $a > 0.8$	3	10
B statistically significant positive $0.5 < a < 0.8$	6	10
C statistically significant positive $a < 0.5$	4	9
D not statistically significant positive	11	5

Note. Item statistics were estimated with a 2PL model including all items ($N = 353$). Reported frequencies are split between one task format which exhibited very poor item discrimination, and all other task formats.

3.2 Test inventory on central epistemological principles

Students were tasked with selecting one or more suitable responses for a statement concerning an epistemological principle of history. The responses represented epistemological beliefs that ranged from naïve (i.e., historical knowledge is merely subjective opinions / pure facts) to advanced (i.e., historical knowledge is constructed, changeable, and interpretable, whereby the need for critical evaluation using disciplinary criteria is particularly important; see Stoel et al., 2017). A high score on the epistemological understanding test means that a student rather rejects naïve beliefs and chooses the advanced options. On the basis of the outcomes of the validation study, one item was revised, and three were removed entirely (like the subsequent item k201, see Figure 1).

It could be that the correct answers were too easy to recognize, as all subitems were answered correctly by a large majority of the students (86% to 96%). Additionally, the advanced

There is only one way to look at history.

☐ I agree, because history happened exactly as it is written in the history book.
"Objectivist" (96%)

☐ I don't agree, because history is always completely subjective.
"Subjectivist" (86%)

☑ I don't agree, because there can be different perspectives on the same event.
"Criterialist" (98%)

Note: Explanation of epistemological belief in italics (not provided in original test).

Figure 1: Item k0201 with percentages of subitems solved correctly in the validation study.

option was not too different from the naïve options. In any case, the item did not allow to differentiate very well between the students in terms of their epistemological understanding (a = 0.35) and was therefore excluded from the test inventory.

The final inventory contained 12 CMC items, each offering three to four subitems for selection to indicate agreement or disagreement. One task with five CMC items consisted of statements about the nature of history itself, unrelated to a specific topic (k02); the other one had statements more closely related to the intervention's topic of eyewitness accounts and transformation time (k03).

3.3 Test inventory on reconstruction and deconstruction abilities

The test assessing methodological competencies consisted of a selection of k = 27 items, organized into five different tasks. Unlike the epistemological test, this methodological test displayed more diversity in task formats, incorporating visuals, such as comic strips, cartoons, and interview-style sources. For an overview of the tasks, refer to Table 2.

Table 2: Overview of the methodological test's tasks and items included in the final test inventory

Task	Description of task	Item description
k01	Three cartoons needed to be analyzed in terms of their core messages and subsequently matched with corresponding statements.	Eight MC items, each featuring a core message that needed to be associated with one of the cartoons or with none.
k04	A comic strip reflecting on a class trip to the GDR analyzed for its underlying messages.	One CMC item was provided, offering five options for selection.
k05	Impacts of two magazine covers on stereotypes related to Bavaria and East Germany had to be explained on the basis of their covers.	Two CMC items with five to six options from which the correct one(s) had to be chosen.
k06	Two interviews containing opposing narratives about the GDR needed to be matched to corresponding messages.	Four MC items, each featuring a message that needed to be assigned to the correct interview or none.
z	Associated quotes from the oral history interviews of the "Generation 1975" project with either the East or West interview partner.	Twelve MC items with quotes that needed to be matched with the interviewee's background.

The tasks required students to either deconstruct or reconstruct narratives using disciplinary criteria by Rüsen (1989, 2017). For example, in task format "z", students mostly needed to assess the empirical plausibility of statements to match the quotes of eyewitnesses to their background on the basis of an evaluation of the past information proposed. Task format k05 had students analyze magazine covers for the norms and values conveyed, targeting normative plausibility. In task format k06, students needed to derive and match narratives to the interviewees of interviews they read, assessing narrative plausibility. A high score means that the student applies the disciplinary criteria when dealing with historical narratives to a greater extent.

Based on the outcomes of the validation study, the items most significantly affected by revision originated from a task format "z", where students needed to analyze quotes from eyewitnesses (initially k = 24 items during validation, subsequently reduced to k = 12 items). Table 3 presents a sample item from the original version of the task and the corresponding revised version thereof. The original version's items exhibited negative item discrimination ($-1.72 \leq a \leq -1.50$; SE = 0.21, N = 353), which means students with higher methodological abilities were less likely to respond with the correct answer. The revised version of the item yielded a statistically significant positive item discrimination (a = 1.98, SE = 0.08, N = 2.279).

Table 3: Task format z with sample item z11 in its original and revised versions

Original Version (*N* = 12*2 items)	Refers to… (z111)		Prejudice experienced by… (z211)	
	Past	Present	Oneself	Others
Sometimes you get the impression that if you reveal yourself as an East German, you are still looked down upon by some West Germans.		X	X	

Revised Version (*N* = 12 items)	Statement made by interviewee from the…	
	East	West
Sometimes you get the impression that when you reveal your identity, you are still looked down upon by some people in the other Germany (z11)	X	

In the validation study, out of the 24 items, 15 displayed insufficient item properties (*a* < 0.5), six had correct response rates of less than 10%, and eight had over 9% missing responses. Upon closer examination of students' answers, it became evident that the task's structure (two items to be answered for a single quote) and the task's ambiguous instructions contributed to these results. Therefore, the task's instructions were completely overhauled, resulting in a 50% reduction in the number of MC items.

3.4 Test employment in the intervention study

The aforementioned intervention study was structured as a randomized controlled field trial, where teachers and their respective students were randomly assigned to either the intervention or control groups. The teachers taught the intervention or business as usual, depending on the group (in-person, video, or control). The ninth-grade students completed the tests. Data were collected between May and July 2022, both before and after the three-lesson unit (or during the same period for the control groups), with each test session lasting 90 min, conducted by test administrators. Both a pretest and a posttest were administered, using the same set of outcome measures. In addition to the newly developed tests, the outcome measures encompassed additional tests, including one designed to assess historical knowledge pertaining to the transformation period and former East Germany (newly developed) and three sample tasks drawn from the HiTCH inventory item pool (hereafter: HiTCH tasks), chosen in accordance with psychometric criteria (Trautwein et al., 2017). The three tasks, two targeting methodological competencies and one focusing on the subject matter, spanned a total of 27 items. Whereas the two HiTCH tasks on methodological competencies were very similar to the newly developed ones on these competencies, the HiTCH tasks did not specifically target epistemological principles. Additionally, inventories querying the Relevance of History, Expectancy and Value of History were applied. The RHMS (Van Straaten et al., 2018), spanning 24 items, measures students' experience of the relevance of history for their own identity (Building a personal identity, e.g., "History affects the way I behave"), their own historicity and how people in the past have dealt with enduring problems of human life (Understanding the human condition, e.g., "History enables us to imagine what the world might look like later on"), and the society they live in (Becoming a citizen, e.g., "History makes me understand the news better."). We assessed students' emotional and volitional effects based on the expectancy-value theory of Eccles et al. (1983), employing three items each on value components utility, cost, intrinsic, and attainment value and four items on students' beliefs about their own academic ability in the subject of history (i.e., expectancy; see Table A2 in the Appendix for further information). Students' characteristics and demographics were collected with the pretest. Table 4 presents descriptive statistics for the tests. For all other measures, see Tables A1 and A2 in the Appendix. The final sample from the classes of the 50 participating teachers included 1,301 students who completed the test at least once (at pretest or

posttest). The average age of the students was 15 years (SD = 0.63, n = 1,193), with 49% identifying as female and 94% indicating German as their primary language spoken at home.

3.5 Statistical analysis

The psychometric quality of the final inventory with k = 39 items was evaluated using data gathered from N = 1,301 ninth-grade students in the intervention study, following a procedure analogous to the one used in the validation study. In line with the preregistered plan for the intervention study, data from all students who participated in a minimum of one measurement occasion were included in the analysis. For one class, data from the pretest and posttest could not be matched; therefore, data from students at pretest were missing at posttest and vice versa, resulting in N = 1,317 cases in total. Statistical significance was set at the p < .05 level. Following another model assessment (RQ1), where only items with sufficient psychometric properties were included in the models using the final sets of items, their correlations with other inventories used in the intervention study were explored (RQ2). Lastly, regression models were estimated with the scores from both newly developed tests predicted by student characteristics (RQ3). We briefly describe these analyses in the upcoming paragraphs. See the Appendix for additional details and the statistical software code.

To address RQ1, the data from both the pretest and posttest were initially subjected to an analysis using the 2PL models. The students were given the same set of items at pretest and posttest. Implying that the item parameters are identical across different time points, we applied the so-called virtual persons approach: treating items that were answered by the same individual at pretest and posttest as answered by two distinct "virtual" participants who responded to the items (N = 2,634). This allows us to assess the items in a much larger sample, deriving more precise item parameter estimates (see De Ayala, 2009). Items that did not exhibit positive and statistically significant discrimination were removed from the set of items used in the final model. This was done because such items do not seem to be adequate indicators of the latent variable representing the construct and are of minor relevance regarding the reliability of point estimates for person ability (see De Ayala, 2009). Estimates were based on the remaining sets of items that met the inclusion criteria (a > 0 and p < .05). Point estimates of person ability were obtained as weighted likelihood estimates (WLEs; Warm, 1989). We report WLE person separation reliability (WLE PSR; Andrich, 1982), representing the proportion of variance in the WLEs that could not be attributed to measurement error, as an indicator for score reliability (RQ1). For RQ2 and RQ3, models were estimated in the structural equation modeling (SEM) framework, based on the scores obtained from the unidimensional 2PL models from RQ1. This allows us to relate the scores (and covariates) to each other and to account for measurement error (see B. Muthén, 2002)—both of which are very important here as the scores and other variables are confounded and all tests are subject to a certain degree of measurement error. We accounted for missing data and the structure of the data (students nested in teachers) by relying on cluster-robust full information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimation. To examine latent correlation patterns, a four-dimensional 2PL model with all ability tests (methodology, epistemology, factual knowledge, and the HiTCH tasks) was computed. In both instances, correlation coefficients were estimated with cluster-robust standard errors. In order to assess potential differences in the correlations between the variables, we added model constraints to our SEM (i.e., we constrained the correlations to be equal). Chi-square tests of model fit were employed to determine whether the respective model with equality constraint showed a statistically significant lower model fit than the unconstrained model. For RQ3, we conducted blockwise multiple regression analyses to investigate the variance within the newly developed test scores explained by various types of student characteristics. We did so in a stepwise approach, where the three blocks were added to the equation one after another. Student grades were added first (first block), followed by reading speed and cognitive skills (second block), and finally age, gender, and the number of books at home (third block). All variables, except for those that were dummy-coded, were z-standardized, which means that the beta weights represented the change in standard deviations in the outcome variables if the predictor were to change by one standard deviation while controlling for all other variables (Kelley & Holden, 2013).

4. Results

4.1 Missing responses

The percentage of item nonresponse for methodological test ranged from 1.0% to 7.1%. In the case of the epistemological test, the range was from 2.1% to 5.7%, with the highest rates occurring toward the end of the respective set.

4.2 Test statistics

No items were excluded from the epistemological test, resulting in the final set comprising 12 items. The item difficulties ranged from -3.69 to 2.24 (M = 0.25). The most challenging items had a correct answer rate of only 10%, whereas the easiest items were answered correctly by 96% of respondents (M = 44%). The WLE PSR was .56. In task k02, which contained abstract statements, only two out of five items exhibited desirable item discrimination values of $a \geq 0.8$ (cf. De Ayala, 2009). In task k03, which offered statements closely related to the intervention's subject, five of the seven items had such item discrimination values. Regarding the methodological test, one item (z07, a = -0.18) was excluded due to predefined criteria. Overall, tasks that contained less lengthy texts (k01, k06, and z) tended to contain items with better discrimination ability than tasks with lengthy texts (k05) or multi-panel comic strip (k04). The final model included the remaining 26 items, with item difficulties ranging from -3.14 to 2.77 (M = -1.01). The percentage of correct answers to these items ranged from 6% to 92% (M = 67%), and the WLE PSR was .70. For a summarized view, see Table 4. The distribution of the ability scores is presented in the Appendix.

Table 4: Item and scale statistics for the achievement tests from the intervention study

Tests	k of inventory		Item and scale statistics				
			Solved (in %)		Discrimination a		WLE
	Tasks	Items	Min	Max	Min	Max	PSR
Methodological test	5	26	6	92	0.22	1.97	.70
Epistomological test	2	12	10	96	0.23	1.66	.56
HiTCH tasks	3	27	36	93	0.36	1.57	.73
Test of factual knowledge	3	22	15	95	0.17	1.74	.68

Note. Estimates are based on 2PL models including the final item selection (2,273 ≤ n ≤ 2,279).

4.3 Best-Performing items

Selected by psychometric criteria, a few items in both inventories deserved a closer look. For each test, we present three items (see Table 6) that ranged from easy to hard and exhibited good discrimination ($0.8 \leq a \leq 2.5$; De Ayala, 2009). Test information can be optimized by selecting items with rather large discriminations and difficulties that align with the expected ability distribution of the target population (De Ayala, 2009), in our case, 9th graders. Larger test information corresponds to increased reliability of point estimates for person ability (e.g., WLE PSR). For the

methodological test, there was an interesting pattern. Except for the easy item, the other two dealt with how the caricature mocked a narrative, where the correct answer was that none of the caricatures conveyed the messages provided in k0105 and k0108.

4.4 Correlations with other measures

Correlations (all ps < .001) are depicted in Table 5 and refer to the association between the two ability tests in each case, while the remaining ones were controlled for. The association between the manifest ability scores from the two newly developed tests was relatively moderate (r = .38). Notably, the methodological test (0.56 ≤ r ≤ 0.57) exhibited stronger correlations with both the HiTCH tasks and the knowledge test than the epistemological test (0.31 ≤ r ≤ 0.38) did ($\chi2(1)$ = 57.079, Scaling Correction Factor (SCF) = 0.767, and $\chi2(1)$ = 88.943, SCF = 0.867, both p < .001). Correlations between the methodological test and the HiTCH tasks regarding factual knowledge were not statistically significantly different ($\chi2(1)$ = 2.084, SCF = 1.283, p = .149). Correlations between the new tests and motivational variables (see Table A3 in the Appendix) were generally positive and low (.15 ≤ r ≤ .36). Regarding the RHMS, both tests had the highest positive correlation with the subscale "becoming a citizen" (.29 ≤ r ≤ .36). Both newly developed tests demonstrated small positive correlations with the dimension of perceived low cost of history (e.g., "History lessons in school cost me a lot of energy", recoded to match the interpretation of the other scales). All correlations were statistically significant (p < .001).

Table 5: Correlations between the ability tests at posttest

	Epistemological test	Methodological test	HiTCH tasks
Methodological test	.38 (.55)		
HiTCH tasks	.38 (.54)	.57 (.79)	
Test of factual knowledge	.31 (.48)	.56 (.85)	.53 (.75)

Note. Correlation coefficients for manifest scores and latent variables (in parentheses) at posttest (n = 1,071) with robust standard errors. All coefficients were statistically significant (p < .001).

Table 6: Selection of the best items from both tests with difficulty level category

Test	Difficulty level	Item	*a*	*b*	Translated item as employed in the intervention study with the correct solution
Epistemological test	Hard	k0307	1.53	1.24	**The history of the GDR and divided Germany is still highly relevant today.** ☑ I agree because one can learn about today's conditions from the history of division. ☐ I disagree because the history of division does not help to explain current conditions. Knowledge about the past does not lead to a better understanding of the present. ☑ I agree because many contemporary societal conflicts today still have to do with or are justified by Germany's past. ☐ I disagree because one cannot solve today's problems with knowledge about the past.
	Medium	k0303	1.66	0.10	**In class, one should learn that there are many different but entirely justified perspectives on a historical event such as the German reunification.** ☐ I disagree because there is only one truth. ☑ I agree because, for example, East Germans have had different experiences than West Germans. ☐ I disagree because I believe that East and West German students of my age should think similarly about the German reunification. ☑ I agree because one's own view of history depends greatly on how, where, and when one grew up.
	Easy	k0203	1.14	-3.69	**One should consider various historical sources before forming a judgment.** ☐ I disagree because one usually has enough information from just one source to form a judgment. ☐ I disagree because different sources always report the same thing for the same event because everyone experienced the same thing. ☑ I agree because different sources can illuminate different aspects of an event.

Test	Difficulty level	Item	*a*	*b*	Central message	Caricature...	1	2	3	none
Methodological test	Hard	k0105	1.03	0.41	West Germans are appreciative of East Germans and acknowledge their life achievements.					X
	Medium	k0108	1.18	-0.19	In the GDR, there were good Spreewald pickles.					X

Test	Difficulty level	Item	*a*	*b*	Statement made by interviewee from the...	East	West
Methodological test	Easy	z11	1.97	-3.09	Sometimes you get the impression that when you reveal your identity, you are still looked down upon by some people in the other Germany.	X	

4.5 Prediction of ability scores

Table 7 provides an overview of the blockwise regression for both new tests (i.e., to what extent the score can be explained by students' grades, their basic cognitive abilities, and their background characteristics). Regarding magnitude, the strongest statistically significant predictors of both test scores were the students' grades in history and German (-0.260 ≤ β ≤ -0.095) and their cognitive ability (0.178 ≤ β ≤ 0.260). Moreover, the number of books at home predicted both scores (0.089 ≤ β ≤ 0.115), and reading speed predicted the methodological test score (β = 0.103).

Table 7: Blockwise regression on ability scores from newly developed tests at posttest

Dependent variable: tests on…		Epistemological test (1)			Methodological test (2)		
Blocks and predictors contained		β	SE	p	β	SE	p
I: Student achievement in the form of grades	History	-0.122**	0.045	.007	-0.260***	0.042	.000
	German	-0.148***	0.042	.000	-0.095*	0.043	.026
	Math	0.017	0.041	.685	0.030	0.033	.357
Variance explained							
(1) R² = 9%							
(2) R² = 16%							
II: Students' basic abilities	Reading speed	0.037	0.031	.236	0.103**	0.033	.002
	Cognitive ability	0.178***	0.037	.000	0.260***	0.036	.000
Variance explained							
(1) ΔR² = 4%							
(2) ΔR² = 9%							
III: Students' characteristics	Age	-0.050	0.039	.199	-0.031	0.036	.387
	Female[a]	0.074	0.075	.322	-0.092	0.059	.119
Variance explained	Diverse[a]	0.082	0.179	.649	0.180	0.214	.400
(1) ΔR² = 1%	Books	0.089**	0.027	.001	0.115***	0.025	.000
(2) ΔR² = 2%							

Note. Standardized regression coefficients from multiple regression analyses containing all predictor variables (*n* = 1,315), including robust standard error estimation. The percentage of explained variance refers to the variance that is explained by adding variables from each respective block.

[a]Gender was dummy coded for the three categories (female, male, and diverse).

Overall, the model explained 26% of the variance on the methodological test and 14% on the epistemological test. Because the model was estimated based on manifest scores, the outcome included measurement error that could not be explained by any given predictor. Taking the reliability of the scores into consideration, the model explained 37% of the "true score" variance on the methodological test and 25% on the epistemological test.

5. Discussion

In this study, we empirically tested newly developed standardized items to measure aspects of historical thinking with over 1,600 students. One test aimed to capture students' methodological competencies (i.e., their abilities to either deconstruct or reconstruct historical narratives using disciplinary methods), and the other test assessed students' epistemological understanding (i.e., their views on the nature and justification of historical knowledge). In Step 1, we conducted a validation study with 354 students to test the initial set of 58 items. In Step 2, the finalized tests with 12 CMC items on epistemological understanding and 27 MC and CMC items on methodological competencies were employed in an intervention study on transformation time involving 1,301 students. We wanted the test to be engaging for the students, leading them to respond to all items. Our main research questions concerned the psychometric performance and reliability of the tests (RQ1) and aspects of validity: testing a priori assumptions about the correlation of the tests with other measures of student ability (RQ2) and the extent to which student background characteristics predict test scores (RQ3).

Results from this large-scale study demonstrate the strengths of both, the methodological test and the epistemological test. First, we attribute the high response rates in both tests (1.0% to 7.1% item nonresponse) to their context, German post-1990 transformation, and the materials used, as we believe that students related to them. Moreover, the items' abilities to distinguish between students in terms of the competencies based on their performance met the predefined criteria for 38 items, with only one item excluded due to insufficient item discrimination. Both tests showed significant, mostly low, positive correlations with the value that students attribute to the subject of history and their self-concept in history. This also applies to the students' perceived relevance of history, where the highest correlations were obtained for the "Becoming citizen" scale. As it included a self-assessment of their approach to forming opinions and justifying judgments, this could be related to aspects in both, the methodological test and the epistemological test. Both tests also exhibited similar performance when regressed on students' performance and characteristics. Concerning school grades, both the history and German grades predicted the test scores, whereas math grades did not. Whereas basic cognitive abilities appeared to be a strong predictor of both test scores, reading speed only predicted the methodological test score. To a lesser extent, the number of books at home also predicted the results of both tests.

Differences between the tests were observed in the item difficulties, which appeared to be higher on the epistemological test than on the methodological test, mirroring the higher rate of CMC items on the epistemological test compared with the methodological one. The tests also differed in measurement precision, with the epistemological one exhibiting low reliability, whereas acceptable values were obtained for the test on methodological competencies. Moreover, correlational patterns suggested that constructs measured in the small selection of items from the HiTCH test were more strongly related to the methodological test than the epistemological one. The relationships of the methodological test and the HiTCH tasks with other tests were similar, while the epistemological test showed weaker correlations with both factual knowledge and the HiTCH tasks. The 27 items selected from the HiTCH test for this study leaned more toward assessing methodological competencies than epistemological principles. Therefore, it was not surprising that the correlation between the HiTCH tasks and the epistemological test was rather weak.

Overall, both tests faced the challenging goal of adequately representing complex constructs, incorporating the historical context without overly influencing the assessment, and limiting the extent to which the test assesses reading skills. In the following paragraphs, we examine the results of both tests with regard to these challenges.

The methodological test adopted a promising approach in its tasks, primarily focusing on one aspect of disciplinary criteria to approach narratives from a specific methodological perspective. It individually targeted the students' methodological competencies regarding normative, narrative, or empirical plausibility. The complexity of methodological competencies was represented by dividing them into small portions that the students had to address in the tasks. Correlational patterns indicated that there was still a considerable relationship with factual knowledge, a pattern also observed for the HiTCH tasks (that worked with historical contexts other than that of the intervention in which factual knowledge was tested). Regarding reliability, the test exhibited acceptable values with potential for improvement. Positive evidence of the validity of the construct was provided by the moderate correlation with the HiTCH tasks, considering

the overlap in methodological tasks. Furthermore, history grades and cognitive ability emerged as the strongest predictors of the test score, whereas reading and text comprehension skills played subordinate roles. The items that performed well in terms of item discrimination in the methodological test were mostly those in which non-complex material (i.e., shorter texts or single-panel visuals) had to be analyzed. Additionally, in two of the best-performing items, the correct solution was not to select any of the given materials (i.e., the caricatures).

Assessing epistemological understanding introduced additional challenges, underscoring that it is challenging to adequately represent the complexity of the construct (Stoel et al., 2017). In tackling these challenges, the test aimed to elicit specific conceptions from students, such as distinguishing between the past and history, addressing the high level of abstraction by contextualizing items in concrete topics for most of the items. Results indicated better performance for items containing more concrete topics compared with abstract ones. In comparison with the methodological test, weaker correlations with factual knowledge were obtained, which could mean that the historical context in the statements was not overly influential. However, problems were noted in terms of psychometric quality, especially the low reliability. Furthermore, the final model predicting the test scores, incorporating grades, reading speed, cognitive ability, and students' characteristics could account for only one quarter of the true score variance, leaving much of the variance unexplained. One reason could be that students' performance in specific scenarios may be influenced not only by their overall epistemic beliefs but also by the interplay of controversial topics like the German post-1990 transformation and their family background. In their investigation of another controversial topic, Iordanou et al. (2020) found differences in students' epistemological processing based on the side taken by a historical account: Less mature epistemic beliefs led students to write summaries that only considered the perspective of their own ethnic group.

Considering the notable correlation of the epistemological test with students' self-reported ratings of the relevance of history, the test could be refined further by aligning it with Wiley et al.'s (2020) recommendations for a more direct approach. They proposed that items containing more self-reports about students' explicit epistemic beliefs measure epistemic understanding rather indirectly and require students to have already formed an epistemological understanding. Students' epistemological understanding would get measured more directly by way of, for example, having them act on concrete scenarios (VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016; Wiley et al., 2020). Students' actions (i.e., how they solve the task) should expose how they view and justify their knowledge (VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016) rather than a measure based mainly on self-reported explicit epistemic ideas (Wiley et al., 2020). In our measure, students were primarily confronted with concrete claims but had only a very limited number of response options. Furthermore, there was no impact from their decision described (e.g., that they would have to justify the claim in front of other people). If one decides to keep the items closed-ended, options could still be expanded, or scenarios could be created that resemble natural situations, such as a discussion among five friends on the way home from school, prompting students to select the argument they would contribute to the conversation.

Keeping in mind the challenges that came with the competencies' complexity, the strengths of both tests lay in specifically targeting the students' deeper thinking operations one at a time when tapping into aspects of their methodological competencies and epistemological understanding. Considering the results of this study, task formats and items that worked well in both newly developed tests should therefore be reassessed given their strengths: The students showed high response rates in the newly developed items, which are contextually embedded in a topic that remains highly relevant today: the German post-1990 transformation. Moreover, the psychometric properties of the items were investigated based on IRT with a large sample. Our (empirical) results regarding the difficulty of the items and their ability to differentiate between students with different competencies provide clear indications of which of the items and task formats have potential for further development. The task materials and assignments can contribute to and diversify existing standardized tests on specific aspects of these competencies or could each be extended on more aspects that they currently underrepresent. Both could contribute to forming more psychometrically sound standardized tests that are able to measure these complex competencies adequately in the future.

The complex process of historical thinking is neither part of natural psychological development nor easy to learn (Wineburg, 2010). However, it is essential for a democracy to provide students (citizens) with the tools to navigate the challenges the present and future hold and enable them to adequately deal with the multiple perspectives they will encounter (Körber & Lenz, 2014). With history education being a central subject for the cultivation of these his-

torical competencies, it is paramount to empirically investigate what goes on in the classroom. Large-scale interventions, such as the outlined study employing eyewitnesses' perspectives, are equipped to assess how and whether students benefit from the lesson units and improve their historical thinking. Considering the gap in valid and robust assessments of historical competencies that these settings and, ultimately, research on students' historical learning need (Körber & Meyer-Hamme, 2015), the present study on newly developed standardized measures attempted to present items that can contribute to closing this gap in the long run.

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ORCID iD

Katharina Totter [iD] https://orcid.org/0009-0004-6078-5142

Wolfgang Wagner [iD] https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9781-4630

Christiane Bertram [iD] https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4520-8692

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Appendix

A1. Additional tables and figures

Table A1: Item and scale statistics for sample demographics and student characteristics at pretest

Variable	Additional information	Descriptives	N
Grade History		$M = 2.37, SD = 0.93$	1,085
Grade German	Received in the last school year, ranging from 1 (very good) to 6 (insufficient), with 7 (I don't know) set to missing	$M = 2.46, SD = 0.83$	1,090
Grade Math		$M = 2.57, SD = 1.08$	1,092
Cognitive ability	KFT 5-12+R (Heller & Perleth, 2000). Visual (figurative) thinking, based on 2PL model deriving ability scores for each student analogous to all other 2PL models described in this paper	$M = -0.04, SD = 1.01$	1,189
Reading speed	SLS-A1/SLS-A2 (Auer et al., 2005). Reading and distinguishing between meaningful and nonsensical sentences, sum score	$M = 46.21, SD = 9.17$	1,193
Age	Answered in open format	$M = 14.82, SD = 0.63$	1,193
Number of books at home	See, e.g., Goßmann (2018). Ranging from 1 to 6 (< 11, 11-25, 26-100,101-200, 201-500, > 500)	$M = 4.67, SD = 1.33$	1,157
Gender	Closed-response format	49.3% female, 48.7% male, 2.0% diverse	1,182

Note. Saturated SEM with FIML and manifest variables for RQ3 (all possible correlations estimated) taking the cluster structure of the data into account (TYPE=Complex) in Mplus ($n = 1,315$).

```
(…)
MISSING=.;
CLUSTER=idgleh;
USEV = t3mewle, t3epwle, t1d01, t1d05, t1v0301, t1v0302, t1v0303, t1fwle,
t1l, female, divers;
   DEFINE:
        IF (t1d03 EQ 1) THEN female = 1;
        IF (t1d03 EQ 2) THEN female = 0;
        IF (t1d03 EQ 3) THEN female = 0;
        IF (t1d03 EQ 3) THEN divers = 1;
        IF (t1d03 EQ 2) THEN divers = 0;
        IF (t1d03 EQ 1) THEN divers = 0;
   ANALYSIS:
       TYPE=COMPLEX;
   MODEL:
t3mewle t3epwle t1d01 t1d05 t1v0301 t1v0302 t1v0303 t1fwle t1l female
divers WITH
t3mewle t3epwle t1d01 t1d05 t1v0301 t1v0302 t1v0303 t1fwle t1l female
divers
   OUTPUT: SAMPSTAT STANDARDIZED;
```

Mplus code for table A1

Table A2 : Descriptive statistics for the subscales relevance of history and expectancy and value of history

Scale outcome measures			Short description	N_{items}	M	SD	α[a]
Relevance of history (RHMS, translated from Van Straaten et al., 2018)	Building identity		Understanding the impact of history on a student's life and today's society as well as their human existence.	7	2.24	0.56	.78
	Understanding the human condition			5	2.55	0.53	.75
	Becoming a citizen			12	2.88	0.44	.82
Expectancy- value beliefs in the subject of history[b]	Value	Attainment value	Assessment of emotional and volitional effects based on Eccles et al. (1983) expectancy-value theory.	3	2.68	0.72	.76
		Utility		3	2.56	0.66	.77
		Low cost		3	2.82	0.68	.81
		Intrinsic value		3	2.87	0.79	.94
Expectancy (Self-concept)				4	2.84	0.71	.90

Note. Responses from 1 (does not apply at all) to 4 (fully applies). Means and standard deviations based on saturated SEM with FIML and manifest variables of RQ2 (all possible correlations estimated) taking the cluster-structure of the data into account (TYPE=Complex) in Mplus (n = 1,071).

a Cronbach's α based on combined pretest and posttest data using the virtual person approach (2,193 ≤ n ≤ 2,247).

b Shortened and adapted for the subject of history from Gaspard et al. (2015) & Gaspard et al. (2019).

Table A3: Correlation coefficients with motivational variables at posttest

		Epistemological test	Methodological test
Relevance of History	Building identity	.21	.15
	Human condition	.25	.19
	Becoming a citizen	.36	.29
Motivation (Value)	Attainment value	.24	.23
	Utility	.21	.17
	Intrinsic value	.21	.26
	Low cost	.20	.23
(Expectancy)	Self-concept	.21	.32

Note. All correlation coefficients estimated with robust standard errors were statistically significant ($p < .001$), $n = 1,071$. For the Mplus code, see the section below.
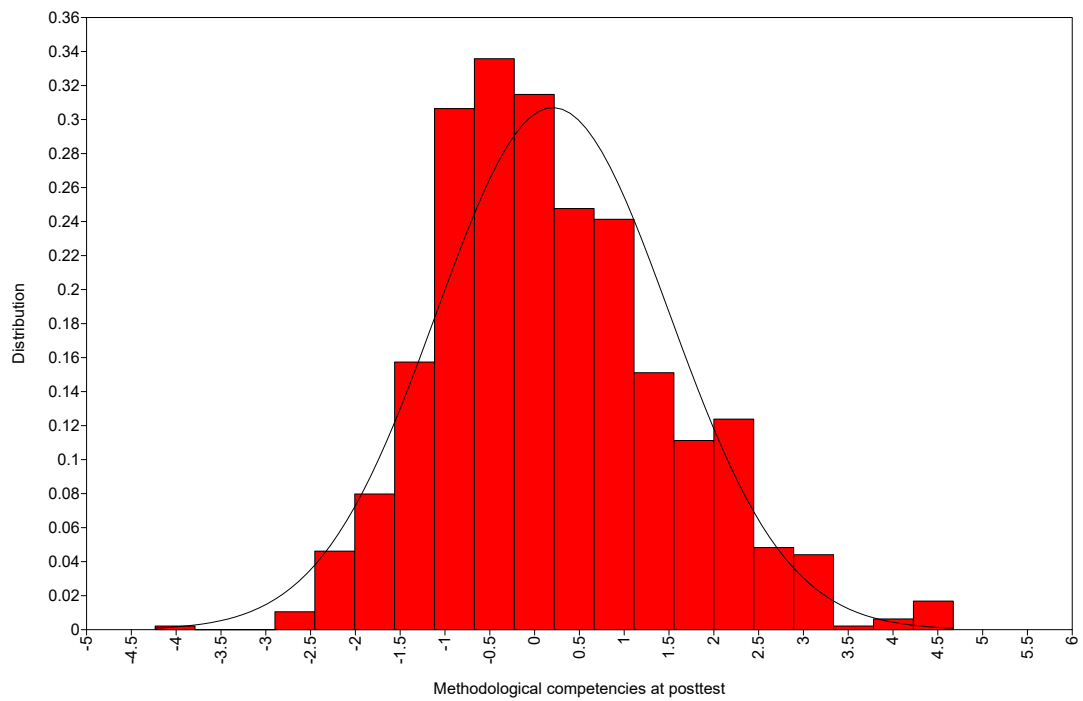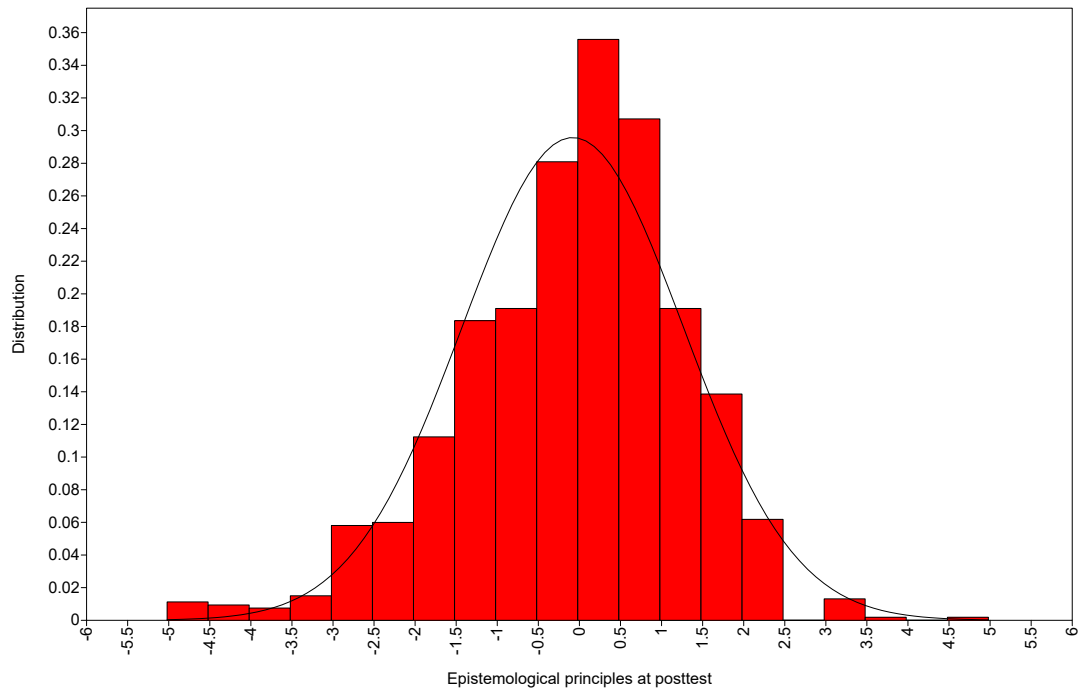
Figure A1: Distribution of point estimates of person ability, obtained as weighted likelihood estimates in the intervention sample at posttest

Note. Graphic derived from Mplus via TYPE = PLOT2 (1,068 ≤ n ≤ 1,070).

A2. Statistical analysis description with abbreviated statistical software code

For the validation study, answers to all items were examined in one 2PL model. The model was computed with "tam.mml.2pl" with the default settings, including Quasi Monte Carlo integration (González et al., 2006; Pan & Thompson, 2007), and the maximization steps (M-steps) for item parameter estimation were set to 10. The calculations were performed with R (v4.3.0, R Core Team, 2023) along with the tam package (version 4.1-4, Robitzsch et al., 2022).

```
# Multidimensional Item Response Model in TAM
# IRT Model: 2PL
TAM::tam.mml.2pl(resp = d[, hkompall], control = list(QMC = TRUE, MSteps
= 10, seed = 12345,
progress = FALSE))
```

R code for the 2PL model in the validation study

To compute descriptives for the scales Relevance of History, Expectancy and Value of History, results were computed with the R-package "psych" (version 2.3.3, Revelle, 2022). Mean scores were computed across the respective set of items for each subscale for all cases with valid answers for at least two thirds of the items from the respective set (otherwise the mean score was set to missing). Cronbach's alpha was computed based on covariances of subscales.

```
# Reliability analysis
psych::alpha(x = dt[, vector])
```

R code for scale assessment (sample)

For RQ1, the models were computed using "tam.mml.2pl" with the default settings, including Quasi Monte Carlo integration (González et al., 2006; Pan & Thompson, 2007), and the maximization steps (M-steps) for item parameter estimation were set to 10. The calculations were performed with R (v4.3.0, R Core Team, 2023) along with the "tam" package (version 4.1-4, Robitzsch et al., 2022).

```
# Multidimensional Item Response Model in TAM
# IRT Model: 2PL
# Methodological Test
TAM::tam.mml.2pl(resp = dt[, vec_menew], pid = dt$idlv1,
control = list(QMC = TRUE, MSteps = 10, seed = 12345, progress = FALSE))
# Multidimensional Item Response Model in TAM
# IRT Model: 2PL
# Epistemological Test
TAM::tam.mml.2pl(resp = dt[, vec_ep], pid = dt$idlv1, control = list(QMC
= TRUE, MSteps = 10, seed = 12345, progress = FALSE))
```

R code for the methodological and epistemological tests' models

To investigate RQ2 and RQ3, all (regression) models were computed in Mplus (version 8.6, L. K. Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017) with person ability scores, accounting for the residual covariances between all variables. The issue of missing data was addressed with full information maximum likelihood estimation (FIML; Enders & Bandalos, 2001; L. K. Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017). Given the clustered structure of the data (students nested within teachers), robust maximum likelihood estimation was employed, incorporating a design-based correction (using the command Type=COMPLEX) to ensure accurate standard error estimates and account for the cluster sampling design.

```
INPUT INSTRUCTIONS
(…)
! t3mwle refers to methodological test
! t3epwle refers to epistemological test
```

```
! other variable names refer to subscales in Relevance of History, Value
and
! Expectancy of History
CLUSTER=idgleh;
(…)
  ANALYSIS:
      TYPE=COMPLEX;
  MODEL:
      t3mewle WITH
      t3iin t3iwi t3inu t3ico t3iex t3ride t3rhum t3rcit t3hiwle t3wwle
t3epwle;
      t3epwle WITH
      t3iin t3iwi t3inu t3ico t3iex t3ride t3rhum t3rcit t3hiwle t3wwle
t3mewle;
      t3iin t3iwi t3inu t3ico t3iex t3ride t3rhum t3rcit t3hiwle t3wwle
WITH
      t3iin t3iwi t3inu t3ico t3iex t3ride t3rhum t3rcit t3hiwle t3wwle;
  OUTPUT: SAMPSTAT STANDARDIZED;
```

Mplus code for manifest correlation model

To examine latent correlation patterns, a multidimensional 2PL model was computed in which factor variances were fixed to 1 and all factor loadings (i.e., item discriminations) were freely estimated for each ability test (methodology, epistemology, factual knowledge, and HiTCH tasks).

```
(…)
MISSING=.;
      CLUSTER=idgleh;(…);
      CATEGORICAL ARE (…);
  ANALYSIS:
      TYPE=COMPLEX;
      ESTIMATOR = MLR;
      INTEGRATION = MONTECARLO;
  MODEL:
      hitch by  t3h0101* t3h0102 (…);
          hitch@1;
      meth by t3k0101* t3k0102 (…);
          meth@1;
      epis by t3k0202* t3k0203 (…);
          epis@1;
      wisse by t3w0101* t3w0102 (…);
          wisse@1;
      meth WITH hitch epis wisse;
  OUTPUT: SAMPSTAT STANDARDIZED;
```

Mplus code for latent correlation model

In order to compare correlations, each model constraint was added to the model separately. For technical reasons in Mplus, the constraint sets the difference between two correlation coefficients to zero which is equivalent to constraining both coefficients to be equal.

```
MODEL:
(…)
  ! Check if Correlations are unequal
  t3mewle(vary);
  t3epwle(varz);
  t3wwle(varx);
  t3wwle WITH t3mewle(covxy);
  t3wwle WITH t3epwle(covxz);
```

```
    MODEL CONSTRAINT:

      0 = covxy/sqrt(varx*vary) - covxz/sqrt(varx*varz);
```

Mplus code for comparing correlations via Model Constraint (sample)

Regarding RQ3, all variables, except for those that were dummy-coded, were *z*-standardized be-
forehand. Means and standard deviations were obtained by running a saturated SEM with FIML
and the manifest variables of RQ3 (all possible correlations estimated) taking the cluster-struc-
ture of the data into account (TYPE=Complex) in Mplus. Gender was dummy-coded with female
= 1 if gender was reported as female, otherwise 0, and diverse = 1 if gender was reported as di-
verse, otherwise 0. Therefore, the reference category was male (if both dummys = 0).

```
(…)
! t3mwle refers to methodological test
! t3epwle refers to epistemological test
! t1v0301..3 refer to the grades reported by the students
! t1d01 refers to age
! t1d03 refers to gender
! t1d05 refers to number of books
! t1fwle refers to the ability test score in cognitive ability
! t1l refer to the test score in Reading Speed
        MISSING=.;
      CLUSTER=idgleh;

  DEFINE:
    female = _MISSING;
    divers = _MISSING;
    IF (t1d03 EQ 1) THEN female = 1;
    IF (t1d03 EQ 2) THEN female = 0;
    IF (t1d03 EQ 3) THEN female = 0;
    IF (t1d03 EQ 3) THEN divers = 1;
    IF (t1d03 EQ 2) THEN divers = 0;
    IF (t1d03 EQ 1) THEN divers = 0;

  T3MEWLEs = (T3MEWLE-0.180)/SQRT(1.693);
  T3EPWLEs = (T3EPWLE+0.096)/SQRT(1.822);
  T1V0301s = (T1V0301-2.366)/SQRT(0.867);
  T1V0302s = (T1V0302-2.463)/SQRT(0.691);
  T1V0303s = (T1V0303-2.571)/SQRT(1.155);
  T1D01s   = (T1D01-14.824)/SQRT(0.392);
  T1D05s   = (T1D05-4.668)/SQRT(1.767);
  T1FWLEs  = (T1FWLE+0.040)/SQRT(1.026);
  T1Ls     = (T1L-46.210)/SQRT(83.986);
  ANALYSIS:
      TYPE=COMPLEX;
  MODEL:
    t1v0301s t1v0302s t1v0303s t1fwles t1ls t1d01s female divers t1d05s
WITH
    t1v0301s t1v0302s t1v0303s t1fwles t1ls t1d01s female divers t1d05s;
    t3mewles t3epwles ON
    t1v0301s t1v0302s t1v0303s t1fwles t1ls t1d01s female divers t1d05s;
    t3mewles t3epwles WITH
    t3mewles t3epwles;
  OUTPUT: SAMPSTAT STANDARDIZED;
```

Mplus code for the model with all three blocks as a sample

A3. Test used in the intervention study (Original German version and translated version in English)

Note: Original version of the test used in the intervention study (without external material), labeled with ***item names*** and codes for correct answers (**1**) and incorrect answers (**0**). Sources of the graphical materials (M...) are included in the workbook, attached after the test.

Aufgabe k01

Hier siehst du drei Karikaturen. Schau sie dir bitte an und bearbeite dann die Aufgaben dazu.
Die Karikaturen kannst du auch vergrößert und in Farbe im Materialheft unter M1-M3 auf den Seiten 1-3 finden.

Karikatur 1 / M1 (aus dem Jahr 1998)

Karikatur 2 / M2 (aus dem Jahr 2020)

Anmerkung zu Karikatur 2:
In dieser Karikatur geht es um die "Treuhandanstalt". Die Treuhandanstalt hatte die Aufgabe, die DDR-Wirtschaft "konkurrenzfähig" zu machen. Dabei gingen viele Arbeitsplätze im Osten verloren. Bis heute wird der Treuhandanstalt vorgeworfen, manche Ost-Firmen, wie die Leuna-Werke oder Carl Zeiss Jena, regelrecht "verscherbelt" (also viel zu günstig verkauft zu haben) zu haben.

Karikatur 3 / M3 (aus dem Jahr 2019)

Task k01

Here you see three caricatures. Please take a look at them and then complete the tasks related to them.
You can also view the caricatures enlarged and in color in the workbook under M1-M3 on pages 1-3.

Caricature 1 / M1 (year 1998)

Caricature 2 / M2 (year 2020)

Note on caricature 2:
This caricature is about the "Treuhandanstalt" (Trust Agency).
The Treuhandanstalt had the task of making the East German economy "competitive". In the process, many jobs in the East were lost. To this day, the Treuhandanstalt is accused of having "sold off" some East German companies, such as Leuna Works or Carl Zeiss Jena, at ridiculously low prices.

Caricature 3 / M3 (year 2019):

Karikaturen wollen etwas hervorheben und kritisieren; sie wollen eine Art Botschaft vermitteln. *Bitte entscheide dich für die Karikatur, die am besten zu der zentralen Botschaft passt.*

Bitte kreuze an, welche der drei Karikaturen die jeweilige Aussage als zentrale Botschaft enthält.

Item	Zentrale Botschaft	Karikatur 1	Karikatur 2	Karikatur 3	keine der Karikaturen
k0101	Es ist (noch) nicht wieder zusammengewachsen, was zusammengehört.	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**
k0102	Die DDR war ein Unrechtsstaat.	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**
k0103	Bei der Treuhandanstalt wurden DDR-Betriebe zu billig verkauft.	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**
k0105	Westdeutsche sind wertschätzend gegenüber Ostdeutschen und erkennen deren Lebensleistung an.	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**
k0106	In der DDR konnte man billig Lebensmittel einkaufen.	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**
k0107	Westdeutsche nehmen Ostdeutsche oft immer noch nicht ernst.	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**
k0108	In der DDR gab es gute Spreewaldgurken.	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**
k0109	Manche Westdeutsche haben sich nach der Wende in der früheren DDR bereichert.	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**

Caricatures aim to highlight and criticize something; they intend to convey a kind of message. Please choose the cartoon that is best aligned with the central message.

Please check which of the three caricatures contains the respective statement as the central message.

Item	Central message	Caricature 1	Caricature 2	Caricature 3	None of the Caricatures
k0101	It (still) hasn't grown back together, what belongs together.	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**
k0102	The GDR (German Democratic Republic) was an unjust state.	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**
k0103	At the Treuhandanstalt, GDR companies were sold too cheaply.	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**
k0105	West Germans are appreciative of East Germans and acknowledge their life achievements.	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**
k0106	In the GDR, one could buy groceries inexpensively.	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**
k0107	West Germans still often don't take East Germans seriously.	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**
k0108	In the GDR, there were good Spreewald pickles.	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**
k0109	Some West Germans enriched themselves in the former GDR after the reunification.	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**

Aufgabe k04

Schaue dir bitte den folgenden Comic an und bearbeite danach die Aufgaben dazu.
Den Comic kannst du auch vergrößert und in Farbe im Materialheft unter M4 auf Seite 4 finden.

Comic / M4

k04		Welche Botschaft will der Comic vermitteln?
		Mehrere Möglichkeiten können richtig sein.
k041	0	☐ Der Comic kritisiert die Willenlosigkeit der Ostdeutschen.
k042	1	☐ Der Comic sagt etwas über die Vorurteile der Westdeutschen aus.
k043	0	☐ Der Comic sagt aus, dass die Menschen in den DDR gefügig waren.
k044	0	☐ Der Comic macht sich über die Vorstellungen von Jugendlichen damals lustig.
k045	1	☐ Der Comic regt dazu an, sich mit den eigenen Vorstellungen über die DDR zu beschäftigen.

Task k04

Please take a look at the following comic and then complete the tasks related to it. You can also view the comic enlarged and in color in the workbook under M4 on page 4.

Comic / M4

k04		What message is the comic trying to convey?
		Multiple options may be correct.
k041	0	☐ The comic criticizes the passivity of East Germans.
k042	1	☐ The comic reflects the prejudices of West Germans.
k043	0	☐ The comic suggests that people in the GDR were compliant.
k044	0	☐ The comic mocks the ideas of young people at that time.
k045	1	☐ The comic encourages reflecting on one's own perceptions of the GDR.

Lies dir zuerst die Hintergrundinformationen durch und beantworte dann die Frage.

1) Im August 2018 kam es auf einer Demonstration der Pegida (= Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes, eine rechtsextreme Organisation) anlässlich des Besuchs der Kanzlerin Angela Merkel in Dresden zu einer Auseinandersetzung zwischen einem Teilnehmer und dem Kamerateam des Magazins "Frontal 21".

Der Mann, der einen **Anglerhut in Schwarz-Rot-Gold** trug, warf dem Kamerateam vor, eine "Straftat" zu begehen, als sie ihn filmten – eine Anschuldigung, die nicht stimmte, insbesondere, da der Mann selbst sich der Kamera aus eigenem Antrieb näherte. Später stellte sich heraus, dass der Mann ein Beamter des Landeskriminalamts war. Der Fall wurde in den Medien viel diskutiert und der Mann wurde als "**Hutbürger**" bekannt. Er wurde oft als Sinnbild für rechte Strömungen in Ostdeutschland herangezogen.

Im Jahr 2019 veröffentlichte der SPIEGEL dann ein Heft mit einem solchen Anglerhut Cover. Daraufhin kam es zu einem öffentlichen Aufschrei in den sozialen Medien, besonders von Ostdeutschen, die sich empörten.

Das Cover kannst du auch vergrößert und in Farbe im Materialheft unter M5 auf Seite 5 finden.

<u>M5</u>
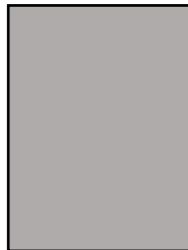
k0501 Warum wurde das Spiegel-Cover mit dem Anglerhut von vielen als provokativ empfunden?

Mehrere Möglichkeiten können richtig sein.

k05011 1 ☐ Weil Ostdeutschen das Gefühl vermittelt wird, dass Westdeutsche auf sie herabblicken.

k05012 1 ☐ Weil nahegelegt wird, dass Ostdeutsche der Pegida nahestehen und die AfD wählen.

k05013 0 ☐ Weil hier von männlichen Ostdeutschen (auf dem Spiegel Cover steht "der Ossi") die Rede ist.

k05014 1 ☐ Weil viele Ostdeutsche das Gefühl hatten, dass Westdeutsche immer nur in Klischees über Ostdeutschland denken.

k05015 1 ☐ Weil nahegelegt wird, dass Ostdeutsche ein anderes Demokratieverständnis als Westdeutsche haben.

First, read the background information and then answer the question.

1) In August 2018, during a Pegida demonstration (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West, a far-right organization) on the occasion of Chancellor Angela Merkel's visit to Dresden, there was a confrontation between a participant and the camera team from the magazine Frontal 21.

The man, wearing a **fishing hat in black, red, and gold**, accused the camera team of committing a "crime" by filming him — an accusation that was untrue, especially since the man himself approached the camera voluntarily. It later turned out that the man was an officer of the State Criminal Police Office. The case was widely discussed in the media, and the man became known as the "**Hutbürger**". The person was often used as a symbol for right-wing currents in East Germany.

In 2019, DER SPIEGEL then published an issue with a cover featuring such a fishing hat. This led to a public outcry on social media, especially from East Germans who were outraged.

You can also find the enlarged and color version of the cover in the workbook under M5 on page 5.

<u>M5</u>

k0501 Why was the Spiegel cover with the fishing hat perceived as provocative by many?

Multiple options may be correct.

k05011 1 ☐ Because it conveys the feeling to East Germans that West Germans look down on them.

k05012 1 ☐ Because it suggests that East Germans are close to Pegida and vote for the AfD.

k05013 0 ☐ Because it refers to male East Germans (the Spiegel cover says "der Ossi", male version).

k05014 1 ☐ Because many East Germans felt that West Germans always think in stereotypes about East Germany.

k05015 1 ☐ Because it suggests that East Germans have a different understanding of democracy than West Germans.

2) Im Jahr 2015, also vier Jahre zuvor, veröffentlichte DER SPIEGEL dieses Cover. *Das Cover kannst du auch vergrößert und in Farbe im Materialheft unter M6 auf Seite 5 finden.*

<u>M6</u>

k0502   Auch hier wird pauschalisierend geurteilt, diesmal über die Bayern. Doch damals gab es keinen Aufschrei. Warum wurde dieses Spiegel-Cover im Jahr 2015 nicht als provokativ empfunden?

Mehrere Möglichkeiten können richtig sein.

k05021   **0** ☐ Weil die Menschen in Bayern nicht so empfindlich sind wie die Ostdeutschen.

k05022   **1** ☐ Weil die Bayern zwar auch mit Vorurteilen zu kämpfen haben, diese aber oft nicht so negativ sind.

k05023   **0** ☐ Weil die abgebildeten Bayern repräsentative Kopfbedeckungen tragen (z.B. eine Krone).

k05024   **1** ☐ Weil die hier angesprochenen Ansichten den Bayern gegenüber auch positive Aspekte haben.

k05025   **0** ☐ Weil hier sowohl männliche als auch weibliche Bayern angesprochen wurden.

k05026   **1** ☐ Weil Bayern vielfältig und reich an Kultur dargestellt wird, mit Merkmalen, auf die sie auch stolz sind.

2) In the year 2015, four years earlier, DER SPIEGEL published this cover. *You can also view the enlarged and color version of the cover in the workbook under M6 on page 5.*

<u>M6</u>

k0502   Here, too, judgments are made in a generalizing way, this time about Bavarians. However, there was no outcry back then. Why was this Spiegel cover in 2015 not perceived as provocative?

Multiple options may be correct.

k05021   **0** ☐ Because people in Bavaria are not as sensitive as East Germans.

k05022   **1** ☐ Because Bavarians do face prejudices, but these are often not as negative.

k05023   **0** ☐ Because the depicted Bavarians wear representative headgear (e.g., a crown).

k05024   **1** ☐ Because the views addressed here also convey positive aspects of Bavarians.

k05025   **0** ☐ Because both male and female Bavarians are addressed.

k05026   **1** ☐ Because Bavaria is depicted as diverse and rich in culture, with characteristics they are proud of.

Im Folgenden wirst du zwei kurze Texte von Menschen lesen, die in der DDR gelebt haben und ihre Meinung über die DDR und die Wiedervereinigung Deutschlands sagen. Lies dir bitte zuerst die beiden Texte durch und beantworte danach die Fragen.

Ilko-Sascha Kowalzcuk, geboren am 4. April 1967 in Berlin-Friedrichshagen (d.h. in Ostberlin), war beim Mauerfall 22 Jahre alt. Herr Kowalzcuk gab das Interview im Jahr 2010; damals war er Projektleiter bei der Behörde zur Verwaltung der Stasi-Akten in Berlin:

<

Auszüge aus einem Interview von Kai Pfundt mit Ilko-Sascha Kowalzcuk auf den Seiten 78 und 79 enthalten Antworten auf die erste, vierte, sechste und siebte Frage.

Quelle: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung/bpb (2011). Geschichte der DDR. *Informationen Zur Politischen Bildung, 312*(3).

>

Simone Fall, eine 1939 geborene Rostockerin (d.h. zum Zeitpunkt des Mauerfalls 50 Jahre alt), die seit 1965 auf einer Werft gearbeitet hat, berichtete im Jahr 2009:

<

Auszüge aus dem Interview von Joachim Gebhardt und Wolfgang Hammer mit Simone Fall am 12.01.2009 auf Seite 36 sind von Zeile 15 bis 23, 30 bis 34, 35 bis 38 und 47 bis 53.

Quelle: Gebhardt, J. & Hammer, W. (2009). LebensWENDEn: "Es war nicht alles schlecht!" – "Es war nicht alles gut" (UE Sek I/Sek II). *Praxis Geschichte*, 5, 32–37.

>

Below, you will read two brief texts from individuals who lived in the GDR, expressing their opinions on the GDR and the reunification of Germany. Please first read the two texts and then answer the questions.

Ilko-Sascha Kowalzcuk, born on April 4, 1967, in Berlin-Friedrichshagen (i.e., in East Berlin), was 22 years old when the Berlin Wall fell. Mr. Kowalzcuk gave the interview in 2010; at that time, he was a project manager at the agency responsible for managing Stasi files in Berlin:

<

Excerpts from an interview by Kai Pfundt with Ilko-Sascha Kowalzcuk on pages 78 and 79 include responses to the First, Fourth, Sixth, and Seventh Question.

Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung/bpb (2011). Geschichte der DDR. *Informationen Zur Politischen Bildung, 312*(3).

>

Simone Fall, a native of Rostock born in 1939 (i.e., she was 50 years old when the Berlin Wall fell), who had been working in a shipyard since 1965, reported in the year 2009:

<

Excerpts of interview by Joachim Gebhardt and Wolfgang Hammer with Simone Fall on 12 January 2009 on page 36 included from lines 15 to 23, 30 to 34, 35 to 38, and 47 to 53.

Gebhardt, J. & Hammer, W. (2009). LebensWENDEn: "Es war nicht alles schlecht!" – "Es war nicht alles gut" (UE Sek I/Sek II). Praxis Geschichte, 5, 32–37.

>

Welcher der Texte drückt die folgenden Aussagen in anderen Worten aus?

Kreuze an. Setze bitte nur ein Kreuz pro Zeile.

Item		Ilko-Sascha Kowalzcuk	Simone Fall	zu keinem Text
k0601	Die DDR war kein Rechtsstaat.	1	0	0
k0602	In der DDR ging es einem gut.	0	1	0
k0603	Die Führung der DDR war alt und verrückt.	0	0	1
k0606	In der DDR wurde den Menschen die Freiheit genommen.	1	0	0

Which of the texts expresses the following statements in different words

Check the appropriate boxes. Please only mark one box per line.

Item		Ilko-Sascha Kowalzcuk	Simone Fall	None of the texts
k0601	The GDR was not a state governed by the rule of law.	1	0	0
k0602	Life was good in the GDR.	0	1	0
k0603	The leadership of the GDR was old and eccentric.	0	0	1
k0606	Freedom was taken away from the people in the GDR.	1	0	0

Die Aussagen in der Aufgabe sind vereinfachte Zitate aus einem Interviewprojekt, in dem Menschen im Osten und Westen Deutschlands zu ihrer Erinnerung an die DDR und BRD und zu ihrer heutigen Einschätzung der deutschen Einheit befragt.

Bitte überlege dir bei den folgenden Aussagen, von wem sie wohl stammen:
von einem oder einer Zeitzeug*in aus dem Osten oder aus dem Westen?

Vielleicht wirst du dich bei manchen Aussagen zuerst nicht recht entscheiden können. Wähle bitte trotzdem eine Antwort aus, die du am wahrscheinlichsten findest.

Setze bitte für jede Aussage ein Kreuz.

The statements in the task are simplified quotes from an interview project in which people in East and West Germany were interviewed about their memories of the GDR and FRG and their current assessment of German unity.

For the following statements, please consider from whom they might come: from an eyewitness in the East or the West?

You might not be able to decide definitively about some statements at first. Still, please choose an answer that you find most likely.

Place a check mark for each statement.

Item	Aussage	Zeitzeug*in aus dem Osten	Zeitzeug*in aus dem Westen
z01	In der Schule haben sie uns erklärt, wie die Gesellschaftsordnung drüben funktioniert: Dass es sehr egoistisch drüben ist, dass es da eine Ellenbogengesellschaft gibt, Drogen, Kapitalismus, Ausnutzung.	**1**	**0**
z02	Wenn die Pakete an die Verwandten im anderen Deutschland gepackt wurden, war ich dann manchmal so ein bisschen neidisch. Weil da schöne Süßigkeiten in die Pakete gewandert sind, die ich nie bekommen hätte. Und dachte so, wie schlecht muss es denen gehen.	**0**	**1**
z03	Meine Eltern haben die einseitige Darstellung des anderen Deutschlands als kapitalistische Ausbeutergesellschaft in der Schule nicht thematisiert.	**1**	**0**
z04	Man hat sich das andere Deutschland eigentlich so vorgestellt: Die waren alle blass. Die hatten nichts zu essen und es ist einfach nur Chaos.	**0**	**1**
z05	Und dann wurde man so behandelt als wäre man ein Befreiter.	**1**	**0**
z06	Die Ignoranz der anderen Deutschen ist in Berlin weniger ausgeprägt als hier in "Restdeutschland", weit weg von dem ganzen Geschehen zwischen Ost und West.	**1**	**0**

Item	Statement made by interviewee from the...	East	West
z01	In school, they explained to us how the societal order worked over there: That it's very selfish over there, that there's a cutthroat society, drugs, capitalism, exploitation.	**1**	**0**
z02	When packages were packed for relatives in the other Germany, I was sometimes a bit envious. Because beautiful sweets were going into those packages that I would never get. And I thought how bad it must be for them.	**0**	**1**
z03	My parents did not address the school's one-sided portrayal of the other Germany as a capitalist exploitation society.	**1**	**0**
z04	We actually imagined the other Germany like this: They were all pale. They had nothing to eat, and it's just chaos.	**0**	**1**
z05	And then you were treated as if you were a liberator.	**1**	**0**
z06	The ignorance of the other Germans is less pronounced in Berlin than here in "the rest of Germany", far away from all the events between the East and West.	**1**	**0**

	Aussage	Zeitzeug*in aus dem Osten	Zeitzeug*in aus dem Westen
z07	Ich kenn' auch viele, die auch heute noch über Deutschland, also unser Deutschland, schimpfen.	0	1
z08	Mein Eindruck ist, dass die anderen Deutschen das Gefühl haben: Die von drüben haben sich ihnen angeschlossen, deshalb sind sie selbst etwas Besseres.	1	0
z09	Ich sage auch, dass nicht jeder gelitten hat. Es gab auch Beispiele, wo es gut lief.	1	0
z10	Für mich war das andere Deutschland halt irgendwie ein anderes Land, wo die Leute auch deutsch sprechen, die arm dran sind, denen es schlecht geht. Aber warum das so ist, das wusste ich gar nicht.	0	1
z11	Also manchmal hat man so den Eindruck, dass man, wenn man sich zu erkennen gibt, dass man dann nach wie vor von manchen im anderen Deutschland vermeintlich so von oben herab angeschaut wird.	1	0
z12	Wir haben früher schon ein extrem gutes Leben auf hohem Niveau gehabt. Und dieses Leben hat das andere Deutschland überhaupt nicht gehabt.	0	1

	Statement made by interviewee from the...	East	West
z07	I also know many who still complain about Germany, our Germany, even today.	0	1
z08	My impression is that the other Germans feel: Those from over there have joined them, so they themselves are somewhat better.	1	0
z09	I also say that not everyone suffered. There were also examples where things went well.	1	0
z10	For me, the other Germany was just somehow another country where people also speak German, who are poor, who are not doing well. But why that is so, I didn't know at all.	0	1
z11	Sometimes you get the impression that when you reveal your identity, you are still looked down upon by some people in the other Germany.	1	0
z12	We already had an extremely good life at a high level before. And the other Germany did not have this life at all.	0	1

Bitte lies die folgenden Aussagen durch.

Beispiel: Leonardo da Vinci war…

☒ ein italienischer Universalgelehrter.

☐ Ein Philosoph im antiken Griechenland.

☒ Maler des berühmten Gemäldes „Mona Lisa".

Hier stimmen die erste und die dritte Option.

Entscheide bei den nächsten Aufgaben selbst, was stimmt und was nicht.

Kreuze jeweils die Aussage an, der du zustimmst.

Es können eine oder mehrere Möglichkeiten richtig sein.

k0202   Geschichte, das ist einfach eine Reihe von Fakten.

k02021 **0** ☐ Stimme ich nicht zu, weil es in Geschichte keine Fakten, sondern nur Meinungen gibt.

k02022 **1** ☐ Stimme ich nicht zu, weil Geschichte auch beinhaltet, Zusammenhänge zwischen Ereignissen herzustellen.

k02023 **0** ☐ Stimme ich zu, weil bestimmte Daten über wichtige historische Personen das Wichtigste an Geschichte sind.

k0203   Man sollte verschiedene historische Quellen berücksichtigen, bevor man ein Urteil fällt.

k02031 **0** ☐ Stimme ich nicht zu, denn man hat meist mit einer Quelle schon genug Informationen, um ein Urteil zu fällen.

k02032 **0** ☐ Stimme ich nicht zu, weil verschiedene Quellen zum selben Ereignis immer dasselbe berichten, weil ja alle dasselbe erlebt haben.

k02033 **1** ☐ Stimme ich zu, weil verschiedene Quellen unterschiedliche Gesichtspunkte eines Ereignisses beleuchten können.

k0204   Geschichte kann niemals etwas Gesichertes über die Vergangenheit aussagen.

k02041 **0** ☐ Stimme ich zu, weil es im Bereich der Geschichte immer so viele verschiedene Perspektiven gibt, dass man nie sagen kann, welche wahr ist und welche nicht.

k02042 **0** ☐ Stimme ich nicht zu, weil man immer eindeutig weiß, was passiert ist.

k02043 **1** ☐ Stimme ich nicht zu, weil es bei vielen Ereignissen der Vergangenheit Erkenntnisse gibt, die als weitgehend sicher betrachtet werden können.

Read the following statements.

Example: Leonardo da Vinci was…

☒ An Italian polymath.

☐ A philosopher in ancient Greece.

☒ The painter of the famous painting the Mona Lisa.

Here, the first and the third options are correct.

Decide for yourself in the next tasks what is correct and what is not.

Check the statement(s) you agree with.

One or more options may be correct.

k0202   History is simply a series of facts.

k02021 **0** ☐ I disagree because, in history, there are no facts, only opinions.

k02022 **1** ☐ I disagree because history also involves establishing connections between events.

k02023 **0** ☐ I agree because certain data about important historical figures is the most important aspect of history.

k0203   One should consider various historical sources before forming a judgment.

k02031 **0** ☐ I disagree because one usually has enough information from just one source to form a judgment.

k02032 **0** ☐ I disagree because different sources always report the same thing for the same event because everyone experienced the same thing.

k02033 **1** ☐ I agree because different sources can illuminate different aspects of an event.

k0204   History can never state something definite about the past.

k02041 **0** ☐ I agree because, in the field of history, there are always so many different perspectives that one can never say which is true and which is not.

k02042 **0** ☐ I disagree because we always know clearly what happened.

k02043 **1** ☐ I disagree because many events in the past have insights that can be considered largely secure.

k0207 Alle Perspektiven auf ein historisches Ereignis sind prinzipiell gleichberechtigt.

k02071 **1** ☐ Stimme ich nicht zu, da manche Perspektiven Aussagen enthalten, die nicht überprüfbar sind oder sogar gesicherten Erkenntnissen widersprechen.

k02072 **1** ☐ Stimme ich nicht zu, weil man zwar schon verschiedene Perspektiven berücksichtigen sollte, aber auch überprüfen muss, wie plausibel sie sind.

k02073 **0** ☐ Stimme ich nicht zu, weil Berichte von Zeitzeug*innen eher der Wahrheit entsprechen als die von sonstigen Quellen und Historiker*innen.

k0208 Wenn man ein historisches Thema verstehen möchte, sollte man sich mehrere Quellen anschauen.

k02081 **0** ☐ Stimme ich zu, weil man dabei merkt, dass sich alle Quellen unterscheiden und man deshalb nie sagen kann, was wahr oder falsch ist.

k02082 **1** ☐ Stimme ich zu, da Quellen oft helfen können, verschiedene Ansichten aus der Vergangenheit zu verstehen.

k02083 **1** ☐ Stimme ich zu, da Quellen auch oft verfälscht oder voller Unwahrheiten sein können. Daher braucht man mehrere Quellen, um vergleichen zu können.

k0207 All perspectives on a historical event are essentially equal.

k02071 **1** ☐ I disagree because some perspectives contain statements that are not verifiable or even contradict established knowledge.

k02072 **1** ☐ I disagree because while one should consider different perspectives, one must also assess how plausible they are.

k02073 **0** ☐ I disagree because accounts from eyewitnesses are more likely to reflect the truth than those from other sources and historians.

k0208 If one wants to understand a historical topic, one should look at multiple sources.

k02081 **0** ☐ I agree because this reveals that all sources differ, and therefore, one can never say what is true or false.

k02082 **1** ☐ I agree because sources often help people understand various views from the past.

k02083 **1** ☐ I agree because sources can also be distorted or full of falsehoods. Therefore, one needs multiple sources for comparison.

Lies die folgenden Aussagen durch.

Beispiel: Leonardo da Vinci war…

☒ ein italienischer Universalgelehrter.

☐ Ein Philosoph im antiken Griechenland.

☒ Maler des berühmten Gemäldes "Mona Lisa".

Hier stimmen die erste und die dritte Option.

Entscheide bei den nächsten Aufgaben selbst, was stimmt und was nicht.
<u>*Kreuze jeweils die Aussage an, der du zustimmst.*</u>
Es <u>können eine oder mehrere Möglichkeiten richtig</u> sein.

k0301 Ich bin überzeugt, dass ich anders über die DDR und die BRD denke, wenn ich mehr darüber lerne.

k03011 **1** ☐ Stimme ich zu, weil man immer neue Erkenntnisse hat, wenn man sich mit Geschichte beschäftigt.

k03012 **1** ☐ Stimme ich zu, weil man merkt, dass es viele Dinge in der heutigen Welt gibt, die stark mit der Vergangenheit zusammenhängen.

k03013 **0** ☐ Stimme ich nicht zu, weil die Geschichte der DDR zwar schon interessant ist, aber die heutige Welt damit nichts wirklich zu tun hat.

k0302 Ich kenne die historischen Gründe für einige der heutigen Probleme in Ostdeutschland und denke, dass sich meine Meinung kaum noch ändern wird.

k03021 **0** ☐ Stimme ich zu, denn auch neue Informationen werden meine Meinung nicht grundlegend verändern können.

k03022 **1** ☐ Stimme ich nicht zu, weil es viele Perspektiven gibt und man dadurch nie objektiv sagen kann, was wahr ist und was nicht.

k03023 **1** ☐ Stimme ich nicht zu, weil es immer historische Perspektiven oder Sachverhalte gibt, die man noch nicht kennt – diese könnten meine Meinung doch wieder ändern.

k03024 **0** ☐ Stimme ich zu, weil meine Meinung auf Fakten beruht, so dass es gar nicht sein kann, dass ich meine Meinung nochmal ändere.

Read the following statements.

Example: Leonardo da Vinci was…

☒ An Italian polymath.

☐ A philosopher in ancient Greece.

☒ The painter of the famous painting the Mona Lisa.

Here, the first and the third options are correct.

Decide for yourself in the next tasks what is correct and what is not.
<u>*Check the statement(s) you agree with.*</u>
<u>*One or more options may be correct*</u>.

k0301 I am convinced that I will think differently about the GDR and FRG if I learn more about them.

k03011 **1** ☐ I agree because one always gains new insights when delving into history.

k03012 **1** ☐ I agree because one realizes that many things in the present world are strongly connected to the past.

k03013 **0** ☐ I disagree because, while the history of the GDR is interesting, it doesn't really have much to do with the present world.

k0302 I know the historical reasons for some of the current problems in East Germany and think that my opinion is unlikely to change significantly.

k03021 **0** ☐ I agree because even new information is unlikely to fundamentally alter my opinion.

k03022 **1** ☐ I disagree because there are many perspectives, making it impossible to objectively determine what is true and what is not.

k03023 **1** ☐ I disagree because there are always historical perspectives or facts that one may not know yet—these could potentially change my opinion.

k03024 **0** ☐ I agree because my opinion is based on facts, so it's unlikely that I would change my opinion.

| k0303 | | Im Unterricht sollte man lernen, dass es viele unterschiedliche, aber durchaus begründete Sichtweisen auf ein historisches Ereignis wie die Deutsche Einheit gibt. |

k0303 — Im Unterricht sollte man lernen, dass es viele unterschiedliche, aber durchaus begründete Sichtweisen auf ein historisches Ereignis wie die Deutsche Einheit gibt.

k03031 0 ☐ Stimme ich nicht zu, denn es gibt nur eine Wahrheit.

k03032 1 ☐ Stimme ich zu, da beispielsweise die Ostdeutschen andere Erfahrungen als die Westdeutschen gemacht haben.

k03033 0 ☐ Stimme ich nicht zu, denn ich denke, dass ost- und westdeutsche Schüler*innen in meinem Alter gleich über die Deutsche Einheit denken sollten.

k03034 1 ☐ Stimme ich zu, da das eigene Geschichtsbild stark davon abhängt, wie, wo und wann man groß geworden ist.

k0304 — Die Beschäftigung mit der Vergangenheit kann uns dabei helfen, die Gegenwart besser zu verstehen und heutige Möglichkeiten zum Handeln besser einzuschätzen.

k03041 0 ☐ Stimme ich zu, weil die Kenntnis über die Ereignisse in der Vergangenheit eine klare Richtschnur für heute ist.

k03042 1 ☐ Stimme ich zu, doch man sollte die Vergangenheit und Gegenwart trennen. Die Geschichte wiederholt sich nicht und wir müssen uns schon selbst Lösungen für unsere Probleme einfallen lassen.

k03043 1 ☐ Stimme ich zu, weil man sich manchmal aus dem, was in der Vergangenheit passiert ist, ein Urteil bilden kann, das einem bei Entscheidungsfindungen heute helfen kann.

k0305 — Aus den persönlichen Berichten von Zeitzeug*innen kann man etwas darüber erfahren, wie unsere Gegenwart so geworden ist, wie sie ist.

k03051 0 ☐ Stimme ich nicht zu, weil unsere Gegenwart und die Berichte von Zeitzeug*innen nichts miteinander zu tun haben.

k03052 0 ☐ Stimme ich nicht zu, weil die Berichte von Zeitzeug*innen sich ständig widersprechen und sie deshalb keine Relevanz für die Gegenwart haben.

k03053 1 ☐ Stimme ich zu, weil die Erfahrungen der Zeitzeug*innen in der Vergangenheit neue Perspektiven auf die Gegenwart geben können.

k0306 — Wenn wir heute etwas über die Geschichte der DDR lernen, ist das dieselbe Geschichte, die meine Eltern damals in der Schule gelernt haben.

k03061 0 ☐ Stimme ich zu, denn die Vergangenheit hat sich ja nicht geändert.

k03062 1 ☐ Stimme ich nicht zu, weil man damals eine andere Gegenwart und deswegen auch eine andere Deutung der Vergangenheit hatte.

k03063 1 ☐ Stimme ich nicht zu, weil sich Geschichte immer verändern kann, je nach dem, in welcher Zeit man in die Vergangenheit zurückschaut.

k03064 0 ☐ Stimme ich nicht zu, weil man nie wirklich etwas Wahres über die Vergangenheit wissen kann, weder heute noch damals.

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k0303 — In class, one should learn that there are many different but entirely justified perspectives on a historical event such as the German reunification.

k03031 0 ☐ I disagree because there is only one truth.

k03032 1 ☐ I agree because, for example, East Germans have had different experiences than West Germans.

k03033 0 ☐ I disagree because I believe that East and West German students of my age should think similarly about the German reunification.

k03034 1 ☐ I agree because one's view of history depends greatly on how, where, and when one grew up.

k0304 — Dealing with the past can help us better understand the present and better assess today's opportunities for action.

k03041 0 ☐ I agree because knowledge of past events is a clear guideline for today.

k03042 1 ☐ I agree, but one should separate the past from the present. History does not repeat itself, and we must come up with solutions to our problems ourselves.

k03043 1 ☐ I agree because sometimes, judgments about what happened in the past can help in decision-making today.

k0305 — From the personal accounts of eyewitnesses, one can learn something about how our present has become what it is.

k03051 0 ☐ I disagree because our present and the accounts of eyewitnesses have nothing to do with each other.

k03052 0 ☐ I disagree because the accounts of eyewitnesses constantly contradict each other, and therefore, they have no relevance to the present.

k03053 1 ☐ I agree because the experiences of eyewitnesses in the past can provide new perspectives on the present.

k0306 — If we learn something about the history of the GDR today, it is the same history that my parents learned in school back then.

k03061 0 ☐ I agree because the past has not changed.

k03062 1 ☐ I disagree because back then, there was a different present and, therefore, a different interpretation of the past.

k03063 1 ☐ I disagree because history can always change depending on the time from which one looks back into the past.

k03064 0 ☐ I disagree because one can never truly know something true about the past, neither today nor back then.

k0307   Die Geschichte der DDR und des geteilten Deutschlands hat heute noch große Relevanz.

k03071 **1** ☐ Stimme ich zu, da man etwas über heutige Zustände aus der Teilungsgeschichte lernen kann.

k03072 **0** ☐ Stimme ich nicht zu, da die Teilungsgeschichte nicht dabei hilft, heutige Zustände zu erklären. Man kann die Gegenwart mit Wissen über die Vergangenheit nicht besser verstehen.

k03073 **1** ☐ Stimme ich zu, da viele gesellschaftliche Konflikte heutzutage immer noch mit der Vergangenheit Deutschlands zu tun haben bzw. damit begründet werden.

k03074 **0** ☐ Stimme ich nicht zu, da man die heutigen Probleme nicht mit dem Wissen über die Vergangenheit lösen kann.

k0307   The history of the GDR and divided Germany is still highly relevant today.

k03071 **1** ☐ I agree because one can learn about current conditions from the history of division.

k03072 **0** ☐ I disagree because the history of division does not help explain current conditions. Knowledge about the past does not lead to a better understanding of the present.

k03073 **1** ☐ I agree because many contemporary societal conflicts still have to do with or are justified by Germany's past.

k03074 **0** ☐ I disagree because one cannot solve today's problems with knowledge about the past.

Materialheft

M1

Karikatur 1 (aus dem Jahr 1998)

Karikatur "Menschenmauer" von Barbara Henniger aus dem Jahr 1998 (https://barbarahenniger.de/).

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Workbook

M1

Caricature 1 (year 1998)

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Karikatur 2 (aus dem Jahr 2020)

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Comic "Moritz" von Flix auf den Seiten 24 bis 26.

Comic

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Comic "Moritz" by Flix on pages 24 to 26.

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Crossing borders in history education

Reflections of students from Prague and St. Gallen on their conceptualizations of a virtual tour based on a Holocaust survivor's transnational life trajectory

Helen Kaufmann* ⓘ , Thomas Metzger* ⓘ

St. Gallen University of Teacher Education, St. Gallen

Abstract

The article was written in the aftermath of an international summer school held in Prague and St. Gallen in the context of the research and public history project "Train to Freedom" by St. Gallen University of Teacher Education, Charles University in Prague, and other partners. Students and teacher students from the involved universities developed didactical concepts for a virtual tour, a so-called "IWalk", covering important chapters of the life of Holocaust survivor Petr Fiala, using excerpts of the testimony he gave to the USC Shoah Foundation in 1997 as well as historical photographs, maps, and archival documents. Fiala was one of the 1200 prisoners who boarded the "Train to Freedom" that brought them to Switzerland in February 1945. The aim of this hands-on student project was to develop an interactive educational tool for high school students and a wider public that conveys an actor-centered transnational migration history. In the article, we would like to give an insight into this experimental teaching project. We are using audio-recordings of discussions among the participants of the summer school reflecting on their own history education and their didactical thoughts when developing the "IWalk" and linking them with research findings and theoretical concepts in history and history didactics.

Keywords

transnational history, history education, biographical approach, digital learning tools, Holocaust Education

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* **Contact:** Helen Kaufmann ✉ helen.kaufmann@phsg.ch, Thomas Metzger ✉ thomas.metzger@phsg.ch
St. Gallen University of Teacher Education, Centre of Democracy Education and Human Rights, St.Gallen, Switzerland

And … there came a very dramatic moment where we have seen next to the train … a Swiss flag … a Swiss flag. Ehm … We … eh … started to understand that we are entering ehm … the … Bodamske jezero, how to translate it? The … Bodam Lake [Lake Constance] which is already at the Swiss-German border. And … we made a stop in Kreuzlingen. Kreuzlingen is already a, a … Swiss village, it was a … it is not a village, it's a small town, it's a small town … and we stopped. We have seen eeh … Swiss soldiers … I cannot explain enough how this was … unbelievably exciting. (Interview with Petr Fiala, 14.02.1997, Tape 5, 00:00:44–00:02:07)

In his interview with the USC Shoah Foundation in 1997, Petr Fiala recounts the moment when he entered Switzerland on a transport that had departed from Theresienstadt Ghetto on 5 February 1945 and brought 1200 prisoners, most of them elderly people from the German "Reich", Czechia and the Netherlands, to Switzerland. Born on 4 May 1930 to a Jewish family in Prague, Petr Fiala was deported to Theresienstadt together with his mother and sister in September 1942. After their liberation and the end of the war, Petr Fiala decided to return to Prague where he stayed for 21 years before emigrating illegally to Israel and then moving to Iran for work reasons. After the Islamic Revolution in 1979, he fled to his sister who was living in Hamburg before settling in the United States of America, where he had lived until the moment of the interview. (Interview with Petr Fiala, 14.02.1997)

Petr Fiala's transnational migration biography served as a case study and starting point for an international summer school in Prague and St. Gallen that took place during one week in June 2023. The summer school was part of the research and public history project "Train to Freedom" conducted by the Centre of Democracy Education and Human Rights at St. Gallen University of Teacher Education in collaboration with Charles University Prague, Freie Universität Berlin, and other partners. The project examines the rescue mission of February 1945 and develops educational activities for both formal and informal learning. During the summer school, the participating students from Charles University Prague and student teachers of St. Gallen University of Teacher Education were asked to work in international teams and develop a concept of a virtual tour, a so-called "IWalk". Students' virtual transnational tours had to cover a few of the most important stops in the life of Peter Fiala. For this, students were able to use the oral history interview from USC Shoah Foundation, as well as other sources such as files from the Swiss Federal Archives, historical newspaper articles, maps, and photographs. The goal was to convey an actor-centered transnational migration history for high school students and the wider public. At the end of the week, the students and student teachers were asked to record their discussions reflecting their didactical decisions during the project work, as well as their experiences in history education in their respective countries.

Introductory Thoughts

This article is based on audio-recordings of the group discussions among the international project teams in which students and student teachers reflected on their didactic approach for the project and shared experiences of their own history education in their country of residence. We analyze these recorded discussions hermeneutically and explore students' opinions and convictions underlying their conceptualization of the developed educational material. We also reflect on how these opinions might have been shaped by their different national and educational contexts.

We begin with a discussion of the transnational approaches in the research and public history project "Train to Freedom", from the perspective of history as well as history education. The research part of the project follows a biographical approach (Gautschi, 2015), examining how the trajectories of the 1200 liberated prisoners were determined: On the one hand, both the forced migration and deportation, and the liberation were the result of international and transnational networks. On the other hand, the trajectories were directed by nation-state restrictions and national migration regimes such as Switzerland's restrictive and antisemitic refugee policy (for this policy see e.g. Picard, 1997; Mächler, 1998; UEK, 2001; Kury, 2003). The transnational approach is also crucial for the public history part of the "Train to Freedom" project, which, apart from the "IWalk", includes the development of teaching materials, exhibitions, and a website. The dissemination of the research findings into schools and the public can help to differentiate, complement and, where appropriate, counter popular national narratives and strengthen a transnational memory of the Holocaust.

In the second part of the article, we provide an overview of the developed "IWalk" concept, consisting of five stops that were each devised by one group of students. We also present an analysis of the audio recordings of students' group discussions on their own experiences while being taught about the Holocaust and World War II, as well as their convictions and didactical reflections while creating the "IWalk", focusing on emotions, empathy and alterity.

Beyond the nation-state: Transnational approaches in research and the project "Train to Freedom"

Nationalism and historiography have been and often still are historically closely intertwined. Consequently, the impact of "nation" as a construct on historical narratives has been and still is big. Transnational approaches, however, have gained much importance since the beginning of the 21st century. They underlie various concepts, such as entangled history, shared history, or histoire croisée and are particularly visible in perspectives of postcolonial studies and global history (e.g. Werner & Zimmermann, 2002; Conrad & Eckert, 2007; Patel, 2010) which also influenced Swiss historiography (e.g. Purtschert et al., 2012; Holenstein, 2015; Schär, 2015; Kreis 2023). Following a classical definition by David Thelen, historians with a transnational approach aim to "explore how people and ideas and institutions and cultures moved above, below, through, and around, as well as within, the nation-state, to investigate how well national borders contained or explained how people experienced history." (Thelen, 1999, p. 967) Transnational history does not deny the relevance of the nation state. The nation state remains very effective. Transnational history, however, widens the perspective and adds important complexity to historical narratives.

The project "Train to Freedom" deals with the transport from Theresienstadt to St. Gallen, one of several successful attempts in the last months of World War II to save a few thousand Jews from systematic murder by Nazi Germany. The project examines the transnational networks that lead to this rescue mission and the transnational trajectories of the 1200 liberated prisoners (for the mission see especially Friedenson & Kranzler, 1984, pp. 124–138; Dieckhoff, 1995; Bauer, 1996; Sebastiani, 2005, pp. 902–937; Krummenacher, 2005, pp. 320–327; Metzger & Gunzenreiner, 2018). Their liberation began as a private initiative of the Swiss Jewish couple Recha and Isaac Sternbuch, who, based in Europe, worked for the North American "Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States of America and Canada" (UOR) and its relief committee "Vaad Ha-Hatzalah". Especially Recha Sternbuch had been a key figure for Jewish refugee relief in Switzerland since the 1930s (on the role of Recha Sternbuch and the relief committee: Friedenson & Kranzler, 1984; Zuroff, 2000; Krummenacher, 2005, pp. 169–174). In October 1944, the Sternbuchs approached former Swiss Federal Councilor Jean-Marie Musy with their rescue plans. From 1919 to 1934, Musy had represented the Catholic-Conservatives in the Swiss government consisting of seven councilors. Due to his authoritarian and corporative ideas, his proximity to fascism, and his key role in anticommunist networks, Musy became a controversial figure in Switzerland after his retirement (Sebastiani, 2004, pp. 433–878; Sebastiani, 2009). Knowing Heinrich Himmler personally, Musy had access to Nazi circles. These high ranked contacts but also the fact that he had already succeeded in having individuals released from NS-camps made him an interesting go-between for the Sternbuchs. Plans for the rescue of the Jewish prisoners finally took shape when Musy met twice with Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler in Germany to negotiate the liberation. The negotiations also included discussions of a plan to rescue 1,200 Jews from concentration camps each week. However, this extension of the rescue operation failed.

When analyzing some of these 1200 trajectories we regard – following Damir Skenderovic (2015, pp. 7–12) – the migrating individuals as transnational actors with agency in social and political processes. On the one hand, we focus on the strategies chosen by liberated prisoners to deal with challenges and expand their opportunities to act freely. On the other hand, we examine their subjective perceptions and their coping with identification, attribution, and dissociation. For a long time, this actor-centered perspective has been missing in the writing of histories of migration. Following the metaphor of Bardo Fassbender and Anne Peters, we use the individual biographies as "'keyholes' through which we can see an entire 'room' or historical space" (2012, p. 14 as cited in Löhr, 2013, p. 14). Coming back to our case study, although Petr Fiala has, undoubtedly, lived a "life beyond borders" (Löhr, 2013), it was not a life without borders. On the contrary, his transnational biography, and especially the cited part of his interview about crossing the Swiss border in 1945, illustrate how borders and national states with their migration

regimes have played a major role: Striking to him was seeing the Swiss flag and Swiss soldiers, indicating that they had crossed the border and were now out of reach from the Nazis. Not only during World War II and its aftermath, but also during his time in communist Czechoslovakia, crossing borders was a key element of his biography. Working for the Czechoslovakian Airlines, Fiala points out he was able to see "the free world" and go on journeys he "loved" and "really enjoyed […] to the full extent." (Interview with Petr Fiala, 14.02.1997, Tape 6, 00:14:18–00:14:54)

Following the approach of Mobility Studies and Transit Research, we are particularly interested in the "spacial-temporal in-between", as Carolin Liebisch-Gümüş (2022, p. 22) describes these migration routes that can lead in many different directions, assuming that migration trajectories are rarely linear, but rather contingent and can change spontaneously. When reconstructing and analyzing such "movement in space respectively its representation and reflection" retrospectively, sources like diaries, letters, postcards, passports etc. can be promising (Liebisch-Gümüş, 2022, p. 23). In the case of our summer school, by leaving the comfort zone of the national container in research (Tanner, 2020, p. 233) thanks to our cooperation with Charles-University in Prague, Freie Universität Berlin and USC Shoah Foundation, we had access to such historical sources on Petr Fiala and not only to his file in the Swiss Federal Archives.

"IWalk" – a tool for transnational history education?

The application "IWalk" allows one to integrate a variety of different historical sources besides the excerpts of the oral history interview, such as documents, photographs, or maps. Connected to Google Maps, users can follow historical (migration) routes of individuals and see where the mentioned sites are located today. The concept of the "IWalk" about Petr Fiala developed by our students during the summer school, contained the following five stops, representing different chapters of his life:

- Stop 1 (His family's house in Mánesova street in Prague): Life before Terezin Ghetto in Prague
- Stop 2 (Former boys' school in Terezin, today's museum): Life in Terezin Ghetto
- Stop 3 (Border between Konstanz, Germany, and Kreuzlingen, Switzerland): Decision to go on the transport and the journey to Switzerland
- Stop 4 ("Disinfection camp" in St. Gallen, today part of the campus of St. Gallen University of Teacher Education): Life in Swiss camps
- Stop 5 (Čáslavská street in Prague where Petr Fiala lived after World War II): Returning to Prague and the decision to emigrate to Israel and further destinations

The chosen stops offer many possibilities for geographical references of familiar places for users from different countries and represent Petr Fiala's transnational trajectory. Linking these historical places onsite with contextual information and Petr Fiala's testimony online, the "IWalk" connects the macro-history of forced migration in the context of the Holocaust and Nazi aggression with a personalized micro-history, showing the personal and sometimes very emotional perception of the historical events by "ordinary people". At the end of each stop, there are one or several questions for reflection and discussion, which users of the "IWalk", especially high school students, are invited to answer.

To round up the summer school, the students from Prague and St. Gallen were not only asked to reflect on their didactical decisions during the development process of the "IWalk", but also to discuss how they remember being taught about World War II and the Holocaust in high school in their respective national contexts. By combining these dimensions, students are made aware of different national narratives and are able to compare and challenge them with other national as well as transnational perspectives.

In total, 14 participants attended the summer school. The group from Charles University in Prague consisted of nine students of Area Studies of which six had attended high school in Czechia, and one in Czechia and Germany. There were two international students – one from Poland and one from the U.S. – who had attended high school in their home countries. The five student teachers that participated from St. Gallen University of Teacher Education had all spent their school years in Switzerland. One of them could not participate in the discussion as she had to

leave the summer school earlier. The following questions structured the discussion:

- How was World War II and the Holocaust taught at your high school (or "Gymnasium")? What narrative of your own countries' role was depicted?
- In your opinion, how should this topic be taught? In what way might a tool like "IWalk" be beneficial for it? In what way not?
- What were the general ideas behind the concept of your stop, e. g.
    - Why did you choose the [video] clip(s)?
    - How did you create the question you are asking the participants?
    - Were there any ideas in the beginning that you didn't realize in the end?

The students discussed these questions in the same groups of two to three that they had worked in for the development of the "IWalk" and recorded the discussions with their mobile phones. The discussions were held in absence of the lecturers.

"… so this all like gets more real": Analysis of students' discussions

Transnational approaches are reflected not only in history, but also in history education (e.g. Fenske & Kuhn, 2015; Grewe, 2017; Marti, 2021; Metzger, 2023). Didactical advantages are usually seen in changing perspectives and in multiperspectivity, in the development of a differentiated understanding of space and historical actors, and in fostering the awareness of power structures. However, until today history classes often do not intend "to make students, in the first place, learn something about society and their changes, but to become the proud citizens of their respective nation." (Fink et al., 2020, p. 50) Rooting back to the 19th century, this way of teaching history that provides "identification offers which promote the social cohesion" (Fink et al., 2020, p.50) has also been experienced by our students. This is the first main finding of the analysis of the recordings. They reported of well-established narratives centered around the national state. All of the interviewed Swiss students remember being taught about the neutral role, the non-involvement of Switzerland in World War II, the narrative of being surrounded by the Third Reich or having to prevent attacks (e.g. Recording group 1: 00:00:36; Recording group 4: 00:05:35). One student also reports that the "Réduit", the Swiss National Redoubt as a measure to defend Switzerland against foreign attacks, was mentioned in their history class (Recording group 2, 00:06:19).

In Czechia, students recalled their teachers sticking to the narratives of the Munich Agreement as a treason from the other states, as a historical account of how these states "sold Czechoslovakia to the hands of Hitler" (e.g. Recording group 2, 00:03:44) and the narrative of Czechs being victims (e.g. Recording group 2, 00:04:08). Another student mentioned the narrative of Czechs fighting back Nazis during occupation as prevalent (Recording group 4, 00:01:39).

The Polish student from Charles University remembered how the topic of responsibility was important and that he was taught that Poland, despite being the place where the Holocaust happened, was not an independent state at that time. It was seen as harmful for Poland if that fact was not emphasized. However, he found that in his school, the history of antisemitism and ignorance in Poland was lacking (Recording group 3, 00:03:40). The other international student in the group from Prague, an American, stressed that the Holocaust and World War II had been taught in a non-European context. Although her teachers tried to show different aspects of the topic, in her opinion it is "very distant from the U.S." and Americans don't understand it as well as they should. (Recording group 3, 00:01:15) She recounted that her history classes were rather about the liberation of Europe and D-Day than Holocaust-related (Recording group 3, 00:03:18).

A second frequently made observation by the students was – although there were some exceptions, for example a Czech student that went to a High School in Germany – having been taught mainly the facts. They missed discussions and critical reflections on the topic, as well as talking about individual life stories of the victims. (Recording group 2, 00:01:05; Recording group 5, 00:01:32) One Czech student mentioned that they had always spoken about "the Jews" in a very generalized way and never about the emotions of individuals (Recording group 5, 00:02:19; 00:01:01). Most of the groups agreed that the "IWalk" had potential in these aspects – showing the perspective of the victims, depicting them as "people like all of us" (Recording group 1, 00:05:28)

or "people like our grandmothers, grandfathers" (Recording group 1, 00:07:14) that "were just made … to look like they were different". (Recording group 1, 00:05:33) They felt that through the biographical approach, "everyone can like … relate to [the topic]" (Recording group 1, 00:07:50) and that through the open questions being asked at the end of each stop, critical thinking could be fostered. One student also found it important to locate history, stating that "history becomes more real" (Recording group 3, 00:08:00) and is "easier to imagine" (Recording group 3, 00:08:25) when it is in our everyday surroundings or as this student pointed out:

> And also these interviews, I think when we were walking in Prague and we watched the videos, that was also like impressive for me that … that … this video was recorded somewhere and I could somehow distance myself to this person but then I realized that this person, was living, for instance, in the house where I'm standing now in front of so this all like becames [sic!] more real […]. (Recording group 3, 00:09:30)

Besides concerns about the length and complexity of the "IWalk" for high school students, as well as a potential lack of supervision by the teacher, emotional aspects were also mentioned as potential disadvantages. One student, for example, highlighted the feeling of over-exposure:

> But what I am experiencing right now is kind of … like an … over-exposure to Holocaust … So for me, now …, it's basically … It's kinda losing the meaning in how tragic … and … grasping how tragic it actually was. (Recording group 1, 00:09:26–00:09:41)

Another group was concerned about a possible over-identification with victims which could cause trauma. (Recording group 5, 00:04:16) On the other hand, one group felt that watching videos of survivors was not as good as meeting them in real life (Recording group 2, 00:10:16) – not considering that a real-life encounter could be even more overwhelming and thus make it more difficult to analyze the testimonies critically (Bertram, 2017, p. 144).

When students reflected on their own projects, meaning the stops of the "IWalk" they developed, emotional aspects were mentioned in all five groups. In the following statement, students describe why their group chose a certain video clip where Petr Fiala talks about his arrival in Switzerland:

> It is also a very powerful clip //Yeah// I feel like, because … he is talking about how overwhelmed he was when … they, like, treated him like normal people. //Mhm// And he also starts crying as a testimony to how moved he was //yeah// or is still moved by this ge … generosity // Yeah//. It is not exactly generosity, it is just like //Yeah, he was, he was, yeah …// treating the person like the person they are and not treating like animals like the Nazis did. (Recording group 4, 00:11:50–00:12:18)

In this part of her reasoning, the student first regards Petr Fiala's crying in the interview in 1998 as proof of his emotions during the actual situation in 1945 he is recalling. She then goes on to specify that it is rather the emotion evoked retrospectively. Thus, she points out the different time layers of the interview. However, she puts the time of the interview and present time on the same level. This is a tendency that happened to other students as well and could be an indication that the "aura of authenticity" (Sabrow, 2012, p. 27) of survivors' testimonies make it difficult even for history students to analyze them as historical sources. However, she distinguishes between what Petr Fiala depicts as "generosity" and what, from her present perspective as a historian, is nothing more than a humane way of interaction.

In the discussion of the group that dealt with stop 3 ("decision to go on the transport and journey to St. Gallen"), a student distinguished between "facts" on one, and "personal story" and "emotions" on the other side, describing the process of choosing the clips as follows:

> So for the clips, I think it was important to get his personal story that follows the facts … during this week we talked about how sometimes memories can be altered or changed a little bit with age … and so these are the clips that … what he's saying did happen but at the same time in these clips you get some of the emotions he's experiencing … and the first clip features his home and his family agreeing to go … to Switzerland … and you see this decision-making process where they don't know if the train is going … but they are taking that risk and taking that opportunity. And the second … clip focuses on the border which I think was one of the most emotionally impactful moments from his testimony that we saw … So I think it is important to include that as well and you really get the idea of transition … and this like choice to go to Switzerland in that clip … (Recording group 3, 00:10:34–00:11:26)

She legitimately emphasizes the retrospective construction of historical events in testimonies, but at the same time ignores that history itself is a construct. Although in the first paragraph, it seems that she views emotions critically and in opposition to the "facts", she later points out that she still thinks that the "emotionally impactful moments" of the testimony were worth including in the "IWalk".

For each stop, the responsible group of students developed open questions to stimulate reflection and discussion among users of the "IWalk", matching the overarching concepts of their stop, for example:

- How do you think he felt being deported while being labeled a Jew?
- You learned about Terezin being a Ghetto during World War II. Today, it is a town where people live again. At the same time, Terezin is memorial site. What do you think is it like to live there nowadays? Would you participate in memorial events if you were an inhabitant yourself?
- What would you do if you had the opportunity to be released, but it could also lead to your death?
- The Musy-transport was also called the "Train to Freedom". Petr Fiala also reflects on this "freedom", but do you think the refugees were actually free when they arrived in Switzerland?
- What do you think home meant to him [Petr Fiala]? How can the concept of home change due to circumstances?

The group that dealt with the part about the decision-making process mentioned above, developed the question "What would you do if you had the opportunity to be released, but it could also lead to your death?" Asking this question shows that they put emphasize on the agency of the persecuted individuals and, at the same time, tried to foster empathy for this difficult decision. However, the struggle of this student explaining why they chose this question shows how there are limits to possible empathy for historical individuals that lived in completely different circumstances than we do (on alterity "Alteritätserfahrung", see: Sauer, 2021, p. 76–79).

> And I think that because of these rumors [about death camps in Eastern Europe] or ... just like information that was ehh ... hmm ... eeh ... hmm ... ehhh ... eeeh ... known by these people ... Eehh...They ... they ... had reasons to be scared and it was extremely rational to be scared and not to trust. And ... errr ... that I think ... that's why this question ... we started with this question about the choice ... And err ... I think that's like very meaningful for ... eeh ... for the students [high school students using the IWalk], that ... that ... that ... they ... in fact, nowadays we cannot ... sss ..., in any sense, hmm ... eer ... reply to these questions, because, question, because we are not in the same situation ... as eeeh ... they were so ... we don't consider the same facts as ... they ... had in mind. (Recording group 3, 00:12:29–00:13:28)

Conclusion

Petr Fiala's trajectory has led him from Prague over Theresienstadt and Switzerland back to what was to become the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, and later to Israel, Iran, Germany and finally the United States. His story stands as an example for a life beyond but not without borders and offers promising opportunities for history and history education with the aim of moving beyond the national context. Petr Fiala can be used as a case study for transnational migration during and after World War II and, following a biographical approach, offers insights into how these processes were experienced and remembered on an individual level.

This article is not based on a complete study, and the interviews were analyzed hermeneutically. However, the discussions among students from Prague and St. Gallen indicate that history classes are often still held in a nation-centered way, reproducing well-established national narratives, and rarely focusing on transnational aspects or on persecuted individuals as actors with emotions and – even if often limited – spaces to act freely. In this respect, tools like "IWalk" seem promising as they make transnational trajectories, as well as national borders and restrictions visible. The testimony clips that are included in each stop of the "IWalk" can help to establish a link between historical events and present places, thus connecting time and space and making history "easier to imagine" or "more real" as some students described it. The emotionally intense moments of Petr Fiala's testimony can be seen as a chance to foster a certain personal

connection and thus interest in learning about the Holocaust, but also bear the danger of leaving viewers overwhelmed and (re-)traumatized. Therefore, it seems important to focus not only on empathy, but also on alterity as well as on a critical reflection of the survivors' testimonies from a present-day perspective. Especially for high school students, the possibility to let them reflect on, discuss, and answer questions at the end of each "IWalk" stop, is a suitable tool for this practice.

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Review

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ORCID iD

Helen Kaufmann   https://orcid.org/0009-0000-4694-0776
Thomas Metzger   https://orcid.org/0009-0006-9913-6996

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Recording Group 2 (24 June 2023), Discussion among one Swiss student teacher and two Czech students, total length: 00:21:03.
Recording Group 3 (24 June 2023), Discussion among one Swiss student teacher, one American student and one Polish student, total length: 00:16:11.
Recording Group 4 (24 June 2023), Discussion among one Swiss student teacher and one Czech student who attended high school partially in Germany, total length: 00:15:55.
Recording Group 5 (24 June 2023), Discussion among two Czech students (Swiss student teacher was missing for the discussion), total length: 00:15:25.

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A call for different perspectives

*Alison Bedford** iD , *Naomi Barnes* iD

University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba,

Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane

Abstract

This miniature offers a provocation to consider both how and why the teaching of differing perspectives in history classrooms is undertaken in different nations and the relationship this has with citizenship in liberal democracies. Drawing on some initial survey data from Australian history teachers, the authors highlight the inconsistent understanding of the concept of perspective and the pressing need to maintain a focus on different perspectives at a time when far-right conservativism seeks to establish a monovocal grand narrative that returns to a 'history of the victors' approach to the detriment of multicultural, democratic societies.

Keywords

historical thinking concepts, perspective, far-right conservatism, history teaching

The "history from below" (Feldman & Lawrence, 2011, p. 3) approach which emerged alongside the civil rights movements of the 1960s and second wave feminism in the 1970s in disciplinary history has slowly found its way into secondary schooling. This has worked to counter the construction of monovocal national narratives as they are "increasingly challenged from within and without" (Levesque, 2017, p. 227). This is now recognised explicitly in secondary schooling contexts,

> in the expectation that in their study of history students consider differing perspectives and historical interpretations. The current focus of history curricula in most Western countries on teaching historical inquiry and historical reasoning could be expected to stimulate critical engagement with the past and open discussion of sensitive historical issues. (Savenije & Goldberg, 2019, p. 41)

This more inclusive, polyvocal approach allows students to construct a more nuanced understanding of the past, by recognising that people's motivations for, experiences of, and interpretations of events are varied, and shaped by a wide range of contextual forces. This approach works to counter historical narratives which construct singular national identities to the exclusion of minority groups or those who reject the dominant view.

Historical enquiry and reasoning (Savenije & Goldberg, 2019, p. 41) underpin Peter Seixas' influential "historical thinking" concepts (Seixas & Morton, 2013). Historical thinking is made possible when students undertake enquiry by engaging with "evidence", "historical perspectives"

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* **Contact:** Alison Bedford ✉ alison.bedford@unisq.edu.au
University of Southern Queensland, School of Education, Toowoomba, Australia

and the concepts of "significance, continuity and change, and cause and consequence", as well as "the ethical dimension" (Seixas & Morton, 2013). Seixas' work has been hugely influential in history education, most notably in Canada, the United Kingdom, parts of the United States, and Australia (Bedford, 2023).

In the Australian context, Seixas' historical thinking concepts are explicitly embedded within the national history curriculum 'Aims':

> the understanding and use of the historical concepts of evidence, perspectives, interpretations and contestability, continuity and change, cause and effect, and significance … capacity to undertake historical inquiry, including skills for questioning and research, using historical sources, historical perspectives and interpretations, and communicating a historical explanation. (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2022)

While this example shows how the focus on a broader range of perspectives and interpretations from the 'history from below' shift in disciplinary history has been taken up in secondary contexts, the early findings of our study (Ethics Approval UniSQ H22REA172) into how the concept of perspectives is understood and taught by secondary teachers has revealed that there is no shared definition amongst history educators. Our initial findings drew on responses from an online survey which asked secondary history teachers in the Australian state of Queensland to rank both how important differing perspectives were in their teaching and how they defined and taught this concept. Of the 31 respondents, there was an even mix of public, independent and Catholic school employees. Approximately half had been teaching for 5 years or less, most came from metropolitan or regional urban centres and were in their 30s. An expanded study of other Australian states and territories is ongoing, with a view to starting both a national and international conversation about the teaching of perspectives in secondary history and its relationship to effective citizenship, particularly in settler-colonial contexts where the silencing of First Nations' peoples was the norm in early national curricula (Bedford, 2023).

In our early findings on how teachers navigate differing perspectives in their teaching, a number of differing foci emerged: range, point of view, argument, and ideology. For teachers focused on range, they wanted to ensure students engagement with a mix of source types, including primary and secondary sources, artefacts, and sources written by people of different origins or contexts. Those teachers with a "point of view focus" were more interested in ensuring that even if the source type was the same, there was variation in the point of view conveyed. They explained this by using language like "critical, favourable, positive, negative" (Survey responses). A third group placed emphasis on how the sources might be used to construct a historical argument, linking the perspectives directly to the resultant response. This is seen in the focus on argument in the following response:

> students will locate sources about the topic that … have contesting evidence about the sub-inquiry question/key-inquiry question/hypothesis. This means the student will have to deal with the reasons as to why these sources are contesting each other, evaluate these sources accordingly and provide an explanation about why their hypothesis is still valid despite the conflicting evidence. (Survey response, Respondent 9)

Finally, some teacher responses touched on the underpinning ideologies or theoretical lenses used, particularly in historical interpretations, but this was infrequent. One example included a teacher who listed "political ideology or historians whose views differ because of when/where they are writing; their historiographical school" as an element of "different perspectives" (Survey response, Respondent 7). No respondent talked about teaching ideological or sociological concepts like revisionism, Marxism, feminism and so on as a means of identifying the historian's approach. This does make sense, as it is not a part of the national curriculum requirements for students to identify the ideological lens through which the historian has produced their interpretations, and ideological and theoretical stance is conceptually challenging for younger learners. This also highlights a key difference between disciplinary history (in which teachers have some training, which may account for their responses which discuss theoretical lenses) and secondary history, where understanding of the historian's ideology or theoretical lens is outside the scope of the curriculum.

There was a degree of overlap between these thematic foci in many of the responses, which only further highlights the absence of a clear and shared definition of what it is to understand and teach the concept of perspectives. Yet taken as a whole, it is clear that our respondents consider differing perspectives to be drawn from a range of source types, contain different points of view on the topic at hand, can be used to inform a historical argument, and are reflective of

different beliefs, values, or interpretations (although they don't articulate this in the same way as historians through the identification of theoretical positionality). Thus, this miniature serves as a provocation for readers to consider how historical perspectives are understood and taught by teachers in their own secondary schooling systems and what the implications of this are for both the dominant and minority cultural groups within society as the norms of liberal democracy face substantial challenges.

This call for a renewed focus on the teaching of different perspectives is timely, as the last fifteen years has seen increased efforts to silence and exclude minorities by a rising tide of far-right conservatism globally. Just a few examples highlight how widespread this effort to restore a singular, dominant cultural narrative is. In the United States, Governor of Florida Ron de Santis has overseen legislation which prevents the teaching of gender and sexuality in schools, referred to as the 'Don't Say Gay' laws (Fla. Legis., 2022). Further legislation has banned the teaching of Critical Race Theory and any negative representation of minority experiences, with De Santis suggesting that slavery had "benefits" for enslaved peoples (Planas, 2023). These efforts to silence and exclude have also found traction in Australia, with neo-Nazis in Melbourne supporting anti-trans activist Posey Parker (Yu & Hosier, 2023) and an Australian anti-Islamic gunman killing 51 worshippers in New Zealand (Garrison, 2019). This massacre was directly inspired by another anti-Islamic white supremacist attack that killed 77 in Norway 7 years prior (Smith-Spark, 2021). In Europe, the rise of far-right rhetoric underpinned some aspects of the Brexit debate and has been used to foster anti-immigration sentiment in a number of nations. In this increasingly hostile 'us vs them' landscape, it is more pressing than ever that young people engage with differing perspectives to counter these attempts to construct singular, exclusionary national narratives, and use evidence critically to make informed decisions as young citizens.

As Drerup eloquently explains,

> Democratic education can be understood as the initiation into basic values, norms and practices that are conducive for the intergenerational reproduction of liberal democracies. Among the central values that are constitutive of democratic education are the acceptance of the validity of basic liberal and democratic principles and procedures (such as basic human rights, the rule of law, pluralism, division of powers). Central aims of democratic education are, among others, personal and political autonomy as the capacity and willingness to critically question one's inherited convictions and perspectives as well as the capacity to participate in public discussions in an informed and reasonable way. (2021, p. 253)

There are two threads here which need to be taken up. The first is the maintenance of liberal and democratic principles, including human rights. Thus, recognition of the human rights violations of the past, including those perpetrated by each nations own dominant (usually colonial) cultures, is a necessary element in any national history curriculum, despite the discomfort this may cause. In the Australian context, this is reflected in the Uluru Statement from the Heart (2017), which calls for voice, treaty and truth (Marshall, 2022). Secondly, developing in students a capacity for challenging their own perspectives and participating in public discussion can be achieved through the rehearsal of the skills of disciplinary history, supported by teachers motivated by a desire to promote critical citizenship (Savenije & Goldberg, 2019, p. 47). That is not to say however that all perspectives, like those of De Santis or the perpetrators of massacres, deserve a place in the discussion as valid. As Savenije and Goldberg point out, "the act of opening a topic to discussion and giving voice can itself be a double-edged sword in terms of promoting a democratic, inclusive climate, at times leading to the opposite effect" (2019, p. 58). However, when historical debate is undertaken using historical thinking concept of evidence, which includes consideration of the source's reliability (Wineburg & McGrew, 2019), it becomes easier for teachers to challenge and highlight the flaws in spurious or biased, unevidenced claims. This remains a difficult task, but a vital one, in which teachers must "make clear to students that they deserve respect as persons but that respect is not owed to statements that do not respect the rights of others, [and]... always try to address all students as agents capable of critically reflecting on their believes and objections" (Drerup, 2021, p. 264). It is here that Sexias' ethical dimension plays a vital role, as teachers must draw a line between discussion of contesting perspectives (e.g. Arab and Israeli interpretations of their ongoing conflict), compared to the discussion of perspectives which do not adhere to liberal democratic values of respect for others (e.g. anti-Semitic or anti-Islamic views). One simple way to do this is to challenge those students who make such statements by asking them for evidence to support their assertion. If they can do so, these sources can then be assessed by the class for reliability, where they are often found lacking. This maintains respect for the student while applying the disciplinary skills

of historical study to challenge their views, and so the discussion of perspectives, even when difficult, supports students to

> acquire and cultivate a variety of epistemic, communicative and political attitudes, skills and virtues as well as associated bodies of knowledge on which democratic societies depend. These include, for example: knowledge about and interest in political issues, critical thinking skills, motivation for political engagement as well as acceptance of basic democratic values and principles (equality, tolerance, pluralism, etc.) and the ability to deal with conflict in a civil and peaceful way. (Drerup, 2021, p. 256)

As the increasing body of work on democratic education emphasises, our students need to be equipped with the skills to navigate a range of perspectives within a pluralistic, multicultural democracy (Bedford & Kerby, 2024), and the study of history is particularly well-suited to this goal, with its emphasis on the use of evidence from a range of perspectives to construct interpretation and argument. Yet it is not clear how consistently teachers do this, and what strategies they use.

In closing, we pose two questions to our readers:

1. How is the concept of perspective understood and taught in your nation's secondary schooling context?
2. How might the effective teaching of different perspectives help counter the promotion of a monovocal, exclusionary national narrative by far-right extremism?

Our early work suggests that a more consistent or shared definition of what 'different perspectives' actually encompass within a secondary history context needs to be established, considering the range of source types, variation in points of view and arguments, and range of ideological positions that should be addressed. This will in turn facilitate a better understanding of how these differing perspectives might be taught and discussed with students in ways that promote the values of our liberal democracies, striking a balance between hearing from a range of perspectives while recognising some perspectives are not reflective of liberal democratic values, which most settler-colonial western nations aim to strengthen through their curriculum.

We aim to explore these questions further in our own context and hope to engage with others asking similar questions of their own history education systems.

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Review

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ORCID iD

Alison Bedford ⓘD https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6708-9896
Naomi Barnes ⓘD https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4049-1866

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"Simply" talking about the Anthropocene?

Pluritemporality, multiscalar history, and history education

*Andreas Hübner** iD

Kiel University, Kiel

Abstract

The Anthropocene seems to be on everyone's lips these days. Whether as a turning point in Earth's history, a geological epoch, or as a cultural narrative and metaphor, the Anthropocene is currently being debated not only in the scientific disciplines, but also as a fashionable buzzword in the media, popular culture, and the arts. Conversely, some scholars have argued that the term perpetuates anthropocentrism, Eurocentrism, and global inequalities rather than "demystifying" them. Use of the term itself would seemingly encourage ongoing processes of depoliticization. In what follows, I will trace this supposed depoliticization of the Anthropocene. Ultimately, I argue that a critical look at notions of temporality and timescale could not only reveal the politics of the Anthropocene and initiate new modes of historical thinking, but also shake the foundations of history education.

Keywords

Anthropocene, history education, pluritemporality, multiscalar history, historical consciousness

History education at the Anthropocene crossroads

The Anthropocene seems to be on everyone's lips these days. Whether as a watershed in the Earth's history, a geological epoch or as a cultural narrative and metaphor, the Anthropocene is currently being discussed not only in the scientific disciplines, but also as a fashionable buzzword in the media, popular culture and the arts — in short, in the public sphere. In times of crisis, the Anthropocene is booming.

History as a discipline is no exception. Alongside pioneers such as Dipesh Chakrabarty (2009) in the international context or Franz Mauelshagen (2012), Jürgen Renn (with Scherer, 2015; 2022) and Eleonora Rohland (2018) in the German-speaking world, a number of historians and history teachers are now working on "the" Anthropocene. Even the first instances of its institutionalization can be observed. The University of Zurich has recently appointed a Chair for the history of the Anthropocene, held by Debjani Bhattacharyya. Moreover, journals are now dedicated to "the" Anthropocene or have special issues on the subject. One such journal is The Anthropocene Review, which regularly publishes historical articles with an interdisciplinary focus. History education, even though it arrived with a splash, has been a little too late to the party. Nevertheless, there have been various responses to Anthropocene studies in history education: First, in the

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* **Contact:** Andreas Hübner ✉ ahuebner@histosem.uni-kiel.de
Kiel University, History Department, Germany

context of the climate crisis, many scholars have recognized the need for conceptual change and have begun rethinking the framework of history education. These scholars are reexamining the notion of knowledge and knowledge production in the Anthropocene (Barsch & Hübner, 2023; Hübner, 2022; Nitsche et al., 2023; Nordgren 2023). Indeed, Kenneth Nordgren gets to the heart of the matter when he writes: "We need to explore what can be powerful historical knowledge to orient in this new normality" (2021). Second, there is a group of scholars who are reevaluating history education itself in addressing climate crises. Some scholars of history education, such as Canadian historians Heather McGregor, Sara Karn, and Jackson Pind, have taken a "radical" approach "in seeking to attune history education to a relational, ecological and ethical future orientation" (2020, 169; also see McGregor et al., 2021). Despite this development, many scholars' reference to the Anthropocene is still simply a reiteration of Crutzen and Stoermer's original wording:

> Considering these and many other major and still growing impacts of human activities on earth and atmosphere, and at all, including global scales, it seems to us more than appropriate to emphasize the central role of mankind in geology and ecology by proposing to use the term "anthropocene" for the current geological epoch. (2000, p. 17)

The concept of the Anthropocene is often reduced to a "tried-and-tested" consensual platitude – and I myself have taken this path: "Humans are now a geological influence and thus a global, geological and existentially threatening (risk) factor" (Hübner et al., 2023, p. 85, trans.). As a result, we lose sight of the need to critically examine the concept of the Anthropocene. After all, the Anthropocene is not only self-referential – Donna Haraway comes to mind (2016, p. 539): "The Anthropocene is thereby produced as a human species act" – the Anthropocene is also "a result of the actions of powerful actors of a global economy and politics of both "old" and "new" imperialism" (Gebhardt, 2016, p. 38, trans.).

The Anthropocene is, in short, a highly political concept – and in this political sense a very Western and Eurocentric concept. However, while the concept reveals the use of time in the context of political action and agency, it also expands the theoretical view of constructing time as a form of social meaning. For the very act of speaking of the Anthropocene in terms of time is a political act, if not one that is also depoliticizing. And, if one follows Landwehr's understanding of knowledge of time, it has less to do with science than with critical discourse and political practice. Once knowledge of time about the Anthropocene has succeeded in "solidifying itself discursively, that is, in forming specific forms of the true and the real, it must be granted historical efficacy" (2020, 41, trans.). Hence, to declare the Anthropocene a geological epoch can be regarded not only as a "discipline-based construction of time" – one that reflects the study of time as manifested in "rock sediment and fossils, the compression of stones and animal remains marking layers of change" (Gribetz & Kaye, 2023, p. 57) – but it could, as the geographer Hans Gebhardt (2016) warns, also be tantamount to depoliticizing global environmental change: "Powerful actors, organizations, institutions and their spatially differentiated actions in a globalized world disappear behind the 'human'" (p. 39, trans.).

Against this background, it is important to discuss the politics of the Anthropocene – and so indeed the depoliticization of the Anthropocene – and to speak of individual people and groups. Elsewise, so the criticism goes, the term would perpetuate anthropocentrism, Eurocentrism, and global inequalities rather than "demystify" them. In fact, the term itself would encourage ongoing processes of depoliticization. In what follows, I will trace this supposed depoliticization of the Anthropocene. In doing so, I take an approach that makes use of concepts of temporality and timescales, consider deep-time and multi-scalar notions of time, and ultimately argue that a critical look at notions of temporality and timescales will not only uncover the politics of the Anthropocene and initiate political action but also shake the foundations of German-language history education.

On the depths of deep history

"The 'Anthropocene'", notes Christoph Antweiler (2022, p. 224, trans.), "reflects the species category human in the word." According to Donna Haraway, such a wording inscribes an overestimation of the human species' agency into the concept of the Anthropocene (2016). Moreover, talk of the Anthropocene, as a number of critics argue, perpetuates a familiar speciesism and exceptionalism content with simplistic solutions. If the anthropogenic climate crisis is the core of all evil, then only anthropogenic science can provide a cure (Antweiler, 2022, p. 226). The pri-

oritization of geoengineering and technological fixes, of "technological openness" and ecological "economic efficiency", which is a mainstay of political discourse, reflects this understanding of the Anthropocene (see Merz, 2023).

Dipesh Chakrabarty (2009) took up this criticism early on in his article *The Climate of History: Four Theses* and introduced the concept of species and species thinking, though not without causing some unease among historians. Chakrabarty himself admits that the category of species would evoke memories of biologism, essentialism, and determinism and could thereby obscure the reality of capitalist production and the logic of imperial rule (p. 216), but he nevertheless sees the concept of species as a starting point to "bring together intellectual formations that are somewhat in tension with each other: the planetary and the global; deep and recorded histories; species thinking and critiques of capital" (p. 213). The basis for this concept is his insight that, on the one hand, the climate crisis "has been necessitated by the high-energy consuming models of society that capitalist industrialization has created and promoted" (p. 217). On the other hand, however, "the knowledge in question is the knowledge of humans as a species, a species dependent on other species for its own existence, a part of the general history of life" (p. 219). Consequently, Chakrabarty argues for an interweaving of the history of capital and the history of species. Following Daniel Lord Smail (2008), Chakrabarty (2009, p. 213) sees thinking in terms of species and all forms of species history as closely linked to the quest for deep history:

Man will have to be placed in the larger context of the deeper history of life on this planet. … So, our inevitable anthropocentrism will have to be supplemented (not replaced) by "deep time" perspectives that necessarily escape the human point of view. (Chakrabarty, 2017, p. 42)

The fact that Chakrabarty speaks here of an inevitable anthropocentrism is probably due to his phenomenological premises: "We humans", he says, "never experience ourselves as a species. We can understand or infer the existence of a human species on an intellectual level, but we never experience it as such" (2009, p. 220). Any form of historical experience in the Anthropocene would be ruled out. Historians would hardly be able to cross the threshold of human and nonhuman modes of existence. The threshold between the distant and the familiar, the anthropocentrism of the past and the present, would ultimately remain insurmountable (Hübner 2022). Such a focus on deep history could therefore lead to the depths of anthropocentrism.

Moreover, and it is important to note this before turning to Chakrabarty's use of the term "species", the blanket use of the term "human" or "humans" can create a feeling of unease. In many discussions about the Anthropocene, talk of humanity or human action "as such" awakens the impression that they are monolithic concepts, which shows a disregard for global and regional diversity, inequalities, and injustices. Scholars such as Kathleen Morrison have thus called for "provincializing the Anthropocene", meaning that

we no longer take European agricultural or industrial history as a starting point, or that we stop trying to project (and retrodict) proposed causal relationships between population and anthropogenic effects derived from a limited sample of human economic history, but also that we attend to the ways in which existing "western" structures of thought and disciplinary practice overdetermine modes of agency – "human" and "natural." (2015)

A universalist appropriation of the Anthropocene that depoliticizes the concept in a political sense stands in sore need of correction. As Frank Biermann et al. – and similar voices above all in sustainability and environmental studies – recognize, the Anthropocene is instead a "political term" (2016, p. 348). Hence, Biermann et al. have pointed out:

[T]he Anthropocene notion … has been criticized for picturing an overly simplistic and globalized view on human agency. … While we recognize that the Anthropocene concept can be powerful in raising awareness of the overall human impacts on our planet, we claim that it risks being framed and understood in a way that is too "global" and monolithic, neglecting persistent social inequalities and vast regional differences. (2016, p. 342)

From multispecies to multiscalar histories

In *The Climate of History in a Planetary Age*, Chakrabarty (2021) has responded to the criticisms of his ideas. Roughly speaking, he distinguishes between two forms of historiography: first, he speaks of a global history, or rather a history of the globe, that is, a human-centered history of the Earth over the past 500 years, which is closely linked to the history of European expansion and colonialism. And second, he distinguishes a history of the planet from this first form, which, through the category of the planetary, removes humans from the center and places them in other, longer timescales:

> The globe, I argue, is a humanocentric construction; the planet, or the Earth system, decenters the human … the doubled figure of the human now requires us to think about how various forms of life, our own and others', may be caught up in historical processes that bring together the globe and the planet both as projected entities and as theoretical categories and thus mix the limited timescale over which modern humans and humanist historians contemplate history with the inhumanly vast timescales of deep history (Chakrabarty, 2021, p. 4).

As Zoltán Simon notes, Chakrabarty is attempting to break the dominance of anthropocentrism through the figure of the dual nature of man:

> Thus, the notion of the "doubled figure of the human" … gives way, later in the book, to a tripartite distinction between the internally divided humanity of the sociopolitical domain and humanist histories, the human as a species in the history of the species, and the human as a geological agent in Anthropocene/planetary history (15). These conceptions of the human and their respective histories intersect and interact as the global discloses the planetary. (Simon, 2023, p. 327)

Historians such as Marek Tamm and Zoltán Simon (2020) address this very point and argue for concepts of multi- and pluritemporality in the writing of history. In this, Tamm and Simon differ from other historians such as Achim Landwehr (2020) and Caroline Rothauge (2017 & 2021), who also discuss concepts of pluritemporality, but hardly problematize humanocentric perspectives. When Landwehr and Rothauge speak of pluritemporality, they often refer to a meaning emphasizing that a "variety of times existed in parallel and that individuals as well as collectives therefore were living in, living with and actively producing a multitude of temporal modes" (Rothauge, 2021, p. 225). Landwehr and Rothauge thus do not include " more-than-human times" and pursue a "chronoanthropocentrism", to employ a term introduced by Helge Jordheim (2022, p. 423), which falls short of Johann Gottfried Herder's ideas of polytemporality: "In fact, every changeable thing has the measure of its time in itself; this would exist even if there were no other; no two things in the world have the same measure of time" (1799, p. 75, own translation). Marcia Bjornerud, a geoscientist and environmentalist, sees the first impulses for polytemporal thinking in art and cultural projects such as that of the photographer Rachel Sussman. In her explorations, Sussman portrayed the oldest living creatures on Earth: a brain coral whose appearance she dated to the time of Plato, pine trees whose age she estimated at over 4,000 years, and soil bacteria that have lain dormant in the Siberian permafrost for over 700,000 years (Sussman cited in Bjornerud, 2022, p. 198). All these creatures, we might readily conclude, create time horizons that transcend generational orders of time, call for alternative narrativizations of time(s), and point to a new kind of relationship to time. For historians, it initially seems somewhat absurd to think of such alternative narrativizations of times beyond cognitive-linguistic narrativizations without slipping into the realm of abstract speculation.

Furthermore, historical animal studies have recently shown how nonhuman actors can become the protagonists of source-based historical narratives. The historian Mieke Roscher (2022) traced the life and myth of "Darwin's" giant Galápagos turtle Harriet, who was hatched from an egg on the Ecuadorian islands of the same name around 1830 and died in an Australian zoo in 2006. Although there is some doubt as to the veracity of this story, since Darwin never visited the island where Harriet originally came from, the turtle has nevertheless left her mark on historical narratives of evolutionary history (Roscher, 2022, p. 20). Still, with this nonhuman biographical sketch, Roscher has opened up a completely new way of reading the history of the 19th, 20th and early 21st centuries (see also Krebber & Roscher 2018).

Tamm and Simon, in a similar way, seek to transcend the anthropocentrism of conventional historiography with their approach of a "more-than-human history". The two authors suggest that, if the Anthropocene has taught us anything, it is that time and historicity are not specifi-

cally human. Accordingly, they continue, a new concept of historical temporality is not just about extending our temporal horizon deep into the past, that is, into deep time. Rather, it is about a pluralistic understanding of temporality, open to different rhythms, events, and processes at different scales. In short, it is about multiscalarity (Tamm & Simon 2020, p. 211f.).

Like Chakrabarty, Tamm and Simon operationalize the concept of species and consequently speak of a multispecies history, which, intertwined with a multiscale history, does not mean putting an end to historiography about the human world, but rather opening up a potentially new historical knowledge that would be inconceivable within the boundaries of a modern concept of history that focused exclusively on humans. Such a concept of history would include all forms of life, reach far into the past, support the interaction and integration of multiple timescales, and take seriously the transformative events and interruptions on a deep timescale (Tamm & Simon 2020, p. 214).

From a scaling of time towards a critique of historical consciousness

The dominance of anthropocentrism in the Anthropocene, it should be noted here, is also conditioned by a humanocentric scaling of time and temporality. Chakrabarty counters this scaling of time with the concept of species and deep time, Tamm and Simon with the concepts of multispecies and multiscalar history. Both approaches are linked to acts of political behavior. For the political is reflected in the scalings of temporality, especially in the scalings of a history of the globe and a history of the planet, in the meeting of human and nonhuman scales. "Global" scalings of temporality unfold at the level of histories of capital, consumption, and colonization, and see human-centered sustainability as a central concern. "Global" scalings are thus not only anthropocentric, they also always blur social and planetary inequalities, promote differentiation, and are hegemonic and Eurocentric. In contrast, "planetary" (or even multiscale) scales do not refer to humans but focus on a complex and multicellular life that makes the habitability of the planet sustainable not only for humans.

The "planetary age", or rather the planetary scaling of temporality, hence opens up a perspective for political action in the Anthropocene: "We are interwoven with a history", Chakrabarty explains, "that is not our own. And this perspective can inspire political action" (2022, trans.). Political action, he continues, should therefore be understood as something that "on the one hand helps people to think beyond their lifetimes and to be at home on earth." On the other hand, and this would certainly be in Chakrabarty's spirit, a planetary scaling of temporality could point the way to educational approaches beyond the usual Eurocentrisms. The provincialization of Europe could be achieved through the concepts of the Anthropocene and multiscalarity, and the historical responsibility of the Western industrialized countries in the so-called Global North could be discussed.

Donna Haraway admittedly leaves such an elaboration of the Anthropocene concept somewhat annoyed: because, as Haraway explains in a roundtable discussion:

> If you propose to call the present time Capitalocene, as I and others have done to highlight these processes … you will be accused of being political. Propose Anthropocene and you are simply talking about the human impact on the planet that is now of a geological scale. (Haraway et al., 2016, p. 5)

In a sense, then, Haraway associates the concept of the Anthropocene with a concealment of the political dimensions of its underlying processes. However, and despite the discrepancy with Chakrabarty's positions, her statement also makes one thing clear: the question of politicizing the Anthropocene is essentially intertwined with the scaling of temporality. Talk of the Anthropocene therefore not only challenges the (non)politicization of history but is also intertwined with a politicization of temporality and time consciousness. To put it more clearly, the very concept of time consciousness is — from Chakrabarty's and Haraway's perspective — a political concept. This means that talk of the Anthropocene, whether it is conceptualized through approaches such as the planetary age, multispecies history, multiscalar history or the like, is rather controversial for history education: first, the "dimensions" of temporality or temporal consciousness appear more political than ever. With reference to discussions on the Anthropocene, it can hardly be denied that the lifeworld perception of the temporality of experience and action (see Pandel,

1987) and its development is closely intertwined with a scaling of temporality that not only focuses on people, but also makes "one's own" scaling of temporality the norm in a quasi-self-referential act in relation to "other" scalings. Furthermore, and this is where I would like to end for now, one of the foundations of history education needs to be reconsidered, namely, historical consciousness, the conventional interpretation of which undoubtedly promotes a humanocentric, "hegemonically Eurocentric and nation-state shaped culture of history and memory" (Yildirim & Lücke, 2020, p. 150).

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ORCID iD

Andreas Hübner https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3885-4429

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Digital construction

Redefine history in historical games

*Lili Zeng** iD

Shanghai Jiao Tong University

Abstract

The traditional linear narrative of historical concepts is currently facing significant challenges and is being partially supplanted by digital media. Historical games hold immense educational potential, offering a unique digital space that compensates for the shortcomings of traditional history education. Their value lies in open narratives, situational immersion, experiential learning, and the ability to contextualize historical events through avatars. Moreover, well-designed games align with principles of effective learning, enabling seamless integration with classroom education.

Keywords

Keywords: historical thinking, history, education, video games, game literacy

Introduction: Challenges of traditional history education

> A historical phenomenon, purely and completely known and resolved into an object of knowledge, is, for the person who has recognized it, dead. (Nietzsche, 2010, p. 12)

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, accompanied by wars and inflation, the world seems to have entered a new phase of disorder. The crisis lies in the rise of nationalism and populism, with different factions intentionally strengthening their legitimacy as communities. At any tumultuous moment, history inevitably functions as a tool for political propaganda, as the past represents the choice of both current identity and future value (or interest). Therefore, the question we must address today is, what kind of historical education do we need to adapt to the genuine process of globalization?

History has evolved into a specialized discipline. Academic research's focus on specific details has made it increasingly challenging to consider grand themes. This trend toward specialization and compartmentalization has been institutionalized in intellectual circles since the nineteenth century (Wallerstein, 1996). In the realm of education, students often encounter the compulsion to grasp intricate historical concepts, and their understanding of history tends to become abstract and nebulous, entangled within the webs of semantics spun by various theories. Hence, the central challenge confronting the field of history lies in dismantling the academic barriers

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*   **Contact:** Lili Zeng ✉ lilizeng000@gmail.com
     Shanghai Jiao Tong University, School of History and Culture of Science, Shanghai, China

that often confine it within the ivory tower. Due to this confinement, history wields an unjustifiable authority in determining the veracity of the past, with underlying pressures stemming from the prevailing social ideologies to which the discipline is affiliated.

However, the primary objective of history education should not be the arbitrary creation of historical consciousness but rather the cultivation of students' capacity to engage with past phenomena, interpret them within a historical framework, and apply these interpretative skills in practical, real-world scenarios (Kenneth et al., 2015). There is an increasing consensus that the aim of history education is not merely to transmit historical facts or traditional knowledge but to engage with epistemological issues arising from the perception of the past. In this process, the exploration of historical thinking plays a crucial role. Some scholars associate historical thinking and reasoning with historical consciousness or cultural literacy. Historical reasoning is informed not only by specific domain knowledge and particular epistemological beliefs but also implicitly involves the application of historical heuristics or thinking strategies related to historical meta-concepts. It relies on critical skills in dealing with texts and endeavors to organize evidence and construct arguments (van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008).

In the Western world, this field predominantly revolves around three main directions: British empiricism, the German "historical consciousness" of the philosophical category, and the "historical literacy" of the disciplinary approach in the United States (Seixas, 2017). These approaches to studying history are increasingly being challenged, criticized for their excessive emphasis on disciplinary forms of knowledge aligned with academic education, rather than considering broader educational backgrounds and societal contexts (Lévesque & Clark, 2018). In the reality of Asian nations, the issue of historical study may be even more complex. For example, in the Japanese education system, the cultivation of historical thinking has surpassed textbooks and become a careful consideration for a portion of post-war Japanese national life (Fukuoka, 2011). Therefore, in a broader sense, the aim of history education should not be confined to whether students can apply a prescribed set of concepts or ideas to solve historical (or epistemological) problems, but rather whether they can perceive history and their own approaches as contingent factors of culture and context. This entails realizing that all individuals construct meaning and approach history within cultural paradigms (Thorp & Persson, 2020). This article, also grounded in the theoretical perspective of constructivism, acknowledges that the essence of historical thinking lies not in the specific knowledge of the past, but in the constituent elements that emerge during the construction of this knowledge. These elements include foundational concepts, utilized resources, experiential modes, and more. The distinction here is in emphasizing that the construction of history is not solely the work of historians or history teachers; it encourages ordinary individuals to question history themselves. This means that we must approach history not only from a constructivist perspective — whether it be social constructivism or otherwise — but also actively participate in the construction of history. This is a reflexive form of learning, requiring learners to actively engage in historical discourse and debates, much like playing games.

Gaming involves principles such as voluntariness, personal participation, and understanding of rule application (Caillois, 2001), which constitutes the process of construction. As psychologist Jean Piaget observed, play is not a purposeless activity; it facilitates learning in children's cognitive development. From an educational standpoint, Piaget was one of the first to propose a constructivist perspective, asserting that children construct their understanding of the world through active interaction with their environment (Piaget, 1954). Specifically, games not only create technology-based learning environments but also shape learning characteristics. Given this, the second part of the article will further explain the uniqueness of game space as a historical context for exploration, and the third part will discuss the connection between games and learning and their positive impact on history education.

Historical exploration in game spaces

Over the past two decades, online games have facilitated extensive global collaboration and interaction among players, resulting in numerous virtual communities with hundreds of millions of participants. A notable example is "World of Warcraft" which has collectively consumed over 50 billion hours of players' time worldwide — equivalent to approximately 6 million years, spanning the entire period since the inception of upright-walking humans (McGonigal, 2021). However, this is just the tip of the iceberg. With the proliferation of smartphones, mobile games have steadi-

ly become the primary driving force behind the expansion of the global gaming market, now claiming over half of the market share. Statistics show that the number of players in the gaming community has surpassed 3 billion during the COVID-19 pandemic, and this figure is expected to continue approaching the total global population. Furthermore, more than 200 million copies of games tagged as "historical" have been sold on Steam, the largest digital game distribution platform (Boom et al., 2020). This underscores the significant role historical-themed games play in contemporary gaming culture and their potential for historical education and exploration. Specifically, it encompasses open narrative, experiential learning, a focus on personal immersion, and the ability to contextualize historical events through the use of avatars.

Open narrative

Although narrative is not a core element of conventional games, often serving as secondary background to guide players through different levels, it undeniably exerts a growing influence in certain role-playing or strategy games. The establishment of player self-identity is intricately linked with the setting and development of the story. Players need an expansive narrative backdrop to give meaning and depth to their actions, thereby enhancing the gaming experience. The narrative in games can be categorized into three types (Fouad, 2019):

- *Embedded Narrative*: The narrative content is pre-generated before the player interacts with the game, and the story serves as a means to motivate players to take specific actions and develop the storyline.
- *Emergent narrative*: This form of narrative occurs in open-world simulation games, often referred to as sandbox games. Artificial intelligence analyzes the behaviors of each user and NPC agent, adjusting the entire world based on player actions. Games with multiple endings or non-linear storylines commonly employ this narrative approach.
- *Mixed narrative*: A combination of the two aforementioned narrative approaches, typically beginning with a simple background story and then, during the interactive process, establishing connections between plot points for the player.

These varied narrative structures afford players an open or semi-open gaming environment, expanding the imaginative scope for games with historical themes. For instance, "Disco Elysium", a recently popular role-playing game designed by an Estonian developer, features an open world and extensive dialogues. Based on an embedded narrative, it introduces a function called the Thought Cabinet. As players engage in dialogues with their brain or corresponding NPCs throughout the game, they acquire new thoughts interwoven to shape different modes of thinking, ultimately influencing the player's skills and affiliations. Despite being grounded in a fictional detective narrative, this game effectively portrays the backdrop of the former Soviet Union and the era of Eastern European socialism in the last century. It immerses players in a vanished historical milieu, prompting contemplation of the communist world through an exploration of its open narrative. Another striking example is "Crusader Kings II", which covers the historical period from 769 AD to 1453 AD, centered on feudal political dynamics and religious conflicts. As a grand strategy game, it simulates intricate political, military, and economic systems, skillfully crafting an engaging interactive story. "Crusader Kings II" extensively relies on emergent narrative, and due to the emotional complexity of independently driven agents, it deploys a layered, hybrid storytelling technique. This attribute significantly contributes to the game's success and popularity (Lucat & Haahr, 2015).

Criticism faced by game narratives revolves around the inconsistency between their content and historical records, potentially leading to the spread of misinformation and contributing to misconceptions among learners. It is essential to note that games prioritize entertaining experiences rather than strict adherence to reality. Therefore, we should perceive them as tools for divergent thinking, harnessing the value derived from the richness of possibilities they offer. Philosopher Paul Feyerabend has noted that activities deviating from reality, such as games, can serve as unconventional sources of inspiration for addressing practical problems, thereby enhancing the diversity of ideas necessary to navigate the complexities of an ever-changing world (Feyerabend, 1993). This approach has the potential to facilitate educational de-standardization, encouraging a more engaging and dynamic learning experience.

Situational immersion

Games distinguish themselves from traditional media primarily through their capacity to endow players with an intuitive role, facilitating their active engagement with informational content conveyed through situational events. This inherent process fosters empathy as players, assuming the perspective of avatars within a virtual environment, encounter stimuli that transcend their real-world attributes, thereby fostering novel cognitive perspectives. This feature is particularly helpful in cultivating historical empathy, defined as "attempting to understand the past on its own terms, and appreciate the perspectives, motivations, and desires of people in the past" (Hartman et al., 2021). Theoretically, players can assume the role of any historical figure or immerse themselves in any historical setting. Consequently, a more profound understanding of historical details becomes essential for players to enrich their operational experiences within the game.

In "God of War", players are intimately immersed in scenarios of the "Epic Mode", while in games such as "Rome: Total War" and "Imperium Romanum", players engage in negotiations with colonized lands. Furthermore, games like "Eleusis" and "Salammbo" offer players the opportunity to delve into mixed narratives steeped in ancient traditions (Clare, 2021). In the field of gaming, historians have assumed a new role — determining how they intend for players to experience pivotal historical moments, while also ensuring the enjoyment of the game for the players themselves (Spring, 2015).

Fogu argues that video games are evidently contributing to a transformative process involving the spatialization and virtualization of historical semantics. Specifically, they are replacing traditional modes of representation with sophisticated simulations and shifting the focus from physical presence to virtual experiences. Through gaming, we increasingly identify with the past through "places" rather than time, as the temporal experience itself is becoming detached from historical representations. On the other hand, we are also growing accustomed to experiencing the virtual sense of the past in reality. Thus, history is no longer presented but virtual (Fogu, 2009).

Additionally, some historians have observed that historical video games serve as a crucial link between the past and the present, significantly influencing historical memory and contributing to contemporary political discourse. Denning conducted research on how digital games with Nazi themes shape public understanding of the Third Reich. He found that games like the "Wolfenstein" series, through their immersive audio-visual worldbuilding, transcend the narrative itself, making them particularly rich texts. These games deeply integrate images and aesthetics of National Socialism, encompassing propaganda posters and German music, within environments rich in visual and auditory details. The informational content conveyed by such games far surpasses that of traditional historical monographs or feature films. However, these games adhere to established narrative and character conventions prevalent in contemporary popular culture while simplifying the crucial historical transformations in complex political processes. For the sake of immersive gamification, designers tend to highlight the bizarre aspects of the Third Reich and exploit public curiosity about Nazi leaders. It is noteworthy that players, while engaging in these games, unwittingly become part of an unconscious political discussion. Games reference past history, filter through previous representations, and reflect contemporary concerns. In other words, electronic games are not reproducing history but conveying our current cultural psychology and political inclinations (Denning, 2021).

Experiential learning

Game designer Tynan Sylveste perceives games as a special kind of machine. "Physical machines are made to propel vehicles, heat houses, or assemble widgets. Games are made to provoke emotion" (Sylvester, 2013). The paramount role of games lies in their capacity to stimulate human emotions, with emotional engagement being of particular significance in contemporary specialized education. The word "education" originates from the Latin root "educare", which signifies "to lead out or bring forth". Effective education is fundamentally guided by the spontaneous evocation of emotions. While we may not possess direct access to the exact events of the past, games and simulations offer a means to reconstruct the actions and experiences of people in specific historical eras, thereby fostering inspiration through immersive interaction. This approach is often referred to as "experiential learning", a process defined as the generation of knowledge through the transformation of direct experience (Kolb, 1984). It signifies that learning involves the interaction between individuals and their environment with experiential

transformation, and simultaneously, it is a holistic process of the ongoing creation of knowledge as individuals adapt to the external world.

Based on existing research, games align with the expectations of experiential learning in three key aspects. Firstly, games promote learning motivation. In a project involving history major students in designing game scenarios, researchers found that this approach significantly mobilized positive emotions among students and promoted enthusiasm for interdisciplinary collaboration compared to traditional learning tasks (Molins-Ruano et al., 2014). Secondly, games create aesthetic spaces. Anderson, analyzing the game "Valiant Hearts: The Great War", highlighted its potential as a teaching tool for imparting the history of war. He draws attention to how games, through emotional design aesthetics, create a learning experience that is closer to visiting a museum than reading a textbook (Anderson, 2019). Thirdly, games foster self-directed learning. It typically occurs in natural, secular environments, where individuals derive experiential meaning from perceiving and interacting with their surroundings (Watkins & Marsick, 1992). Zap and Code studied the regulatory mechanisms of self-directed learning, discussing the design characteristics of game environments that support self-directed learning. This includes features of a realistic learning environment, where students can make decisions in a safe space without real-world consequences (Zap & Code, 2009). Therefore, the crucial points for introducing games into the educational environment should focus on enhancing students' proactivity, critical thinking, and creativity in design (Toh & Kirschner, 2020).

Game literacy for history learning

Beyond serving as an external environmental stimulus for learning, the intrinsic mechanisms of games themselves also exhibit a diverse array of learning characteristics. Play itself is a learning process. Good games engage players willingly, prompting them to invest time and attention in overcoming difficulties, teaching them to adapt to the challenges presented by different tasks. From a design perspective, "games are inherently systematic, and all games can be understood as systems" (Salen & Zimmerman, 2003). A system can be defined as a collection of elements that engage in interactions within a specific environment, resulting in the emergence of larger patterns or behaviors that are not inherent in any individual part. Games exemplify such systems with the notable characteristic of emergence. This gaming system is typically composed of three essential components:

- *Rules*: the logical and mathematical structure governing algorithms.
- *Gameplay*: the pattern of interaction between players, shaping the overall experience derived from these rules.
- *Culture*: the cultural context embedded within the system.

The systemic characteristics of games, capable of carrying a wealth of historical information, hold immense potential for crafting expansive realms of possibility. This observation has been duly recognized within the field of archaeology. The game project "Ancestors: Stories of Atapuerca", which aimed to showcase the most recent archaeological findings from the UNESCO World Heritage site of Atapuerca, was released for free on both Google Play and the Apple Store in 2018. Impressively, it garnered over 25,000 downloads within six months (Rubio-Campillo, 2020). This impact may surpass the display of neglected artifacts in archaeological museums.

Besides systemic interaction, another characteristic of games is multimodal text learning. In our contemporary context, visual symbols, images, symbols, graphs, diagrams, artifacts, and various other non-verbal forms of communication play a significant role, arguably even more so than in the past (Gee, 2007). Linguistic scholar J. P. Gee has aptly defined game playing as a form of acquiring a new competence, one that encompasses the comprehension and use of multimodal texts, which he refers to as "game literacy." More importantly, excellent game design aligns closely with some principles observed in the process of human learning. These characteristics can be summarized in the table below (Gee, 2005, pp. 6-14).

Table 1: Summary of learning principles and game characteristics according to Gee (2005)

Feature	Principle	Games
Co-design	Act as active participants rather than passive recipients.	Players feel that their actions and decisions collectively create the world and experience they inhabit.
Customize	Effective learning requires adjustment according to personal styles.	Gameplay can be customized according to personal situations.
Identity	Long-term investment.	Good games provide players with identities worth deeply investing in.
Manipulation	Human perception and behavior are closely associated.	Games provide players with virtual space to manipulate complex objects.
Cycles of expertise	Expertise stems from repetitive, cyclical practice.	Games support the continual expansion and testing of in-system knowledge in new tasks.
Information 'on demand' and 'just in time'	Humans apply information 'just in time' and 'on demand' with a given context.	Games provide abundant verbal information, which players learn and apply during manipulation.
Fish tanks	Simplified ecosystems are more likely to explain how critical variables work.	The tutorial or beginner mode in games serves as a fish tank demonstration.
Sandboxes	An environment that tolerates failure and provides a sense of authenticity can incentive learning.	Games encourage players to explore through sandbox.
Skills as strategies	Skills are best learned and practiced when used strategically to achieve goals.	Games encourage players to use strategies rather than isolated skills to achieve goals.
System thinking	Experience is enhanced when we understand how it integrate into a larger system.	Good games enable players to understand how each element integrates into the game's system.
Meaning as action image	Humans think through experiences and imaginative reconstructions on it.	Games convey through inviting experiences, not preaching.

These characteristics of games that align with learning principles can also be selectively applied to the design of history instruction, providing support for students' self-construction, thereby encouraging them to practice and utilize historical thinking. This can be achieved, for instance, through the use of virtual personas and personalized scenarios that amplify their sense of historical immersion. Besides traditional study like reading historical texts, it is crucial to introduce interactive modes of learning that enable students to augment their comprehensions through practical engagement. Research indicates that students exhibit higher emotional engagement and greater motivation when involved in game design activities. The use of video games has led to a shift from traditional teacher-centered learning environments to student-centered learning environments, with students being noticeably more active and engaged in the learning process (Watson et al., 2011).

In the field of education, games are further expanding their potential as supplementary teaching tools. A high school in Quebec, Canada, has introduced the game "Assassin's Creed" into history classrooms, aiming to evoke students' enthusiasm for history learning in a captivating and immersive way. Due to the rich historical information embedded in the game, cinematic clips can be extracted and used similarly to films in the classroom. As a simulation game, especially one with realistic reconstruction, "Assassin's Creed" presents past events with high-quality visual fidelity, capturing the players' attention and engaging them. Although this type of simulation may not handle ambiguity or uncertainty well and, in some aspects, deviates from professional historical facts, it sparks imagination and enhances players' overall understanding of ancient lifestyles (Karsenti & Parent, 2020). Another typical example is the use of the historical simulation game "Civilization" in online university history courses. It serves not only as a valuable supplement to traditional texts and lectures, assisting second-language speakers, but also fosters a sense of community in online courses (Martin, 2008).

Moreover, the influence of games on education extends beyond the realm of history to a broader exploration of effective educational practices. There is a burgeoning trend of integrating innovative educational concepts into game design, aiming to create experiences that resonate with learners by seamlessly blending educational content with gameplay. For example, the Education Arcade, an educational game research lab at MIT, has developed several science education games targeting young learners. These games are based on the principles of "resonance design," with the aim of connecting with learners' lives, passions, and the systems they embed. These design principles include honoring the whole learner, the learning context, the sociality of learning and play, and establishing a deep connection between the content and the game (Klopfer et al., 2018, pp. 2-10). For instance, "Vanished" is a game designed to cultivate STEM skills, where students investigate the environments of Earth-like planets as scientists. "Vanished" was funded through the Informal Science Education division of the National Science Foundation, combining online gaming, museum interactions, and multidisciplinary, cross-domain collaborative learning models. "Vanished" has not only been enthusiastically received by middle school students but has also led to the formation of clubs that host competitions. Similarly, in the math puzzle game "Lure of the Labyrinth", students are invited to navigate a labyrinth to rescue lost pets from underground monsters. These math problems are designed according to the standards of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and align with the core curriculum, allowing teachers to directly connect in-game tasks with classroom math concepts. In this game, students have used their math skills to rescue over 30 million pets!

In summary, games, through their inherent learning features and the exploratory space they provide, support a unique construction of the past, thereby influencing the student-centered learning concept in the field of education. However, while history-based games are a valuable avenue for connecting with the past, they should not be seen as flawless, nor should they constitute the only interpretation within the classroom setting. Whether used as an auxiliary teaching tool in formal education or as a complementary resource in informal education, game models should be effectively juxtaposed with other sources of evidence. This comparison will aid students in the process of corroboration and enable them to compare and contrast diverse sources, thereby enhancing their research skills in history and fostering a more comprehensive understanding of the topic being studied (McCall, 2016). Notably, the more boundaries are delineated between mass media and formal education, the greater the rift that may emerge between students' experiences in the classroom and their real-life situations. The role of games, perhaps, lies in serving as a buffer of digital technology, aiding traditional disciplines like history in better achieving knowledge and information sharing.

To Cite This Article

Review

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ORCID iD

Lili Zeng   iD   https://orcid.org/0009-0004-9573-0301

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Is there something that connects the diversity of historical narratives?

*Kenneth Nordgren** iD

Interviewed by Sebastian Barsch

About Kenneth Nordgren

Kenneth Nordgren is Professor of Social Science Education at Karlstad University in Sweden. His research focuses on the significance of our views of the past in the present and how history is used to convey understanding, identity and influence. In particular, he has studied the role of history in a multicultural society and the implications for history education.

Keywords

historical consciousness, intercultural learning, Anthropcene, history education, digitalization

Photo: © Andreas Reichenberg

Interview

Sebastian Barsch: Kenneth, thank you very much for taking part in this interview. Let's start with the first question. We want to talk about the challenges of transcultural dialogue and the value of historical thinking and learning. Have these changed fundamentally in teaching and research practice in your national context in recent years?

Kenneth Nordgren: Yes, they have quite a bit actually. It depends, of course, on what we mean by recent years. When I started as a PhD student, that's more than 20 years ago now, I was pretty much alone in the field. I wasn't the only one doing research connected to history didactics in Sweden, but there weren't many others. However the discussion goes back to the 1980s, where historians interested in educational aspects came into contact with Jörn Rüsen and the German tradition. In the 1990s, there was a Nordic community, very much influenced by historical consciousness and those ideas. It was a discussion quite far from education and teacher education and schools. However, it nevertheless had an influence on educational reforms. In 1994, there was a big curriculum reform in Sweden, and the concept of historical consciousness was explicitly incorporated in the Swedish curriculum from the early years up to the upper secondary school. It was not very clear for teachers what it meant, but it affected the discussion about the meaning of the subject among teachers and in teacher education.

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*   **Contact:** Kenneth Nordgren ✉ kenneth.nordgren@kau.se
    Karlstad University, Department of Social Science Education, Karlstad, Sweden

There was a sort of a transcultural influence, mainly from Germany but also from Denmark that also was quite in the forefront at that time.

The research schools for teachers that the government initiated around 2008 have had an important impact on both the scope and direction of Swedish history didactic research. As teachers got involved the research questions became more practice-oriented. That also meant that we started to search for inspiration beyond the German and Danish tradition and invited people like Stéphane Lévesque from Canada, and Christine Counsell from Britain and several others. So there was a broader transcultural meeting opening up in Sweden. This became evident in the curriculum reform in 2011, where second-order concepts was incorporated alongside with the notion of historical consciousness. So, you can see that there was a trans-cultural influence, mixing different theoretical traditions, but there was also a more distinct Nordic tradition growing from this influx. Around 2011 the concept Use-of-history came into the curriculum. The research community in Sweden has grewed quite fast. I would say now that there are now several universities in Sweden that has a research community around history didactics, and all of them with international networks. There is also another kind of trans-cultural influence. As I mentioned, teachers came into the academic discussion through these research schools. This has really affected the discussion in Sweden.

Based on your experiences: How can we promote a transcultural academic dialogue on concepts of history education that are embedded in different educational contexts and linked to state policies, societal values, and norms?

It is a difficult question in a way. I believe there is a fairly strong international community in history educational research. We are learning a lot from each other. But it's also about how we can influence policy at the national level. The possibilities differ from country to country. And as I mentioned before, in Sweden we have been quite successful in influencing the curriculum, and the nationalistic or patriotic side of history is not very visible in curriculum. However, the far-right party is becoming stronger and nationalistic rhetoric is becoming normalised in the public discourse. The present government is just now investigating the possibility to establish a national canon in schools. We can see similar trends in many other countries as well. I believe that as resarchers we should participate in the public discussion more, we don't do that very much, at least not in Sweden.

How can we ensure that the academic discussion is not dominated only by those with economic or social power, and how can we bring to the fore relevant perspectives that are often overlooked? We must also keep in mind that we, who are conducting this interview, belong to the group with economic and social power.

As you frame the question, the academics are part of the economic and social power in a society. And to some extent we are, I agree with that. But I also think that one should acknowledge some differences within this group. The universities and the academia have to fight for the academic privilege of being independent from the government, and other financiers. We are familiar with what is happening in USA, of course, and we also see parallels in Denmark, and we have the same discussion in Sweden. There is a trend where the government is trying to control and even restrict specific research and teaching. So there are many layers to this question. The academic freedom is quite important for enabling a transcultural dialogue. Because the very dialogue that some governments wants to oppress is about postcolonialism, gender, queer theory, migration, etc.

Educational research needs to fulfil two criteria: It has to be both academically and externally relevant. The latter means that we have to have a dialogue outside of academia. And for us, the relation to teacher education and the practice of teaching is important. Your question, I guess is also about going beyond eurocentrism and outside the norm. Our national and international research community should be better in broadening the horizons. This has also to do with the concept of transcultural. I think that we need several terms, to capture the variety. Terms like multicultural, intercultural, and transcultural. I do not agree with definitions that sets transcultural to a more nuanced and floating understanding of culture. While there is historical relevance to such a development in thinking about culture, I don't think it is this distinction that explains the differences between the concepts today. We need multicultural, intercultural and transcultural as they conceptualizes different aspects or dimension of interaction and change. To put it shortly, multicultural is also a descriptive term of a de-facto situation, intercultural is a

normative idea of interrelations, while transcultural has to do with processes of change. So we also need an intercultural dialogue, I think we need to recognise the boundaries of positions within our different disciplinary, culturally and national environments and how they affect, and from there explore how we can transcend them.

Let's move on to a slightly different topic. How do you see the role of the digital age and networked communities in the teaching of history and historical thinking?

There are several layers to that question. I think that there's a positive, interesting movement going on where minority groups, that often are not included in the curriculum or the informal canon, have developed spaces for their history and ideas from where they can make their voices heard. In Sweden we can see, for instance, the Sámi people who are doing this.

The digital resources are also underpinning an ongoing fragmentation of historical meaning and one can ask oneself, if there is something that holds the stories together within the national or European or whatever space of belonging you want to talk about? Is there something that connects the different histories to each other? This brings me back to the far-right and their push for a sort nationalistic narrative. We as historians, and educationalists have for so long focused on deconstructing national narratives and for good reasons, but we don't have a counter-narrative to offer. So now when the far-right is saying "Okay, let's go back to what we feel is safe and secure and what we all as Swedes or Germans or Finns or whatever feel is the real us, let's go back to that": That is a vision that is possible to imagine, while the critical perspective cannot offer an alternative vision of that kind.

Then of course there is the aspects of disinformation and alternative facts and all that, which indicates the limits of historical thinking. It has been argued that the digital age further emphasises the need to teach students about evidence and sourcing. One example used to advocate the need to think like historians is from when Bush after 9/11 lied about chemical weapons in order to legitimize the attack on Iraq. The argument was: We cannot even trust the government and therefore need to learn critical thinking and evidence aspects.

I agree that those are important skills, however what the Bush-example shows is that it is quite impossible for a single individual to fact check the news. This brings me back to the importance to learn historical content and about uses of history, in order to develop what Paul Ricœur calls hermeneutic suspicion. We need to be suspicious to stories that are too simple, too one dimensional. Such stories should make us suspicious. This is even more important than traditional historical evidence. I'm not saying it's not important, but it is no cure against the disinformation on social media. Wineberg's later research has shown that even professional historians are actually no more critical than others when it comes to everyday news.

We talked a lot about history didactics. Should a transcultural dialogue also take into account the crossing of professional boundaries? What is the importance of domain-specific knowledge in history?

Yes and no. I'm a firm believer in disciplinary borders. But that doesn't mean that I'm against transdisciplinary aspects. I think that disciplinary borders are a sort of a precondition for transcultural and transdisciplinary approaches. We need to understand what disciplinary borders are and why they develop. Disciplines are historical constructs, but they are not arbitrary. When building knowledge, we form concepts and methods and communities that understand these concepts and methods. Hence, epistemic communities are becoming specialized. That is how we knowledge advance. At the same time, it is of course as Bourdieu, Foucault and others have showed us: When we form borders, we also form gatekeepers. This is a battle that we constantly need to have. We need borders to dig deeper, but we don't want these borders to get fossilized and rigid.

Disciplines change and evolve if there is a sort of a healthy community. Sometimes they dissolve or transform in to other orders. Hence, we need disciplines. We need them for to organizing our knowledge. In actual research, we can see that the best research is often transdisciplinary or interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary. When transcending the borders, we need to know why we are doing that. We are not doing it to dissolve the disciplines, but to use the strength from different sources of knowledge. We should also strive to be open-minded because when we are working within specialized communities, we are trained to detect some things, and consequently sort out other things. That is also why we need this transdisciplinary dialogue. But I don't think that we should have a vision where we dissolve the disciplines.

And now, the last question, which is already some kind of an epilogue. How do you think we can integrate today's challenges, such as the Corona pandemic, wars, and the consequences of climate change, into historical education? Do these phenomena reinforce the need for transcultural exchange in academia and practice?

I think it's not just the climate, it's the whole environment and biodiversity that are in crisis. This should remind us of how interconnected we are. The coronavirus is obvious. And I think we can also see from the war in Ukraine how the world is interconnected. We are very much interconnected, and this interconnectedness makes people afraid. And that's why I think the far-right is growing right now. So, we need this transcultural and intercultural dialogues. I like Chakrabarty's idea of thinking on a planetary and global and perhaps local level, recognizing both a world where human is decentered and a world where human activity in all its inequality is central. There is a quote of Seyla Benhabib who says that, our fate as late-modern individuals, is to live caught in the permanent thug of war between the vision of the universal and the attachments to the particular. And that captures the situation that we are in. There are universal aspects that we need to approach, which doesn't mean that they have a universal effect. We can see that on all these examples, the Coronavirus, the war and the climate, they have global consequences but don't affect people in the same way. We need a transcultural dialogue to deal with these questions. And I think that as historians and history didacticians, we need to support students and teachers to get in this transcultural dialogue in a broader way. History, at least in Sweden, is still eurocentric and antropocentric. We could do a lot more to help students and teachers to see how historical content can connect in different ways: that migration and culture/nature are inter- and transcultural processes. The ability to detect how history is used for different purposes and works as a tool for communication within and across cultures is also important to develop. The fears we have are universal, but how we approach them and how we are affected by them is particular. Therefore we need this transcultural exchange, and initiatives like for instance the HTCE journal and the Erasmus LETHE project.

Kenneth, thank you very much!

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ORCID iD

Kenneth Nordgren https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1168-8608

We must teach both sets of skills

Challenges for history teaching in the digital area

Carmen Gloria Zúñiga González* iD

Interviewed by Sebastian Barsch

About Carmen Gloria Zúñiga González

Carmen Gloria Zúñiga González is History, Geography, and Social Sciences teacher from the Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaíso and Doctor of Education from the University of Western Australia. She is an assistant professor in the Faculty of Education at the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile. She researches projects related to the study of pedagogical practices of outstanding history teachers, feedback practices in initial teacher training, and citizenship practices within the school system. Her main lines of research are the teaching and learning of History and Social Sciences, Citizenship and Human Rights Education and classroom assessment.

Photo: © Faculty of Education, PUC, Chile

Keywords

historical thinking, digital citizenship, interdisciplinarity, teaching challenges, Chile

Interview

Sebastian Barsch: Let's talk about the challenges of transcultural dialogue, about the value of historical thinking and learning. Have the conditions for these changed recently in your national context?

Carmen Gloria Zúñiga González: Indeed, significant changes have occurred in the Chilean educational context. Over the past decade, there have been numerous discussions in parliament regarding the curriculum. The Ministry of Education decided to eliminate history as a mandatory subject in the final two years of compulsory education. This decision was controversial, as history was replaced with a new subject called "citizenship education," which aims to integrate history, geography, and other disciplines. In Chile, there has been a shift towards a more integrated approach to teaching history, akin to the American educational system's model of social studies. This new subject encompasses history, geography, and social sciences. However, in the final two years of compulsory education, it focuses solely on citizenship education.

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*   **Contact:** Carmen Gloria Zúñiga González ✉ carmen.zuniga@uc.cl
     Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, Faculty of Education, Santiago, Chile

Reflecting on history education, it has indeed transformed over the past decade, with significant changes starting around 2020. Consequently, research practices among academics like myself, who specialize in history education, have also shifted towards citizenship education and an integrated approach that includes sociology, history, geography, economics, and civics. The primary goal at the academic level is to critically engage these disciplines together in response to both national and international contexts, thereby enabling students to analyze sources and evidence to address complex problems. Additionally, we aim to cultivate students' sense of agency, empowering them not only to answer challenging questions but also to propose actionable solutions.

You were already talking about the political implications on history teaching. What do you think about academia? How can we promote a transcultural academic dialogue on concepts of history education that are embedded in different educational contexts and, of course, linked, as you said, to state policies, social values and norms?

I believe this question encompasses multiple levels. What we are engaging in here is already a transcultural and transnational dialogue. Academic collaboration through international conferences and co-authoring books is one approach, and I am pleased to see this happening. However, this occurs primarily at an international level.

Nationally, the Ministry of Education has been actively working on curriculum reform. Following a decision in 2020, both the Ministry and we are now revising and reviewing the curriculum, a process that began in 2014 with an agreement for a ten-year review. Currently, various stakeholders are being invited to provide input on the curriculum's content. This process includes history and social sciences education as well as all other school subjects. In the academic sphere, we had the opportunity to contribute during four meetings, each lasting three hours, where we suggested ideas, objectives, and specific strategies. Similar consultations were held with school principals and teachers. Although stakeholder engagement has happened before, this time it was a comprehensive national consultation with structured meetings. It has been a thorough process of soliciting input from relevant parties on what school history should encompass over the next decade, which I believe is an excellent approach. However, there are some concerns. It is uncertain whether all types of stakeholders, including ethnic minorities, sexual minorities, and those concerned with intersectionality issues, will be adequately represented. This proposal primarily targeted schools and other stakeholders, but did not specifically focus on ethnic or gender minorities, which are currently very sensitive and important topics.

You already talked about agency. When we switch that to a global level, how can we ensure that the academic discussion on history education is not only dominated by those with economic or social power and how can we bring to the fore relevant perspectives that are often overlooked?

I believe this is why we, Chileans, often find ourselves under the Global South label. The Global South remains underrepresented, and even Australia, as a British colony, does not wield the same influence as the UK, Europe, or the United States. This issue is particularly relevant for us, academic non-English speakers from the south, who have limited budgets for conducting research. At our Faculty of Education and our university, we strive to adhere to the Global North standards of publications and research, which is quite challenging.

Opportunities like this interview in journals that are not tied to indexation, ranking, and metrics provide us with a chance to innovate and pursue our research goals. To be candid, publishing in an American journal often requires referencing American academics. Reviewers may critique the absence of certain frameworks, which are typically grounded in research conducted outside the Global South. This challenge extends to Spanish journals as well. Unfortunately, Latin America lacks strong journals in terms of metrics, and those that exist are highly competitive due to the high demand from Latin American researchers.

In the Chilean academic community, particularly in history teaching, we are striving to support one another through collaboration and knowledge sharing. Our goal is to achieve both: disseminating knowledge to teachers, who are the ultimate beneficiaries of our work, while also meeting international standards and metrics. This dual challenge is not unique to Chile but is a broader issue faced by academia globally.

We talked a lot about transcultural issues – when taking transcultural dialogue into account: what do you think about the crossing of professional borders as you faced in your curricula? What is the importance of domain specific knowledge in history or history education?

I believe both perspectives are highly relevant. I fully endorse the transdisciplinary approach. Currently, I am transitioning from history teaching to citizenship education, recognizing that, historically, these fields have been interconnected in Chile. Citizenship education, especially within a human rights framework, is more inclusive than history education alone and extends beyond it. Citizenship education can be promoted across all disciplines, which is why my research is now focusing on this area. I aim to understand how citizenship education is and has been taught across various school subjects, moving beyond just history teaching.

I strongly believe that interdisciplinarity is essential. However, one cannot construct knowledge without a specific domain and a solid methodology for building scientific knowledge. Both aspects are necessary, and I experience this challenge firsthand. As a history education instructor for primary school teachers, I notice that these teachers often have a strong foundation in pedagogical content but lack depth in the historical discipline. In my course, "Teaching and Learning History", I must address both: providing disciplinary knowledge and teaching how to analyze sources and understand context. Context is crucial in all social science disciplines.

Therefore, my response to your question is that both approaches are necessary. We must maintain deep disciplinary knowledge while also adopting an integrated approach to understand the broader purpose of teaching history and social sciences. For me, this purpose is to educate young students to become informed adults capable of making decisions and living peacefully with others. This knowledge is particularly relevant in our current contested world, with conflicts in Gaza, Syria, and Ukraine, as well as issues like narco-violence in Latin America. We must foster a culture of peace in these diverse geographical contexts, which cannot be achieved solely through history teaching. It requires an integrated approach that includes geography, understanding territorial dynamics, and sociology, understanding human behavior.

The last two questions head a bit in a different direction. How do you see the role of the digital age and networked communications in the teaching of history and historical thinking?

Digital communication has fundamentally changed the way we teach history. The skills required to analyze written documents differ significantly from those needed to assess online information, especially in terms of reliability, authorship, and the purpose or intention behind online or social media sources. This presents a challenge for history educators, as we must teach both sets of skills: those for analyzing traditional paper-based documents and those for navigating online information. Our students, having been born in the internet era, require instruction on handling online information first. In parallel, we then teach them how to manage written information. This complex topic also presents numerous benefits. For example, digital storytelling, which involves using reflective tools displayed in videos, requires comprehension, reflection, planning, and leverages students' native technology skills.

Sam Wineburg proposed using Wikipedia to explore parallel thinking, not as an endpoint but as a starting point for information-seeking. Despite the challenges, there are also significant benefits. I would like to address the impact of social media on the Chilean context. In 2019, we experienced a social outburst that disrupted our lives with nationwide strikes and demonstrations. Although not a civil war, the country essentially came to a standstill. This was followed by the pandemic. The social unrest revealed that the political division stemming from Pinochet's dictatorship had not been overcome; in fact, polarization is now more pronounced, as evidenced by the 2021 presidential election, where the final candidates represented the far right and far left. The far-left candidate won, not because of widespread support, but because voters opposed the far-right candidate.

History education is crucial in this context, especially regarding social media. Algorithms and the information consumed online by both young and adult people influence our society profoundly. Our role is to teach not only young students but also adults how to navigate the web responsibly. One significant benefit of the digital age is access to lifelong education, which history education must promote. The influence of the internet on voting behavior, as seen in Chile and Argentina, where Javier Milei's campaign targeted young voters on Instagram and Tik-Tok, underscores the need for history educators to engage with present and future societal challenges. Politicians' use of online information has had problematic effects on society, making our role as history educators critical in teaching about the past, present, and future.

The last question: How do you think we can integrate today's challenges such as pandemics, wars, the consequences of climate change into history education? Do these phenomena reinforce the need for transcultural dialogue or exchange in academia and practice?

I want to emphasize that the interdisciplinary approach is grounded in the idea that we teach history and social sciences to enable students to learn from the past and build a better, peaceful, and sustainable future and present. One effective way to achieve this is by addressing controversial topics – referred to as "difficult knowledge" by some academics – such as climate change, wars, and ethnic conflicts. These issues are more effectively taught in a contextualized manner, as history alone is insufficient for students to fully grasp current events.

For example, when teaching about the Spanish conquest in Chile, we now link it to contemporary issues involving indigenous people and current conflicts, moving back and forth to make history meaningful for our students. Similarly, geography, climate change, and human rights are interconnected. In the Chilean academic community, we are considering: "Why separate them?" Instead, we advocate for teaching historical thinking in conjunction with geographical and sociological thinking. This integrated approach helps students understand the current world while appreciating the past.

Carmen Gloria, thank you very much!

To Cite This Interview

ORCID iD

Carmen Gloria Zúñiga González   https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6031-9687

There are clear challenges and is a clear need for action

*Johannes Meyer-Hamme** iD

Interviewed by Sebastian Barsch

About Johannes Meyer-Hamme

Johannes Meyer-Hamme is Professor of Theory and Didactics of History at the University of Paderborn in Germany. His research focuses on the empirical study of how history is dealt with, including in migration societies and in the digital transformation. A central question is how historical learning can be conceived under these conditions.

Keywords

competencies in historical thinking, historical consciousness, historical learning, digital transformation, migration society

Photo: © Martin Schmitt

Interview

Sebastian Barsch: Johannes, I would like to talk to you about the challenges of transcultural dialogue and the value of historical thinking, learning and historical consciousness within it. Has a transcultural history education changed your teaching and research practice in the national context in recent years?

Johannes Meyer-Hamme: Yes, I think a lot has changed, and I would distinguish three levels. Firstly, the level of lived academic discourse; secondly, university teaching; and thirdly, what we actually know about school practice.

In the academic discourse, I see significant changes and efforts to promote networking and exchange, including through digital formats, digital lecture series and so on, which have emerged in recent years. Or projects like this new journal this interview is in, which is also an expression of such efforts. And I see this as a very positive development. Especially because history and the study of history are all too often thought of in national terms. But if I am completely honest, I have to admit that I am essentially located in the German- and English-language discourse. And there are hardly any networks in other language discourses. And there I simply see clear challenges and a clear need for action.

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*   **Contact:** Johannes Meyer-Hamme ✉ jmh@mail.uni-paderborn.de
    University of Paderborn, Historical Institute, Paderborn, Germany

When I look at teaching, I see a clear interest in such questions. Last semester, for example, I taught a seminar on learning history in a migration society. It was very well attended and the students were very engaged in discussing these issues. And the most impressive example was a case study we discussed in which a young person who does not see himself as German said that in history classes you are offered the 'costume of German history'. And you can put it on, but you can also take it off afterwards. And suddenly students come and say, yes, that's exactly how I see it and that's exactly how I experience it. And I've never had that before, students revealing themselves in this way with their own historical orientations. But this is also where I see a great need for further discussion, and I also wonder a little bit why these students are studying history.

And the third is the level of teaching practice. Given the diversity of the participants, the change should actually be much greater than in the universities. So there should be more diversity. And the question is, how can history education be successful if the stories told are often not relevant to the learners? And here I see a huge need for research that focuses on these current developments and does not neglect the perspective of teachers.

You have already touched on this. Do you see a contradiction between a potentially transculturally oriented history education and the educational contexts that are usually embedded in official guidelines, respective regional values and norms?

I see many contradictions. The teaching of history originated in a national context and is very much steeped in national traditions. At the same time, we have a strong shift to the right and a strong focus on national perspectives and, of course, national histories, including in Western democracies. But we also have freedom for manoeuvre in the curricula in many contexts of Western societies. And as long as there are no strictly comparative works to learn from, teachers have more or less room for manoeuvre. And I think they should use it. But yes, I definitely see contradictions.

You just mentioned Western societies. One of the things we are trying to do with the journal is to establish a transcultural dialogue with the Global South. But we always notice that our discourses are ultimately shaped by the people in the regions who have economic and social power. How do you think we can actually expand the circle of people who can take part in the discussion?

That's a very difficult question. A couple of years ago we did an international conference digitally as part of the "Histories in Motion" project. Neeladri Bhattacharya from India, for example, who once created an alternative textbook, was there. Michael Rothberg from the USA and Kenneth Nordgren from Sweden were also there, as was Aleida Assmann from Germany. But they weren't the marginalised ones, they were always the ones who were established in some way. I find it extremely difficult to make contact at all and then to address different categories of diversity, but it is one of the great tasks we have. And what you can see, I think, especially in postcolonial discourses, is how very quickly fundamental questions arise. And the question of what is history and what is a plausible story and what does historical learning mean, these are highly political questions that come up and that we have to discuss further.

I'm going to go in a slightly different direction: transculturality and networked communities through digitality. Do you think that digitality and the potential for networking knowledge regions has an influence on history education today?

Yes, on the one hand there are opportunities. I already talked about digital conferences and exchange forums and lecture series on the internet, and of course this is a great opportunity that we have and that I think we should take advantage of. But we are also seeing a fundamental shift in what it means to tell a story. A prominent example of this is what we call social media. A lot of stories are being told on YouTube or TikTok or Instagram, including those from marginalised perspectives. Overall, we see a pluralisation of perspectives and that maybe not everyone, but a lot of people have the opportunity to tell their stories from their perspective. And we see some very big differences in perspectives between platforms and that this also creates an educational task in dealing with these different stories. At the same time, however, we are experiencing something quite different. Through AI models such as ChatGPT, we are experiencing a completely different way of dealing with perspectivity, because individual information from very different narratives is collected and packaged into a new narrative without making transparent where this information and these perspectives and interpretations come from. This means that

we have a completely different way of processing perspectivity, which is completely contrary to the trend we are seeing in social media. This poses a great challenge for transcultural historical education, namely to make these things visible and reflectable.

You used the word "perspectivity" several times. I would like to address another aspect of perspectivity. So far, our questions have always been very much rooted in a discourse on history education. Do you think that transcultural dialogue also requires the crossing of disciplinary boundaries? Or, to put it another way, how important do you think disciplinary knowledge, i.e. historical knowledge, is for the questions of our time?

Yes and no would have to be my answer to the question of whether we should extend the disciplinary field or not. First of all, I would like to emphasize that disciplinary boundaries have grown historically and are therefore cultural products, and they can also look quite different and in other cultural contexts they also look quite different. In this respect it has to be said that, of course, we have to cross them, of course consciously, where we enter other scientific fields and cross our own boundaries, our scientific disciplines. On the other hand, it is only through a theory and a clarified perspective that something can be explored, by clarifying together what our understanding of the terms and concepts behind them is. And that we absolutely need our disciplinary knowledge, because otherwise we will hardly be able to do meaningful research, because then we will remain in an everyday language that is not sufficient for us to have at least partially clarified our terms. And thirdly, if we see that it is about the further development of our subject-specific theories and concepts, then I think we need theories and concepts from other fields of science, certainly sociology, philosophy or psychology would be three very hot candidates here.

Now we come to the last question. Today there is a lot of talk about the polycrisis, the coronavirus pandemic, various wars, climate change. Somehow all this should be included in history lessons. In any case, this is often a normative requirement. Do such phenomena promote or reinforce the need for transcultural exchange in academia and fields of practice?

Yes, because on the one hand we would have to historicise these current crises and use them to make clear that there is not just one answer to them, that not every answer is equally good, but that the question is what range of stories we can actually tell about a historical context, be it the current wars, the Corona pandemic, climate change and so on, and at the same time withstand the controversy of different interpretations. And that's where transcultural issues come in, because one problem with current conflicts seems to be that many people in this world do not consider the current world order to be just. And the question is how do we actually create one, how do we create narratives that integrate different perspectives and that is an open task that we are facing.

Thank you very much!

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ORCID iD

Johannes Meyer-Hamme https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2537-6712

HTCE

University of Applied Sciences and Arts
Northwestern Switzerland (FHNW)

School of Education

Center for Citizenship Education
and History Didactics

Kuettigerstrasse 21, 5000 Aarau,
Switzerland

https://eterna.unibas.ch/htce