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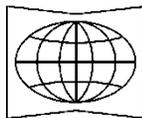


**WOCHEN  
SCHAU  
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HISTORY EDUCATION  
AND HISTORY CULTURE (JHEC)  
YEARBOOK  
OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY  
FOR HISTORY DIDACTICS (ISHD)

History Didactics  
and Public History



**WOCHEN  
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## PREFACE

In recent years we can observe the dynamic development of public history. Called history for the public, by the public, with the public and in public, it tends to comprise of not only all history-related activities happening outside Academia but also academic research on those activities. It has moved from North America where it had established itself as early as in the 1970s and is gaining more and more recognition world-wide. General academic textbooks and detailed monographs on various aspects of public history are mushrooming. So are public history programmes at universities that attract a growing population of students.

Many members of the International Society for History Didactics are actively involved in developing public history and in discussions related thereof. They publish articles and comments in on-line international blog-journal *Public History Weekly*, become members of the International Federation for Public History and develop programmes or individual courses in public history – often to be integrated into the teacher training track.

The dialogue between public history and history didactics is an on-going one. Is history education part of public history? Can it profit from public history strategies of dealing with the public? How does it incorporate public history into the teaching-learning process? How does it deal with public history products, such as museum exhibitions, tours, history-related fiction and comic books, movies and games? Or maybe public history is a form of history didactics and can use its conceptual models in the process of developing its own? How are both related to academic history, to historical memory and culture and how do they influence them? These are just some questions related to the topic. The editorial board of the JHEC decided to encourage contributors to participate in the discussion and proposed Public History and History Education as the leading subject of the 2018 issue of the Journal.

Barbara Silva sets the context by referring to the debate on the relations between classical academic history and public history. Then we present two examples of history-related entertainment that have been attracting broad publicity internationally and nationally. First, Elias Stouraitis discusses massive multiplayer on-line games as both a public history phenomenon and a potential educational tool. Second,

Karel van Nieuwenhuysse analyses the results of a nation-wide Flemish history quiz as a reflection of the historical consciousness of Flemish society going beyond factual knowledge and including familiarity with the procedural concepts of historiography. Thus, we gradually move from public history to history education. In the following two texts it is education that refers to public history settings: museums (mutual relations between history teachers and museum educators in preparing and conducting pupils' visits in the museums are discussed by Joanna Wojdon) and cartoons (by Denisa Labischova) which are one way of presenting history in the public sphere, not always easily grasped, especially by the younger audience.

The Forum section provides snapshots on crucial topics of didactical research in selected countries: curricula, textbook production and contents, and school practice in the process of changes. We close with the theoretical reflection by Wolfgang Hasberg on periodization in history and history education.

I wish to express my gratitude to Kath and Terry Haydn for the English language proofreading of the articles and to David Lefrançois and Catherine Poulin, and Jutta Schumann for their work on the French and German parts, respectively.

Joanna Wojdon

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## VORWORT

In den letzten Jahren beobachten wir eine dynamische Entwicklung der *public history*. Bezeichnet als ‚Geschichte für alle‘, die unter Beteiligung der Allgemeinheit generiert und in der Öffentlichkeit debattiert wird, umfasst sie tendenziell nicht nur alle geschichtskulturellen Phänomene außerhalb der Universitäten, sondern auch die wissenschaftliche Erforschung dieser geschichtskulturellen Aktivitäten. Die *public history* etablierte sich bereits in den 70er Jahren in Nordamerika, von wo aus sie sich weiterverbreitete und mehr und mehr Anerkennung weltweit erfuhr. Allgemeine akademische Lehrbücher und detaillierte Monographien zu verschiedenen Aspekten der *public history* sind im Kommen, ebenso wie universitäre Veranstaltungen zur *public history* bei den Studierenden zunehmend beliebt sind.

Viele Mitglieder der Internationalen Gesellschaft für Geschichtsdidaktik sind aktiv an dieser Entwicklung der *public history* und den damit verbundenen Diskussionen beteiligt. Sie veröffentlichen Artikel und Kommentare in der internationalen Online-Blog-Zeitschrift *Public History Weekly*, sind teilweise Mitglieder der Internationalen Federation for Public History oder entwickeln Programme und Kurse zur *public history* bzw. zur Geschichtskultur, die oft auch in die Lehrerausbildung integriert werden.

Der Dialog zwischen *public history* und Geschichtsdidaktik ist nicht abgeschlossen, sondern wird weitergeführt. Ist Geschichtsunterricht ein Teil der *public history* bzw. der Geschichtskultur? Kann die Geschichtsdidaktik von den Vermittlungsstrategien der *public history* profitieren? Wie werden die *public history* oder der Umgang mit der Geschichtskultur in Lehr- und Lernprozesse einbezogen? Wie geht die Disziplin mit geschichtskulturellen Produkten wie z. B. Ausstellungen, historisch orientierten Führungen, Romanen, Comics, Filmen oder Spielen um? Umgekehrt wäre zu fragen, ob nicht die *public history* eigentlich ohnehin ein Teilbereich der Geschichtsdidaktik ist, da diese bereits seit langem – in der Auseinandersetzung mit der ‚Geschichtskultur‘ – Konzepte und Methoden auf diesem Feld entwickelt hat. Diese könnten wiederum von der *public history* bei der Entwicklung eigener Methoden und Konzepte genutzt werden. Offen ist auch, wie die beiden Disziplinen Geschichtsdidaktik und *public history* sich wiederum im Verhältnis zur Geschichtswissenschaft und zur öffentlichen Erinnerungskultur definieren und wie sich diese verschiedenen

Felder gegenseitig beeinflussen. Die genannten Fragestellungen zeigen nur einen Teil der Problemfelder auf, die im Hinblick auf die Beziehungen zwischen *public history* und der Disziplin der Geschichtsdidaktik relevant erscheinen. Daher hat die Redaktion des JHEC beschlossen, die Beitragenden zur Diskussion dieser Fragestellungen zu ermutigen und legte dementsprechend für die Ausgabe 2018 das Leitthema *Public History und Geschichtsunterricht* fest.

Im ersten Beitrag des Bandes schafft Barbara Silva eine Rahmung des Themas, indem sie nach den Beziehungen zwischen der Fachwissenschaft Geschichte und der *public history* fragt. Danach stellen Elias Stouraitis und Karel van Nieuwenhuysse zwei Beispiele aus dem Bereich der – historische Themen nutzenden – Unterhaltungsindustrie vor, die international und national breite Aufmerksamkeit erregt haben. Elias Stouraitis beschäftigt sich mit Massively-Multiplayer-Online-Spielen sowohl als Phänomen der *public history* als auch als ein potentiell tool zur Vermittlung historischen Wissens. Karel van Nieuwenhuysse analysiert die Ergebnisse eines landesweiten flämischen Geschichtsquiz, interpretiert diese als Spiegel des Geschichtsbewusstseins der flämischen Gesellschaft und erforscht basierend darauf die Vertrautheit mit prozeduralem historischem Wissen, das über reines Faktenwissen hinausgeht. Die folgenden beiden Beiträge rücken dann stärker die Geschichtsvermittlung in den Mittelpunkt: Joanna Wojdon diskutiert die wechselseitigen Beziehungen zwischen Geschichtslehrern und Museumspädagogen bei der Vorbereitung und Durchführung von Museumsbesuchen, während Denisa Labischova sich mit einer breiteren Öffentlichkeit zugänglichen Karikaturen beschäftigt, die jedoch – insbesondere für ein jüngeres Publikum – nicht immer leicht verständlich sind.

Das Forum liefert Beiträge zu wichtigen Themen der geschichtsdidaktischen Forschung in ausgewählten Ländern und beschäftigt sich dabei mit Lehrplänen, Lehrbüchern und deren Inhalten sowie mit sich wandelnden Bedingungen in der schulischen Praxis. Der Band schließt mit einer theoretischen Reflektion von Wolfgang Hasberg zu Fragen der Epocheneinteilung und ihrer Bedeutung für die Geschichtsvermittlung.

Ich möchte mich bei Kath und Terry Haydn für das Korrekturlesen der Artikel in englischer Sprache und bei David Lefrançois und Catherine Poulin bzw. Jutta Schumann für die französische und deutsche Übersetzung bedanken.

Joanna Wojdon

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## PRÉFACE

Au cours des dernières années, nous pouvons observer le développement dynamique de l'histoire publique. Appelée histoire pour le public, par le public, avec le public et en public, ce type d'histoire englobe non seulement toutes les activités liées à l'histoire menées en dehors du milieu universitaire, mais aussi toute la recherche universitaire sur ces activités. L'histoire publique a quitté l'Amérique du Nord où elle s'était d'abord établie au début des années 1970 et elle est de plus en plus reconnue dans le monde entier. Les manuels scolaires généraux et les monographies détaillées sur divers aspects de l'histoire publique se multiplient depuis cette période. Il en va de même pour les programmes d'histoire publique offerts par les universités qui attirent de plus en plus d'étudiantes et d'étudiants.

En outre, de nombreux membres de l'International Society for History Didactics participent activement au développement de l'histoire publique et aux discussions la concernant. Ils publient des articles et des commentaires dans la revue internationale en ligne *Public History Weekly*, ils deviennent membres de l'International Federation for Public History et élaborent des programmes ou des cours d'histoire publique qui souvent intégrés dans la formation initiale destinée aux enseignantes et aux enseignants.

Le dialogue entre histoire publique et didactique de l'histoire est en cours actuellement. L'enseignement de l'histoire fait-il partie de l'histoire publique ? Peut-on tirer parti des stratégies de ce type d'histoire pour interagir avec le public ? Comment intègre-t-on l'histoire publique dans le processus d'enseignement-apprentissage ? Comment traite-t-on les produits de ce type d'histoire, tels que les expositions, les visites guidées, les fictions et les bandes dessinées, les films et les jeux ? L'histoire publique peut-elle être une forme de didactique de l'histoire et peut-elle utiliser ses modèles conceptuels dans le processus de développement de ses propres modèles ? Comment l'histoire publique et la didactique de l'histoire sont-elles liées à l'histoire enseignée, à la mémoire et à la culture historiques et comment les influencent-elles ? Ces questions sont des pistes de réflexion liées à ce sujet. Dans cette optique, le comité de rédaction du JHEC a décidé d'encourager les contributeurs à participer à la discussion et a proposé l'histoire publique et l'enseignement de l'histoire comme sujet principal de l'édition 2018 de la Revue.

Barbara Silva pose le contexte en se référant au débat sur les relations entre histoire classique enseignée et l'histoire publique. Nous présentons ensuite deux exemples de divertissements liés à l'histoire qui ont bénéficié d'une vaste publicité nationale et internationale. Premièrement, Elias Stouraitis aborde les jeux en ligne majoritairement multijoueurs en tant que phénomène d'histoire publique et outil éducatif potentiel. Deuxièmement, Karel van Nieuwenhuys analyse les résultats d'un jeu-questionnaire sur l'histoire flamande à l'échelle nationale, reflétant la conscience historique de la société flamande, allant au-delà des connaissances factuelles et familiarisant avec les concepts procéduraux liés à l'historiographie. Ainsi, nous passons progressivement de l'histoire publique à l'enseignement de l'histoire. Dans les deux textes suivants, l'éducation fait référence aux contextes de l'histoire publique : des musées (relations mutuelles entre professeures et professeurs d'histoire et éducatrices et éducateurs de musées dans la préparation et la conduite de visites muséales scolaires qui sont discutées par Joanna Wojdon) et des dessins animés, abordés par Denisa Labischova, qui représentent une façon de présenter l'histoire dans la sphère publique, qui n'est pas toujours très compréhensible, surtout par le jeune public.

Quant à la section Forum, elle présente des instantanés sur des sujets cruciaux de la recherche didactique dans certains pays, que ce soit sur les programmes d'études, sur la production et les contenus des manuels scolaires, et sur les pratiques enseignantes dans un processus de changements. Nous clôturons ce dossier avec une réflexion théorique de Wolfgang Hasberg à propos de la périodisation en histoire et de l'enseignement de l'histoire.

Je tiens à remercier Kath et Terry Haydn pour la relecture des articles en anglais ainsi que David Lefrançois et Catherine Poulin, et Jutta Schumann pour les traductions française et allemande, respectivement.

Joanna Wojdon

PUBLIC HISTORY  
AND HISTORY EDUCATION

PUBLIC HISTORY UND  
GESCHICHTSUNTERRICHT

L'HISTOIRE PUBLIQUE  
ET L'ENSEIGNEMENT DE L'HISTOIRE



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## HISTORY, NARRATIVE AND THE PUBLIC: TOWARDS A SOCIAL DIMENSION OF HISTORY AS A DISCIPLINE

Barbara Silva

*This article seeks to reflect on public history from the problems historic narrative perspective poses to the discipline of history. We understand narrative as a shared space between public and academic history, which can address aspects regarding time, space and, especially, the social dimension of history. These are also key aspects when teaching history, and therefore related to history didactics. This article seeks to question the dichotomy between academic and public history, and to regard them as part of the same process.*

Since a few decades ago, the concept of public history increased its presence and became part of historical debate (Cauvin, 2018). Of course, history is not a new discipline, nor is the public dimension of societies. However, when these two elements – history and the public – converge, public history opens new discussions about history and the historian’s role. If we add narrative, as a factor that has been part of history’s craft since its foundations (Roberts, 2001: 3), we can strengthen our reflections on history, as well as improve our capacity to teach history’s social dimension.

Societies have different relations with time, most of deep complexity. From ancestral times, human beings have worried about the uncertainties of the future, and the understanding of the past. Despite changes in communication processes, narratives remain as part of the basics of history.

When historical narratives have a meaningful reception by a non-academic public, discussion about writing history for a broad citizenry emerges once again. On the one hand, written history has continuity in its format; on the other, that discussion seems important, since it presents us with some deliberations on history, its production, its reception, its teaching and learning process, and also, with the historian’s role, as a subject immersed within a society. Nowadays we can address these discussions to the area of public history.

Public history, with all its nuances in definitions and scope, has a long history, even though formerly it was not addressed by that

name. Heritage studies, memory studies, graphic history, audiovisual historic productions, reenactments, among others, have existed prior to the conceptualization of the field as public history. All of them have already brought together several possibilities when analyzing public history. But even if we have different and attractive formats, we still work with narrative history, whether the final product is written or not.

It is more or less explicit that both academic history and public history work with written texts and historical narratives. This can lead us to face a basic problem: to question if there really is a difference between public history and academic history, or if it is a false dichotomy. Even if that distinction might have been created for functional reasons, at its core, there are interesting conceptual fissures. We can understand public history as those history practices seeking to reach a wide audience, and not only to people linked to the academic world. It is interesting to note that history didactics, explicitly or not, also deal with that shared space, and moves from academic discussion to a wider audience.<sup>1</sup>

Nowadays, it is possible to find several texts on public history practices. These have contributed to specify and to systematize several initiatives on public history, as well as to discuss their significance in the field. However, debates focused on narrative history *as* public history are scattered; it is usually linked to historical understanding, and we can find some in introductory texts on History as a discipline, or in History's theoretical texts.<sup>2</sup> Even if we acknowledge that narratives and written texts are not new, they are still part of societies' communicability, a relevant dimension of knowledge and thinking development, and history is closely related to writing and narrative.

Following this statement, we built the arguments of this paper on public history texts, as well as on the theory of history ones, even those considered as 'classics'. This decision aims to insist on the need for questioning that distinction between public and academic history as a false dichotomy.

## **1. The Public Temporality of History**

Throughout time, history academics, education professionals, and amateurs have approached the complex question of 'what is history?' in multiple ways. In a simple and functional manner, we can

understand history as a sort of bridge looking to connect a past with a present. It is a discipline that allows us a particular time travel: the past is updated via the questions historians pose about a reality that existed and will never exist again.

However, in that approach of what could be a definition of history – which several intellectuals have elaborated and re-elaborated – it was never stated that the possibility of a ‘trip to the past’, or better said, that the understanding of the past, was exclusive to historians. Even if historians are, presumably, the ones that dedicate most of their lives to comprehending those past realities in a professional manner, that closeness to the past is not their assigned exclusively to them. Not by chance is history a mandatory subject in school, nor is the fact that we have been trying to figure out a way to teach the understanding of the past, addressing historical thinking or history didactics (Wineburg, 2001).

It is evident that history has become more professionalized and institutionalized, mostly through universities, in a trajectory settled between the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Paradoxically, even if that process has enhanced history’s strength and diversity, at the same time, it has created a gap in the social and collective appropriation of those pasts’ understandings, referring to an historical production oriented to peers rather than to a wider audience.

We should not be surprised by those changes. As an area of knowledge, history is also historic: it is susceptible to transformation in its understanding, due to the human condition. Antoine Prost synthesized this idea, when he stated, ‘The discipline called history is not an eternal essence, a platonic idea. It is a historical reality itself, that is, situated in space and in time, elaborated by men who call themselves historians and are acknowledged as such, and received as such by the most diverse public’ (Prost, 2001: 24).

Part of what public history questions is precisely the notion of ‘the most diverse public’. In this sense, much has been said on the gap opened in History – and in other disciplines – between academic knowledge and that of the ‘public domain’. This distance would have appeared during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At that point, professional historians would have ceded ‘the task of synthesizing historical knowledge to unaccredited writers’ (Guldi & Armitage, 2014: 8), and from there on they would have lost the influence they once had on policy: ‘The gulf between academic and non-academic

history widened. After 2000 years, the ancient goal for history to be the guide to public life had collapsed' (Guldi & Armitage, 2014: 8).

The big issue in this gulf between an academic audience and one that is not, is that history addresses time, and temporality is an undeniable and an inalienable condition of human existence: 'We inhabit human worlds which are intrinsically suffused with a sense of history and a placement within webs of historical significance [...] historical consciousness is not a choice; it is an inevitable part of the human condition' (Fulbrook, 2002: 189). The historic and time-based condition is inherent to every human, academic or not. In fact, the recurrence of attempts to understand time has been, indeed, a historical continuity. In words of Le Goff (2016: 2), 'One of the essential problems of humanity, innate with its birth, has been dominating terrestrial time'. Actually, it is not a whim that history didactics addresses time as a key issue when learning history (Trepát & Comes, 2000)

In the attempt to assume and integrate that omnipresent, but elusive time-based condition, history has related, closely, permanently and inseparably to the past. The attempt to apprehend that condition is that 'History is a work on time, but it is about a complex time, a constructed time, with multiple faces' (Prost, 2001: 113). In other words, the relationship history has established with time allows it to make understandable those processes of disjunction and reconstruction of a temporal dimension, fundamentally human. Hence the statement 'The past and present have always enjoyed a symbiotic relationship' (Martin, 2013: 1).

The time-based connection is inevitable to every human being, and to every society, in both directions. Bloch (2001: 70-71) argued, 'solidarity between ages is so strong that intelligibility bonds among them have indeed a double meaning. But perhaps [it] is equally vain to make an effort to understand the past if one knows nothing about the present'. The relationship between these temporalities is multiple, for not only does the present begin to be comprehensible through the past, but the present also establishes how we interrogate that past.

Certainly, enquiries on time and history could be more extensive, but the goal here is to specify that temporality is inherently human, and time is at history's core. Other disciplines such as geology, astronomy, psychology or even physics, also have a time-based dimension, but not in a deep both human and collective sense.

## **2. Communicating and Publishing in Public History**

Although it might seem obvious, the relationship humans have with time is also historic, and we can add other phenomena to this relationship. Nowadays, one of the discussion topics is the preeminence of immediacy, as one of the problems of our time: 'We live in a moment of accelerating crisis that is characterized by the shortage of long term thinking' (Guldi & Armitage, 2014: 1). Statements such as the latter are not surprising, but the value of history does not seem to have evolved with the same intensity as those diagnoses. Even if that is one of the features of our present, time has not stopped that long-term condition, neither has it suppressed the symbiosis between present and past eras. In addition, we must remember that 'is undeniable that a science will always seem incomplete if, sooner or later, it does not help us to live better' (Bloch, 2001: 46).

Therefore, far from being an antiquary's object, displayed at a store only to be looked at, the past is a source of meaning, a social need, since 'Finding meaning in the past is the essential activity for achieving self-awareness and a life that is in balance, building healthy communities, and forming a just and equitable civic society' (Wright & Viens, 2017: 3). To assume there are two types of citizens, the ones that can find that meaning in the past, and others that cannot would be a deeply antidemocratic attitude.<sup>3</sup> With that, democracy as an ideal of emancipation, globalized and susceptible of being appropriated widely by citizenry, would be questioned (Guénard, 2016).

Short-term supremacy and the feeling of time acceleration is linked to another phenomenon of our times: the relativity of space. Spatiality also questions the supposed distance between a public and an academic history. It is difficult to deny that there is indeed a difference, for example, in terms of what deliverables are expected from each one of them, 'There is a distinction between literature produced for experts in the field and literature aimed at the general public'. The point is from where do we build that difference: 'whether it is considered scholarly should be based on the depth and breadth of the originality, the research, the analysis, and the impact on disciplinary and policy discourses – not simply on how it is produced or where it appears' (Blain & Kendi, 2017).

The dichotomy then reveals its fissures, as in a globalized world, societies question and doubt spatiality, so the argument is not enough

to settle that distance. Globalization accelerated time's perception and shortened distances' experiences, which led to questioning the impenetrability of certain spaces (Fazio, 2009: 302-303). It was not only that, but technology which is both a product and an explanation of this phenomenon also questioned the spatial stillness of people, knowledge, relationships, cultures, etcetera. At the same time, the emergence and proliferation of multiple communication formats and social media broke the structures of spatiality's social role, as they generated new challenges on knowledge democratization (Noiret, 2011: 114-115).

Hence, to install a gulf between an academic and a public history, argued for by where it gets published or where it circulates, does not seem enough. When public history emerged as a delimited field Kelley (1978: 16-28) tried to specify it as the one produced outside academia, but today that seems at least doubtful. The question today seems to be how can we understand public history, and how we value history as a discipline. In the same way, establishing that gap based on how knowledge production circulates, also seems like excessive confidence in the university and academic system, which has shown several and repeated proof of its shortcomings.

Moreover, the international dimension of public history indicates the need to debate social knowledge circulation and appropriation, which goes beyond circumscribing spaces. Certainly, this internationalization has dealt with local culture challenges, and dissimilar approaches to specifying what constitutes public history. Even so, it is definitely a dimension growing at an accelerated pace (Cauvin, 2016: 17-18).

These debates indicate the need to take a step forward: "To bring this about, we must think creatively about how we can produce scholarship that touches lives far beyond the walls of academia, a conversation that is already underway" (Blain & Kendi, 2017). History's ability and its possibility of connecting with societies include the time-based dimension, the present's comprehension, but also exceed them. Critical thinking and the pretension of truth, among others, are also at the crossroads of the discipline's challenges.

### **3. Truth, Words and Narrative**

As it deals with the past, history seeks to understand the processes which have already occurred. One of this position's features is that,

almost inevitably, some sort of ‘truth aura’, or ‘truth pretension’ embraces history (Florescano, 2012: 244; Prost, 2001: 282). Notwithstanding that history’s absolute objectivity has already gone, when dealing with something that ‘actually happened’, history has a responsibility, covered by that authority of the presumable truth.<sup>4</sup>

However, historians know – or should know – that there is no absolute truth, and its construction depends on the history they elaborate. Others have said historical narratives are a path leading to historical understanding (Gallie, 2001: 40-51). Despite the longing for getting close to the truth, history ‘creates an understanding that historical narratives are multi layered and interpretations, and stimulates willingness to question these narratives and think critically’ (Euroclio, 2015).

In fact, when working on memory processes, historians and other professionals have to deal with and define the existence of different truths, as much as categorizing them into versions of a forensic, narrative, social, or healing truth (Blanco-Rivera, 2009: 114). Even if the historical narrative must always be sustained in sources, it has a relevant dose of interpretation, almost unavoidable, but also desirable, and this closely relates to questioning truth. This becomes clear when considering that ‘The existence of multiple truths has challenged historians time and again – notably in the 1960s with ‘bottom-up’ social history and again in the 1990s, when linguists and cultural critics called into question all sorts of narrative and analysis’ (Lauritz, 2017: 89). Hence, history’s own historicity proves truth’s impossibility.

However, every history and every historiographical tendency in some way flirts with that truth, for which ironically it is responsible. Certainly, authenticity is not negotiable, in any kind of history. In history, truth is about something that happened and the historian embarks on telling a story, a true story. From there, we can maintain that one of the elements that can bridge that history’s communicability, and that is in the core of how we tell that truth, is words: language. On one hand, we can understand language as a primary source to rebuild the past, and on the other, it is the structure of the circulation system history builds.

Paradoxically, those same words and the way we join them together have contributed to widening the gulf between a public and an academic audience. In this tension we can set public history: ‘Academic (or professional) and popular history styles which are

often seen as opposed [...] However, the distinction between academic and popular history writing is increasingly challenged by the rise in public history' (Cauvin, 2016: 115).

It is possible to place narrative history as one of the convergence points between academic and public history.<sup>5</sup> The goal of this discussion is not to 'deconstruct' every history as a literary object, or *just* see it as a narrative, as Hayden White (1992) did. The point here is to focus on the process of telling stories, as part of the explanatory purpose of history, and as a contact and dispute issue between a history that is supposed to be academic and one that is not. In this process, the explicit reference aims at the double meaning of history: what happened, but also how we tell what happened (Gallie, 2001: 45).

As history is part of time's fluctuation, it also has continuities, and narrative is one of them: 'Historians have always told stories. From Thucydides and Tacitus to Gibbon and Macaulay the composition of lively and elegant narrative prose was always counted as their highest ambition' (Stone, 1979: 3). Perhaps nowadays that eagerness for a vibrant narrative is somehow forgotten.

In any case, in this discipline we tell stories, in an inseparable act of its explanatory dimension: 'History tells, and in the telling is how it explains' (Prost, 2001: 248). This reminds us we are in a different perspective from the one of Lawrence Stone in the 70s, of reclaiming a narrative's renaissance, as if it were opposed to an analytic history, as Hobsbawm (1986) replied to that discussion.

However, if we add our own historical perspective, it is not by chance that, when Stone was looking to defend narrative history, microhistory was strengthening, and it presented a robust narrative dimension. At the same time, public history was being defined and articulated, mostly in the United States.<sup>6</sup> Something was happening, expressing the gulf between that academic place of historic production, and some sort of communicability crisis. In that convergence narrative history had a special role. If we think of telling stories framed by history as a discipline, we have to build and communicate not only a contextual dimension, but also an analytical dimension, and therefore we are aiming at narrative history within historical understanding.

Therefore, reflections on public and academic history need to include narrative history, for words have been a key instrument of history: 'In fact, history has to represent and make the past

understandable: to achieve that goal, it has no other thing than words' (Prost, 2001: 275). Today we can combine the dialogue in those words with other formats, but words must still be incorporated to articulate a narrative, regardless of however it finally expresses itself.

In fact, when we think of the historian's craft, as Marc Bloch said decades earlier, we talk about history writing: 'But if that history, which has an appeal that almost everyone feels, only has its attractiveness to justify itself; if in fact it was not more than a nice hobby like bridge or fishing, would it deserve all the efforts we make to write it?' (Bloch, 2001: 44-45).

As Bloch argued, there is something in history writing that nurtures the desire for knowledge, and takes a step forward. History writing has been the process through which we have shaped the discipline, and written text is still one of our tools. At the same time, writing has allowed history's communicability for centuries. Writing has connected different timing comprehension not only contemporaneously, but also throughout time. 'Hence a conclusion that sounds like a challenge: yes, history is written. Yes, to make history is to tell a story, a story of true events. Yes, there is a literariness of history, and the historian, that 'poet of detail', carries out a 'literary staging' (Jablonka, 2016: 110).<sup>7</sup>

The above does not prevent those dialogues in words searching for new formats, in the need to update the discipline and deepen its communicability. But writing has a permanence that, although presented in other formats, anchors the possibility of telling a story. The relevance of narrative is not accidental, but is located at the core of the ability to understand the past: 'Historical knowledge comes from 'narrative understanding', the competence we have to tell or follow a story; but this 'ultimately narrative character of the story' should not be confused with the defense of the traditional history-story' (Jablonka, 2016: 110).<sup>8</sup>

In this way, we can access the potential of narrative history as public history, by observing the double function of words in history: that of connecting and, at the same time, being able to contribute to academic impenetrability. By focusing on the first of these, the connecting function, is that history returns to its social dimension.

#### 4. The Process of History and Its Social Dimension

In its formulation, the process of history has, by principle, a social dimension. Fragments of the past are reconstructed, not only for individual satisfaction or need – which can equally exist – but to extend knowledge about that reality, contemporaneously as well as for the future. The link between recording and registering past events, and then using those records, connects directly to that social dimension.

For a long time, the social function of history was related to national histories and identity construction. History was a source of belonging for those processes of nation building (Hobsbawm, 2000: 84). However, the awareness of the destructive potential of nationalisms and the exaltation of national identities increasingly discredited that function of the discipline (Prost, 2001: 291).

Far from contradicting that discrediting, it is important to point out that the narrative questioning of history allows us to understand how different social processes are intertwined with these identity stories. From the narrative, by working with the truth and its communicability, and with the act of questioning as the key to historiography production, it is possible to turn those national and identity studies towards critical thinking and towards the evidence of how a supposed truth has been constructed.

That social dimension is closely related to the bases of public history, if we understand it as a dynamic area, which makes evident its constructed nature: ‘we see public history as a process by which the past is constructed into history and a practice which has the capacity for involving people as well as nations and communities in the creation of their own histories’ (Kean & Martin, 2013: XIII).

In this proposal to define public history, there are two key concepts: practice and process. Through both, it refers to how we make history, and furthermore, how that ‘making’ implies a possibility of changing over time. In addition, these concepts demonstrate the relational component, that is, the possibility of being constituted as one of those bridges between history as a discipline and those communities which it claims to represent.

To conceptualize a discipline or a practice as a process is not random. The process definition has been part of other dimensions of history, e.g., in heritage studies (Harvey, 2001), in which ‘heritage is best identified as a ‘verb’ rather than a ‘noun’, and a number of

authors have examined heritage as a body of knowledge and as a political and cultural process of remembering/forgetting and communication' (Smith & Akagawa, 2009: 6). Although this is part of another discussion, we usually find heritage studies among public history practices, and this is not by chance; it emphasizes the relationship established between those individuals dedicated to the recovery and understanding of the past, and the communities affected by or interested in that past.

When we grant dynamism to the definition of public history, and we understand it as a process, we can reach the community we are aiming for. In fact, history generates questions that aim to understand a reality that is gone forever and, linked to our present, represents a chance to embrace otherness.

To become interested in that 'other' is also part of human nature: 'Both the overspecialized academic and the solipsistic educator underestimate the public's passion to explore the unfamiliar, which has been the fundamental characteristic of historical inquiry from the time of Herodotus forward' (Wrights & Viens, 2017: 30). With this, the duality of 'we and the others' (Todorov, 1991) acquires a new meaning, not necessarily affiliated to identity or nationalistic impulses. Just as language and stories can reveal diversity within a nation (Cassin, 2016: 16), the acceptance, and even embracing of difference can be understood not only from spatiality, but also from a temporal distance.

On the other hand, the binomial 'we and the others', besides reminding us of the relevance of otherness, demonstrates the existence of a community of belonging, in which the bonding of individuals is relevant, beyond any nationalist desire. In this sense, another element of relevance for the historian's social commitment has to do with how we get involved in that community in relation to, for example, public policies (Green, 2016).

In this way, it is possible to sketch different factors from which the social dimension of history becomes clear and strong. Communicability appears in a place of particular relevance, whether it is in the identity and nationalist problem, in the appreciation of diversity, the construction of truth, or connection with democratic principles, among others. The very etymology of 'communicating', that is, sharing or putting something in common (Corominas, 2005: 163), points to that social dimension which, in the case of history, involves sharing understanding of the past, and discussing the

comprehension of the present. To return to history's communicability, one of the possible openings is that of the narrative.

With this, it becomes essential to question the distinction between academic history and public history. The brief outline of history's social dimension leads us to question or try to understand what is behind the distance established between an 'academy' and an 'audience'. This becomes especially problematic, as well as interesting, when we approach that distance from a shared space between both histories, where narrative is. This does not imply it does not happen in other media, but in narrative, with its condition of continuity and convergence, the debate becomes more visible.

## 5. A False Dichotomy?

When raising some features about history's social dimension, it became clear that history has always tried to reach an 'other'. Involved in recording and writing history, imaginary or real, there is a reader, or a community that seeks to understand that past (De Groot, 2016). In other words, and pointing more assertively to the public function of history, that audience's almost inevitable presence has been raised, as has been established in practically all models of communication theory (Russill, 2008): 'It is probably obvious to point out that historians have always had a public. From its earliest times, the study of history has been a public act, although different historians at different times have had different publics' (Grele, 1981: 41).

The distinction between public history and academic history leads us to think, precisely, of this idea argued by Grele. It is also evident how the volatility of those audiences is significantly different: 'Where the audience in academic arenas is fairly predictable, for public history programs it is highly diverse and variable' (Wright and Viens, 2017: 26). Hence, describing audiences in public history would assume additional difficulty, while the public in the so-called academic history is well known: pre and postgraduate students, instructors, researchers, professors, highschool teachers, among few others.

Beyond all this criticism, when considering history's social dimensions, we can begin to understand that all history is – or should be – effectively public. Conversely, all public history, to be history,

must be strongly based on rigorous research. This is based on the argument that public history, rather than a historiographical line, configures 'an attitude or perception about the use and value of history' (Kean & Martin, 2013: XVI).

In relation to the previous argument, reflecting on this false dichotomy becomes especially relevant when referring to the practice of historical narrative. Writing and words are the main tools of academic history as well, so perhaps narrative history creates more problems concerning the limits, if they exist, between one and the other. When working with other formats in public history, this distinction seems to become concrete, and sometimes, does not generate confusion.

For this reason, an piece of evidence through which it is possible to exemplify this false dichotomy opens precisely with historical narrative. Decades ago, far from the nomenclatures of public history or academic history, some cases of strong narrative history crossed the borders of universities, students and history teachers, and reached a much wider audience. In this, the work of Ginzburg (1976) and Zemon Davis (1982) are key. Martin Guerre and Menocchio were not confined to history programmes, nor to classrooms, but despite being minimal stories, with centuries in tow, in very precise places in Europe, they crossed time, borders and epochs.

Although the focus here is not to debate on microhistory but to think of the possibilities of narrative history, there are some interesting questions addressing their public dimension. Historiographical discussions emerged around the extension of microhistory: was it useful, pertinent, appropriate, to generate historical knowledge with that level of specificity? What was the purpose of this 'microscopic' exercise? To these and other questions, Ginzburg himself assertively replied: 'I do not make history for my colleagues, but for other people'.<sup>9</sup> This does not imply in any case, that the public function of narrative must affiliate with microhistory, but that the latter provides an example difficult to refute regarding how all history can be public.

The next step is to understand how public history, far from being an area that is delimited on formats or media, is a place that allows us to insist on history's public commitment.

Therefore, public history is also theoretical, as it questions the discipline's social dimension, refers to the role of the historian, and thus transits between an academic world and the one outside it.

Otherwise, one would not understand the paradox of holding onto texts of public history, which have been developed within the academic system, but would advise on how to move away from it.

In this way, understanding this distinction as a functional space, re-questioning the discipline is an exercise which also exposes fissures in the current production of knowledge. It was in that sense that, decades ago, Appleby (1977) questioned whether all historians should become public historians.

## **6. Final Remarks. Narrative History: Towards a New Academic History?**

There are several aspects to explore about narrative history as an area shared between academic history and public history. We have been able to ask various questions about history as a discipline, the possibilities of public history, and the false dichotomies that sometimes flood the parcels of knowledge to which we are already accustomed, for quite some decades now.

Narrative history shares the same tools and – apparently – uses the same communication format as the history that calls itself academic. This convergence allows us to question once again historical discipline, based on what currently constitutes its practice. Telling a story from the past has become an extended practice far beyond historians, while historians tend to tell stories for themselves. Thus, the paradox of academic secrecy makes sense again and can direct public history towards other discussions.

Perhaps, the analysis of public history is not only the debate about practices to approach broader and diverse audiences. Through this tension, it points to the various limits and barriers that so-called academic history has imposed on itself. Those borders built by academic disciplines have developed, from a desire for professionalization and deepening, into a reproduction of their own – and misrepresented – privileges.

By using narrative history to enter this debate between public space and academia, we realize how public history, in the end, becomes a sort of mirror of words that reflects everything that the other history, circumscribed to the universities, has ceased to do.

The communicability and connection potential of words, understanding of otherness, reflection on ourselves, construction of belonging, and many other questions about the relationship between

history and societies becomes, almost inevitably, obvious. In this way, narrative history also helps us understand how one of the continuities of history is our recurrent binary obsession with false opposites, in this case, public history and academic history, analysis and narrative, secrecy and communicability.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> There was a fruitful discussion regarding public history and history didactics (Dean & Wojdon, 2017). Notwithstanding the relevance of museums that authors suggest, the discussion addressed the common ground between public history and history didactics, but then derived somehow in how other aspects might antagonize these fields. As Wojdon replies, far from antagonizing, even if we recognize similarities, we have to acknowledge that they are not the same. I think one of those similarities is the attempt to reach a wider audience, with the goal of broadening historical understanding.

<sup>2</sup> Much of the literature on public history used in this paper show this statement: readers on public history deal with practices at museums, archives, digital platforms, audio-visual projects, private consulting, etc., but narrative history is not particularly present, as it is in historical theory works.

<sup>3</sup> Even if it is part of a different discussion, it is worth mentioning that in many societies, history and citizenship are integrated into social sciences programmes. The standpoint of current curricula on humanities or social sciences is usually that a participating responsible citizen can understand his temporality and historical context, and value the democratic progression of their society.

<sup>4</sup> It is relevant to notice how this issue becomes a central one in the beginnings of the so-called post-truth era. Regarding the digital dimension, it is interesting to understand recent studies on complex systems: their interaction levels in physics, and the possibility of applying them to social environments, linked to the production and circulation of 'alternative facts' (Zschaler et al, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> Certainly, academic and public history converge in several ways, starting from the fact that public history relies on historical research, which can be academic. Therefore, the convergence is multiple. In narrative history, the convergence is made from research but also from words and the use of language in articulating a story from the past.

<sup>6</sup> With a functional purpose, we can place that effort for systematizing Public History with the first issue of *The Public Historian*, in 1978; Stone's paper was published in 1979, and one of the masterpieces of microhistory, *The Cheese and the worms* was originally published in 1976.

<sup>7</sup> Jablonka uses a reference from Michel de Certeau, in *L'écriture de l'histoire*, 1975: 111, 119.

<sup>8</sup> Jablonka refers to Paul Ricoeur, *Temps e Recit*, vol 1: 165.

<sup>9</sup> In fact, this phrase was used as the headline for Ginzburg's interview for the Spanish newspaper *El País*, 24 December, 1981, [https://elpais.com/diario/1981/12/24/cultura/377996409\\_850215.html](https://elpais.com/diario/1981/12/24/cultura/377996409_850215.html) (28.05.2018).

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# DECONSTRUCTING THE HISTORICAL CULTURE OF MASSIVELY MULTIPLAYER ONLINE GAMES: A PARTICIPATORY INTERACTIVE PAST

Elias Stouraitis

*Living in the era of the fourth Industrial Revolution is characterized as a turning point in post contemporary societies since people bring together different cultures and collective memories through searching, sharing, transferring, visualizing, querying and updating several data. Within this spectrum, the constructors and players of digital games constantly produce data by creating new game material or just playing. Game data and game mechanics combined with fun provide users with a sense of the past. The greatest interaction between data and games' mechanics is well-known in Massively Multiplayer Online Games (MMOGs) through which anyone can participate and collaborate with anyone around the world. This article will clarify the origins and the meaning of Massively Multiplayer Online Games' historical culture including some reflective ideas on how these games change the notion of history.*

## 1. Introduction

The 21st century has been characterised by the digitalization of society. As such, history has passed to a new era providing its content in a digitalized environment. Broadly defined, digital history is 'an approach to examining and representing the past that works with the new communication technologies of the computer, the internet network, and software systems' (Seefeldt & Thomas, 2009). In other words, it describes historical inquiry that is based on primary sources available as electronic data, whether digitalized or born-digital, and the narratives that are constructed through such inquiries (Lee, 2002). Born-digital was coined independently by web developer Randel (Rafi) Metz in 1993 due to a url domain (<http://www.rafi Metz.com/borndigital>) and refers to materials that originate in a digital form. Born-digital content constitutes newly generated archives and several narratives regarding the past including, for example, social media, digital games, historical web exhibits, webcomics, e-books, digital sound recording and electronic records.

Digital games as hybrid aesthetic and artistic expression serve either as a message or a playful situation. Digital games with historical content gain more and more social acceptance, developing new forms of social representation, communication, expression, argumentation and conciliation with the past. Some slogans of games related to the past are 'Bring History into Your Life' or 'Change History Completely'. Players may receive the games' message or create their own one or just play the game. Even greater interaction between single-user games and players comprise those known as Massively Multiplayer Online Games (MMOGs) through which anyone can participate and collaborate with anyone else around the world. Along with these games, players participate in chat rooms in order to find a suitable team, learn things about the game, develop strategies, understand gameplay concerning another historical era and how experienced players would be willing to educate a new one.

Many surveys underestimate the impact of MMOGs on the user's learning (Bonk et al, 2006 featuring a new field of survey). Historian Wulf Kansteiner (2007) points out the large social network which emerges through MMOGs and especially their game culture of the past. Virtual sociability constructs digital identities which are based on game rules, the interrelations among players, veterans' role, the imagination and simulated narratives. Not only does it change the experience of time during game play and chat rooms, but it also affects users' historical consciousness. Claudio Fogu (2009) characterizes games as processes of de-temporalization and de-referentialization of history focusing on possibilities rather than historical facts.

This paper discusses the concept of historical culture within the spectrum of a medium which encompasses different internships, such as programmers, game designers, game developers, historians, anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists and constitutes a representation of the past which is based on algorithms, counterfactual historical narratives and the participatory users' data. MMOGs' historical culture is an accumulation of people who construct and play these games based on the term of 'what if' rather than a definitive statement around a historical issue. How did the creators consider the meaning of past through these games? Does the algorithmic culture behind these games affect the players' experience? Could we characterize this experience as a mediated learning process

of historical knowledge? Which are the characteristics of this interactive past based on hybrid norms?

## **2. Historical Culture in the Age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution**

Historical culture is considered a core concept for understanding the interplay between people and the past. This concept took root during the 1970s and 1980s when the ‘cultural turn’ in humanities became a major issue. (Grever, 2017). Historical culture describes how a specific group of people approaches and understands the past. For this purpose, we examine why people select historical issues from the past as well as why they are interested in talking about them or desire to ‘consume’ them. The social production of historical experience by different social agents, such as media, schools, policy makers, and the creative industry set several questions asking how people handle the past when they come in touch with it by creating or consuming it (Erdmann, 2008). In addition to the previous reference, historians Grever and Adriaansen state that this concept began as a response to the traditional hermeneutic approaches to history education (Grever & Adriaansen, 2017: 74) implying the shift of ‘cultural turn’ from history and history education. Therefore, they provide a meaningful interactive level of analysis in the study of historical culture; Historical narratives and performances of the past: the emphasis is placed on identity formation and emotion through individuals and mnemonic communities; Mnemonic infrastructures: enable mediation between past and present, and between personal and collective memory; Underlying concepts of history: an idea of what history is. These three aspects demonstrate how historical culture was articulated by a target group of people.

The philosopher of history Jörn Rüsen advocates that historical culture is an interplay between institutions and strategies of memory and the relevant dissemination process.<sup>1</sup> This denotes that historical culture is a complicated concept which is articulated in societies and their social representatives, such as governments, schools, the creative and cultural industries, museums, the mass media and so on. He denotes that historical culture is the inner side of historical learning and historical culture is the outer side, the infrastructure of historical learning which enables collective instruction. Rüsen (2017: 190) underlines five dimensions of historical culture which provide

meaning to the daily lives of human beings: the aesthetic (feeling), the cognitive (thinking), the political (wanting), the moral (judging) and the religious (believing). Peter Seixas (2016) redefines Rösen's matrix which provides a way of thinking about the relationship between the discipline of history and the larger cultural circumstances within which the discipline is practised. Seixas divides the cognitive process of history into two parts. The first one is characterised by the strength of collective identity which means that there are no critical discussions and/or debate (red colour). On the other side, disciplinary history focuses on competence in the disciplinary practices of history (blue colour). He concludes with the idea of a purple between these sides connecting historical practices and memorial beliefs.

The past is active in the present and depending on their future expectations they choose the fragment of the past which sparks societies' interests. That is what Morris Suzuki (2005) said regarding the terms of the past which are not homogeneous because there are gaps in the way history is used at an institutional level, in communities, and by individuals. Historical culture is a dynamic process of social dialogue between representatives of the past and the producers' understandings. Nostalgia, vengeance, analogies and expectations of recognition are transporters of interest in the past to the present. Contemporary societies deal with the past based on the concerns of their own lives. If examination of historical culture is related to serious social changes which provide answers to the present through the past, they we should carefully examine the current production and consumption of history.

Reconsideration of the 'historical distance' metaphor is required in how we think people understand history through historical representations. Based on this, historian Mark Philips points out that every representation of history incorporates elements of making, feeling, doing and understanding considering mediation and its four fundamental dimensions of distance which shape the experience of historical time (Philips, 2011). As such, historical distance is reconceived as a layer of complexity through which the historical experience can be understood. It is essential to know the medium through which we come in touch with the past, the emotional experiences that this medium promises to users, the political, religious or ethical implications and finally the conceptual assumptions that users may construct. This notion could be used as a

type of strategy in order to achieve effects of both proximity and separation from mediated history (Hollander, Paul & Peters, 2011).

We should examine all previous theories of the digitalized turn of post-modern societies which redefine the linear-narrative cultural context of modern societies. The historian Claudio Fogu (2009: 103) emphasises the impact of digital technology on all aspects of historiographical operation and suggests that we first understand history in the digitalized era. If the previous comment is true, the challenges of digitized societies should be a real turning point in how historical culture is shaped. He stresses the role of games saying that the meaning of time is based on the spatial environment of each game. This changes the way we orient ourselves in time. Professor of Contemporary history and didactics Marko Demantowsky (2015) supports the idea that the culture of remembrance and historical culture are by no means mutually exclusive but complementary; the culture of remembrance is contemporary historical culture. He highlights that what is needed is a dynamic understanding of contemporary history. Peter Seixas (2017: 68-69) underlines this idea considering that different cultures have different kinds of temporal orientation, different ways of dealing with the relationship between past, present and future.

The new challenges of migration, technology, the collapse of the notion of progress and the decline of nation promise in the light of globalization are some of the aspects which Seixas supports.

As such, several data are produced during these days in cyberspace. They all come from people who communicate, react and participate in any cyber activity and the programmers create algorithms which allow computational machines to carry out a series of logical sequences. It is no coincidence that the rationale and application of the algorithms have been characterized as an algorithmic culture (Galloway, 2006), which predetermines to a certain extent the movements of the users in cyberspace. What does the algorithmic culture include? Information, the crowd, and the algorithm (Striphas, 2015) that are involved in a clear and unobtrusive manner. Following this understanding, there is a strong possibility that people learn, query and criticize specific information based on algorithmic rules.

In this sense, digital games are also being launched, which operate using an electronic device such as a computer, a video game console, a mobile phone, and more. Games are one of the most important

applications of artificial intelligence, utilizing its methods to provide competition to the player. Artificial intelligence attempts to emulate human intelligence, as the mathematician Alan Turing first attempted, but has consistently followed the Occam's Razor as its scientific principle. The simpler the algorithm is, the safer the result will be, but digital games create complicated procedures for their users. Digital games use algorithms through game machines and people's data to create a simulation regarding historical event/person and develop the users' imagination.

### **3. History and Digital Games**

If we wanted to define the meaning of a game with historical content, we would say that it is related to a past event or somehow talks about the past during the users' gameplay, as well as practices, motives and dynamic representations or simulations unfolding through it (Chapman, 2016). Fogu (2009: 104) has concerns that it is difficult to provide the definition of historical video games and wonders whether we should watch their historical representation in a literal way when we live in a modern historical culture. Probing these digital games, we should remember the digital-interactive fantasy and the ethical-aesthetic limits. Historian Wulf Kansteineir (2007) observes the transformation of collective memory and historical consciousness when people are engaged in digital environments, such as history digital games. He believes that games construct memories each time any user is playing, which means that memory studies will need to change their theory of investigation.

In the videogame industry, two main streams have emerged. One side, known as ludologists, argues that the game must be understood through its own mechanics, while the other side, so-called narratologists, argues that it must develop its meaning through narrative (Simons, 2007). But digital games usually combine systems based on both rules and narrative structures. As such, Ian Bogost (2007) has created the term of procedural rhetoric which means pointing out the combination of two aspects of narrative and mechanics in digital games and this can be understood through the correlation between cause and consequence of the players' action and the game's rules.

The narrative dimension of games resembles a dominant or popular cinematic perspective with wars as the most well-known

theme even in games with a social content. The concept of the imaginary is joined to the dominant visual narrative in order to give an illusion of authenticity to the historical past, but also to produce the functional methodology of a game. The rationale of modern progress with strong teleological features is reflected in these games involving players in perceptions of Manichaeism. To understand MMOGs and their characteristics we will shortly present the historicity of digital games on which MMOGs are based.

The architecture of digital games in the mid-twentieth century includes the creation of the first commercial games mainly with themes concerning conflict, war and survival in the background. First person shooter games are characterized by their confrontational character and are rarely related to the notion of peace. The representation of the past is usually based on a scenario of war with the participant seeing through the weapon that the player holds and with the angle of view to face a situation or to survive it. These sorts of games could be characterized as a simulation of the passive experience of the player in a situation of conflict that unfolds when players focus on their goals as well as the illusion of control through the supposed elimination first of their target and finally of the fragile playable character (de Groot, 2009: 136). The past seems to be fragmented between small narrative moments, including mainly representations of war, while the main goal remains the players' attempt to survive in a war (e.g. *Medal of Honour*). The development of such games over time is related to the parallel involvement of other players, also seeking to achieve their target, and usually they need to work with other players (e.g. *Call of Duty*). In this form of games, participants are integrated into the notion of war, since they are not individual entities, but they work together to achieve a goal.

Another category that appears more and more intense is strategy games (e.g. *Civilization*) with historical, geographic and real background data. In these games, a teleological dimension develops. Players win or lose depending on the outcome of their decisions in various areas such as the economy, technology or even military events. The rationale of progress is a basic point of reference for these games and is related to the discoveries and inventions that players will make during gameplay. Of course, according to the new media professor Kevin Schut (2007), there is an aggressive logic rather than the perception of developing a social understanding and a whole perception of the world. In *Civilization*, players compete for a

happy and thriving society with similar financial gains. What is represented in these games is the culture of progress which is realized by players as protagonists of history who seek a linear and progressive success for their society with intensive patriotic or even nationalist references. The success of the players' society is related to their strategic movements. Only enemies can randomly and unintentionally alter the opponent's decisions. Every player's movement or decision has a certain consistency.

Action games, which include the past as background or scenes for the game, are also behind the game story. Players direct the protagonist or the protagonists who deal with the enemies or zombies that appear. Information about the past is minimal, but the representations resemble a scene from another era. Interestingly, players are focused on dealing with the enemy by developing a Manichaean approach to how they will work within the game, thereby enhancing the sense of enjoyment and fun.

The 21st century brought changes to social fabric by adapting living conditions to a globalized environment. Similar technologies are available to bring people into contact anywhere in the world. Digital social networks unite people from different parts of the world, but they also share collective memory or secondary memory, alternative forms of history and uninterrupted information of the past. Moving into an open framework of sharing data and bringing people together with different considerations has led to conflicts, misunderstandings, and scepticism about such collaborations in the future. Digital games from the 2000s evolve in proportion to this technological development that shapes and co-shapes the culture of people of this period.

Players usually choose, name, or design a virtual avatar to enter the three-dimensional world and connect with the virtual characters (avatars) of other players to start the game. These games are characterized by a combination of play, role-playing, and virtual reality, and are free to play in the game. Players' experiences change in the course of gameplay, as participants communicate with other players to reach a goal, while they are in a historical context. The player acquires an autonomy to manage the situation in the game, but at the same time seeks to work with other people to achieve its purpose. A rotation of experiences and abilities develops during the game. Even if the players fail in achieving the desired goal with their team, the game will continue. Players will only lose their experience

and their time of play. The feeling that emerges is that history is a game of consciousness through the roles you take to represent your team. It is an interaction between a role that forms part of a wider game context and at the same time has an empathic relationship with the representation of the past.

This sort of game develops a series of communities making them social and interactive with other players, shaping the experience of the game for the player. Schell (2008: 370) expresses the importance of these communities believing that they may eventually turn from virtual to real communication networks in the future. Wenger (2006), on the other hand, emphasizes the concept of engagement and commitment of members in the community of these games by developing relationships of mutual help and interaction. Thus, a sense of the wider gamer community that extends beyond the boundaries of the game seems to affect how players play during such a game. Returning to the concept of algorithmic culture, it appears that the design of the environment of these games pushes towards the development of communities with the main elements of teamwork, communication and dialogue, developing superficial or short-term contacts. Shared skills and competencies that are intertwined by virtual characters with real individual characteristics combine to develop progress within the game.

The evolution of first person shooter games in the 21st century is associated with a better visual representation with the magician having three-dimensional simulations. These kinds of games, beyond the evolution of graphics and music, are evolving in their content, escaping from cinematic glances and incorporating more historical information from historical narratives. Along with these games, official pages with historical information, hyperlinks to museums, movies books and maps are created. Players can gain a sense of the past as well as be involved in the game. The hyperlinks and related historical information that players can access gives them a sense of security to understand their past and produces effortless engagement in the game. Head Mounted Display technology (HMD) has changed the player's experience in first person shooter games because players are physically placed in the simulation giving them the illusion that they are fighting as if they were on the battlefield. At the same time, the evolution of strategy and action games is modified to enhance their image to players, as well as their active participation. For example, in *Civilization*, players are actively participating in the UN

council to make decisions. In the *Assassin's Creed* action game, players receive historical information beyond the already formed representational historical scene.

Access to digital content historical games is transformed into a logic of easy access and diffusion like that of the general trend for open data and the logic of sharing. Participation in massive cyber games and communication by teammates provide them with a sense of direct communication and management of the game. But why is the past chosen? Ian Bogost (2015) is thinking about the culture that these games bring us back to; the original position on integrating video games into a wider culture that chooses elements, trends, examples, and translates them into a representative form through games. The past is an example of how to refresh the creation of digital games as a means of entertainment and fantasy development, where memories, historical information, fantastic events and creativity are blended.

#### **4. Deconstructing MMOGs Related to the Past**

As we see above, digital games from the 2000s onwards evolve in proportion to the technological evolution which is being shaped and reshaped by the culture of people of this period. The prominent form of these games is Massive Multiplayer Online Games. These games combine virtual simulation with social integration and association with players from anywhere in the world (Delwiche, 2006). Players are asked to complete a series of tasks on contemporary events, develop their characters within these games, coordinate with other players, and set up teams to achieve clear goals. MMOGs do not have a specific goal or end. On the contrary, players take part in several activities and challenges overlaid on a narrative context or a general story. There is no linear or predetermined progress. Each player has its own hero who is crossed by other players' heroes and stories. Players form their experience based on their choices, rules and predetermined algorithmic game mode. The virtual worlds of MMOGs are permanent and the game environment continues to operate even if the player is not in this room.

The main categories of Massively Multiplayer Online Games are based on previous games. That is why we can meet first person shooter games, strategy games or action games which are massive and for multiple players. The new category which is well known is

massively multiplayer online role-playing games. Each player constructs a digital identity based on the game scenario and participates with others playing the game. A significant example is the death of a US diplomat Sean Smith who was the well-known player Vile Rat of *EVE Online*.<sup>2</sup>

Massively Multiplayer Online Games do not require such advanced computing skills for players as the previous ones and they can be played by a much broader segment of Internet users (Castulus Kolo & Baur, 2004). As such, mechanics have created the game based on a database through which players are prompted for different actions in accordance with real-time interaction and turn-based mechanics (Bond, Loidl & Louchart, 2016). The algorithms represent historical representations and narratives as well as direct players' movement during gameplay. However, MMOGs use the social networking infrastructure which means that players communicate in order to continue the game. Otherwise, the meaning of these games has lost their added value of socializing. The game engine of these games also provides the time model (real time of players and time of game, game goals, game resources, such as titles, money, population), game characters and game rules.

Based on the previous analysis, we will focus on three strands; the experience, the historiographic approach and the learning. The first thread of discussion, as mentioned at the beginning, concerns the concept of the past as an experience that takes place during and outside the game, attempting to map out the historical status that is potentially developed through this social dialogue. The experience of the games is divided into two parts. The first includes the design-creative side of a game's experience where manufacturers will visualize the content of games based on the cultural recruits that the creators carry in relation to the available capabilities they have in their hands to create expectations for a utopian or a dystopian future.

On the other hand, there are players who, according to the game, acquire a totally different kind of experience beyond the ordinary one of fun. Let us begin with the MMOGs which are based on first-person shooter, strategy and action games. First-person shooter games could be characterized as a simulation of the passive experience of the player in a confrontational situation that is unfolding by targeting his enemies, the illusion of control through the supposed elimination of the target, and of the fragile character of the player (de Groot, 2009: 136). The past seems to be fragmented

between small narrative moments, including mainly war representations, while a strong individualized survival effort is boosted in a war. The historical experience of the game is characterized by a combination of cinematic narrative, a sense of simulation in past time and space with many fantastic elements enhancing the emotional tension.

The culture of progress is what is represented in strategy games, turning the participants into other protagonists of the story, pursuing a linear and progressive rationale for their society, with intense patriotic or even nationalist references. Players need to develop a strong conscious behaviour that is related to their decision and consistency. The game story here is a series of trials, problems, and issues to be resolved through concrete decisions and even ideal decisions. The game story may well be played again with many different results depending on the decisions of players. The fact that you can play 'History' again is one of the most significant successes of these games. Different decisions have different effects and the historical process is defined as a complex process. The player conceives historical development as something predicted by the powerful results of the multiple decisions he takes and the ultimately prohibitive moves to the course of developments.

Massive multiplayer online role-playing games retain the theme of the others, but they are different in their mode of play and thus in the players' experiences. Players choose gender, race, class, and similar abilities that unfold during the game. They can upgrade their role in the game, chat with characters that are not active by other players, get more equipment or lose and need to work with other characters to achieve their goals. They are therefore involved in activities that enable them to acquire skills like activities and conciliation they will have with other players. Groot (2009: 139) describes mass games as identity games, through which the player can form in cooperation with other players from anywhere in the world a consciousness or perception of their participation in space-time. These games show a sense of identity for the players in their space-time position.

In massive multiplayer online games with intense interchanges between communities and the content of the game, it appears that the player's time is dominated by the idea of success, adaptation, and upgrading their profile. Reputations build around those of good players who carry a game-related experience. The past contained in the game plays a role in the rules, namely the algorithm's

predetermined function and the record of good players, referring to successful outcomes of their steps in the games.

Out of gameplay, players create guilds (group of teams) which deal with the challenges of the game and its past references. A parallel world with that of the game is played beside it depending on the player's experience, the 'officer', 'leader', etc. who usually are referred to. Thus, a sense of the wider gamer community that extends beyond the boundaries of the game seems to affect how players play during such a game. Returning to the concept of algorithmic culture, it appears that the design of the environment of these games pushes towards the development of communities with the main elements of teamwork, communication and dialogue.

Experience in these games seems to be a content in progress as participants communicate with other players to reach a goal, while they are in a historical context. The player acquires autonomy to manage the situation in the game, but at the same time seeks to work with other people to achieve its purpose. A rotation of experiences and abilities develops during the game. Even if the players fail in achieving the desired goal with their team, the game will continue. Players will only lose their experience and their time of play. The feeling that emerges is that history is a game of consciousness through the roles you take to represent your team. It is an interaction between a role that forms part of a wider game environment and at the same time an empathic relationship with the representation of the past.

The second thread relates to the historiographic approach of digital games by detecting an alternative form of story that is designed by social fabric and combines different representations of it. But what we can understand is the mediation of a popular cinematic view of the past or a widespread historical narrative that is transformed through algorithms, graphics, music and rules into an alternative form of history. The protagonists of this new form come from developers, graphic designers, composers, while historians are also involved in so-called serious games.

The commercial game designers depict virtual representation of cinema or aspects of a predominant narrative that is enriched with extra fictional elements in order to mainly give enjoyment but at the same time complete immersion in the content of the text. In contrast, the so-called 'serious' games, which, although they usually restore a dominant narrative, try to turn the narrative into a lesson by retaining

the basic features of the game, but eliminating the sense of fun. Within this spectrum, the historian of digital games Vit Sisler underlines the importance of multiperspectivity when you create a serious game based on historical events (Sisler, 2016).

Players do not only consume the content of these games but are part of the creation of the game world. Some examples are commentary, games reviews, sounds, videos, analyses, memes, social networking, etc., with which players produce material and data. Players are invited to make newspapers, posters, videos, maps, etc. inside and out of the game. In short, players create beyond the protected frame of the game. But they build a profile, an identity in the game. Let us not forget that games are accompanied by social, political and economic visions. The origin of this vision stems from the conversation of players, designers, developers in order to create a result that will spark the interest of the players.

We should not overlook the case of companies that leave some of their game code open for the players themselves to refresh the game with data they themselves wish to bring by modifying the original design. Although the main reason for such an approach is nothing but the creation of another popular game, the players transfer their own narratives to the games. Finally, indie teams create alternative games that are usually not widely publicized or taken when they are transferred by large companies to the public.

The third involves the shifting of digital games to historical education – schools and universities – through formal or informal form, claiming a new role in mediating knowledge. Toys are points of communication and expression of individuals involved in such a process (Squire, 2004; Egenfeldt-Nielsen, 2007). Several studies have been carried out in schools and universities using digital games to develop students' historical thinking with controversial results. Can historical thinking be based only on historical understanding, awareness and motivation? It is really difficult to answer this question theoretically.

However, an informal form of learning emerges in massively multiplayer online games. Players help each other and learn about the content of the game. Learning how to play requires time, serious work, collaboration and engagement with game rules and entrant guilds. Several players, of course, perceive algorithmic guidance, but they insist on continuing the game headed by it. Let us not forget that mass multiplayer online games never end, because manufacturers are

constantly making changes by always putting players in search and waiting mode.

This cognitive procedure is related to the game context and users learn from it and their interplay with game participants. A virtual ethnographic research in Greece (Voulgari, Komis & Sampson, 2014) demonstrated that players in a massively online game develop cognitive aspects based on game elements, context and the users' ability to communicate with each other and express their thoughts. In general, there are some surveys concerning MMOGs and their learning outcomes when they are used in classrooms but not focused on history education. For example, Delwiche (2006) points at his ethnographic research saying that the decision to implement an MMO-based curriculum should be positive but we have to think about the students' immersion and engagement which can lead to addictive gaming behaviors.

What should happen in a history massive online game when players communicate, chat, express, learn, and write their thoughts depending on the immersive environment? As we said before, there is not a linear relationship between game and player, but a complicated interconnection related to the game design by developers and designers, the algorithms they have chosen or created and the information (data) they have already retrieved by users for future updates. Participating in massively multiplayer online games with simultaneous participation and communication by teammates provide them with a sense of direct communication and democratic management of the game. Players feel that they can move on depending on other players' directions making it possible for them to learn more from the game and its content. The past is an example of how to refresh the creation of digital games as a means of entertainment and fantasy development, where memories, historical information, fantastic events and creativity are blended.

## **5. Discussion**

If the role of historical fantasy ultimately becomes fruitful, when it is not limited by the rigour of reasoning, then how is it legitimized within a framework of gambling rules aimed at success? The rules of historical gameplay are not related to historical research and methodology. The rules are designed by the creators to be able to control the flow of the game and lead the players to a desired result.

The past, however, is involved in the game rules by mixing the player's experience with the ability to understand the rules and the skill to manage representations of the past, to communicate and to express themselves, to imitate the 'veteran' players who have succeeded and finally to interact in and out of play with other players. The fear of linking the content of the game with Manichaeic perceptions and past events is a crucial issue of how users are ultimately affected by games. In addition, the gelatinisation of space and time creates an image of fragmentation, creating intersections in time and selectively observing space. Players are immersed in the gameplay space and they are interested in it (whether there is past time or not).

The digital game functions several times as a mediated medium of the past, often approaching a dominant narrative, although many new attempts are made to escape this rationale (for instance indie gamers). If we still think that the space and time of the past interact with fantastic events or even create fantastic spatial contexts in the past, relativization becomes even more intense for the player. In this way, a mixture of various collective memories, individual memories and perceptions are mixed with imagination during an engagement in a game by interacting with game designers. All previous references are related to the mnemonic infrastructures of this medium. The concept of history which was selected for mediation as well as simulated historical narratives construct the world of MMOGs and digital games in general. MMOGs provide mediated cognitive skills to players through their context, the interplay with team and the culture of game designers and programmers (algorithmic culture). Manninen and Kujanpaa (2005) present a survey based on the case of *Battlefield 1942* game. They present how players' embodied actions are affected by the game framework. That is why they collected all the game elements (avatar appearance, facial expressions, kinesics and so on) in order to understand the predetermined algorithmic conditions.

Finally, do MMOGs create a new form of historical experience or even a form of social dialogue? It could be denied that the production of the creator comes into direct interaction with the player's reaction, which deliberately or not creates also the game. Individual games enhance player's skills and perceptions to successfully complete the game. Indeed, there is a passive experience, which is achieved by the player himself and has individual characteristics. Of course, social dialogue around these games takes

place inside or outside the game. In contrast, MMOGs are characterized by the emphasis on social interaction to complete the game by developing a strong dialogue between players about the game, its content and how it will work in the future. In this case, players' experiences, skills and competencies are knit together and interactive, observing the very active role that players have. Social dialogue around the past is related to players' experiences and their attempt to play a leading role in the game. We should understand that game design shapes social dialogue about the past when the past becomes a benchmark for digital games and through the games' rules affects players. This experience related to the past needs to be explored to understand how the association of game culture interacts with wider culture and how the two sides are fed by the similar experiences that they acquire. In general, MMOGs should be characterized as a medium with cognitive social, ethical, aesthetic and cultural aspects which are merged during the simulation process and later in community spaces.

Some questions for further discussion are: Do we have to understand the digital world and its characteristics in order to know the structure of new media? For sure, this is an absolute prerequisite for the use, engagement and any implementation of technological tools or methods. We should understand the context, the mechanics, the users' role very well so as to use it in our lives and then in classroom environments. Digital games are complicated media and especially Massively Multiplayer Online Games which are based on social interaction. Constructing digital identities and memories is a turning point for history understanding and the formation of historical consciousness. Software studies would clarify what is happening in the environment of Massively Multiplayer Online Games as they examine the software context and how users react within it (Fuller, 2008). As such, we can have a look at digital worlds and how people react, feel, understand, and interpret.

How do games form a historical culture when they have already developed an argument or message around the past through algorithms? Massively Multiplayer Online Games have already created a historical culture from their constructs. This means that players will make a digital identity based on the game mechanics and narrative. On the other hand, Massively Multiplayer Online Games are based on sociability during game play and outside. This automatically creates new data from players which are really

interesting for the constructors. The construction of digital identities and memories based on the game are essential for game progression, especially for free Massively Multiplayer Online Games. Constructors pay attention to what is happening in these digital worlds.

Do players always understand the game argument or message? This question is not easily answered as we do not have several surveys based on players' experience. For sure, players follow the game message as they must thoroughly understand the rules (mechanics) and any narration which appears on the screen but simultaneously they have to be sociable with other players in order to continue the gameplay. This changes how they understand game argument as they have to follow their team and the constructors notice how they interact with their team. Let us not forget that Massively Multiplayer Online Games have not any end and constructors always seek players understanding of or reactions to games.

How do the networks between MMOG creators and players construct a historical culture around the digital world? How do MMOG players' social collaboration and interaction with game content and during chat rooms which players create in parallel to the game redefine the meaning of historical culture? How does the 'purple zone' of historical practice and memorial beliefs transform international players' understanding when they are connected to game rules and contingency? How does players' data including collective memories and play preferences in accordance with algorithms determine historical culture? As we mention above, the construction of the digital world is a complex matter. The historical culture of Massively Multiplayer Online Games is constructed on a hybrid basis between collective memories of real life and the constructed memories of game. The purpose here is more complicated than real life since the circle is formed between the collective memories of real life and constructed memories of digital life. All these can change based on how people react and collaborate during gameplay.

Should we characterise what is happening in games as digital historical culture or is this just a common sense understanding of what is happening in digital games? How has the meaning of space and time in digital games changed due to game mechanics engagement? How does a playful situation transform the meaning of historical narratives and the concept of history? When the past is the

basis for the creation of these Massively Multiplayer Online Games, players face the real time of gameplay and the game time of their constructed memories. Players build empathy during gameplay (Oldenburg, 2017), react to game narratives related to the past and they construct new narratives for the past based on these new memories. This should be under discussion in history education and be a really challenging issue of MMOG implementation in classrooms.

## **6. Conclusion**

Massively Multiplayer Online Games historical culture should be examined as a dynamic system which continually changes due to each time players' roles and motives and the update of technological tools and methods. As such, the historical culture of these games is constructed by the connection of different networks (those of producers and those of players) which meet, generating a focused network. This network is international including different ages, gender, cultural backgrounds, understanding of the past and the reason they spend time playing games. The network transfer and construct of collective memories collaborate with each other. Massively Multiplayer Online Games historical culture is constructed by a participatory interactive past in which the players' data and constructors' algorithms join together.

This makes MMOG a special category of digital game due to the fact that the historical understanding is based on social interaction among players, game designers and the predetermined algorithmic rationale of game mechanics. MOOG implementation in history education is not as easy as some researchers think. History educators should examine game context, game elements and how players react during game play. They have to be aware if some students already play some of these games, know what their role is in the game, their social interaction with the communities and the game context. Any implementation of these games in classrooms should be assessed in relation to the goal of added value for students.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> More at [www.culturahistorica.es/historical\\_culture.html](http://www.culturahistorica.es/historical_culture.html) (25.05.2018).

<sup>2</sup> [kotaku.com/the-extraordinary-mischievous-too-short-life-of-sean-481060252](http://kotaku.com/the-extraordinary-mischievous-too-short-life-of-sean-481060252) (25.05.2018).

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## THE 'GREAT HISTORY QUIZ': MEASURING PUBLIC HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE AND THINKING IN FLANDERS

Karel van Nieuwenhuysse

*This article reports on the principles, aims, design and analysis of the results of a large-scale online 'Great History Quiz' organized in Flanders (Belgium). The quiz did not solely test a lay audience's historical knowledge, but particularly focused on testing its ability to debunk historical myths and its historical reasoning skills. Based on an analysis of the results of a set of 70 multiple choice questions launched among a test panel of 1013 volunteers, eighteen questions were selected to be part of the final, online quiz, in which ultimately 100,563 people participated. While the results were good regarding historical knowledge, they reveal shortcomings in historical reasoning. It is argued that the way a lay audience deals with history would benefit from a manual.*

On March 21, 2016 several Flemish newspaper headlines screamed: 'Fleming flunks historical knowledge and understanding.'<sup>1</sup> The headlines referred to the results of 1013 people living in Flanders who had participated in a test panel of the 'Great History Quiz'. The average score was 4.5/10. The headline seemed to announce yet another bad tidings of the poor state of historical knowledge in society at large.

'Yet another', because echoes of such critique of decreasing historical knowledge are certainly not new, and moreover not typically Flemish. American history education scholar Sam Wineburg raised in an article in 2000 the following question: 'Imagine the following test question: Identify the source of this statement: "Surely a grade of 33 in 100 on the simplest and most obvious facts of American history is not a record in which any high school can take pride."' This characterization of the knowledge of high school students comes from: (a) Ravitch and Finn's report of the 1987 National Assessment of Educational Progress in history, in which they argued that students' test scores indicate they are "at risk of being gravely handicapped by ... ignorance upon entry into adulthood, citizenship, and parenthood." (b) The 1976 *New York Times* test of American youth, published under the banner headline "Times Test Shows Knowledge of American History Limited."

(c) Reports of the 1942 *New York Times* history exam that prompted Allan Nevins to write that high school students are “all too ignorant of American history.” (d) None of the above.’ (Wineburg, 2000: 306)

The choices highlight how throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century a negative perspective apparently prevailed on young people’s historical knowledge, especially as the correct answer was ‘(d) None of the above’. The statement actually stemmed from a 1917 research into the knowledge of the American past among 668 high school students from Texas. Not only young people’s, yet the general public’s poor historical knowledge as well has often been the target of criticism, as recent examples show. In the Netherlands in 2003, a historical knowledge survey among 683 adult participants who on average obtained a score of 4/10, made researchers conclude that the Dutch public was very ignorant of its own history (Smits, 2003: 42). In 2014, television historian Lucy Worsley claimed the British public ‘are ignorant about history’ (Flanagan, 2014). A poll in August 2015 organized by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (2016) also led to the conclusion that the historical knowledge of both college graduates and the general public was very poor.<sup>2</sup>

The question arises: what is the value of such bad tidings, whose roots date even back to Classical Antiquity, eventually. For such discourses often express a nostalgia for a very encyclopedic, factual dealing with the past, furthermore particularly aimed at supporting national identity-building processes. Wineburg firmly rejected the recurrent critiques against the (alleged) decrease in historical knowledge. In his opinion, it is not a good idea to test factual knowledge of (young) people, ‘only to discover – and rediscover – their “shameful” ignorance’ (Wineburg, 2004: 1406). He made a plea for a different, reflective approach of the past (particularly in history education), more oriented towards fostering people’s understanding of the past and fostering their historical thinking skills. When I was asked to establish an online history quiz meant for large-scale dissemination in Flanders, the northern, Dutch-speaking part of Belgium, I kept this idea in mind.

This article starts with a view on the aims and the design of that quiz. The next parts provide an analysis of the results of a test panel of 1013 persons, an explanation of how the final online quiz was established, and a comparative analysis of the results of the test panel with those of a lay audience of more than 64 000 participants. This is

followed by a discussion of the significance of the results in terms of how a lay audience deals with and thinks about the past and history.

## 1. Principles and Aims

The initiative for the 'Great History Quiz' was taken by *Davidfonds*, the main cultural network in Flanders, annually organizing somewhat 10 000 cultural activities with the help of more than 6 000 volunteers.<sup>3</sup> On the occasion of its annually organized 'Night of History', *Davidfonds* planned to organize a history quiz, in collaboration with national public *Radio 1* (particularly paying attention to developments in society, politics, culture, science and sports and helping to create the social debate about these topics), and *i-vox*, a private market research and polling agency.<sup>4</sup> In their search for academic historians to support the content of the quiz, they asked the History Department of the University of Leuven to collaborate.

As a staff member of the department, I agreed to take up this responsibility, but required that the following conditions and principles had to be met in the design of the quiz. First, the quiz had to go beyond the level of measuring people's knowledge of petty facts, and had to measure aspects of people's historical thinking as well. Second, participants in the quiz had to receive feedback on their result. Third, the feedback had to be based on an algorithm designed on the basis of scientific analysis. Fourth, the quiz had to be based on the current historiographical state of the art. Fifth, the quiz had to be easily accessible for a lay audience, meaning the selection of recognizable content had to be safeguarded. Sixth, the content was not to be limited to questions of the national past, as in Flanders/Belgium no master narrative of the national past exists, but the orientation of history is much more Western-European.<sup>5</sup>

All conditions were accepted, and ultimately, it was decided that the quiz had to contribute to a lay audience's understanding of both the past and history. The quiz had to test factual basic historical knowledge, participants' ability to debunk historical myths by questioning the distinction between historical representations in collective memory and in academic historiography, and participants' historical reasoning skills.

## 2. Design

In order to realize the main goal of the quiz, three categories of questions were designed. The first category consisted of questions testing participants' factual basic historical knowledge. Questions were drawn up to test the knowledge of important and significant past events, spread over and safeguarding a balance between different periods of the classic historical frame of reference and societal domains.<sup>6</sup> Examples are: 'In 1492, Christopher Columbus 'discovered' America. As a result, many new products were exported to Europe. Which of the following was *not* one of those new products? (1) Potatoes, (2) *Paper*, (3) Tobacco, (4) Corn' or 'When were women granted the right to vote for parliamentary elections in Belgium? (1) 1948, (2) 1918, (3) 1893, (4) 1830' or else 'In which sector was the largest part of the population employed during the Roman Empire? (1) Trade, (2) *The agricultural sector*, (3) The army, (4) Commerce and business.'<sup>7</sup>

Contrary to what one might assume, it turned out to be quite difficult to design unambiguous factual questions with a clear answer leaving no room for discussion or protest. The (Eurocentric) idea of 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Athens under Pericles as the cradle of democracy provides a good example to illustrate this. Academic historians have shown that non-Western societies also had democratic forms of government, even before the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. (Isakhan & Stockwell, 2011). They refer for instance to pre-Babylonian Mesopotamia where Gilgamesh did not dispose of autocratic power. By contrast, in many city-states a council of (young) men existed, who had decision-making authority, or at least had to be consulted on important decisions. The same applies to the so-called *gana sangha* republics in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. on the Indian subcontinent. Nevertheless, historians discuss whether those were forms of democracy or rather of oligarchy. Several historians prefer to use, in those contexts, the terms 'pre-democracy' or 'proto-democracy'. Such an example immediately reveals the interpretative and constructed nature of historical knowledge, and also shows how historians focus on the particular rather than making general remarks. At the same time, this made it particularly difficult to design unambiguous questions, leaving no room for discussion.

Another example is this question: 'Which statement about the position of women during the Olympic Games in ancient Greece is

correct? (1) Women were allowed to participate, (2) Women were not allowed to participate, only to be spectators, (3) *Women were not allowed to participate, and we do not know whether or not some could be spectators*, (4) Women were not allowed to participate nor to be spectators, under penalty of death.' No consensus exists among historians on this topic. An important source about women as spectators is Pausanias, *Description of Greece* V6, 7. He wrote that *gunè* were not allowed as spectators. 'Gunè', however, was normally used to indicate married women, meaning that virgins on the other hand could yet have been allowed as spectators. Suetonius, in *The life of August* 44, mentioned a prohibition for women (*mulier*) on attending sports games. It is hence certain that married women were not allowed as spectators during the Olympic Games; virgins being allowed is merely a hypothesis.<sup>8</sup> The 'lay' assumption in this respect, however, remains that women could not attend the Olympic Games under penalty of death. This shows how recent historiographical findings do not easily trickle through in popular historical culture in society at large.

This finding inspired the establishment of a second category of questions, in which it was particularly measured to what extent participants were capable to debunk myths circulating in collective memory. All questions referred to widespread myths that have nevertheless been refuted by academic historiography since many years or even decades. Examples are: 'Witches have been prosecuted the most during: (1) Early Middle Ages, (2) Late Middle Ages, (3) *Early Modern Period*, (4) *Late Modern Period*'<sup>9</sup>, or 'Which statement about prostitution is wrong? (1) *Prostitution is universal and of all time*, (2) In the beginning of the *Early Modern Period*, the church did not consider sexual intercourse with a prostitute as adultery, (3) Some societies did not have prostitution before European colonization, (4) Professions such as doctors, priests, clerks or cooks are at least as old (if not older) than prostitution'<sup>10</sup>, or else 'In which of the following ancient societies were men and women granted equal rights the most? (1) Rome, (2) Greece, (3) *Egypt*, (4) Phoenicia.'<sup>11</sup>

The third category of questions focused on measuring participants' ability to reason historically. Questions particularly addressed setting historical persons, events and developments in a chronological order; causal reasoning including contingency; the use of historical key-concepts and reasoning about sources; the field of tension between past and present, including the awareness of anachronisms and

perspective taking. Examples are: 'Put the following inventions in the correct chronological order: (1) The motorized airplane, (2) The electronic computer, (3) The pill', or 'Which of the following statements is correct? The establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (1) provoked an unstoppable European unification process, (2) provoked rivalry leading to a new war, (3) *was meant to guarantee enduring peace in Western-Europe*, (4) was meant to secure the European provisioning of coal and steel'<sup>12</sup>, or else 'Which definition of 'king' is correct? (1) A king is the highest authority in the country, receiving his power from God, (2) A king is theoretically the leader of the country; in practice the government, appointed by the parliament, has the power, (3) A king is a kind of dictator, (4) *All definitions are correct, as definitions of a concept are bound to time and space*' or still else 'Which of the following statements is correct? (1) Slavery in Athens in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. is a good example of a violation of human rights, (2) The rack, used in the Low Countries between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century was not only inhumane, it also was a travesty of justice, (3) *In 1964, all racial segregation in the United States was legally banned*, (4) The high mortality rate as a consequence of colonization among the indigenous peoples in Central-America during Early Modern Period is to be called genocide for good reasons.'<sup>13</sup>

Ultimately, a set of 70 multiple choice questions was established: 28 in the first category testing factual basic historical knowledge, 22 in the second category focusing on the ability to debunk historical myths, and 20 in the third category testing participants' historical reasoning skills. In February/March 2016, the 70 questions were tested through a random sample survey, resulting in a test panel of 1013 volunteers living in Flanders. The gender balance of the panel was almost perfect: it was composed of 506 women and 507 men. In terms of diploma level, 22 % (225) had at the most a certificate of lower secondary education, 42 % (427) at the most of higher secondary education, and 36 % (362) a degree of higher education. The division of age groups was as follows: 28 % (280) were younger than 35, 37 % (379) between 35 and 54 years old, and 35 % (354) were older than 55. The specific age groups had particularly been set like that because in so doing they coincide with educational reforms in Flanders/Belgium. In 1970, in history education under the so-called Renewed Secondary Education system, patriotic discourse was replaced by a European orientation, a presentist approach to the past, and a discourse of attachment to democracy, human rights, tolerance,

and solidarity. In 2000, the new history education curriculum under the so-called Unified Education system particularly emphasized critical and historical thinking skills, such as the analysis of sources, putting events in a chronological order, causal reasoning, and historical perspective taking. The basic frame of reference remained (Western-)European (van Nieuwenhuysen & Wils, 2015).

### 3. Analysis Results Test Panel

#### 3.1 *In General*

As mentioned above, the average total score of the 1013 participants was 4.5/10. When, however, split according to the three categories of questions, a more nuanced picture arises. The average score for factual basic historical knowledge questions was 6.8/10, for questions related to the ability to debunk historical myths 3.2/10, and for questions testing historical reasoning 3.6/10.

The low score on those questions measuring the ability to debunk historical myths should not be surprising. For this shows the strength and stubbornness of historical representations within collective memory, and the difficulty to make recent historiographical findings trickle through in collective memory. A large majority of 70 % of the participants for instance considered the (Early or Late) Middle Ages as the period in which witches were prosecuted most, while the correct answer in fact is the Early Modern Period. This shows how strong the myth of the 'dark' and 'cruel' Middle Ages still is in popular historical culture. On the other hand, collective amnesia (particularly regarding its own colonial past in Flemish-Belgian society for instance) is strong as well, as the answers on this question show: 'Which of the following statements about Congolese independence (30 June 1960) and decolonization is correct? (1) The assassination of Patrice Lumumba, Congo's first prime minister, is only be explained by the enormous tensions among contemporary Congolese leaders, (2) Congolese decolonization was a success story, that served as an example for the road to independence of many other African colonies, (3) *When the assassination of Lumumba was announced, large protest movements hit the streets, not only in the communist and in the Third World, but in the West as well (e.g. in London)*, (4) The rich mining province Katanga broke away from the rest of the Congo on 11 July 1960, against the will of the former colonizer country Belgium.' 15 % of the participants considered Congolese

decolonization successful, 20 % had no idea of Belgian involvement in the assassination of Lumumba, and 32 % did not know that Belgium remained involved in internal Congolese affairs, even after the country's independence. Those issues were, however, fiercely debated at the beginning of the new millennium, as a result of publication of the book written by the Flemish sociologist Ludo De Witte (1999), entitled *The Assassination of Lumumba*, causing great controversy in Belgium and abroad. Drawing on new documents from the archive of the Belgian ministry of foreign affairs, De Witte claimed that Lumumba had been assassinated by order of the Belgian authorities. The discussions following the publication led to the creation of a Parliamentary Enquiry Commission by the House of Representatives, which tasked four expert-historians with examining the alleged Belgian involvement in the assassination. After two years of inquiry, the experts concluded in 2001 that at least 'moral responsibility' fell on the Belgian authorities of that time (De Vos et al, 2004).

The questions aimed at testing participants' historical reasoning skills turned out to be very difficult as well, as the average score for the questions within this category was 3.6/10. Again, this should not be surprising, as it has been commonly acknowledged by both history education scholars and public historians that historical thinking and reasoning is an 'unnatural act' (Wineburg, 2001). A lay audience does spontaneously not reason historically, yet looks at the past through a presentist lens; furthermore, it takes a judgmental stance towards the past and often condemns it, from a present-day point of view and from the own contemporary moral perspective (van Nieuwenhuysse et al, 2015b). An important obstacle that hindered historical reasoning throughout the quiz was the finalistic opinions many participants held of the past. The following question clearly illustrates this: 'Which of the following statements about the First World War is correct? (1) The way the Treaty of Versailles was concluded after the First World War, inevitably led to the outbreak of the Second World War, (2) Without the assassination of the Austrian crown prince in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914, the First World War would have never broken out, (3) *The outbreak of the First World War was not solely the responsibility of the German empire. Other European countries like France, Russia, Austria-Hungary and Serbia contributed to the outbreak as well,* (4) In the First World War, the largest number of soldiers was killed at the Russian frontline.' (Clark, 2013; Hastings, 2013; MacMillan, 2001; MacMillan,

2013) Two third of all participants were convinced that either answer (1) or (2) – both inspired by finalism – were the right one.

When combining the scores of the first (historical knowledge) with the second and third category (about the ability to debunk myths and historical reasoning), the results showed a connection between historical knowledge and the ability to reason historically. The higher the score for the first category, the higher the scores for the second and third category as well. It hence seems as if historical knowledge and historical reasoning clearly went hand in hand among the participants.

### *3.2 Differences According to Age*

When analyzing the results of the test panel according to the age groups they belong to, interesting differences occurred between the age group younger than 35 years, and those older. On factual basic historical knowledge questions, the youngest age group gained the lowest scores. The difference was particularly striking for those knowledge question related to Contemporary Period (history since 1945). The age group of participants younger than 35 years had an average score of 8/10, the older age groups of 8.9/10. A possible explanation might be that people accumulate knowledge throughout their life (by reading, experiencing, travelling etc.); the older they are, the more knowledge people then have, especially about the recent past which they themselves experienced.

The scores for the second and third category on respectively the ability to debunk historical myths and historical reasoning skills showed the opposite balance. Here, participants younger than 35 years obtained higher scores than older participants. Especially the results for questions related to the status of historical sources in historical research and to putting events in the right chronological order (5/10 for those younger than 35 years, and 3.6/10 for those 35 years old or older) clearly revealed differences. The new history education curriculum since 2000 might provide an explanation for this finding. As mentioned earlier, this curriculum, still in use today, particularly emphasizes critical and historical reasoning skills, and pays attention to the use and analysis of historical sources. The scores for this question can serve as an example: 'Historian Ies Vuijsje concludes, after having analyzed diaries 'common Dutchmen' kept during the Second World War, that Dutchmen knew very well about

the Holocaust. Historian Bart van der Boom claims, also on the basis of diaries, that Dutchmen had no knowledge of the Holocaust. How do you explain this? (1) The past is what the historian him/herself makes of it, (2) One of the two historians used the sources in a wrong way, (3) *Historical sources are open to interpretation*, (4) One of the two historians lied.' (Vuijsje, 2006; van der Boom, 2012) The percentage of participants answering correctly was the highest in the age group of less than 35 years old (65 %); it decreased to 52 % in the age group between 35 and 54 years old, and to 43 % in the age group of older than 55 years.

### 3.3 *Differences According to Other Characteristics*

Differences did not only occur with age. Historical interest, diploma level and gender generated differences as well. With regard to interest in history, it should probably not be surprising that the higher the interest, the higher the scores for the questions in all three categories. The same applied to general interest in politics, economy, culture and education.

As expected, participants with a higher diploma level, obtained higher scores than those with a lower diploma level (participants having at the most a certificate of lower secondary education scored an average of 3.8/10, those with at the most a certificate of higher secondary education 4.4/10, and those with a degree of higher education 5.1/10). Nevertheless, it became obvious again that historical thinking is an unnatural act, as participants with a degree of higher education also did not score that well on the second and third category of questions. Only 21 % of the participants holding a degree of higher education scored 50 % or more on the questions testing the ability to debunk myths, and only 34 % scored 50 % or more on the questions testing historical reasoning.

A striking finding occurred related to gender. Except for the questions related to myths within Contemporary Period, women's scores on all questions in all categories were lower than men's scores. The average total score among men was 4.7/10, among women 4.3/10. An explanation is not obvious, as for instance no differences in diploma level existed between men and women in the test panel. There is certainly no scientific evidence that supports any assumption as if men would be better in remembering historical facts, or would be better in historical reasoning. Such assumption is, in other words,

simply wrong. The only factor seemingly able to explain the gender difference in scores is that of the interest in history. For in the test panel, a considerable difference occurred between participating men and women, with the latter showing less historical interest than men.<sup>14</sup>

#### **4. From Test Panel to General Public: The 'Great History Quiz' Online**

Based on analysis of the test panel's scores per question, a number of questions per category were selected to be part of the final, online 'Great History Quiz'. In the selection, a balance between the periods within the classic historical frame of reference, and between the societal domains was safeguarded. This led to a selection of ten questions testing factual basic historical knowledge and the ability to debunk myths from collective memory. Eight questions testing historical reasoning skills were added: per subcategory two questions related to (1) putting events in the right chronological order, (2) causal reasoning, (3) the use of historical key-concepts and reasoning about sources, and (4) the awareness of anachronisms and perspective taking. Again based on analysis of the test panel's scores per question, a balance was sought regarding the level of difficulty for the whole of the eighteen questions. Subsequently the 'Great History Quiz' was launched online, on 18 March 2016.<sup>15</sup>

As it was intended to provide participants with an understanding of the status of historical knowledge and their specific way of dealing with the past, standardized feedback was designed for the future participant. In so doing, use was made of the results and scores of the 1013 participants in the test panel. Based on the score per question, combined with the total score, a profile of historical knowledge, of the ability to critically approach collective memory, and of historical reasoning was established through an underlying algorithm. To make the feedback light-hearted at the same time, it was phrased in terms of historical relics, which had to serve as a metaphor. Participants were awarded a 'monument' with this score: factual knowledge  $\geq$  80 %, debunking myths and historical reasoning  $\geq$  60 % and the total score  $\geq$  70 %; participants were awarded a 'statue' with this score: factual knowledge  $\geq$  50 % and debunking myths and historical reasoning  $\geq$  40 %; participants with this score: factual knowledge  $\geq$  50 % and debunking myths and historical reasoning

<40 %, were awarded a ‘ruin’; if the factual knowledge was below <50 %, one was awarded an ‘oubliette’. For each of the four characterizations, feedback was provided. A ‘monument’ for instance got to read the following: ‘Congratulations, your basic historical knowledge is phenomenal. You infallibly succeeded in putting events in the right chronological order. Your understanding of the causal connection of historical events deserves a monument as well. You debunk the most stubborn historical myths as a true Sherlock Holmes. You devour history books and documentaries with a will, even more, perhaps you write them yourself!’ A ‘ruin’ received the following feedback: ‘The foundation of your basic historical knowledge has remained intact, although some stones are crumbling. What is missing, however, is an understanding of how the building once looked. Several times, you were caught out by historical clichés. You could probably boost your historical thinking by reading a good history book every once and a while.’

After one week, when 64 124 people had participated in the online quiz, new scores were calculated.<sup>16</sup> The average score of the eighteen questions was 5.6/10. In general, the results were about 10 % better than those of the test panel: 15 % of the participants were awarded a ‘monument’, 32 % a ‘statue’, 47 % a ‘ruin’, and 6 % an ‘oubliette’. In general, 64 % of all participants obtained a score of  $\geq 50$  %, and hence passed the quiz. One in five participants obtained a score of 70 % or more and 45 % gained the maximum on the factual basic historical knowledge questions. Almost one third (30 %) of the participants scored 5/10 or more on the questions in the second and third category (regarding the ability to debunk myths and historical reasoning). The same differences according to age group and gender as already witnessed in the test panel occurred. Older people scored better than young people (the group younger than 35 years) in terms of factual basic historical knowledge. Yet again, the age group younger than 35 years obtained better scores for questions in the second and third category on respectively the ability to debunk historical myths and historical reasoning skills. Men obtained better scores than women in all three question categories.

## **5. Discussion**

The large numbers of participants in the ‘Great History Quiz’ seems to indicate that historical interest within society at large in Flanders is

big. This finding parallels conclusions from earlier research in, among others, the United States, Australia, Canada and the Netherlands (Rosenzweig & Thelen, 1998; Ribbens, 2002; Hamilton & Ashton, 2003; Conrad et al, 2013). Furthermore, there seems to be no need for lamenting over an alleged poor state of historical knowledge in society at large. The results of the 'Great History Quiz' show that a majority of the more than 100 000 participants living in Flanders passed the knowledge questions rather to even very well.

Nevertheless, the results of the questions on the ability to debunk historical myths and historical reasoning skills show that the way a lay audience deals with history would benefit from and could use a manual. The results confirm findings from previous international research about the stubborn continued existence of mythical historical representations of past events and persons in collective memory, even though academic historiography often has debunked them for a long time. The constant reconstruction of history does not seem to trickle through that much in popular historical culture in society at large.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the results re-affirm the finding that historical thinking is an unnatural act, and that a lay audience does not spontaneously reason historically, yet by contrast approaches the past in a presentist way (Angvik & von Borries, 1997; Wineburg, 1999).

When reflecting about where such a manual of how to deal with the past in a well-considered way could be provided to a lay audience, one rather quickly ends up with history education. Rosenzweig for instance, based on his above mentioned study with David Thelen on how Americans use and think about the past, enumerated several important implications for the teaching of history in schools (Rosenzweig, 2000). In his opinion, teachers should raise interest for history among their students, should critically analyze their engagement with the past (in a collaborative effort), and should reveal the constructed and interpretative nature of historical knowledge and representations. Analysis of the results of the 'Great History Quiz' in Flanders seems to suggest that history education can indeed influence people's historical thinking. Even though no causal connection can be claimed, a correlation nevertheless seems to occur between history education practice and participants' performance. Participants younger than 35 years especially obtained the highest scores on questions related to critically debunking myths and to historical reasoning. Precisely that age group has had history

education according to the new history curriculum particularly emphasizing critical and historical thinking skills. One could therefore conclude that it might be worthwhile to continue orienting history education curricula towards fostering young people's historical thinking skills, instead of solely transmitting historical knowledge (van Nieuwenhuysse et al, 2015a; van Nieuwenhuysse et al, 2015b).

This, however, does not mean that fostering historical thinking cannot be reconciled with transmitting historical knowledge, both in- and outside history education. By contrast, analysis of the 'Great History Quiz' scores clearly shows that both go hand in hand. Historical knowledge is a necessary condition to enable historical thinking. At the same time, it needs to be emphasized that historical thinking is an unnatural act, meaning it needs to be taught to (young) people. Therefore, the transmission of historical knowledge and the fostering of historical thinking are probably best realized simultaneously.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> See for instance 'Vlaming gebuisd voor historische kennis en inzicht', *De Standaard*, 21.03.2016, [http://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20160321\\_02194158](http://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20160321_02194158) (26.12.2017).

<sup>2</sup> The report was mentioned in articles on the news websites of among others *CNN*, *The Times*, and *The Atlantic*.

<sup>3</sup> See [www.davidsfonds.be](http://www.davidsfonds.be) (26.12.2017).

<sup>4</sup> See [www.vrt.be/en/our-content-/brand-radio-1/](http://www.vrt.be/en/our-content-/brand-radio-1/); [www.ivox.be/](http://www.ivox.be/) (26.12.2017).

<sup>5</sup> The basic frame of reference in Flemish history education is (Western) European; the (sub)national past is only marginally present. In popular historical culture, different and often conflicting narratives on the history of Belgium circulate; here as well a Western European civilization story prevails (van Nieuwenhuysse & Wils, 2015; van Havere et al, 2017).

<sup>6</sup> The periods within the classic historical frame of reference are: prehistory, Ancient Near East, Classical Antiquity, Middle Ages, Early Modern Period, Late Modern Period, Contemporary History. Societal domains are: politics and institutions, economy and society, culture and religion, and arts and culture.

<sup>7</sup> Here and elsewhere in this article, the correct answers have been italicized.

<sup>8</sup> [ancientolympics.arts.kuleuven.be/sourceEN/D105EN.html](http://ancientolympics.arts.kuleuven.be/sourceEN/D105EN.html) (26.12.2017). This website has been built by Willy Clarysse and Sofie Remijsen, both of the University of Leuven, Faculty of Arts, Department of Ancient History.

<sup>9</sup> It is a stubborn myth in popular historical culture that witches were prosecuted most during the Middle Ages, considered as Dark Ages (Burns, 2003).

<sup>10</sup> Contrary to popular belief prostitution is not universal and of all time. Various societies were not familiar with the phenomenon of prostitution upon the arrival of Europeans (Ringdal, 2007).

<sup>11</sup> In Egyptian society, men and women were more equal, when compared with for instance Greek society, nevertheless often considered to be the cradle of democracy (Meier Tetlow, 1980).

<sup>12</sup> The word 'unstoppable' in the first answer possibility was used to examine whether or not the participants held deterministic beliefs of the past.

<sup>13</sup> In this question, answer possibilities 1 and 4 contain anachronisms, as resp. the concepts of human rights and of genocide did not exist yet in the context in which they have been used here. The rack can surely be considered inhumane, but was not a travesty of justice, as it was included in the law at the time.

<sup>14</sup> It is important to note here that this difference is certainly not generalizable to the complete population living in Flanders.

<sup>15</sup> The quiz is still available – in Dutch – via <http://www.davidsfonds.be/geschiedenisquiz/> (26.12.2017).

<sup>16</sup> Ultimately, 100 563 people participated in the quiz. No analysis was, however, done anymore for the whole of the participants.

<sup>17</sup> Many scholars came to this conclusion, while examining school history textbooks and historical representations in popular historical culture (books for a lay audience, museums, heritage sites, television documentaries etc.).

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# THE INFLUENCE OF THE DIDACTIC STRUCTURING OF LEARNING TASKS ON THE QUALITY OF PERCEPTION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF A HISTORICAL CARTOON

Denisa Labischová

*This article presents the results of qualitative research conducted in 2015 and 2016 on a sample of pupils at Czech lower secondary schools (age 14-15) and upper secondary schools (age 17-18). The research drew on a pilot study carried out in 2014, whose aim was to determine the extent to which didactically structured learning tasks influence the quality of perception, analysis and interpretation of an iconographic historical source – specifically a cartoon. The research presented here applied two methods of data collection and processing: analysis of audio recordings via open axial coding, and the eyetracking method (which is still not yet widely used in history didactics research). The results showed that the didactic structuring of learning tasks has a clear positive influence on pupils' perception strategies and on the quality of their analysis and interpretation of the cartoon. If pupils are not guided to observe the image in detail, to identify the various symbols and understand their meanings, they generally overlook these significant elements entirely, and their interpretation remains on a very superficial level. This finding should encourage textbook authors and history teachers to place more emphasis on structuring learning tasks related to historical sources in such a way as to guide pupils to develop their historical thinking skills.*

## **1. The Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of the Research**

### *1.1 The Educational Context – Developing Historical Thinking Skills at Czech Secondary Schools*

A major factor influencing history teaching in the Czech Republic is the high degree of autonomy enjoyed by schools in the creation of school curricula, which are based on relatively general framework education programmes. For more than a decade, each basic school (*základní škola* in the Czech system, combining primary and lower secondary stages) and each (upper) secondary school has been able to make its own decisions regarding the content, teaching methods and

strategies of its educational provision – though all schools have to achieve centrally stipulated expected outcomes. It is thus largely up to individual teachers whether they take account of current trends in history didactics or prefer to operate within the traditional reproductive style of teaching.

History didactics primarily emphasizes the need to focus on *historical thinking competences* rather than on the mere reproduction of a narrative presented in a textbook or by the teacher. These history-specific competences comprise a set of knowledge and skills on whose basis pupils' historical awareness is cultivated, and which are closely related to the concepts of understanding, meaning creation, reconstruction and deconstruction (Schreiber, 2008). However, no educational standards reflecting this comprehensive set of competences have yet been formulated in the Czech Republic.

Instead, there is a continuing preference for inquiry-based learning, which has been adopted from natural science didactics. This approach is based on the methods and procedures used by academic historians, consisting primarily of the critical analysis and interpretation of various types of historical sources (Papáček, 2010; Labischová, 2014 and 2017). In accordance with didactic principles, these methods and procedures are adapted to suit pupils' ages and existing levels of historical knowledge. However, unlike many countries (Germany, the UK, France, Switzerland, and more), the Czech Republic does not have modern history textbooks for all types of schools; as a result, Czech history teachers often lack the necessary methodological support for working with sources in the basic educational medium.

Of all the various types of historical sources, history didactics places the strongest emphasis on iconographic sources (reproductions of art works, historical photographs and cartoons), because sources of this type remain neglected in schools. Czech teachers generally use visual materials merely to illustrate their own narrative and explanation, without attempting to interpret these materials in a thorough manner. In textbooks too, visual materials tend to be used for purely illustrative purposes, and they are generally not accompanied by learning tasks which would help pupils analyze and interpret these iconographic sources. This situation has been repeatedly identified by empirical studies (Gracová 2008 and 2012; Labischová, 2014).

## 1.2 *Historical Cartoons in History Teaching*

Historical cartoons play a specific role among iconographic sources used in history teaching. Using cartoons for teaching purposes makes it possible to apply the principle of multiperspectivity (Stradling, 2003), as they express the author's stance in an often very forceful manner. History contains numerous examples of cartoons expressing opposite stances towards the same event or situation (e.g. during the Cold War). Pupils can be guided to understand the ideas at the heart of the cartoon, to recognize the symbolism in the images, and to compare the various means used by the cartoonist to ridicule the 'enemy'.

A number of scholars outside the Czech Republic have developed general interpretative models for analyzing cartoons as historical sources in history teaching (Panofsky, 1978; Pandel & Schneider, 2005). One potential source of inspiration for teachers and textbook authors is Schnakenberg's analytical-synthetic model, which divides cartoon analysis into five basic steps (Schnakenberg, 2012: 103):

1. First impressions (express spontaneous reactions and overall impressions, identify striking details, formulate hypotheses).
2. Formal information (identify the author, topic, date and place published).
3. Description (systematically describe the cartoon, identify individual elements – items, people, symbols, artistic techniques and compositional principles, e.g. perspective).
4. Historical context and analysis (identify historical figures and types, develop an understanding of the topic and content of the cartoon).
5. Interpretation and evaluation (summarize the main message of the cartoon, characterize the cartoonist's intentions, explain the effect the cartoon is likely to have had on contemporary readers, assess its value as a historical source, and present one's own evaluation of the cartoon).

This general interpretative model is designed to be applied to specific cartoons and transformed into a complete learning task. The task is most frequently structured as a set of interrelated questions.

There is still a shortage of research investigating the effectiveness of such structured learning tasks in developing pupils' skills of perception, analysis and interpretation – i.e. research studying the differences in the quality of interpretations generated by structured

and unstructured analysis. In addition to traditional history didactics research methods, another potential method that could be used to study this issue is eyetracking – a technique that is currently used mainly in applied research.

### 1.3 *The Eyetracking Method*

Eyetracking is a research method for studying the mental processes of perception and cognition by monitoring eye movements (Duchowski, 2007). This method dates back to the period after the Second World War, when it was used in the development of military technologies and military aviation. It later became widespread in marketing and advertising research (Silberer, 2005; Klimeš, 2008); in cartography, for evaluating geographical maps (Popelka, Brychtová, & Voženilek, 2012); and in kinanthropology (ball games, target-shooting).

Eyetracking can also make a useful contribution to research on some pedagogical topics. Previously published studies based on eyetracking methods have investigated the process of reading, reading disorders (e.g. dyslexia), and the effectiveness of various methods of teaching reading, with a particular focus on early reading among younger schoolchildren (Jošt, 2009; Červenková et al, 2014; Knight & Horsley, 2014; Metelková & Svobodová, 2016). Other promising areas where eyetracking methods can be applied include mechanisms of on-line learning and e-learning (Jamet, 2014; Persaud & Eliot, 2014) or pupils' work on learning tasks in natural sciences, specifically physics (Kekule, 2014).

Eyetracking has remained practically unused by scholars researching history didactics – not only in the Czech Republic, but also abroad. Nevertheless, this method has the potential to offer useful insights. It can be used in studies of textbooks and other teaching materials, or in studies of perception processes in the development of historical thinking competences (especially the analysis and interpretation of texts, images, historical maps, statistical data, and audiovisual media).

Eyetracking research usually involves the use of an electronic eyetracking device (a form of camera) which records the subject's eye positions both statically and dynamically (enabling eye movements to be tracked over time). The key data concern fixation, saccade and regression. Data collected in this way can be evaluated both

quantitatively and qualitatively; a mixed research design is the optimum approach.

Quantitative data are generated in the form of statistics expressing the frequency and duration of individual fixations on specific, precisely defined areas of interest (AOI) in the image.

The data can also be displayed in various visual forms (Popelka, Brychtová, & Voženílek, 2012; Labischová, 2015):

1. Gaze plot: this plots the saccade trajectory and the position of individual fixations. The fixations are numbered in the order in which they occur, and they are displayed as circles of varying sizes (more intense fixations are displayed as larger circles). The disadvantage of this form of data display is that the circles overlap if large quantities of data are displayed, making the visualization somewhat confusing.

2. Heatmap: this form of display uses a colour scale; red represents the points with the greatest intensity of fixation. The scale gradually moves from red through orange into yellow, green and ultimately blue. When dealing with larger quantities of data (e.g. when representing several subjects), this form of display is clearer than gaze plotting.

3. Gaze opacity maps: this is a form of inverse heatmap; light colours represent areas with the highest number and longest duration of fixation, and dark colours represent areas where subjects' gaze fell only rarely or not at all (it thus shows the 'blind spots' in the image).

4. Gaze replay: this is a video recording of eye movements, i.e. a dynamic record of the trajectory of subjects' gaze over time. The eyetracker equipment also features audio recording technology, so it is possible to replay the subjects' gaze trajectory accompanied by their verbally expressed responses and thoughts.

## **2. Research**

### *2.1 Aims and Research Methods*

The aim of the research presented in this article was to determine the extent to which didactically structured learning tasks (specific interpretative models) influence pupils' perception strategies and the quality of their analysis and interpretation of an iconic text (a historical cartoon).

A mixed research design was used for the collection and analysis of the data, i.e. a combination of qualitative and quantitative

approaches. The research tool was a computer test consisting of a didactically structured set of questions guiding the analysis and interpretation of a historical cartoon and using a Tobii TX300 Eye Tracker and Tobii Studio software, which was used to monitor subjects' eye movements as well as creating an audio recording of their verbally expressed responses and thoughts during the test.

The test was based on a well-known cartoon by David Low (1891-1963) depicting the meeting of Adolf Hitler, Neville Chamberlain, Édouard Daladier and Benito Mussolini which led to the signature of the Munich Agreement on 29 September 1938; the cartoon was published the following day in the London-based *Evening Standard* newspaper (Figure 1).



**COŽE, PRO MĚ ŽIDLE NENÍ?**

Figure 1. David Low's cartoon published in 1938.<sup>1</sup>

In accordance with didactic principles, particular attention was paid to the selection of a cartoon representing a key historical event with which most respondents should be familiar. Another important consideration was the need for the cartoon to include easily decipherable symbols and easily recognizable historical figures.

The test subjects' task was to look at the cartoon and pay careful attention to the questions which were displayed on the computer monitor; the cartoon was displayed throughout the test, and the

individual questions were displayed in succession on the screen. The test subjects were instructed to formulate their responses to the questions aloud; no time limit was set for each question.

Initially there were 13 questions. However, based on the results of the first phase of testing, the set was subsequently reduced to 10 questions:

1. Interpret the following cartoon.
2. Name the symbols used in the cartoon. What is their meaning?
3. Which individuals does the cartoon depict?
4. What emotions are expressed by the positions in which these individuals are depicted?
5. Why is the individual at the right not seated?
6. Why is there a globe in the cartoon?
7. Which details do you not understand?
8. Which historical event does the cartoon refer to?
9. Why is there no representative of Czechoslovakia present?
10. What is the cartoonist's stance towards the situation depicted?

The first question represents a type of didactically unsuitable formulation which still remains persistent. It is overly general, and it does not encourage respondents to think about the meaning of the cartoon and the significance of its individual elements. The remaining nine questions make up a structured learning task based on general interpretative models. They begin by encouraging respondents to observe the image closely and identify the symbols used. Question 3 determines the respondents' basic knowledge (the names of the historical figures depicted). Question 4 then integrates historical knowledge with knowledge of non-verbal communication. The cartoonist uses a wide range of non-verbal expressive resources (folded arms, a hunched back, blank facial expressions, etc.) to express the geopolitical position of each participant, thus capturing the historical context of the events; respondents should take account of this fact and offer an interpretation on this basis. Question 5 tests respondents' understanding of the broader geopolitical context and the position of the Soviet Union at the time of the meeting in Munich. Question 6 focuses on one of the symbols used in the cartoon, which expresses the international significance of the events depicted. Question 7 ascertains which elements of the image are

difficult for respondents to comprehend. The questions pertaining to the topic of the cartoon (8 and 9) are deliberately left until near the end of the analysis. The final question (10) concerns the cartoonist's stance, his evaluation of the events, and the perspective from which he views the events (Low was a well-known critic of the policy of appeasement).

The following methods were used when analyzing the data collected from respondents:

1. The recordings made by the eyetracker device were evaluated both in terms of the graphic visualization of the results (heatmaps, gaze plots, gaze opacity maps, gaze replay) and on the basis of statistical data and calculations (mean frequency and duration of individual eye fixations).

2. The audio recordings of the respondents' verbal responses were transcribed verbatim, and the responses were evaluated using open and axial coding, categorization and partial quantification of the data.

## 2.2 *Research Sample and Research Organization*

The research was conducted in three phases during the period 2014-2016:

1. April-October 2014: pilot study testing 23 students of teacher training programmes for social science subjects at the Faculty of Education, University of Ostrava, Czech Republic.
2. February-April 2015: testing of 67 pupils from four lower secondary schools in Ostrava (age 14-15); due to the differences among the curricula taught at the individual schools, teachers were asked whether the pupils had already covered the Munich Agreement in their lessons.
3. May 2016: testing of 26 pupils from two *gymnázium*-type secondary schools in Ostrava (age 17-18).

The testing lasted an average of 10 minutes per respondent. The testing in phases 2 and 3, i.e. in the schools, was conducted by two trained assistants (teacher training students who had been involved in the research as respondents in phase 1, i.e. the pilot study). The students were recruited to test the respondents in order to minimize respondents' nervousness by minimizing the age gap between them and the assistants. At the beginning of each test, the assistants conducted a brief motivational conversation with each respondent (interests, future career plans). All respondents received precise

instructions, and eye calibration was carried out. Before the test itself, each respondent was given a brief 'dry run' test in order to alleviate any initial nervousness or stress, to enable the respondent to concentrate and become used to the instructions and texts on the screen, and to clarify any queries.

Ethical principles were fully adhered to both during the data collection and at the data processing stage. The parents of all respondents signed a statement of informed consent, the respondents were informed about the aims of the research and the procedure, and after completion of the test they were able to view their own test results and the (anonymized) results for the entire group. These rules were strictly adhered to throughout the research. All respondents are anonymized, and the research data (the recordings of eye movements and the respondents' verbal comments) are subject to maximum protection (in a password-protected computer). The names of the respondents given in this text have been altered.

### 2.3 *Pilot Study (2014)*

In view of the fact that eyetracking had not previously been used for this type of research, in 2014 a pilot study was conducted on a sample of 23 students of teacher training programmes for social sciences subjects. The purpose of this pilot study was to verify the research tool (i.e. the computer test) and make any necessary adjustments to it. The students volunteered to take part in the study, and during the course of testing they offered valuable feedback on the comprehensibility of the questions and the procedure as a whole. The pilot study was carried out in three stages (April, June and October 2014) at the eyetracking research laboratory of the Faculty of Education, University of Ostrava.

The results of the pilot study confirmed that the eyetracking method – combined with the analysis of audio recordings – can generate valuable information on respondents' processes of perception and cognition, as well as on their different perception strategies when analyzing and interpreting historical sources (not only cartoons, but also e.g. photographs and written documents). It was interesting to note that even future teachers had considerable difficulties analyzing the cartoon, and that their answers to the first question were very superficial and incomplete. It was only with the

help of subsequent questions that they were able to give more specific and elaborate answers (Labischová, 2015).

Category	Subcategory	Category code	Category description, examples
Historical figures	Basic information on figures	HF1	name, country of origin, political position (Reich Chancellor, Prime Minister)
	External description	HF2	individual appearance (moustache, hair, height, body size), clothing, uniform, headgear, footwear
Symbols	Symbolic items	S1	swastika, document text, (missing) chair, open door
	Geographical symbols	S2	map, globe
	Psychological symbols	S3	non-verbal signs: position of figures (seated, standing), expression of dominance/submission (folded arms, erect posture or hunched back, lowered head), smile, grumpy expression; emotions: joy, arrogance, passivity, authority, ridicule
Historical event	Time	HE1	1938, before the Second World War
	Place	HE2	Munich, Germany
	Description of event	HE3	Munich Conference, signature of the Munich Agreement
	Ideology and politics	HE4	Nazism, communism, democracy, nationalism, appeasement
Broader historical context	Significance and context	HC1	Czechoslovakia sidelined, global impact of the event, short-termism of the appeasement policy, international status of the USSR (Stalin was not invited, yet he had a major influence on later developments)
	Cartoonist's stance	HC2	irony, agreement/disagreement, critical distance, criticism of appeasement policy

Table 1. Proposed system of categories for analyzing and interpreting a historical cartoon (Labischová, 2015).

Based on the analysis of the respondents' verbal interpretation of the cartoon and the eyetracking data, a system of categories was created; this formed the basis for the subsequent phase of the research.

## 2.4 Results

### 2.4.1 Analysis of Audio Recordings

Based on the transcription of respondents' verbal responses to the test questions and the subsequent open and axial coding, the individual categories in the above system were quantified. Graphs 1 and 2 show the quantitative differences in the occurrence of individual code types between the didactically unstructured learning task (Question 1 of the test) and the didactically structured task (Questions 2-10).

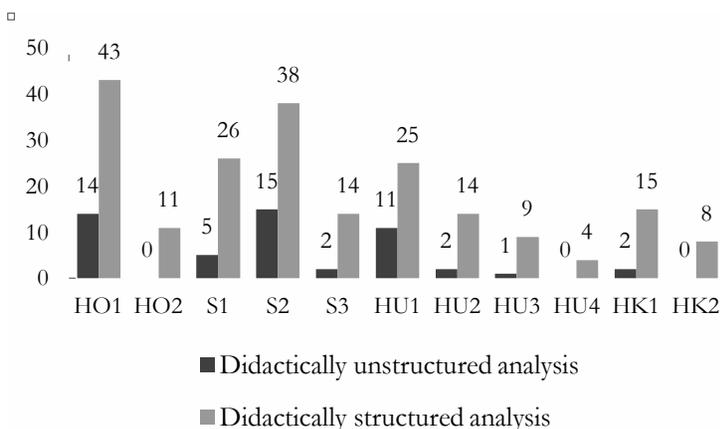


Figure 2. Comparison of absolute frequencies – categories (by occurrence of codes) in didactically unstructured vs. didactically structured analysis of the cartoon – lower secondary pupils.

The results indicate that the lower secondary pupils experienced major difficulties with the analysis of the cartoon. In the case of Question 1, which asked respondents to interpret the cartoon, a large majority of them did not even attempt to do so, or their interpretation was entirely unsatisfactory:

*There are five people, it's a long time ago, and one of them is standing and would like a chair. (Petra, age 14)*

Eleven pupils very vaguely situated the cartoon in the period around the Second World War, and four of them were able to state that the image was related to the partitioning of Czechoslovakia. The most commonly given names of the figures depicted in the cartoon were Hitler (11) and Stalin (3); none of the respondents recognized any of the other figures. Of the range of symbols in the image, respondents recognized the swastika (5), the map of Czechoslovakia (12), and the globe (3). This finding suggests that lower secondary pupils have practically no contact with cartoons in their history lessons; this was confirmed by both the respondents and their teachers in subsequent discussions.

The purpose of Questions 2-9 was to guide the respondents' thought processes and encourage them to think more deeply and thoroughly about the cartoon. Graph 1 shows that the occurrence of individual category codes is significantly higher in the case of the didactically structured analysis than in the case of the unstructured analysis (Question 1).

Of the historical figures, respondents named Hitler (24) and Stalin (14), but this time also Mussolini (3) and Chamberlain (2). Several pupils were able to state that besides Germany, the figures depicted in the cartoon represented Britain, France and Italy. Incorrect answers included Beneš (the President of Czechoslovakia at the time of the Munich Agreement), Masaryk (the previous President of Czechoslovakia) and Churchill.

Perhaps the most noticeable difference between the results for the structured and non-structured analyses was observed in the response to Question 2, which elicited respondents' knowledge of the various symbols and their meanings. The only symbolic items recognized by the respondents were the swastika (26), but there was a relatively high level of recognition for the geographical symbols – i.e. the map of Czechoslovakia and the globe. However, at this stage most respondents paid no attention to the meaning of the individual symbols. It was only in response to Question 6 – concerning the symbolism of the globe – that the respondents made some progress in explaining the geopolitical significance of the event:

*The globe is there because the topic is the partition of Czechoslovakia, but Hitler wanted to occupy the whole of Europe. (Jan, age 14)*

The only symbol respondents claimed not to understand was the document under Hitler's chair.

Regarding the cartoonist's intentions and stance (Question 10), almost none of the respondents were able to give an adequate answer. Two respondents thought that the cartoonist was opposed to the absence of a Czechoslovak representative at the meeting. The large majority of answers consisted of a simple 'I don't know'. In some cases an incorrect response was given, e.g.: *The cartoonist thinks that they were wrong not to invite Russia too.* (Marek, 14)

The large majority of the responses given by the lower secondary pupils were very brief, imprecise or entirely incorrect, and the occurrence of individual category codes was relatively infrequent. However, the respondents from upper secondary schools gave better answers; this was to be expected, as they are older (age 17-18), they attend an academic type of secondary school (*gymnázium*), and they had already covered the Munich Agreement twice during their secondary school careers due to the cyclical repetition of material as part of the curricular system. In the subsequent discussion, some of the teachers from these schools stated that they occasionally included cartoons in their lessons. It should be taken into account that the sample of upper secondary pupils was smaller (26) than the sample of lower secondary pupils.

In response to Question 1 (the unstructured question), several of the upper secondary pupils attempted to give a more complete answer. Six of them managed to identify the historical event depicted (the Munich Conference) and to name at least some of the participants – most frequently Hitler (11), and also Stalin (5) and Mussolini (1); several respondents confused Chamberlain with Churchill (4). Several respondents (8) quoted the well-known Czech phrase 'o nás bez nás' (literally 'about us (but) without us' – referring to the way in which Czechoslovakia was sidelined from the discussions and had no direct say in its own future). None of the respondents mentioned the cartoonist's stance or motivation at this stage of the test.

*The cartoon depicts a meeting before the Second World War about Czechoslovakia – it is a negotiation about Sudetenland, it could be Munich. Stalin is surprised that they haven't invited him, because they don't think he has the right to decide on Europe's future. Although his stance is rather aloof, he's keeping his thoughts to himself, and in any case he has an idea of how things will*

*turn out after the war. Or he simply thinks he knows something that the others don't know.* (Vojtěch, 18)

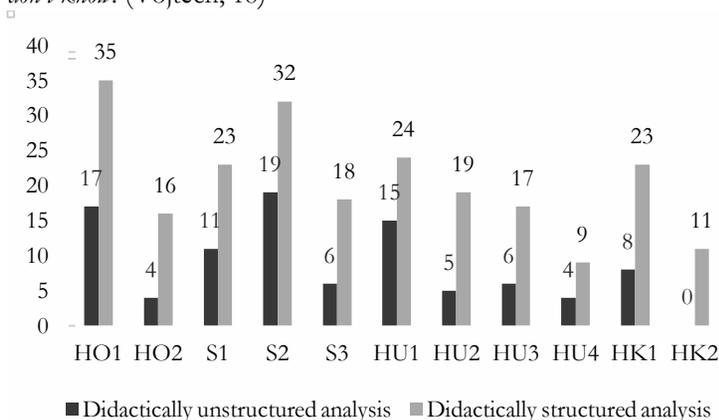


Figure 3. Comparison of absolute frequencies – categories (by occurrence of codes) in the didactically unstructured vs. didactically structured analysis of the cartoon – upper secondary pupils.

Similarly to the responses of the lower secondary pupils, the frequency of occurrence of individual category codes was substantially higher for the structured analysis. The most frequently identified historical figures were Hitler (22), Stalin (10), and Mussolini (3). It is interesting that the upper secondary pupils often confused Chamberlain with Churchill; none of the respondents named the British representative as Chamberlain, but 7 named him as Churchill. The symbolic items identified by the respondents were the swastika (17) and the text of the Munich Agreement under Hitler's chair (5); out of the geographical symbols in the image, respondents identified the globe (14) and the map of Czechoslovakia (18). Respondents also frequently noticed elements of non-verbal communication (Hitler's arrogant expression, Stalin's mocking smile). The question concerning the emotions felt by the individual figures encouraged most respondents to think more deeply about the cartoon:

*Hitler is sitting in a very arrogant way, with his chin up and his legs indicating that he is keeping a distance from the others. It's a kind of feeling of superiority – the same as the man opposite him. They're not looking at Stalin at all, and*

*Stalin is looking at the scene with a degree of suspicion – he’s smiling but not smiling at the same time. He looks like he’s having cunning thoughts, as if he’s planning some scheme. The representatives of Britain and France are looking confused, and they’re turning round to look at Stalin as if they’re afraid. (Roman, 18)*

The question concerning the cartoonist’s intentions elicited either relatively brief responses (‘he was opposed to it’, ‘he’s condemning it’), or – more frequently – attempts at a more detailed response:

*I think he’s criticizing it and slightly mocking the fact that Czechoslovakia was sidelined. Perhaps he’s pointing out that Russia had certain ambitions at the time, while Hitler was planning to occupy the whole of Europe himself. And that Britain and France were passive, and they paid the price for that. (Barbora, 18).*

During the measurement with the eyetracker device it was possible to identify the precise length of time spent by the respondents answering each of the questions. Table 2 shows that in the second half of the test (Questions 5-9) the time spent looking at the cartoon became substantially shorter; there was a slight increase with the final question. Two possible explanations present themselves: the respondents had already looked thoroughly at the cartoon, and/or their attention had faded and they were attempting to answer the questions as quickly as possible.

Question no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Lower secondary	33	36	29	43	13	13	22	16	16	24
Upper secondary	44	39	23	39	13	16	23	10	16	26

Table 2. Mean duration of time spent answering the different questions (seconds).

#### 2.4.2 Analysis of Visualized Data

The data from this study was visualized in the form of gaze opacity maps and gaze plots, which express the intensity of respondents’ gaze on the individual elements of the cartoon and their fixations, saccades and regressions. Heatmaps were not included because they require a colour scale.



Figure 4. Gaze opacity map for lower secondary respondents (all) – Question 1.



Figure 5. Gaze opacity map for upper secondary respondents (all) – Question 1.



Figure 6. Gaze opacity map for lower secondary respondents (all) – Question 2.



Figure 7. Gaze opacity map for upper secondary respondents (all) – Question 2.

The analysis of the visualized data revealed a substantial difference in perception processes between the structured and unstructured interpretations of the cartoon. This is perhaps most notable when comparing the intensity of respondents' gaze – i.e. the frequency and duration of fixations – in Questions 1 and 2 of the test (Figures 4-7). For Question 1 (*Interpret the following cartoon*) the lower secondary pupils focused almost exclusively on the faces of the figures depicted in the cartoon; there were also a small number of fixations on the globe. The various details in the image (the map of Czechoslovakia, the text of the Munich Agreement under the chair, the open door, the swastika) were essentially ignored. The upper secondary pupils likewise concentrated mainly on the faces of the figures, but they also paid attention to the text, both geographical symbols, and (to a small extent) the document under Hitler's chair. The gaze opacity map clearly shows that a large part of the cartoon was a 'blind spot', essentially ignored by the respondents.

By contrast, Question 2 (*Name the symbols used in the cartoon. What is their meaning?*) encouraged a more thorough perception of the image. Here there are no substantial differences in the intensity of gaze between the lower and upper secondary pupils. The main focuses of attention were the map of Czechoslovakia on the wall, the globe, Hitler's swastika armband, details of Mussolini's uniform (the tassels of his sash), and the text of the document under Hitler's chair. The question itself was read more carefully than the previous question, but the caption of the cartoon was read with lower intensity (it was already known to the respondents, and it was not viewed as a symbol).

In the case of Questions 3-10, the visualized data played less of a role – especially for the questions eliciting responses about the historical context. Respondents continued to focus their gaze mainly on the faces of the figures in the cartoon; when asked the question about non-verbal means of expression, their gaze shifted to the full bodies of the figures. It is logical that the question about the significance of the globe attracted respondents' attention to this symbolic item, but the saccades shifted between the globe and the map of Czechoslovakia.

Regarding the details that the respondents did not understand (Question 7, Figure 8), the highest gaze intensity was on the text of the Munich Agreement under Hitler's chair; respondents were probably trying to identify the document and read its text. Other

elements of the image that attracted relatively intense gazes were Chamberlain's striped trousers, the tasselled sash of Mussolini's uniform, the author's monogram and the curtain at the right of the picture. The visualized data correspond fully with the respondents' verbally expressed answers.



Figure 8. Gaze plot (showing fixations, saccades and regressions) for one upper secondary pupil – Question 7.

Another source of valuable qualitative information are video recordings made during testing. It is possible to identify the moments at which the respondents hesitate, and where their gaze is directed during specific answers. For example, the research thus showed that respondents found it particularly difficult to identify British and French representatives (when mentioning the French representative they repeatedly looked at Chamberlain, and vice versa).

### 3. Conclusion

Although the importance of methodologically sophisticated work with historical sources in history teaching is constantly emphasized, research on the perception, analysis and interpretation of historical sources has remained relatively neglected by history didactics research in the Czech Republic. Previous research on history teaching has

focused mainly on qualitative surveys collecting data from pupils and students (including questionnaire-based surveys).

The research presented in this article (conducted in 2014-2016) shows that it is possible to use less widespread research methods to investigate the process of acquiring historical thinking competences – primarily involving a shift away from purely qualitative research to a quantitative or mixed research design. The eyetracking method has proved to be a highly viable way of accomplishing such research. It yields data from the qualitative analysis of audio recordings as well as statistical data and visualized data (heatmaps, gaze opacity maps, gaze plots, gaze replay).

The results of the research presented here show that lower and upper secondary pupils found it relatively difficult to give a thorough description and interpretation of a historical cartoon. They are not used to identifying the symbols used in such images, identifying individual elements of the image, situating the depicted event in its broader historical context, or describing the cartoonist's intentions and stance. However, there is a substantial difference between their performance when faced with an unstructured learning task and a didactically structured task, consisting of a systematic set of questions based on general interpretative models. A structured analysis generated by such a set of questions clearly helps students to engage in more thorough observation and interpretation of the historical source, and it should be incorporated into history teaching in schools. It should also be used by the authors of textbooks for various types of schools; historic sources (both textual and iconographic) should be accompanied by lists of didactically structured questions and learning tasks which help users interpret those sources.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The cartoon is accessible at <http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/record/LSE2568>. The Czech caption is a translation of the original English text: 'What, no chair for me?'

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## MUSEUM LESSONS AND THE TEACHER'S ROLE

Joanna Wojdon

*History museums are regarded as one of the first and most important public history institutions. Their educational offer is often used by history teachers. However, it turns out that the relations between museum educators and teachers are not always smooth and unproblematic. This article discusses the mutual perceptions of the two groups and suggests the possibility of bringing them into closer cooperation for the benefit of pupils.*

### 1. Introduction

History museums are regarded as one of the first and most important public history institutions (e.g. Cauvin, 2015). Their task had always been to collect artefacts related to the past, preserve them and present them to the public. In past years the emphasis has shifted from preservation to presentation and the public (rather than objects) seems to occupy a more and more prominent place in the focus of museum management and its employees. Because the number of visitors is an important indicator when discussing the rationale for keeping or developing a given museum, attention must be paid to ways to attract the public.

Schoolchildren constitute an important, yet specific, part of the museum public. Their importance lies in the raw numbers of present-day visitors but also in their potential to return to the museum (or to any museum) when they grow up. The care of young visitors nurtures the future public (Marcus et al, 2017: 9).

The specificity of schoolchildren lies also in the reasons and aims of their visits. Unlike most other visitors, they do not make the decision to come by themselves – they follow their teacher who has (or at least should have) a clear goal in mind while taking them on the trip. The primary goal of their visit is not leisure but learning – about the past or about museums, or about themselves. Unlike other visitors, they are also treated in a special way when they come to a museum: they are addressed by the museum educators as a class, not as individuals or small groups like families (Kisiel, 2003).

Researchers prove that education plays an important role in the activities of many museums and that the position of museum educator was established some forty years ago. The numbers brought

by Tuffy (2011: 25-26) are certainly impressive: 'Eighty-eight percent of museums in the United States reported to have some sort of educational programs. [...] Museums spend \$193 million dollars on those educational programs. The measurement of museum instructional hours provided to students per year total 3.9 million hours. [...] The typical museum has one fulltime and two part-time employees and five docents that dedicate their time to educational efforts for the museum.' However, their role has not evoked as much discussion or comments as the exhibition contents or other elements of museum management.

This is not to say that museum education has been neglected in educational research. There are publications arising from different geographical milieus and addressing various types of museums, based mostly on the observations of field trips (e.g. Tal & Morag, 2006 science museums in Israel; Kisiel, 2003 natural history museum Los Angeles; Griffin & Symington, 1997 in Australia). They all find museum lessons important but difficult to organize and even more so to organize effectively. The doubts start from setting the goal(s) of field trips to the museum: should the pupils concentrate on the museum as such and work with the whole exhibition or rather focus only on one topic that corresponds with their current school curriculum (Kisiel, 2003: 14-15 calls it a survey agenda and a concept agenda, respectively)? What should the pupils actually learn: facts, concept, general ideas, organization of a museum (see e.g. Griffin & Symington, 1997: 773-774)? How to prepare pupils before the trip? How to engage them and keep them focused in the museum? How to make their museum experience meaningful? What teaching methods and tools to use? How to refer to the visit further in the process of education? What is a successful trip: the one that the pupils enjoy most or the one that best corresponds with the curriculum?

In all these analyses three groups of participants can be distinguished: schoolchildren (students/pupils), schoolteachers and museum educators. Educators are the most active providers of knowledge (and to lesser extent also some skills), while schoolchildren are the most passive receivers of museum education. Teachers are usually located somewhere in-between, and sometimes regarded as visitors accompanying students while in other studies – as educators potentially co-operating with the museum employees.

The goal of this article is to discuss the role of teachers in museum lessons. It is usually regarded as important (Griffin & Symington,

1997: 774; Tuffy, 2011: 34-35) yet insufficient. Kisiel (2003, cited also in Marcus et al, 2017: 8 and Griffin, 2004: 65; cf. Griffin & Symington, 1997: 775) writes about the majority of teachers as 'well-intentioned novices' at the museum who lack pre-service or in-service training in planning museum visits. Even if the teachers know how to use the museum in education, their practice does not always correspond with their statements (see e.g. Griffin & Symington, 1997: 770-771, 777).

This research is based on a questionnaire (see Appendix) distributed among a group of 19 teachers who attended a meeting summarizing the results of the 2017 final secondary school exams in history and civic education in Wrocław (Poland) and on three semi-structured interviews with museum educators. Two of them were taken face-to-face and one on-line via Messenger.

We will start by presenting the teachers' views on history-related field trips to museums. Then the educators' perspective on museum lessons will be presented. Educators' opinions about and expectations of teachers will be followed by the teachers' opinions and expectations of educators. The conclusions will suggest areas for further research.

## **2. How Do Teachers See Museum Lessons?**

The teachers, first of all, point to the organizational burden that any field trip evokes (cf. Marcus et al, 2017: 7). Matching the time of their lessons with museum opening hours, gaining permission from school headteacher and sometimes also from other teachers (whose lessons will be 'used' during the trip) and from parents, organizing transportation and taking care of discipline during the lesson itself may discourage even the most devoted enthusiast. Sometimes financing the visit also causes problems, especially in smaller classes (if the lessons are paid per hour, not per the number of students). This is probably the reason why only four teachers reported organizing field trips to museums 'often' (one of them mentioned about 4-5 times a year). 'A few times' or '1-2 times' per year were the most common answers (6 indications each). One teacher wrote that she had only visited a museum 3-4 times in her thirty-year professional career (she could certainly be a 'novice' during such trips). Three others used the word 'seldom' to indicate the frequency of visits.

In choosing a museum to visit, the physical distance was mentioned by 8 respondents in open-ended questions and good timing by 10 (both the museum opening hours and availability of the lesson/exhibition when the given topics are covered at school – cf. Marcus et al, 2017: 8).

Why do they take an effort and organize such trips nevertheless? What are their goals? Apparently, in some cases, museum lessons are just one element in the program of longer school excursions that assures the educational character of the whole trip or a separate activity undertaken in free time (e.g. during the days of state final exams in the Polish language, mathematics and English when schools should be emptied of younger pupils). As Griffin & Symington (1997: 774) noticed, in such cases students are less motivated to learn in the museum than those pupils whose teacher has clear educational goals in mind while scheduling and preparing the trip.

Most teachers from the research sample do, however, pay attention to the content of the visit (it corresponds with the findings of Kisiel, 2003: 14). Fifteen respondents explicitly mentioned that the relation between the museum exhibition or lesson and the school curriculum is an important factor in planning the field trip. The attractiveness of the museum exhibition was indicated by six teachers, while five of them took into consideration the educational offers of the museum: what lessons are taught and even who teaches them. Four teachers wrote about the profile of their pupils and potential attractiveness of the exhibition to them (taking into consideration the age and interests of the schoolchildren).

Only two teachers did not report any preparation for the museum visits and three did not mention using them in the teaching-learning process afterwards. The majority reported both pre-visit and post-visit activities. The information provided was very general, however. The pre-visit activities were mostly characterized as ‘presentation of’ or ‘a lecture’, or ‘a talk’ about the museum or about the historical topic presented at the exhibition. This corresponds with the observations of Griffin & Symington, 1997) in Australia.

All replies except one indicated the active role of the teacher and the rather passive role of pupils. The one where the teacher and the students were preparing teaching aids to be used in the museum was an exception but no details of the aids were provided. Another teacher asked her pupils about their expectations related to the trip. Two teachers mentioned that if it was a museum that they had

already visited they could talk about the exhibition itself. Only one teacher stated it as a rule of preparing the trip: that the teacher visited the museum himself prior to the lesson (Kisiel, 2003: 13 provides similar characteristics of teachers' preparation in the case of science teachers in America).

Only three teachers did not mention any post-visit activities related to the trip. However, the descriptions provided were as general as the pre-trip ones. In most cases it was just something like 'referring to the museum exhibition in the lessons that follow.' More concrete replies included asking pupils if they liked the visit, what they liked, if the trip met their expectations (the teacher who had asked about the expectations prior to the visit). One teacher mentioned that he asked students to take notes from the trip in their workbooks. Another one wrote that he used the data from the trip in tests and essays. One more wrote that 'there should be [my emphasis] homework related to the visit'.

One may ask to what extent the questionnaires reflect what the teachers think 'should be done' in relation to field trips rather than what actually is being done. The methodology of using school excursions and museum lessons in history education is part of initial teacher training in Poland (Choraży, Konieczka-Śliwińska & Roszak, 2008: 258-261; Unger, 1988 and Zielecki, 1989 are monographs specifically devoted to museums in history teaching). Therefore, unlike the American teachers mentioned by Kisiel, Polish teachers are (or should be) familiar with 'the rules' and best practice. However, the very general character of their remarks raises doubts as to whether they indeed implement those rules in their everyday practice and if the preparation goes beyond some organizational aspects that teachers mentioned among the pre-visit activities. Post-visit activities may be limited to general questions, such as 'What have you learnt? What did you like?' or demanding a written report from the trip. Ways of placing field trips into the larger teaching-learning context need closer examination. Griffin and Symington (1997: 772) are quite critical about this aspect of museum visits in Australia. They cite examples where teachers did not use quite obvious opportunities to refer to the field trips while Kisiel (2003: 13) presents similar findings regarding American teachers.

The top five benefits from museum visits, according to Polish teachers were:

1. acquiring more knowledge (though, as Cox-Petersen et al, 2003: 208 found in their observations of natural history museum that ‘overall, 91 % of students’ responses represented medium to low levels of learning’ and they mostly memorized some unrelated facts or descriptions), and

2. learning in a more attractive, easy and pleasant way (Griffin, 2004: 60 cites the research that prove that field trips increase motivation toward learning and evoke positive attitudes among the pupils),

3. being out of school (see e.g. Cox-Petersen et al, 2003 on benefits and challenges of teaching-learning in informal settings),

4. getting to know the museum as an institution and

5. confronting their school or textbook knowledge with ‘real’ artefacts from the past (this is what the American students liked most in their museum visits, according to the research by Cox-Petersen et al, 2003: 209; on the benefits of such education see Griffin, 2004: 65).

Some teachers hoped the trips would encourage students to visit museums again in the future and one person mentioned that the trips would bring a more local perspective to history education.

Thus, even if teachers were pre-occupied with the organizational burden, used the museum lessons only occasionally and perhaps rather superficially, they related them to history curricula and to developing the historical culture of their pupils.

### **3. How Do Museum Educators Perceive Museum Lessons?**

Museum educators regard the lessons they teach as ‘a product’ they offer to this special segment of their audience. They advertise it, primarily among teachers – who make the decision whether to visit a museum and which museum to visit. Various forms of advertising are used: mailing schools, phone calls to headmasters or to rank-and-file teachers, or even organizing special workshops addressed to teachers where the content of the exhibition is presented alongside the educational offer of the museum. Unlike in the examples brought by Griffin (2004: 65-67), the main goal of such trainings is not in-service teacher training but advertising the museum and its educational offer – in order to recruit more visitors.

From this perspective, educators are providers while teachers and pupils are customers. Museums propose or rather ‘offer’ or ‘deliver’ lesson scenarios that educators implement during the visits. Each

museum offers a set of lessons to choose from. They state that they take into consideration the age of pupils and, at least to some extent, school curricula.<sup>1</sup> An educator from a privately-owned car museum told me that a lesson on the history of the automobile industry lasted about an hour for pre-school children and up to two hours for high school students. It consisted of an educator's introduction, a guided tour of the museum and some activities in the yard but the latter part was rather more recreational than educational, in the form of a picnic. A history-related museum in Wrocław divides school-children's visits into two parts. The first is a guided tour with an educator serving as a narrator, who sometimes uses some interactive elements of the exhibition or asks open-ended questions but mostly tells her/his story. The second part is a workshop loosely related to the exhibition: on laying a 'historical' table, on making pottery, or on historical clothes, depending on the teacher's choice. The tour lasts for about an hour while the workshop for about 30 minutes. Another museum has developed worksheets for both school groups and individual young visitors. One worksheet is addressed to younger schoolchildren (aged 7-10) and another one to the older group (11-15).

In the case of the automobile museum, lesson scenarios pay most attention to the presentation of the exhibition, not to the school curricula. I could observe a similar situation when I collaborated with the museum devoted to the post-WWII history of Wrocław. The lesson plans were museum- not curriculum-oriented.

For museum educators a lesson is an organizational burden, too. Contrary to the school teachers, they do not struggle with bureaucracy or transportation but with pupils' behaviour. Keeping pupils' attention in the informal setting of a museum is a challenging task, especially when many educators have no formal pedagogical training and have to rely on their intuition and experience. But as researchers note, the educators still want to reproduce traditional in-school practices (Cox-Peterson et al, 2003; Griffin, 2004: 64-66). They also complain that they cannot resort to such instruments as assessment or additional tasks/homework that teachers use to discipline the class. They ask for the teacher's help and the teacher's authority in such cases.

#### 4. How Do Educators Perceive School Teachers?

My interviewees saw the teachers predominantly as ‘policemen’ who intervene in case the class does not behave appropriately – which corresponds with the findings of Tal and Morag (2007: 753). Usually, it is stated in the contracts the teachers sign prior to the visit that they will be present during the whole museum lesson. However, one of the interviewees told me that if everything goes well she feels more comfortable when a teacher is busy elsewhere and the educator is left alone with the class. Otherwise, she feels she is being judged by the teacher, with her authority potentially questioned in case the information she provides does not correspond with what the teacher expects. She also finds pupils more relaxed and more creative when they are left without their teacher. On the other hand, in the case of more difficult and less concentrated and collaborative classes she appreciates the teacher’s presence and authority.

Teachers who take care of their pupils on their own initiative, without being prompted by the museum staff, are appreciated, while those who limit their activity to bringing the children to the museum and later behave as just another visitor are criticized, not to mention those who talk with pupils while the educator is lecturing, and those who are busy with their cellphones or drink coffee (or talk with parent-helpers, as mentioned in Griffin & Symington, 2007: 764, 770). According to Kisiel (2003: 13-14) ‘the level of teacher or chaperone involvement with the students greatly affected [...] effectiveness’ of teaching and students’ involvement.

No educator, however, expected teachers to actually teach in the museum nor to actively participate in preparing the lesson.<sup>2</sup> Teachers are not even consulted. They have no say in the process of developing lesson plans. They simply choose the topic and bring the participants. The lessons are universal and not adjusted to the needs of a particular class or to the expectations of a particular teacher (Cox-Peterson et al, 2003: 206 also report on the set scripts of lessons taught in the museums, so it probably is not only a Polish phenomenon).

On the other hand, no teacher, according to my interviewees, ever proposed any particular activities or content to be addressed. As I read from my Messenger interviewee, he would gladly give the floor to a teacher if only any of them volunteered. However, according to some museum policies, only museum employees can be guides or

educators in order to secure 'the correct' information delivered to the visitors. Such a policy corresponds with the diagnosis by Marcus et al (2017: 15) that it 'continue[s] to view museums as completely authoritative' and 'fail[s] to account for the subjective nature of museums', and as a result, it fails 'to take advantage of the opportunities that museums provide to enliven the study of history.'

In such circumstances, teachers at best can support their pupils in answering questions or fulfilling some tasks assigned by the educator (e.g. filling in worksheets). But in most cases (also in the more liberal museums) the role of a teacher as an effective policeman seems to satisfy the educators. They appreciate positive feedback from teachers – about the exhibition and even more so about the educational activities. One of my interviewees was surprised to hear from one of the passive teachers that the teacher had never relaxed so well during any lesson.

## **5. How Do Teachers Perceive Museum Educators?**

Both the majority of the questionnaires and opinions of museum educators indicate that most teachers look at the educators as experts in the content of the museum exhibition (cf. e.g. Marcus et al, 2017: 14). Teachers are ready and willing to rely on the competence of the museum staff and believe this is the way they assure 'the best service' for their pupils. Such an attitude corresponds with the generally high authority museums enjoy in society. Thus, the museum employees benefit from the authority of the institution. Following the usual pattern of a museum lesson releases the teachers from some of their regular duties and they seem to accept their role of a 'policeman' who takes care of the discipline but does not interfere in the content of the teaching.

Some teachers, however, seemed not to be entirely satisfied with the lessons they had attended with their pupils. They would expect, for example, more inter-active methods or group work while the educators were mostly lecturing. It corresponds with the postulates of the American science teachers who opted for 'more hands-on activities, increasing student interaction and providing more time for students to explore exhibit halls freely' (Cox-Petersen, 2003: 207, 210; cf. Tal & Morag, 2007: 767). However, observations from Australia prove that teachers themselves find it hard to change their teaching practices typical for formal circumstances (school) in informal

settings (museum) and that they usually replicate their regular routine: addressing the class as a whole, providing task-oriented worksheets etc., and they fail to develop or implement a specific methodology of museum lessons (Griffin & Symington, 1997: 775; Kisiel, 2003: 19).

One of the Polish teachers mentioned that (s)he takes into consideration who will be teaching the museum lesson when planning the visit to one or another place. Another one wrote that the lessons were sometimes boring and that keeping the motivation and attention of children was a challenge. International researchers found also that museum educators tend to lecture using complicated vocabulary, taking for granted that pupils are familiar with many concepts that in fact can be new to them and overwhelm the listeners with a huge amount of factual data (Tal & Morag, 2007: 757-763; Cox-Petersen et al, 2003: 206, 211).

One of the Polish teachers would like to get some teaching materials from museum educators in order to use them in homework or with the classes who were not able to visit the museum. None of them, however, mentioned that he had voiced his/her criticism or expressed his/her expectations to museum staff. It corresponds with the findings from Australia where teachers sometimes complained about the exhibition content but very rarely took an active role in planning the trip or more generally in facilitating the link between the students' knowledge and the museum offer (Griffin & Symington, 1997: 773; cf. Tal & Morag, 2007).

## 6. Conclusions

All the researchers admit that teacher-educator cooperation 'is a key characteristic of successful museum visits for students' (Marcus, 2017: 14). However, they also agree and the present study fully confirms that there is actually 'very little coordination and collaboration between museum educators and teachers' (Tal & Morag, 2007: 767). Although both sides seem to realize this problem, they show no real will or plan to overcome it. The relationship of a product (in this case: a lesson) provider to a customer rather than that between an educator and a teacher seems to either satisfy both sides, or, perhaps, is so deeply rooted in the school/museum practice that it is hard to question or challenge it.<sup>3</sup> If a teacher does not like a particular museum or lessons by a particular educator, he/she will simply not visit it rather than propose any changes. On the other

hand, it would be worth investigating how open museums would be to such suggestions, whether they would use them as an opportunity of improvement or rather regard them as a challenge to their expertise and authority.

Publications on museum education usually take the educators' perspective. They suggest how to make the educational offer of museums more professional and more attractive, and how educators can prepare and teach good lessons (e.g. Marcus et al, 2017; Cox-Petersen et al, 2003) or train teachers (Griffin, 2004: 66-67). On the other hand, prospective teachers (at least in Poland) are taught how to choose a good museum offer, how to prepare pupils and how to use the museum experience afterwards, but not how to cooperate with the museum staff or how to teach museum lessons themselves. Both training practices (in museums and in initial teacher training) in fact petrify the existing situation.

As Cox-Petersen et al (2003: 215) rightfully notice, 'changing a traditional model of instruction can be difficult, as it involves disrupting a status quo' (see also Kisiel, 2003: 19-20 on potential difficulties in overcoming existing practice). Nevertheless, future research can experiment with changing the roles of teachers and museum educators. Without questioning the expertise of educators in the museum exhibitions and their historical contexts, the expertise of teachers in teaching their pupils according to their curriculum should be emphasized more than it is today. Perhaps, a school teacher can design a lesson him/herself while a museum educator would serve as a consultant and expert who can be asked specific questions – also by pupils during the lesson – if necessary. This or other models of partnership between teachers and educators (or what Griffin, 2004: 65 f calls 'crossing boundaries' between schools and museums) are obviously even more burdensome and time consuming in the course of preparing the field trip, but it would be worthwhile checking if and how the pupils would benefit from it. Pupils' perspective and their feedback on various forms of museum lessons should also be taken into consideration.<sup>4</sup> Especially when, according to Griffin, 2004: 61 and others, students 'value the provision of choice and control in their learning in museums', and giving them freedom of choice brings various educational benefits.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Cox-Petersen (2003: 210) proves, however, that such declarations do not always correspond with actual practice of museum educators.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Tal and Morag (2007: 763) re. Israeli educators and teachers: 'We did not document any deliberate attempt by a museum guide to invite the teacher to actively contribute to the activity'.

<sup>3</sup> See Griffin and Symington (1997: 775) on the role of teachers' memories of school excursions on shaping them in teachers' own professional practice.

<sup>4</sup> Some potential ideas are given by Griffin (2004) who promotes a family-like form of museum visit with many individual interactions between pupils and teachers/chaperons/educators. On the other hand, Kisiel (2003) discusses various models of museum worksheets. Marcus et al (2017) provide detailed case studies from particular American museums related to history.

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## **Appendix. The Questionnaire**

1. How often do you use museum visits (or visits to similar establishments) in connection with your history or civic education lessons?
2. What factors determine your choice of the place of such a visit?
3. What factors determine your choice of the time of such a visit?
4. What do the preparations for such a visit look like?
5. How do you use such a visit in further work with the pupils?
6. What benefits do you see from such lessons?
7. What difficulties do they present?
8. At the back of the sheet please describe the ideal course of such a lesson, provided it was organized in Wrocław. We will try to bring selected lesson scenarios to life.



# FORUM



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## THE NATIONAL PAST ACCORDING TO FLEMISH SECONDARY SCHOOL HISTORY TEACHERS: REPRESENTATIONS OF BELGIAN HISTORY IN THE CONTEXT OF A NATION STATE IN DECLINE

Karel van Nieuwenhuyse and Bernd Stienaeers

*In Belgian-Flemish society, no master narrative of the national past exists. In Flemish history education, the basic frame of reference is European; the national past is only marginally present. In Flemish popular historical culture, various and often conflicting narratives of the national past circulate. This article reports on a small-scale, qualitative study examining which narratives 11th-12th grade history teachers construct while designing a lesson series of the national past, and what particularly influences them. Sixteen experienced history teachers executed a performance task in which they selected the ten historical events they considered most important to the national past, and would teach about. In subsequent individual semi-structured interviews, their selection method was addressed, in search of the use of narrative templates. No dominant template stemming from popular historical culture dominated most teachers' thinking. They rather applied a European narrative template, in which a parallel with the history education standards can be recognized.*

Since the early 19th century, many Western governments have pursued national cohesion and attempted to construct a national identity, by fostering shared knowledge and a shared master narrative of the national past (Carretero, Asensio, & Rodríguez-Moneo, 2012; Grever & Ribbens, 2009). Such a national master narrative constituted one dominant, 'closed' representation of the national past, and included elements like pride in the nation's and compatriots' achievements in the past, or a shared victimhood, that allowed and stimulated people to identify with the nation. Governments circulated master narratives in popular historical culture, including history education. Historical culture can be understood as the particular (effective and affective) way(s) in which a society relates to its past, and uses history in the present to instill specific social practices, values and identities (see for instance Grever & Adriaansen, 2017). Coinciding with increasing globalisation and intercontinental migration flows, attempts to impose and/or

reinforce a national identity via a national historical master narrative have gained strength again during the last few decades, as the history wars in, among others, the United States, France and the Netherlands have clearly shown (Taylor & Guyver, 2012).

Belgium is, in this respect, somewhat the odd-one-out. The impact of the state in the field of education has historically always been relatively small as freedom of education was one of the cornerstones of the ultra-liberal Constitution, resulting in strong autonomy for different educational (private catholic, and public) networks (Wils, 2009). Particularly from the 1950s and 1960s onwards, however, the Belgian government gradually decreased its engagement in memory politics due to the highly ideologically and Community-charged, and thus controversial memory of World War II (Rosoux, & van Ypersele, 2012). In popular historical culture, a master narrative about the (sub)national past has not been instilled by national government since the 1960s. In this respect a distinction is being made in this paper between history education and popular historical culture in society at large, because history education in Belgium occupies a special place within historical culture, as it partly aims for an academic, disciplinary approach of the past, and hence can be situated in between historical culture and academia. Situated within Seixas' History/Memory Matrix for History Education, it holds a position in between historical practices and memorial beliefs (Seixas, 2016).

The regional Flemish government, being attributed with control over several policy domains among which is education since the 1960s-70s onwards, continued the policy of (almost) non-engagement with history education (Beyen, 2011; Rosoux, & van Ypersele, 2012). The basic frame of reference in Flemish history education is (Western) European; the (sub)national past is only marginally present. In line with the way Belgian history is addressed in academia, it is only required that 'students analyze the lines of fracture within evolving Belgian society from 1830 onwards' (Flemish Ministry of Education and Training, 2000). The main values history education wants to pass on to young people are not related to patriotism but far more to western Enlightenment values such as individual rights, individual and collective freedom, equality, democratization and respect for human rights. In Flanders, teachers are furthermore attributed a large amount of freedom in selecting contents to teach

about (Flemish Ministry of Education and Training, 2000; van Nieuwenhuysse & Wils, 2015).

In popular historical culture within society at large, the Flemish government intervenes somewhat more, for instance by explicitly celebrating the Flemish (sub)national holiday on 11 July. This date refers to the victory of a Flemish foot militia over a powerful army of French knights during the Battle of the Golden Spurs, in 1302. This can be considered an element in the attempt of the Flemish government to construct a present-day Flemish identity.

As no master narrative exists, yet by contrast different and often conflicting narratives of the history of Belgium circulate in popular culture, and the national past is quasi absent in Western-European oriented history education, the question arises of which historical narratives of the national past history teachers in Flanders construct. This small-scale pilot study addresses the Flemish region of Belgium, and includes qualitative research with 16 Flemish secondary school teachers, all having a master degree in history from a Flemish university and an additional teaching degree.

The paper starts with a short introduction to existing international research and a theoretical framework on the construction of historical narratives. The second part consists of a brief description of the position of the national past in Flemish history education and popular historical culture. This part is followed by a brief sketch of our research methodology. In the next part, we present the results of our empirical study, and discuss them afterwards.

## **1. International Research into Historical Narratives of the National Past**

The production, often by authorities, of master narratives about the national past and their influence on secondary school history curricula has been examined a lot (Carretero, Asensio, & Rodríguez-Moneo, 2012; Taylor, & Guyver, 2012). The construction and outlook of historical narratives by (young) people in education and in society at large has also been the subject of substantial research (e.g. Létourneau & Chapman, 2017). A useful theoretical framework has been developed by James Wertsch (2004; 2012), who distinguishes between specific narratives and schematic narrative templates. While the former are stories that include specific information about places, dates, and actors and involve chronology, temporal order, and

emplotment, the latter provide a narrative framework that is compatible with many instantiations in specific narratives. A template is a pattern, an abstract core idea or plot providing a structure that can underlie several different specific narratives, each of which has a particular setting. Templates are produced and disseminated in the complex interplay between historiography, politics and education. A dominant template is called a 'master narrative'. Templates are cultural tools that configure how the past is represented and understood in people's minds.

In his own empirical research, Wertsch elaborated several examples. In Russia, for instance, he asked Russians to narrate the story of the course of the Second World War. Participants belonged to different generations; some had experienced the fall of communism in 1991 while others had not. Wertsch concluded that both generations told a narrative that was based on one template of 'victory over foreign powers', even though there were substantial differences in factual knowledge (Wertsch, 2004). Most often, templates occur in an unwitting and unreflective manner, as Wertsch and other researchers stress (Lopez, Carretero & Rodríguez-Moneo, 2014).

Scholars worldwide have used the concept of templates in their research on historical narratives. How templates are particularly and (un)wittingly used by history teachers in order to construct a historical narrative of the national past has, however, not yet been examined.

## **2. History Education in Flanders: (Western) European Orientation**

In 1990, after a long process of regionalisation of education policy resulting in the transfer of all educational matters to regional governments, a new secondary education curriculum was set up in Flanders (Lobbès, & Wils, 2017). The regional government established final objectives, or standards, delineating the minimum targets that each subject should meet. The history standards, consisting of 29 specific attainment targets and an explanatory text, are still in use today. In defining the history standards, the Flemish Community made a deliberate choice not to enumerate the factual knowledge that must be taught. The attainment targets primarily aim at critical-thinking skills and attitudes. Apart from the aim to

introduce students to the academic discipline of history, the subject of history is ascribed four functions with regard to ‘students as members of society’, among which is the stimulation of ‘identity building’ (Flemish Ministry of Education and Training, 2000). The standards state that history education should support young people in their search for both personal and social identities, emphasising the plural character of identity. They do not refer to, nor try to support, a (sub)national identity.

The main frame of reference of the Flemish history standards is Western European. Out of the 29 concrete attainment targets in the 11th and 12th grade, not one refers to Flemish history and no more than one refers to the history of Belgium, requiring – in line with the way Belgian history is addressed in academia – that students analyze the lines of fracture within the evolving Belgian society (Flemish Ministry of Education and Training, 2000). In lower secondary school classes, where the historical eras before 1800 are taught, no reference is made to Belgian or Low Countries history. This means that Belgian history is only addressed as a particular history which can be distinguished from European history after 1830. Its specificity is to be found in these ‘lines of fracture’, the ideological, socio-economic, and communitarian/linguistic tensions which have characterized Belgian politics and social relations since the mid-19th century. Although the standards are very Western-oriented, teachers are at the same time explicitly encouraged to make their students frame historical phenomena in a broader, worldwide context. The standards require that, in each of the three stages of secondary school history education, at least one non-Western society is addressed. While this choice on the one hand reflects transnational ambitions, it reaffirms at the same time, however, the Western orientation of the history curriculum, suggesting that the most important part of history is to be found in the historical trajectory of Europe and the Western World (van Nieuwenhuysse & Wils, 2015).

Based on the official attainment targets, different educational networks in Flanders can further design their own curriculum, based on which publishing houses then draw up history textbooks (who do not need governmental approval in order to be used in schools). The standards are clearly reflected in history curricula and textbooks. Both curricula and textbooks for instance do not pay much attention to the national nor subnational past, and particularly take a Western-oriented stance, narrating the past as a Western story of progress

towards freedom, equality, democratization and respect for human rights.

### **3. Popular Historical Culture in Flanders: Various and Often Conflicting Historical Narratives**

In popular historical culture in Flanders, different and often conflicting narratives and narrative templates of the national past occur. Those templates, underlying historical narratives of the Belgian past have been mapped in previous research (see Appendix 1) (van Havere et al, 2015). How have they been defined? First, we identified historical narratives of the Belgian past on the basis of academic work on the historiography and historical culture of Belgium (Beyen, & Majerus, 2008; Deneckere et al, 2014; Morelli, 1995; Stengers, 1981; Tollebeek, 1994; Verschaffel, 2006; Witte, Craeybeckx, & Meynen, 2009). To check whether these templates are still in use today, we analyzed, secondly, editorial comments, opinions and columns in contemporary newspapers, recent general overviews of Belgian history, posts on social media such as Facebook and Twitter, and secondary school history curricula and textbooks. This second analysis in which collective memory was included, inspired us to reject some older templates and to add a few recent ones. We ended up with a list of thirteen templates that currently circulate in Flanders. The exact number, and the delineation of these thirteen templates, is of course open to debate. It is certainly possible to merge some of them into a more general template, for instance by combining several templates stressing the greatness and brave and progressive character of Belgium and the Belgians throughout history.

Some narrative templates have their roots in early 19th-century romantic representations of the nation's past, while others are quite recent; some are based on a well-researched, historiographical tradition – connecting to disciplinary practices of history (see Seixas' (2016) History/Memory Matrix) – while others have more popular and/or political roots (and relate more to memorial beliefs in that same Matrix). Some embrace Belgium and its history, while others distance themselves from it, either in a scientific or in an emotional way.

An example of a template that embraces Belgium and its history is the 'Small but Tough' template, established and favored by the Belgian government in the 19th century, in which the national past is

approached as a continuous and forceful resistance of Belgians to foreign occupiers. This template can be fleshed out with concrete events such as the opposition of Ambiorix and his Gallic tribe against the legions of Julius Caesar, the brave resistance of 'poor little Belgium' to the German occupation during the First World War or the armies of Adolf Hitler in the Second. The 'Flemish' template established by the Flemish Movement in the late 19th century, by contrast, distances itself from Belgium, and expresses utter resentment towards present-day Belgium and its past. Belgium is considered the latest occupier of an occupied Flanders. Distancing oneself from Belgium and its history does however not necessarily involve emotional resentment; it can also be inspired by a scientific perspective such as in the 'Lines of Fracture' template (developed by social scientists in the 1960s), which is referred to in the history standards. It approaches the national past through the ideological, socio-economic, and communitarian/linguistic tensions emerging between different groups in Belgian society since 1830. In this respect, it needs to be noticed that the communitarian line of fracture is especially a typically Belgian phenomenon. Both other lines of fracture occurred in many other European countries, also. After the Second World War new lines of fracture emerged over existing ones, regarding ethical questions (such as abortion and euthanasia), environmental problems, and public security policy and migration.

#### **4. Research Questions and Research Methodology**

Starting from the finding that no master narrative of the national past exists in popular historical culture nor in (Western-European oriented) history education in Flanders, this research examines which historical narratives of the national past Flemish history teachers then construct, and in so doing to what extent they (un)wittingly rely on existing templates. Initially, we planned to ask history teachers to write an essay about the national past. This turned out not to be a good method of data collection. Teachers showed only little willingness to participate, as they felt as if their knowledge about the national past was being assessed. Classroom observations turned out to be unworkable as well. As the national past, in its broadest sense of Low Countries history, can be addressed in each grade of secondary education, and teachers are free to choose their lesson

content and timing, this made it impossible, in practice, to organize lesson observations, even with a rather small sample of teachers.

Therefore, to gain an understanding of teachers' historical narratives of the national past, we partly used a methodology that has been developed by the Canadian educationalist Peck (2010) which consists of a performance task, combined with interviews. In January-March 2014, we selected on a voluntary basis sixteen history teachers teaching in the 11th and 12th grade. We chose teachers active in those grades, because the curriculum precisely prescribes that the 11th and 12th grade should be devoted to the period from ca 1750 to the present, the period in which Belgium gained its independence. Those teachers are, in other words, certain to be acquainted with aspects of Belgian history. All teachers, of which four female and twelve male, and between 26 and 55 years old, with an average age of 44 years old, teach in general secondary education, and have a masters degree in history from a Flemish university and an additional teaching degree. This means that they are all familiar with the 'lines of fracture' template, that can be considered as the academic approach towards Belgian history. All teachers are of Belgian origin. We could not find history teachers of minority ethnic-cultural backgrounds, if only because history teachers in Flanders mostly do not meet this profile. All teachers have taught at least three years at upper secondary level, which ensures they all have an experienced and more or less developed view on history education and on teaching about the national past.

We asked each teacher to individually execute a performance task in which they had to select ten historical events from a list of thirty (see Appendix 2):

*Select ten events that you consider most important to address in history classes, supposing that you could freely design a lesson series about the national past for five to eight hours (= three to four weeks). 'Freely' means that you do not necessarily have to take into account what the curricula require, the textbooks state, or what you currently do in your teaching practice.*

It was clarified that they could design a coherent lesson series (hence implicitly hinting at designing a coherent historical narrative), without having to take into account curricular requirements such as addressing only specific (recent) time periods.

The guiding principle behind the selection of the thirty events was that they should enable the construction of specific narratives based on any of the thirteen templates we distinguished earlier. A balance was sought between political, economic, cultural and religious events. A chronological balance was assured as well; all historical periods were addressed and an equal number of events from before and after 1830 were selected. Furthermore, important historical benchmarks and events that have given rise to conflicting interpretations were selected. Though the logic of selection was first and foremost national, many selected events – in particular those stemming from the pre-1830 period – refer to a broader geographic dimension. Of the fifteen post-1830 events, nine were embedded in a broader international framework. Once selected, all thirty events were put on picture cards (see appendix 3 for an example). Each card contained a title and a date such as ‘Fascist parties win the 1936 elections in both parts of the country’. The cards also gave a short caption (of around seven lines) which describes the event in a factual way. The cards finally contained two to three iconic or at least rich images which collectively offered different perspectives on the event.

We stressed that we did not expect participants to know about all thirty events, and that the short explanation of each event was intended to enable them to consider all thirty when making their choice. We also stressed that there was no ‘good’ or ‘bad’ selection and that every choice was legitimate.

The teachers had to execute the performance task individually, yet were allowed to do that at home, in the absence of the authors, in order to avoid them feeling uncomfortable. Afterwards, semi-structured interviews were done by the second author (a graduate student at the time), to avoid participants feeling uncomfortable in the presence of a history educational academic scholar (first author). Each interview took about an hour. All teachers were asked to explain their choices, and were also asked questions about the method or logic they had used to select the ten picture cards, and whether or not they saw any connections between the selected events. That way, we could examine both whether they (un)wittingly used one or more templates in constructing their lesson series and perhaps had a master narrative in mind. At the same time, the participating teachers were offered the opportunity to name other events than the thirty we offered them. In so doing, we could examine whether they even had a different template in mind. The

interviews were digitally recorded, literally transcribed, and analyzed with NVivo qualitative analysis software.

In our search for traces of narrative templates, all data have been examined, starting from the thirteen existing templates. To determine whether one of those templates was underlying the participants' selection, we defined two criteria which had to be met. First, the core idea of the template in question had to be articulated through the discussion of a specific event. In the case of the 'foreign occupations' template, for instance, teachers should have mentioned that the Belgians had been occupied by successive foreign powers for centuries. Second, teachers should explicitly have mentioned that this core idea was applicable to other events that are represented in the picture cards. With regard to the 'foreign occupations' template, they should have referred to the idea of occupation by foreign powers when discussing, for example, Ambiorix' revolt against Caesar or the First World War.

## **5. Results**

### *5.1 The Selection of Events*

When looking at the selection of events teachers made, it is notable that no teacher only selected events from 1830 onwards. All teachers were well aware of this choice. They all indicated that, *strictu sensu*, considering the pre-1830 period as 'Belgian' is anachronistic; they did nevertheless select events from that period, because those embodied important phenomena and developments, and/or because those events helped to explain important characteristics of post-1830 society. Some teachers stressed that they chose events that could help fostering an understanding of present-day society, while others selected events considered important for the people living at that time, and/or for their impact on later past events. Only occasionally, an event was chosen on moral and civic grounds, to learn from the past for present and future, to set moral standards and/or to exemplify good civic behaviour.

One third of all events chosen by the participating teachers was from the period before the official existence of Belgium as an independent state. Within the post-1830 period, the events chosen from the 19th century and from the 20th-21st century are more or less balanced.

Six events were selected by more than half of all sixteen participating teachers. It should probably not be surprising that the picture card of Belgium's independence in 1830 was the most selected (by fourteen participants), closely followed by the cards depicting Flemings demanding unilingualism of Flanders (thirteen participants), Belgium and the world suffering under the First World War (twelve participants), the rubber cultivation in the Congo Free State causing global turmoil (eleven participants), a Flemish foot militia defeating a powerful army of French knights during the Battle of the Golden Spurs (ten participants), and all male Belgians acquiring voting rights (nine participants).

## 5.2 *The Use of Narrative Templates*

When asking the teachers what method or logic they had used to select the ten picture cards representing historical events from the national past, one teacher explicitly indicated that resistance to foreign occupiers served as a connecting thread during the performance task. In his selection, Thomas chose no less than six cards which he interconnected and related to the idea of the national past as a continuous resistance to foreign occupiers, such as the cards of Ambiorix, of Napoleon and the Battle of Waterloo, and of the First World War. The 'Small but Tough' template clearly served as a cultural tool in his mind, and constituted a master narrative. This was closely connected to how he perceived his own identity. He stated: 'I am proud to be Belgian, and I consider it important to pass that on to my students. They should realize that we can be proud of Belgium.'

The large majority of fifteen teachers, however, did not testify to a (sub)national identification, and also did not operate from a master narrative. Six teachers acknowledged that Belgian society was/is riddled with contrasts, and sought to address that phenomenon in specific events. They selected the First School War to illustrate the ideological line of fracture (between catholics and non-catholics), the card of John Cockerill to illustrate the socio-economic tension (related to the emergence of a class struggle during the industrialization in Belgium), and for instance the card of The Lion of Flanders to illustrate the communitarian line of fracture. Those six teachers, however, only partly relied on the 'Lines of Fracture' template. On average, they only selected three events on this basis;

seven events were selected without making use of a Belgian template. It is remarkable, furthermore, that ten teachers did not make use of this template at all, despite it being explicitly mentioned in the history standards, and prominently present in history textbook chapters dealing with Belgian history. Two teachers, Stefan and Ivo, even denied the Belgian specificity of 'lines of fracture'; according to them, lines of fracture in a society are rather a European-wide phenomenon.

The fact that they did not use templates much, does not necessarily mean that teachers were not aware of them. On the contrary, templates such as 'Sleeping Beauty' and 'Small but Tough', both circulating within collective memory in current society, were well-known among six teachers, who did, however, not use them to construct a specific narrative, but by contrast reflected on them. Four teachers critically deconstructed the 'Sleeping Beauty' template. When discussing cards such as Ambiorix rising in revolt against Caesar, the Battle of the Golden Spurs, 600 Franchimontois fighting Charles the Bold and Louis XI, or Belgium acquiring independence in 1830, they brought up 19th century patriotism and nationalism, in which the idea had been created that Belgians and a Belgian genius existed long before 1830. The same applies to the 'Small but Tough' template, which was critically deconstructed by two teachers, who also referred to mechanisms of stirring up patriotism in explaining the existence of this template.

### *5.3 Belgian History Embedded in a (Western) European Framework: A European Template?*

With only one teacher solely relying on one template to make his selection, and six teachers only partly relying on a template, it is clear that the aforementioned thirteen templates did not play a preponderant role in the selection process, and that no ingrained master narrative was present in the minds of participating teachers, except for one. The question remains then on what grounds did teachers actually make their selection. Except for Thomas (using the 'Small but Tough' template), all other fifteen teachers indicated that they especially selected those events that illustrate the main lines of (important evolutions within) the past. Two teachers, Lucien and Raymond, indicated that they considered it hard to come up with specific characteristics of the national past. The other thirteen

teachers immediately mentioned explicitly, in this respect, that they had not limited ‘the past’ to the national past, but had embedded the Belgian national past in a (Western) European framework. Annick, just like David, Ivo and Stefan, stated: ‘I considered the thirty events in a European framework, and made decisions from that perspective.’ Stefan and Ivo, for that matter, were the ones who denied the specific Belgian character of the ‘Lines of Fracture’ template. Some teachers did not even mention Belgium in their explanation. Gunter for instance, just like Johan, consistently talked about the importance of events and persons for Europe and European history. He stated: ‘Clovis converting to Christianity is very important for European history.’ When talking about Napoleon, he said: ‘Just like Charles V, the French emperor has been a very important person for Europe.’ Lydia even went one step further, when stating, even though the performance task clearly referred to the national past: ‘I did not construct a Belgian story, but a European one.’ She used Belgian events only as an illustration or a case study to explain developments within (Western) European history. It therefore seems as if fifteen out of sixteen teachers particularly made use of another, fourteenth narrative template, what could be called a ‘European template’. This template ignores to a large extent any specificity of Belgian history, and embeds it in a larger (Western) European one. It allows teachers to select events in such a way that they can narrate the national past as a story of progress towards democracy, and hence develop a progressive, human rights-focused narrative that can be considered a (Western) European rather than a specifically Belgian narrative.

## **6. Conclusion and Discussion**

This research examined how sixteen history teachers in Flanders constructed a representation of the national past. It made use of the concept of ‘schematic narratives templates’, which proved to be very useful, methodologically speaking, to analyze historical narratives in history education, academia and popular historical culture.

A first important conclusion from this small-scale research is that no ingrained master narrative of the national past was present in the minds of participating teachers, except for one. When considered in a comparative international perspective, this is remarkable. For in many countries, history teachers are often heavily influenced by the existing master narrative of the nation’s history, and are moreover expected

to pass it on to their students. When taking the specific Flemish-Belgian context into account, however, this conclusion is not really unexpected, as no master narrative of the national past circulates in popular historical culture or in history education,

If we then particularly look at how teachers actually did make their selection, it is remarkable that the thirteen existing templates of the national past in popular historical culture, and the 'Lines of Fracture' template used in academia and in history education did not really seem to structure most teachers' selection. By contrast, throughout the interviews, we noticed a quasi-absence of any historical specificity of Belgian history in the minds of fifteen of the sixteen teachers. Most teachers rather used a 'European template'. They particularly chose those events from Belgian history illustrating the main lines of European history, partly as a story of progress towards democracy. The connection with the approach to history in the Flemish history standards seems obvious here, even though the performance task explicitly stated that teachers did not necessarily have to take into account what the standards and curricula require. Nevertheless, it seems as if the participants' thinking has been much more influenced by the way Flemish history education addresses the past, than by historical representations in popular historical culture and in academia. In this respect, it could be noted, throughout the research in general, that all teachers in the end reasoned very didactically. They kept close to their own teaching practice, even though the performance task did not oblige them to. Teachers for instance often referred to their own students and classes, to the courses of study in which they teach, and to the culture of the school in which they work.

Another explanation of our finding might perhaps be found in what Zahra (2010) describes as 'national indifference'. With this concept, she refers to people and groups, especially in multinational states, expressing a complete indifference towards (belonging to) the nation. The extent to which 'national indifference' actually played a role, is not entirely clear. Although except for one, none of the teachers testified to a (sub)national identification, we could not clearly and explicitly deduce, from the interviews, if teachers were indeed indifferent towards the Belgian nation and its past. Nevertheless, we can only but conclude that the Western focus of the curriculum seems to have clearly left deep marks in teachers' minds,

in so far that they almost all applied, as mentioned earlier, a fourteenth, 'European template'.

This finding is also significant in the light of the history standards' goals related to supporting young people in their identity construction. A warning, however, is in order here. At first glimpse, it might seem as if Flanders/Belgium is the best pupil in the European history classroom, going beyond national boundaries and national historical frameworks towards a transnational approach. This transnational orientation, however, gives rise to new mechanisms of in/exclusion. Other research we conducted among twelve first-year undergraduate students from the University of Leuven indicates that the European orientation of the Flemish history curriculum leads them into drawing new identity boundaries. Instead of distinguishing between Flemings or Belgians and 'the other', they make new identitarian distinctions between the West and 'The Rest'. One student talked for instance about the 'progressive and free' West, and the 'regressive' Arab world. This tendency reflects current discourse in society at large, but it is probably also – unintentionally – supported by the history curriculum in Flanders, which is essentially Eurocentric (van Nieuwenhuysse, & Wils, 2015).

A last remarkable conclusion is that six teachers spontaneously deconstructed certain templates. This is all the more surprising, as templates normally function in an unwitting and unreflective manner. Almost all teachers participating in the research, furthermore, spontaneously deconstructed historical representations of specific events stemming from collective memory. Many participants for instance immediately connected persons such as Ambiorix, or events such as the battle of the golden spurs, with attempts to create and support nation- and identity-building processes within society at large. This interesting finding can at first be explained by referring to the academic training of the teachers, during which they became acquainted with a perspectivist stance. Furthermore, attention to the constructed nature of history has increased in Flemish history education in general. Professional development initiatives, history educational publications, and history textbooks all echo an increasing awareness of history as a construct. Finally, the specific subject of national history might have also played a role. Precisely the absence of a national historical master narrative in Flemish history education, as well as the very weak presence of templates, did perhaps also

facilitate a distant, critical and perspectivist approach to national history.

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## **Appendix 1: Thirteen Schematic Narrative Templates about the National History of Belgium**

Expressing affection for Belgium

1. 'Sleeping Beauty': Already established long before 1830, a Belgian spirit (*âme belge*) existed and strove unceasingly for national independence.
2. 'Foreign Occupations': Before its independence, Belgium was occupied by a succession of foreign powers, starting as far back as antiquity when Julius Caesar conquered Gaul.
3. 'Battleground of Europe': Throughout history, Belgium has suffered passively under the important European battles fought out on its soil, such as the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 or the World War I.
4. 'Modern Country': After 1830, Belgium's vigour and prosperity were displayed through its industry, commerce, and culture by, e.g., the construction of the first railway on the continent in 1835.

5. ‘Small but Tough’: From the legions of Caesar to the armies of Adolf Hitler, little Belgium always managed to resist foreign threats and to maintain some sort of national integrity.
6. ‘Model Country’: Belgium has always been an ambitious and progressive nation, with its liberal Constitution of 1831 or the legalisation of gay marriage in 2003.
7. ‘Microcosm of Europe’: As a meeting place of North and South – of the Germanic and Romance civilizations – Belgium can be considered a symbol and model for European diversity.
8. ‘Absurdistan’: Living in Belgium, one has to note the peculiar and even frustrating, but nonetheless pleasant, character of the country, with its seemingly-endless problems and inconsistencies.

#### Expressing rejection of Belgium

9. ‘Artificial Country’: There are no historical foundations to the Belgian nation. The country was created solely by other states in 1830 to safeguard the European Balance of Power.
10. ‘Flemish’: The centuries-old Flemish nation has long been oppressed and Belgium is the latest hindrance to the complete emancipation of Flanders.
11. ‘Country of Scandals’: With numerous episodes, such as the colonisation of Congo or its recent political problems, one can only be ashamed of Belgium and feel aversion towards it.

#### Expressing scientific distance

12. ‘Ironical’: The history of Belgium consists of the accidental presences of ever-changing populations, which are only connected to each other because they live within the nation’s present-day borders.
13. ‘Lines of Fracture’: Belgian society is marked by various lines of fracture; next to the older ideological, socio-economic, and community divergences, newer topics such as immigration, environmental problems, and ethical discussions have brought forth new lines of fracture.

### **Appendix 2: Overview of the Thirty Events Selection for the Performance Task**

1. Ambiorix rises in revolt against Caesar, 54 BC
2. Clovis is converted to Christianity, c. 500 AD

3. Godfrey of Bouillon rules over Jerusalem after the First Crusade, 1099
4. Flemish foot militia defeat a powerful army of French knights during the Battle of the Golden Spurs, 11 July 1302
5. The Joyous Entry of Joanna and Wenceslaus of Brabant, 3 January 1356
6. 600 Franchimontois fight Charles the Bold and Louis XI, 29 October 1468
7. Charles V postulates the indivisibility of the Netherlands in the Pragmatic Sanction, 4 November 1549
8. Alva orders the decapitation of the counts of Egmont and Horne on the Grand Place in Brussels, 5 June 1568
9. Inspired by the Baroque and the Counter-Reformation, Rubens paints *The Resurrection of Christ*, 1611-12
10. Emperor Joseph II allows freedom of religion in the Edict of Tolerance, 12 November 1781
11. Flemish and Brabant Peasants rise in revolt against the French oppressor, 12 October 1798
12. Allied forces clash with Napoleons at Waterloo, 18 June 1815
13. William I reforms education, 1817
14. Belgium achieves independence, 25 August-4 October 1830
15. John Cockerill establishes the first blast-furnaces on the river Meuse, 1838
16. Hendrik Conscience writes *The Lion of Flanders*, 1838
17. Marx resides in a dazzling, liberal and cosmopolitan Brussels, 1845-48
18. The First School War focuses differences between Liberals and Catholics, 1879-84
19. All male Belgians acquire voting rights, 1893
20. The rubber cultivation in the Congo Free State causes global turmoil, 1890-1908
21. Belgium and the world suffer under the World War I, 1914-18
22. Magritte plays with perception and reality in his Surrealist paintings of the 1920s
23. Fascist parties win in elections in both parts of the country, 1936
24. 25,000 Jews and 350 Roma and Sinti are transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau via Dossin Barracks, 1942-44
25. Women acquire suffrage for parliament, 26 July 1948
26. The mining disaster in Marcinelle claims the lives of 262 people and shocks Belgium, 8th August 1956

27. Flemings demand unilingualism in Flanders, 1961-1968
28. The European institutions are established in Brussels, 8 April 1965
29. 300,000 people express their indignation over the poor working of police and justice in a White March, 20 October 1996
30. Belgium is the second country in the world to allow same-sex marriage, 2003

### Appendix 3: Example of a Picture Card

Cartoon of little Belgium denying Germany free passage, by Frederick Henry Townsend, Punch, 12th August 1914

Photo showing Indian soldiers, carrying a wounded officer, in Flanders Fields, 1918 (*The Doctor in War*, Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co.)

The painting *Massacre at Dinant* by George W. Bellows (1918). On 23rd August 1914, German soldiers executed 674 inhabitants of the Belgian city of Dinant, among whom were 26 men aged between 65 and 75 years old, 76 women, and 37 children.

Date: 1914-1918

21. Belgium and the world suffer under the First World War

A few days after the outbreak of the First World War, German troops marched into neutral Belgium. Belgian civilian casualties and material damage like in Leuven (the university library) and Dinant caused an international outcry. On the Western Front, a race towards the sea occurred in which both warring parties fought for control of the narrow territory in front of the English Channel. The result was that the front became static and trench warfare emerged; trenches extended from the Swiss-French border to the Belgian coast. Millions of people were killed worldwide.

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## HISTORY TEACHING AT POST-ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN ESTONIA – SUCCESSSES AND CHALLENGES

Mare Oja, Grete Rohi and Merike Väs

*In 2016 the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research asked Tallinn University to find out if the provisions of the national curriculum in history (2011/2014) are feasible for students, which competences are achieved, skills developed, teaching methods and materials used, how control, assessment and evaluation is organised and in which direction further development of the syllabus should go? Based on research, it can be argued that although teachers consider the development of skills and competences to be essential, they mainly work with textbooks, and the teacher usually talks herself/himself in lessons. Analysis of historical sources has a modest place, problem solving is not considered applicable for students, and oral questioning is traditionally predominant. There is room for development in organizing learner-centred learning process and developing student creativity.*

### 1. Introduction

History teaching in Estonia has a history of vast and rapid changes. Since the restoration of independence in 1991, paradigmatic developments and changes took place in education in Estonia and in history teaching, which had already been included in the first national curriculum of 1996. Today, Estonian schools are working according to the third national curriculum, which was adopted in 2011 and completed in 2014.

International trends, the opinions of Estonian teachers and specialist students, the results of external assessment, that is, the results of national examinations in history, examinations after the basic school and level works, have been based on a continuous curriculum development. There is no separate study on the effectiveness of history teaching in Estonia. International studies conducted in Estonia (PISA, TIMSS, IEA – International Educational Achievement) do not include information about history teaching either. However, an overview of teaching and the level of study is crucial information for curriculum development. This is precisely why a study commissioned by the Ministry of Education

and Research was held in Tallinn University. The aim was to find out the situation in history education at the post-elementary school level and to find out teachers' opinion of further development of history teaching. The study was designed to find out whether curriculum applications, such as a learner-centred teaching process, integration with general competences, and aims of the history curriculum such as development of historical thinking and skills, have been implemented, or normative documents and real school-life are different.

## **2. The historical background of history teaching**

At the end of the 1980s, the Estonian society reached a revolutionary point, which brought about changes throughout the entire spectrum of society: in politics, in principles, in the functioning of institutions and in everyday life. The state changed structures and institutions, teachers and educators started developing syllabi, which took place after the Teachers' Congress in 1987 (Oja, 2016). The first changes in teaching plans in 1989-1992 (Oja, 2016: 121-127), the development of the national curriculum in 1996 (Oja, 2016: 130-134), and further curriculum development (Oja, 2016: 134-147) demonstrated the direction of the reform, through which education was to be brought in line with the expectations of society.

Renouncing Soviet traditions was a crucial turning point – the content and principles of history teaching changed, ideology in teaching was abandoned, new teaching material was developed, teachers had to update their knowledge and reconsider their perceptions. During the transition period, teachers were free to deal with topics that they could not have touched before (so-called white spots), and they had the opportunity to learn together with pupils. Many historical events were known about, but not in depth, and were presented in 'black-and-white' in a politicised historical narrative. Teachers assessed the period as extremely interesting, but do not want to work so intensively again (Oja, 2016: 196-214): lack of guidelines and teaching material at the end of 1980s put the responsibility of education solely on teachers.

The first national curriculum of 1996 unified education and Russian speaking schools had to follow the same curriculum. Previous updates to programmes had only been recommended, not compulsory for them. According to the first national curriculum,

history teaching had two centres: the first at basic school level and the second at gymnasium level. Changes in the curriculum adopted in 2002 (Põhikooli, 2002) were editorial. This curriculum was welcomed with less criticism, because teachers prefer stability. The current national curriculum (Põhikooli, 2011) gave pupils more freedom of choice. History teaching at basic school level concentrates on the principle of ‘from local to more distant’, which aims to raise interest in history. History teaching in the gymnasium should be based on problem-solving to develop critical thinking and the ability of argumentation. The multi-perspective approach brings together different viewpoints and pluralism, in which pupils should make decisions based on the sources themselves. The approach should be supported by a pupil-centred learning environment, stronger integration between different subjects and study areas, as well as with cross-curricular topics and key competences, including digital competence.

While the Soviet school was knowledge-centred, the modern school is student-centred, where the key motifs are to raise the level of interest towards history, and emphasizing and keeping democracy as a value. Selected teaching content and methods are to be based on pupils’ needs, instead of the teacher-centred method used in the Soviet period, when students’ opinion was not invited. Teaching is not ideological today – developing understanding of the one and final truth – but deals with history from different points of view. Today, it is important to develop pupils’ own opinion and position and ability to defend it with argument. It is important to extend knowledge and develop skills via History teaching. Teachers have noticed that pupils’ interest in history is decreasing, which is explained by the greater amount of possibilities to deal with other activities and self-fulfilment. Teachers have underlined that the negative side of their work is the ever-growing bureaucracy and workload (Oja, 2016: 196-220).

ICT and electronic environments are used more, the role of the teacher is different – the conveyor of wisdom has become a supporter and guide, relations between different roles in school have changed. The learning environment has broadened and thus requires different planning of the learning process. In assessment and evaluation, the importance of formative assessment has increased, in order to develop learners’ awareness of their strengths and weaknesses, their personal learning management and self-reflection.

Students must receive explanation together with marks, what her/his strengths and personal weaknesses are and their needs for development. Because of the changed role, teachers have more problems to solve and these are completely different from a time when one political system was replaced with another.

During approximately 30 years, changes happened in all areas of history teaching: pupils, teachers, syllabi, pedagogical concepts, teaching methods and learning process, textbooks, etc. Developments in all areas influenced each other. Changes in education today are not caused only by changes in society, but by general trends and developments in education and the world.

Great paradigmatic changes have taken place in Estonian education and history teaching from the Soviet era to today: tendencies in education support the development of an independent democratic state, subject syllabi correspond to modern perceptions, teaching practices are developed towards learner-centred teaching and support the development of the independent learner. Developments that began with the restoration of independence and highlighted values were already included in the first (1996) national curriculum. Today, Estonian schools are already operating in accordance with the third national curriculum (2011/2014).

### **3. Justification for the need for the study**

Evidence-based development of the curriculum must be based on research. It was the reason why the Ministry of Education and Research decided to conduct the questionnaire in spring 2016 among history teachers, who work at the post-elementary school level. The aim of the research was to find out whether paradigmatic changes to History teaching have been implemented in schools. The aim was to investigate if applications of the current national curriculum (2011) are feasible for students; whether and which competences of pupils described in the general curriculum are developed by teachers at the post-elementary school level; which skills teachers shape through history teaching, and which of them do they consider to be the most important; which teaching methods and teaching materials are most commonly used and how control and evaluation are carried out. Also, teachers' opinion about the direction of further development of the syllabus was invited.

After the post-elementary school level (6<sup>th</sup> grade – 12-year-old pupils) history is studied for only two years. In the current national curriculum, history starts in the 5th grade, where students learn the basic concepts of history, timeline, historical sources, everyday life, some historical events and significant historical figures. The focus is on local history. The approach is not systematic.

#### **4. Description of the method and sample of the survey**

The survey was conducted in the form of an electronic questionnaire via Google Form. The questions were designed in a way to avoid the possibility of answering yes or no. The responses were related to teaching practice, for which respondents were asked to describe a specific example. The questions were divided into seven thematic blocks, according to the set of research questions. Five teachers, who were working at the post-elementary school level, piloted the questionnaire. On the basis of feedback from the pilots, the wording of the questions was altered.

The request to complete the questionnaire was forwarded by the Ministry of Education and Research to all schools in which there are fifth and sixth grades. It was possible to do via Google Form (online) or using a Word document as an attachment, or to print the questionnaire out, complete by hand, and submit the replies by scanning electronically.

Answers to the questionnaire were received from 65 teachers in age 24-67, 12 of whom were men and 52 women, 49 worked in Estonian and 16 Russian-language or language immersion schools. 44 teachers had a history education, the rest had other qualifications. Teachers of Estonian-language schools had graduated from University of Tartu or Tallinn University, teachers from Russian-language schools had received higher education in the Russian Federation or in the Soviet Union.

The survey was conducted via Google Form, and handwritten responses to the printed questionnaire were also accepted. The revised Excel spreadsheet was used in analysis. The results were presented as comparative diagrams. Answers to the questions were presented as a total summary, by sex, study language and work experience. The  $\chi^2$ -test was used to check for differences between groups and all statistically significant differences were commented on.

A total of 65 responses were received. 54 teachers responded to questions online, 11 responses received via e-mail were added to the Excel spreadsheet, including replies from the teachers who had piloted the questionnaire. The revised Excel spreadsheet was used in the survey. The results were presented as comparative diagrams. A total summary of the issues researched, gender differences, language of instruction, and seniority were outlined. As the picture of the teaching language was very tangible, a language-based summary was split into Estonian and non-Estonian, under which the Russian language of instruction is represented either separately or in combination with language immersion schools. Since the sample was small and not proportional to the gender and the study-language, differences were checked with the calculations of the  $\chi^2$ -test for a statistical difference (if the probability was less than 0.05)<sup>1</sup>. In the case of differences, the questionnaire was presented as a separate diagram and a statistically significant difference was commented upon.

42 of respondents taught in grades 5 and 6, 11 teachers only in 6 and 12 only in grade 5. Most of the respondents were history teachers, namely 35. 11 respondents were class teachers, who also taught history, and nine contributors had learnt history as an additional subject. 10 teachers of the 65 had had no preparation for teaching history.

Subject	5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> grade	5 <sup>th</sup> grade	6 <sup>th</sup> grade	Total
History as an additional subject	6	1	2	9
History teacher	27	2	6	35
Class teacher	3	6	2	11
Other subject	1			1
Other, non-History teacher	5	2	2	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>65</b>

Table 1. Qualification of the teachers participated in the research

Twelve respondents were men and 52 women; one of the respondents did not mark the gender. The average age of respondents was 47 years.<sup>2</sup> The youngest teacher was 24 and the oldest 67, one respondent did not give their age. The majority of

respondents (19) were aged between 51 and 60, or 41-50 (18 respondents). 9 teachers were over the age of 61, and 9 teachers aged between 21-30 and 31-40 years old.

The average length of teachers working as a history teacher was 21 years. The shortest working time was 1 year and the longest 43 years. There were 18 respondents with 10-years or less working experience, 18 who had worked for 11-20 years, 15 who had worked for 21-30 years, and 16 who had worked for 31-40. One teacher had worked over 40 years. Thus – in the sample there were teachers of very different ages and lengths of working life, which ensured the representation of different experiences in the answers.

In the comparison of the study-language, it was asked whether the school has an Estonian or Russian study language, or whether language immersion is applied. Most of the respondents (49) were from schools with Estonian study-language. Since there were 9 teachers in Russian-language schools and 5 teachers in the language immersion school, the respondents from Russian study-language and language-immersion school were merged. Two more schools were added to the same group, one which used both Russian as a study-language and as a language-immersion, and another school in which all the options provided in the questionnaire were used. Thus, 49 of the respondents represented Estonian study-language schools and 16 Russian study-language or language-immersion schools.

Most of the teachers (26) had graduated from the University of Tartu/Tartu State University. The University of Tallinn/Tallinn Pedagogical Institute was mentioned 24 times. Teachers of Russian-medium schools had graduated outside of Estonia, in the former USSR or Russian Federation. Language immersion teachers had graduated from Tartu or Tallinn University. One Russian-language school teacher had no higher education. Two respondents did not mention their graduation year, and one was still a student.

Seven respondents were in higher education in 1971-1980, 9 respondents graduated in 1981-1990, 11 in 1991-2000, and most of the respondents (19) in 2001-2010. Sixteen teachers had graduated after 2010, half of whom (8) had their diploma from Tartu and half (8) from Tallinn University.

The low response rate was probably due to the fact that the questionnaire was conducted in May, at the end of the school year, when the teachers were focusing on finishing the schoolyear. However, it is still right to ask for feedback on the learning process at

the end of the academic year, rather than at the beginning of a new one, when attitudes are more likely to be influenced by intentions and plans, rather than by the experience of the previous year.

## 5. Discussion

The results are interpreted in terms of parts of the study. For each block, a general summary, a comparison with the results of other blocks, and a discussion that may be the reason for the emergence of the trend(s) are presented.

### 5.1 *Knowledge and Skills*

The purpose of this block was to find out if learning outcomes of the history syllabus are feasible for the students. The respondents had three choices: for all, some or individual students.

When using the timeline, 70 % of respondents noted that the learning outcome of 'understand the concepts related to the concept of time: the century, the millennium' is feasible for all students. Some students have difficulty linking the year and century and using Roman numerals – Arabic numbers are used more on a daily basis. BC and AD are commonly confusing. Improvement could be provided in conjunction with mathematics and Estonian language teachers, continuous training and the use of concepts in different situations.

Teachers consider the development of time orientation skill to be very important. Some find that it can be handled by all students, some of them see serious problems for weaker pupils, especially for learners with special needs and learners who study a simplified curriculum. It is unanimously confirmed that it requires continuous work and repetition. Students do not understand abstract concepts without explanation.

Analysis of historical sources requires the student to have functional reading skills and the courage to express and justify his/her opinion. According to teachers, at least a quarter of students have problems with this: either reading skills are very weak, they do not understand the meaning of the text, or are not encouraged to express their opinion. Students know best where sources are stored, and the fact that sources are the basis for explaining the past. Classification of sources is also executable. It is known that interpretation depends on the position of the interpreter, but students cannot interpret the sources by themselves. Thus, history

teaching should support the understanding that sources and interpretations of events may vary. Critical thinking develops during the learning process.

However, the analysis of sources should begin immediately at the beginning of learning history, of course, at a manageable level, starting with simpler tasks and moving towards more complex ones. For example, the learning process could be started by looking for information from a source and expressing an opinion based on the information in the excerpt. Students should understand from their first history lessons that historians investigate the past using various sources. Perhaps knowing the source could help them understand the teachers' answers. The sources are mainly considered to be primary sources and the use of different types of text, or the use of video or audio clips, etc. do not qualify as work with sources. Source analysis leads to the issue of study literature. Teachers should not have to search for specific types of sources themselves. These should be included in the tasks and instructions for use in study materials or made available in other ways.

Teachers who responded to the questionnaire generally thought that description of everyday life can be managed by everybody because these skills have been developed in elementary classes from the 1st grade. The question is – what is the individual strength of each pupil? The largest number of respondents said that all students can satisfactorily point out their home country, Estonia and neighboring countries on the map, and only two thought that it would be feasible only for some. It was noted that most students are capable of writing a short story. Depending on the individual, However, it can be difficult for individual learners to tell, to compose or to plan a short story. Initially, it is necessary to practice short writing skills according to a given plan, but over time pupils should learn to write independently.

It is recommended that learning to use maps is coordinated with geography. In history, maps are used earlier than in geography (only in the 7th grade). In the 2nd grade of social studies, the map is used to show Estonia and neighbouring countries,<sup>3</sup> in the 1st grade of science, the legend and signs of the map are introduced.<sup>4</sup> In the 4th grade of science education at the II level, the physical map of the world and the political map of the world are taught.<sup>5</sup> Cooperation between teachers is definitely commendable, but geography does not necessarily have to be the first subject which uses maps. Some history

educators, for example, are also using electronic maps (Google Maps) for learning. Students know their home county well and they are able to use the map of Estonia. Difficulties are met when maps of different ages are used and when trying to understand changes on maps.

It is difficult to distinguish between significant and irrelevant, to draw a logical sequence of events. In general, pupils of 5th and 6th grade do not have a comprehensive understanding of history, of the big picture. This is precisely why students present the most interesting aspect of a person or an event, although these might not be historically significant.

From outcomes of the topic 'Describes historical events, knows historical figures', most teachers considered that students know some historical figures best. Teachers explained that in the last quarter of the 5th class, the focus is on local history, including learning about well-known people from the local area. All teachers who answered valued their home area. Students will be directed to seek out and share additional information with each other during the study of the topic. According to teachers' opinion, pupils are more interested in personalities than in historical events. The most important events in history are known, but the timing is forgotten. Fields of activity of historical figures are also better remembered than years of birth and death or even the century when the person lived. It was also noted that local history is more interesting for students and could be paid more attention if introductory history studies allow.

A conclusion of the feasibility of the subject syllabus showed that teachers think that only a small number of students are capable of interpreting sources and evaluating the reliability of resources. Also storytelling, making the link between living conditions and the environment, writing short stories and highlighting important information were mentioned among sophisticated skills. It was noted that all students know that sources are kept in a museum, many understand that information about the past can be obtained from historical sources, are aware of the classification of sources into material, oral and written, and know some historic figures. Source analysis might have been considered to be difficult because only primary sources were considered as sources in teaching, and the use of secondary sources was not taken into account.

Teachers fear that more demanding learning outcomes, such as reflection and interpretation skills, are not feasible for students in the

second year of school. However, the wording of learning outcomes necessitates a demonstration of skill at an appropriate level for the learner. The learner's development can only be supported by achievable tasks.

## 5.2 Development of Competences

The national curriculum necessitates the development of general competences that help young people to better manage their learning, working and living situations. In the second thematic block, teachers had to indicate, which of the general competences described in the national curriculum were, in their view, achievable through history teaching at post-elementary school level, what is feasible, and to add an example (method, learning activity, task) that supports the development of these competences. Therefore – it was assumed that the teacher answers from his/her personal experience, which competences they develop and how they develop them through the learning process. A summary table of the development of all competences was obtained on the basis of the total number of teachers' choices and divided by the number of descriptions. Answers were given in percentages. Thus, the result is general and does not characterize the various aspects of competence.

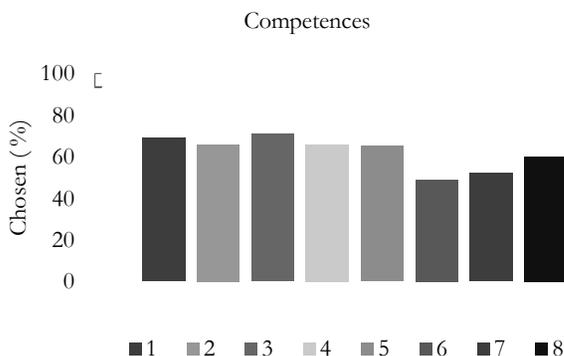


Figure 1. Development of competences through history teaching: (1) cultural and value; (2) social and civic; (3) self-determination; (4) academic/learning; (5) communicative; (6) mathematical, scientific and technological; (7) entrepreneurial; (8) digitization.

Based on the results, we see that teachers see the most opportunities for developing self-definitional competences (71 %), then culture and values competence (69 %), social and civic competence and literacy (66 %) as the third, and only one percentage-point less was given to communicative competence (65 %). Followed by digital competence (60 %), entrepreneurial competence (52 %), and lastly mathematical science and technology competence (49 %).

It should be noted, however, that one specific description of cultural and value competence has been assessed to be the most suitable (86 %) by all respondents in the context of history studies of the second year of schooling: 'to perceive and value their connection with other people, society, nature, the cultural heritage of one's own and other countries and peoples and events of contemporary culture'. History teaching offers versatile opportunities for integration. The least suitable (26 %) was the description of entrepreneurship competence: 'take smart risks'. A high degree of appreciation (80 %) of the description of digital competences was also found: 'to find and store information with digital devices and to evaluate its relevance and reliability'. Learning ability was highly valued, but the following description: 'analyze your knowledge and skills, motivation and confidence, and the need for further learning' brought the general average low. Teachers do not think that it is achievable to learners at the post-elementary level.

In the descriptions of mathematics, science and technology competence, only two descriptions received less than 50 %: 'to understand the importance and constraints of science and technology' and 'to use new technologies for the purpose'. Three descriptions of entrepreneurship competence that teachers did not consider to be achievable by students, received less than 50 %: 'to see problems and their opportunities, help solve problems', 'respond creatively, innovatively and flexibly to change' and 'take smart risks'. History teachers perceived fewer opportunities to support the development of these competences by subject teaching, which led to a somewhat lower average score.

### *5.3 Skills Developed Through History Teaching*

In the history subject syllabus, the need for developing skills along with the extension of knowledge is emphasized and a list of subject-

specific skills is presented as well.<sup>6</sup> Two different ways were used for investigating the development of different skills. First, teachers were asked to mark which skills they considered the most important in history teaching, and secondly, they were asked to select the three that they try to develop most often. It was possible to add a comment. The questionnaire outlined the skills presented in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Development of skills through history teaching: (1) asking and answering questions; (2) obtaining information independently, including use of ICT tools; (3) oral and written self-expression; (4) reasoning, including writing short stories; (5) developing creativity and empathy; (6) working with a map; (7) orientation in time/timeline; (8) analysis of various sources; (9) knowledge of history vocabulary and explanation of concepts; (10) developing cooperation skills.

The chart shows that the development of self-expression is considered to be the most important, and the importance of source analysis, which is the core skill in the work of historians, is considered to be less important. Teachers do not consider this to be accomplishable for students in the second school level. However, the lowest-rated source-level analysis is important in the opinion of 65 % respondents, which is a very high figure. Although, due to the small size of the sample, there are no fundamental conclusions to be drawn

from the comparison of various groups, the distinctions are, however, characterized by certain tendencies.

In gender comparison, there is the biggest difference in comparison of female and male teachers in skills: more information is independently obtained, including through ICT tools, the development of creativity and empathy, working with maps, and the development of collaborative skills, which female teachers consider to be more important than male teachers. Male teachers have evaluated oral and written self-expression and orientation in time slightly higher.

Teachers of Estonian study-language schools noted more skills (8.6 Estonian – 7.6 Russian average marks of the ten proposed skills).<sup>7</sup> Although current data does not show a statistically significant difference, this could occur with a larger sample. On this basis, it can be assumed, that in Russian-language schools teaching is oriented towards the expansion of knowledge. Equally low is the development of skill working with maps and less distinction is drawn between developing skills for analyzing different sources. Larger differences arise in finding information independently, analytical skills, including writing short stories, creativity and empathy and developing cooperation skills.

There are no statistically significant differences in the length of working experience as a teacher. People with working experience as a teacher of both 11-20 and more than 30 years are somewhat more consistent and unassuming in the comparison between oral and written self-expression, the development of creativity, working with maps, orientation in time and source analysis. Evaluations of young teachers and teachers whose working experience is 21-30 years are higher and more similar. The importance of developing oral and written self-expression, creativity and empathy, source analysis and development of cooperation skills are mentioned more often. Teachers with up to 10 years of professional experience value the need to develop analytical skills higher, teachers with 21-30 years of work experience value work with maps and also orientation in time more than others.

History teachers are somewhat more conservative in developing pupils' skills in comparison with class teachers. The development of analytical skills, such as reasoning, source analysis, and expanding the vocabulary of history were evaluated similarly to other teachers. History teachers do not prioritize subject-specific skills but

emphasize the development of students' self-expression skills, which is followed by expansion of history-specific vocabulary. Class teachers have been marking the development of finding information independently, self-expression, creativity and empathy with maximum. The development of source analysis and analytical skills is marked as less important. For teachers with another educational background, orientation in time and self-expression skills are the most important. The development of collaborative skills was marked as the least important. The reason for that can be found in the interpretation. Teachers constantly support students' co-operative skills with group work, but they do not associate it with learning history.

In 44 cases teachers pointed out that they develop all the skills together, trying to teach students to see links between past and present, causes and consequences, to support student communication, self-expression and listening skills. They pay attention to the development of skills using study materials and giving additional tasks. Work with maps is included in learning each topic. The emphasis on designing skills depends on the age of students. For example, questioning and discussion are very important in the 5th grade. Analytical and argumentation skills are developed through oral discussions, presenting experience in the class is expected. Although thinking skills are still in the process, they practice short story writing, analyzing different historical sources. Several teachers have marked the analysis of historical sources as the most complicated, which explains why it is evaluated lower compared to other skills.

Secondly, in the survey, teachers were asked to designate three skills, which are developed most often with numbers (1, 2, 3). It was possible to mark several skills with the same number. It was even possible to mark all skills with number 1. Obviously, the definition of 'more often' is the key to explaining the answers, that is, why general skills were preferred to subject-specific. They are dealt with in each learning situation and in studying each topic. The development of subject-specific skills depends on the topic.

The answers were not surprising: what was considered important was also developed. The need to develop oral and written self-expression skills (42 times) was highlighted most, followed by asking and answering questions (29 times), and learning the vocabulary of history and explaining concepts. A little less important (noted 27

times) was orientation in time and finding information independently, including use of ICT tools (indicated 22 times). Analytical skills, including reasoning, creativity and empathy, ability to work with maps, and to develop cooperation skills, were marked less (marked 17 times). The support of skills to analyse various sources (indicated 11 times) was valued least. Both work with sources and maps are emphasized in the preamble of the history syllabus as history-specific skills. In their comments, this same understanding was shared by the teachers. Again, the complexity of the task for the learner at post-elementary school level, as it was mentioned previously, may justify this opinion.

The development of skills through history teaching is very important in teachers' opinion, and they do it by study exercises. In schools with another study language, greater attention is paid to expanding knowledge, and the development of skills is less important than in the Estonian-language school. There are no disparities in attitude towards skills between teachers with different working experience, but compared to class-teachers, historians are more conservative in classroom practice. For post-elementary school level students, the development of oral and written self-expression is considered to be age-appropriate, less age-appropriate is source analysis, which should be given more attention in teaching practice. According to teachers' opinion, it is crucial to develop basic skills: drawing up and using a timeline, assigning tasks using different types of maps, working with sources, filling out charts and tables, which develop analytical and information selection skills. It is also important to support social skills through group work. More than half of responding teachers are using ICT tools to raise their pupils' digital competence in their lessons.

#### 5.4 *Teaching Methods*

In this block, teachers had to mark the list of methods and teaching materials, which they use in teaching history at post-elementary school level and explain their choices. There were a total of 19 methods and 9 types of study materials in the list.

The respondents indicated that the use of methods depends, in particular, on the topic, on the ability of students and on the number of pupils in the class. Teachers complained that many methods require a lot of time and resources both from teachers and students,

but in the 5th grade, there are only 35 history lessons per year and it does not allow implementation of different methods. Unfortunately, it was not mentioned which methods were considered to be the most time-consuming.

'Teacher's lecture' was the most frequently used method in Estonian study language schools, and even twice as much in non-Estonian schools. The reason might be that students in language immersion schools need a more in-depth explanation by the teacher. The often used 'explanation of concepts' was especially important in the opinion of female teachers. Surprisingly, it turned out that 'working with sources' happened rather often. In the first block of the research, it was mentioned that source analysis is complicated for second school level, and in the block of skills it was not selected among the first. Working with maps, filling an outline map and orientation in time were the methods frequently used. Using the timeline increased with the length of teachers' work experience. Teachers, whose work experience was over 30 years, worked with timelines most. Methods such as planning, finding important information from the text, filling the schemes and tables were also used quite often. If it is difficult for students to distinguish important information from non-essential, then the above-mentioned methods could be helpful in developing this skill.

Teachers from other language schools used seven methods more than teachers from Estonian-language schools, and the difference was statistically significant. These methods were the teacher's lecture, working with maps, working with timeline, writing a short story, project design, writing an essay and presentation.

The method of writing a short story is rarely used. Also, in the block of knowledge and skills, writing a short story was only third in frequency. Teachers do not often use the method in which students teach each other. This method has the advantage of developing communication skills and collaborative skills by acting in the role of teacher, which implies that the topic is clear to the student. Study tours are also not frequent. It was added in the comments that the location of the school, the teacher's motivation and the students' economic possibilities limit the use of this method. Project method is rarely implemented. Writing an essay allows development of communication skills: writing different types of text using specific references, appropriate language resources and the appropriate style.

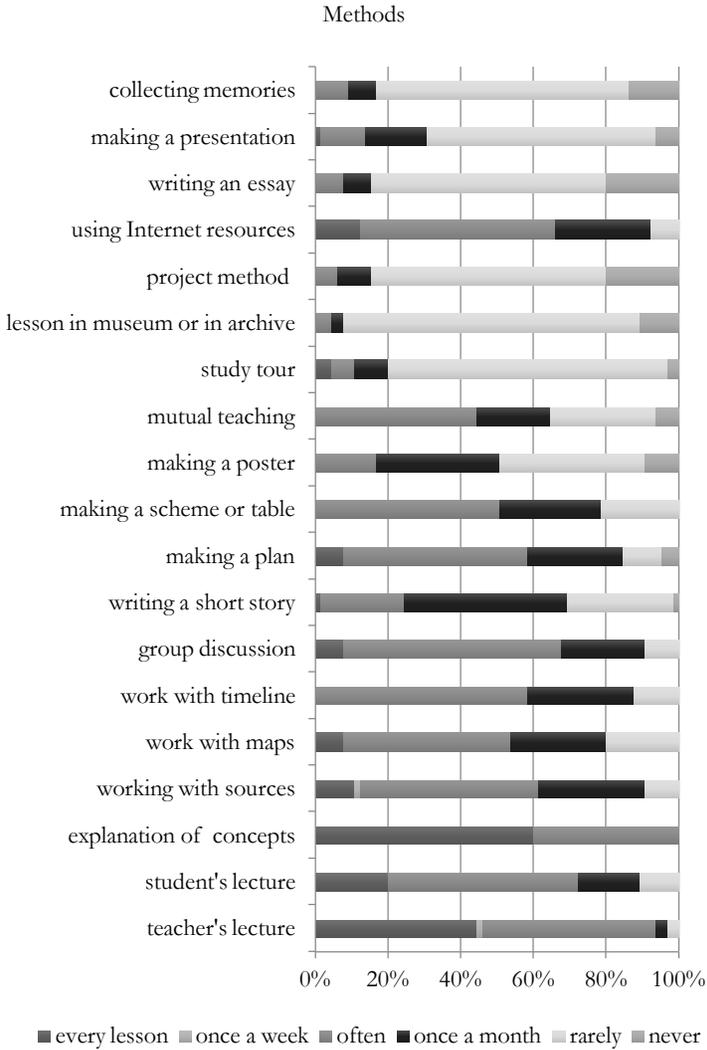


Figure 3. Frequency of using methods.

Preparation of a presentation develops the language and expression skills of students and supports communication skills. Over half of respondents think that ‘interviewing and collecting memories’ is too complicated task for the 5th grade. However, teachers would like to use it more than usual

The methods are used to diversify and organize learning in a learner-centred way and to develop a variety of students’ skills. However, the teachers’ own narrative story telling is overwhelmingly prevalent, although the ability to develop students’ oral and written self-expression skills is more important in the opinion of teachers. Different methods are used more often in Russian-language schools. The only method used by everyone in every lesson or often is the explanation of concepts, which was also highly regarded in the skill range. Writing essays, study tours, project-learning and lessons in museum are not very frequently used forms of study. The reason might be that these methods require more time. However, teachers should be persuaded to use these methods as effective ones much more in learning.

### 5.5 *Study Materials*

The number of study materials that are used daily in teaching is not diverse. Textbooks, worksheets/workbooks and illustrative material are the most used. There are some schools which lack money to buy workbooks, and the possibility of making copies of worksheets is limited, so for that reason teachers use worksheets compiled by themselves. There was also a statement that workbooks are expensive and limit the teacher’s professional freedom.

Maps, various sources, movie clips and illustrations are used often. Contour maps, comparative sources, audio-sources and interactive learning environments are less commonly used. Teachers of non-Estonian schools use outline maps more often than teachers from Estonian-language schools. The same tendency was also evident in the methods block.

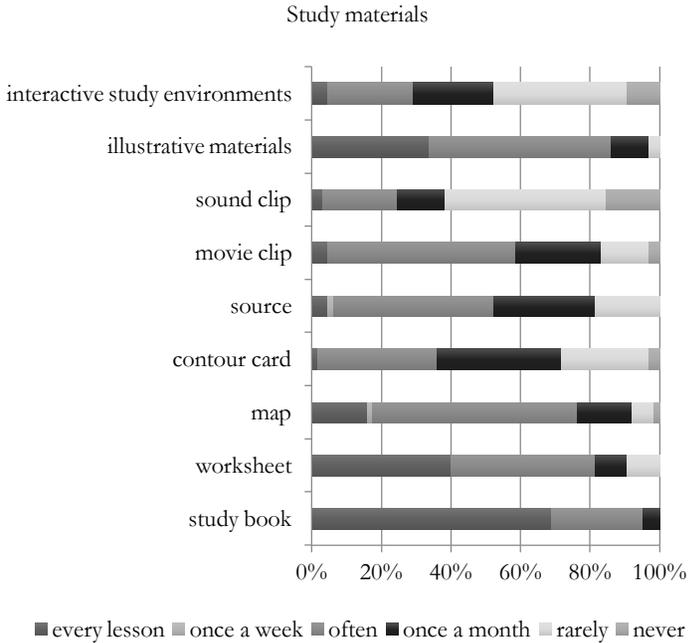


Figure 4. Frequency of using study materials.

As an example of ‘other study material’, students’ compiled material, for example, crosswords were mentioned, also portfolio, which requires continuous improvement, thus contributing to the development of the students’ competence of self-analysis. The portfolio can be successfully used to analyze the development of knowledge and skills of students. Also films were chosen, smartboard, internet environments as youtube.com, Stickymoos, Socrative, learningapps.org, different items and objects, observation and worksheets created by museums, materials completed by the educational institutions (Innove and HITSA), the archive of the National Broadcast, digital archives, Learning Webbing, newspapers and fiction. The list was varied. Teachers found that an interactive learning environment should not dominate the learning process, but be balanced with other study materials.

Several teachers pointed out the importance of using a variety of teaching materials and emphasized the importance of using (old) items and objects. For example: to prepare food from some old recipes or compare a new item with an old one. The added value is the use of local (the home area) features, such as books and photos. The choice of additional learning materials is based on the relevance of the topic and the goals of the lesson. Teachers complained that there is not enough teaching material for students with special needs, where 'hearing, seeing and touching' might be possible at the same time.

Textbooks and work sheets are the most commonly used, although the choice of study material is varied. The teacher does not have enough time to search for suitable sources and other illustrative materials for each topic or to create a suitable teaching material for a particular class, therefore they prefer to have ready-made examples.

Teachers expect that teaching material should meet the requirements of the national curriculum, that study texts and tasks would be tested beforehand in school, that the teachers' manual should include meaningful teaching activities and tasks, which would also be based on the requirements of the national curriculum. There is a need for one (informative) environment where the teacher would quickly find the necessary source or task.<sup>8</sup> Study material sorted by heading according to the curriculum would give teachers a quick overview of existing ones.<sup>9</sup> National property deposited in archives and museums should be freely available for use in history teaching.

### *5.6 Feedback and Evaluation*

In the sixth block teachers were asked to mark the choice of how frequently they use each form of evaluation.

When answers were analysed, it was noticed that some of the teachers probably only meant numerical and conclusive evaluation because none of the methods were marked with the option 'every lesson'. Some of the respondents interpreted the question more widely and took the development of students' knowledge and skill during the study process into account.

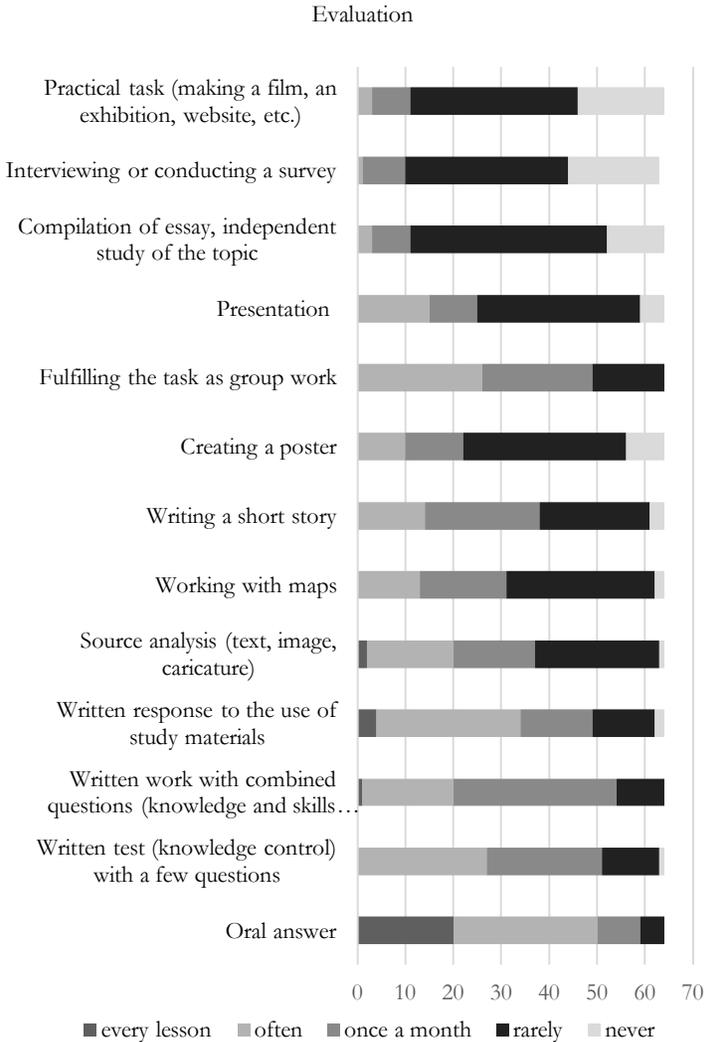


Figure 5. The frequency of the use of feedback and evaluation techniques.

The most popular form of evaluation by frequency was oral answering ('every lesson' was marked 20 and 'often' 30 times.) The popularity of the choice is probably explained by fast feedback and in most cases doesn't mean that multiple students were regularly called in front of the classroom to answer. Written answering based on study materials was also highlighted ('every lesson' was marked 4 and 'often' 30 times). This can also be applied to completing worksheets and workbook tasks. Source analysis was used in 'every lesson' by 2, 'often' by 18, 'once a month' by 17 and 'rarely' by 26 respondents which shows that the development of skills is being dealt with. Somewhat saddening was the fact that the ability to work with maps was rarely tested. How else can the teacher get feedback that the use of maps doesn't just serve an illustrative purpose? Written tests and group work have also been marked as more frequent means of assessment, others are represented less. It is natural that large scale methods of evaluation like interviewing, writing a report, designing a poster or a presentation are used more rarely. It would be bad, though, if they weren't used at all. Short stories were never ticked by three, maps by two and source tasks by one teacher. Yet all of these are history specific skills. A guide to evaluation, which has also been used for level tests, was developed to assess short stories. How can the most ticked skills of self-expression be developed? A clearly structured short story, which forces the pupil to highlight the important will surely develop written self-expression skills the best.

In the comparison based on the learning language, the written test, the written test combined with questions, source analysis, knowledge of maps and writing a report differed.<sup>10</sup> Teachers from schools with Estonian learning language use written tests or written tests combined with questions more often. The evaluation of source analysis receives more attention in Estonian schools than in schools with other learning languages. Although writing a report is a time-consuming and exhaustive task, which can be used rarely, independent work with a topic is an important skill that should definitely be developed. In Estonian language schools, this is applied in either 'every lesson' or 'often' in 90 % of respondents.

Based on teachers' experience the difference was only visible in the use of written tests as a form of assessment. Young teachers use it 'often' and teachers with 11-20 years of work experience 'very rarely'. When work experience grows, teachers start using these tests again, but 'often' still doesn't reach 40 %. Does the reason lie in the

fact that knowledge is a lot easier to evaluate than skills or do young and very experienced teachers value the role of knowledge more highly?

As other means of feedback and evaluation (21 comments), workbook assessment, the constant monitoring of students' development, writing questions and crosswords by students and answering them were used. Debates were conducted with older students and seminars with ninth graders. Feedback was given to participating in role plays and short plays. Behaviour during guided tours was also evaluated, even by other students. Requirements had been previously discussed. Self-assessment and the assessment of other students was noted twice. Creating and regularly assessing a portfolio was suggested. Different events taking place in the school were suggested. Students looked into the school's history and made presentations of the results in the school's history conference. Certain topics were also prepared to be presented to other students in the classroom. The form of short answers was also used: the teacher would ask questions about the things learnt in the previous lesson, and, depending on the answer, the student would get either a plus or a minus. A student with 5 pluses/minuses gets a mark. Marks are also given for exercises and answering the teacher's questions during the lesson. As one example a control work with materials was mentioned. One of the respondents said that the basic course of history should be evaluated with written feedback, not numerically.

The question 'How do you support students' development through formative assessment?' was answered mainly by thorough feedback accompanied by an explanation or analysis. It was added that formative assessment takes the student's level and capability into account. In the case of a weaker answer an overview of the points that the answer should have contained is given. In the case of a strong answer the performance is praised. An explanation is added verbally if necessary. As a good example, putting together specified work instructions was mentioned. This means that students know exactly what is expected of them but are also given the opportunity to choose the best means of demonstrating what they've learned. Assessments by other students are used, followed by the teacher's explanation, which discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the answer so that all students understand what could be done better next time. Students are involved in the study process by self-

evaluation and evaluation of other students. One teacher honestly said that they don't use formative assessment.

The most popular form of control and evaluation was verbal response, with the least and less frequently used interviewing or questioning. The comparison of answers by teachers with different working experience varied only in the use of a written test. Teachers of Estonian study-language schools use a more varied assessment based on research, including a written test, a written interview with combined exercises, a source analysis, work with maps, and writing an essay. A positive result was that the evaluation of group work is highlighted – co-learning is valued. Equally important in assessment is learners' self-assessment, formative assessment, assessment of learning outcomes in school, as well as external evaluation and assessment, which harmonizes understanding of the national curriculum/syllabus, i.e., we value through assessment what we should learn and develop. The assessment tool developed by the teacher follows the teaching style of the teacher to some degree. It is important to know if the student understands and is able to solve tasks that may not follow the way in which the subject was studied and taught.

### *5.7 Curriculum Development*

The purpose of the questions on curriculum development in the survey was to find out teachers' vision and understanding of the introductory course in history teaching. The block consisted of six questions. It was possible to make suggestions.

The first question of the block was 'whether history should be an autonomous subject or integrated with another subject'. Most of the teachers (56 out of 65) had a position that history should be an independent subject.

In the following it was explored 'What students should learn and practise in fifth grade: activities and skills'. A large number of teachers noted that in fifth grade it is important to focus on the timeline, the identification of centuries, and the interpretation of the formation of a historical environment – so, according to teachers, it is important to develop the skill of orientation in time, which is the content of the introductory course of the history in the current national curriculum. Teachers presented the same position through their answers in block III – to develop basic skills of history. The

development of functional literacy was considered to be very important: working with text, asking and answering questions, building links between events and periods, drawing conclusions, planning. These skills are the basis for the development of analytical skills.

Concentrating on local history and Estonian history as a right way to start history teaching was highlighted many times. For example, one teacher mentioned: 'rather practical tasks (making paper, trying to make ceramics, etc.) and learning local history can raise students interest towards history.' Working with sources and working with maps were also underlined as important study tasks. According to teachers, teaching history should concentrate on the development of skills, competences and values at basic education level. A large part of respondents are satisfied with the current national curriculum. Speaking about the content of study, teachers referred to textbooks several times. Referring to textbooks confirms the view that the teacher often approaches the textbook rather than the curriculum in designing the learning process.

It was mentioned as a positive aspect that teachers can select between different study sets, according to their preferences and emphases. Thus, it can be concluded that the content of the fifth grade covers the expectations of teachers and allows it to be placed at the centre of the subject with the help of different sets of study, based on the values, skills and competences emphasized by a particular teacher (or in the light of Estonian or general history). In addition, teachers also long for audio-visual material, such as educational films and interactive games. It is understandable, because today's student has better visual perception and prefers playful learning. Teachers also wanted outline maps, pre-prepared tasks with maps, including digital, interactive tests, team work manuals, simplified source books, crosswords, e-materials, and animations on more complex subjects.

To the question 'what should the learning be like (environment, methods, etc.)?', the majority of teachers answered: 'diverse'. Group work was performed as the main educational activity, which contributes to the development of self-expression, communication and cooperation skills. Research tasks, study tours, writing down memoirs, role-plays to develop empathy, preparation of presentations and presenting papers. Therefore, teachers listed the learning methods which have been presented in the current national

curriculum. It can be concluded that responding teachers emphasize pupil-centred teaching. There was also the opinion that learning should be classical, but without an explanation of what this means exactly.

A classroom, an archive, a museum, a cemetery, historic sites, a library, and nature were named as learning environments. Teachers think that out of school education is important and supportive and should be used as much as possible.

The last question of the block was: 'What else would you like to say?' Answers were different and sometimes even contradictory. Some respondents wanted more specificity in the syllabus, others liked freedom of choice. It was proposed to increase the number of lessons in the fifth grade (up to two per week). Teaching with one lesson per week does not give the possibility to 'use the desired interesting methods' and 'if the teacher makes students interested in history in the 5th grade, then it is a very good basis for further learning.' All teachers considered it important that learning history is interesting.

The questions of *national curriculum development* showed satisfaction with the current one, which provides an opportunity to raise students' interest in history. It was hoped that history would remain an independent subject in the next curriculum, but integration with competences, cross-curricula topics and other subjects should be stronger. More than anything else, the importance of developing skills, in particular exploratory learning, should be emphasized, which helps to support students' problem-solving and analytical skills and gives students an idea of how a historian works. Based on source analysis, it is good to move forward with the development of critical thinking, as opposed to knowledge based on emotions, and often stereotyped collective memory.

## 6. Conclusion

Because the research included quite a small number of respondents compared to the general sample, only statistically important results can be widened to the general sample. Presumably respondents were active educators, thus the actual situation might not be as good as the results show. Based on the study, one can still state that teachers need to develop skills in addition to expanding knowledge, follow the same principles in feedback and evaluation, support the development of

competences through teaching and use a variety of methods and teaching materials.

Thus, according to the research, it can be concluded that although teachers consider the development of skills and competences as essential, they mainly work with textbooks; the teacher usually speaks to classes her/himself; there is a modest place in the analysis of historical sources; the oral question is traditionally predominant. The organization of student-centred learning process has room for development. Little attention is paid to the development of student creativity, students are not considered able to solve problems. If one doesn't practice, they cannot expect the skill of analysing and solving problems to exist on a more complicated level in the next school level. In the development of the syllabus, the use of research-based learning strategies should be mentioned more. This would encourage teachers to use them and would support students' problem solving and analysis skills.

There are some differences between Estonian- and Russian-speaking schools. More attention to development of skills and variety in assessment procedures is inherent in Estonian speaking schools; expansion of knowledge in Russian speaking schools. Also, the pupils' ability to plan their learning is assessed as lower. Surprisingly, the working experience did not play the biggest role in teachers' answers, but depended on the individual personality of the teacher. It turned out that teachers who are historians are more conservative in developing skills and believe that expanding knowledge about the subject is more important.

The teacher expects more methodological material from the state, guidelines and examples of good practice in planning the learning process and in raising the students' awareness in the teaching and learning process. A teachers' guide is required, with examples of lesson plans included, worksheets and descriptions of thematic solutions, and also references to skills development and control, references to integration with the general part of the curriculum and other subjects, as they cannot find the appropriate examples and ways themselves. Study material is requested electronically, structured in terms of the subjects and headings of the syllabus into one e-environment, from which the teacher can develop the most suitable solution for his/her class. There could be more opportunities for teaching in a museum or archive. Training seminars are needed to implement research-based learning, learner-centred methods and

diverse assessment tools for examining strengths and weaknesses that will allow the experience/suitability of the model to be experienced. At the same time, teachers want to be involved as experts in curriculum development process at different stages, which also increases the responsibility for implementing the agreed principles in teaching practice.

The role of unifying evaluation can be filled by well planned and executed external evaluation. The evaluation of source analysis and independent conclusions increases the importance of developing skills in the study process. Only the topics that have been studied can be evaluated, with the evaluation prioritising what should be studied and developed. A means of assessment made by the student's own teacher inevitably follows the style of teaching. It is important to know whether the student understands and is able to solve problems that might not follow the way that the subject was studied.

Possible changes and development directions should be discussed in subject associations and regional meetings. Teachers should feel that their opinions and experience is taken into account and that they are involved in development. This also raises responsibility in using the agreed upon principles in the practice of teaching.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>  $\chi^2$ -test is a statistical test of the categorical variables to assess how likely it is that the observed difference between the groups was random.

<sup>2</sup> According to the TALIS study (OECD 2014), the average age of the Estonian basic school teacher is 48 years.

<sup>3</sup> Põhikooli riiklik õppekava. Lisa 5. Ainevaldkond Sotsiaalsained. RT I, 29.08.2014, 20: 10, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akti/1290/8201/4020/1m%20lisa5.pdf#> (22.08.2017).

<sup>4</sup> Põhikooli riiklik õppekava. Lisa 4. Ainevaldkond Loodusained. RT I, 29.08.2014, 20: 11, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akti/1290/8201/4020/1m%20lisa4.pdf> (22.08.2017).

<sup>5</sup> Põhikooli riiklik õppekava. Lisa 4. Ainevaldkond Loodusained. RT I, 29.08.2014, 20: 12-13, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akti/1290/8201/4020/1m%20lisa4.pdf> (22.08.2017).

<sup>6</sup> Põhikooli riiklik õppekava. Ajaloo ainekava. RT I, 29.08.2014, 20: 20, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akti/1290/8201/4018/141m%20lisa5.pdf> (15.08.2017).

<sup>7</sup> Calculations are performed with the t-test – a statistical hypothesis test to determine whether the two sample averages differ significantly:  $t = 1.37$ ,  $p = 0.087$  t-statistic, p-statistical probability.

<sup>8</sup> At the moment of writing the article, e-learning materials for the gymnasium are being, which will be located in the e-school bag, at least partially meeting the expectations expressed by the teachers.

<sup>9</sup> The suggestions for bringing together the study material are presented in two studies: Aas et al, 2013 and [https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/oppevara\\_kaardistus\\_kokkuvote\\_0.pdf](https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/oppevara_kaardistus_kokkuvote_0.pdf) (22.08.2016).

<sup>10</sup> The following methods were distinguished by the calculations of  $\chi^2$ -test: written test ( $\chi^2 = 0.028$ ), written work with combined questions ( $\chi^2 = 0.025$ ), source analysis ( $\chi^2 = 0.014$ ), knowledge of working with the map ( $\chi^2 = 0.018$ ), compilation of essay ( $\chi^2 = 0.06$ ).

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## THE IMPACT OF WORLD WAR I ON THE RISE OF NATIONAL STATES: CHALLENGES OF HISTORY TEXTBOOK WRITING

Anu Raudsepp and Tõnu Tannberg

*The main aim of this article is to address new challenges of the treatment of World War I in history textbooks. From the point of view of Estonian history, the most important consequence of World War I is the fact that along with the breakdown of the Russian Empire the rise of the independent state of Estonia became possible after its centuries-long colonization. One of the tasks of modern history textbooks is to teach students primary skills in handling reference/source materials, provided in history textbooks in the form of illustrations, written and visual sources. Thus, when dealing with the rise of national states the article will give examples of the treatment of biographical sources in history textbooks. An analysis and critical interpretation of ego-documents can show events from the perspectives of different people and help us to understand history better. The main topics of research are: on the Estonians in World War I, on outlines of modern historiography in Estonia and Russia, on the breakdown of the Russian Empire and the rise of national states in Russian and Estonian historical studies, the breakdown of the Russian Empire and the rise of national states in the most recent history textbooks in Estonia, diaries as sources in the study of the rise of national states in historical textbooks.*

### 1. Introduction

One of the world's historical landmarks was World War I. In 2014, the passing of a hundred years since the beginning of World War I was marked by a great boost to the study of its history all over the world as well as in Estonia. Academic historical research, in its turn, has a significant impact on the teaching of history, including the writing of history textbooks.<sup>1</sup> To date, issues of World War I are also topical in the didactics of history.<sup>2</sup>

The main aim of this article is to address new challenges of the treatment of World War I in history textbooks. From the aspect of Estonian history, the most important consequence of World War I is the fact that along with the breakdown of the Russian Empire the rise of the independent state of Estonia became possible after its centuries-long colonization. It was one of the national states

established in the wake of the collapse of empires. Therefore the significance of this topic will be to shed light on both the most recent Estonian and, comparatively, in Russian historical studies. Then an analysis of the treatment of the impact of World War I on the rise of new national states, including Estonia, in recent Estonian history textbooks follows. Recently published history textbooks for basic school (Seppel & Pajur, 2013; Antons & Hallik, 2015; Värä, Pajur & Tannberg, 2015) and gymnasium (Laar & Vahtre, 2014; Hiio & Lippus, 2016) in correspondence with the Estonian National Curriculum, will be observed. Textbooks will be analyzed by the method of qualitative content analysis, observing didactic recommendations by Falk Pingel (2010).

One of the tasks of modern history textbooks is to teach students primary skills of the handling of reference/source materials, provided in history textbooks in the form of illustrations, written and visual sources (Becher, 2007: 46). Thus, when dealing with the rise of national states the article will give examples of the treatment of biographical sources in history textbooks. To date, research on World War I both world-wide<sup>3</sup> and in Estonia (Esse, 2016) has notably evaluated diaries and letters as fundamental sources. Several authors rightly point out that World War I, for the first time ever, made wide numbers of people write, whereas until then writing had mostly been the territory of the elite in Europe (Esse, 2015: 21-22).

Personal letters and diaries are sometimes connected to ego-documents. This notion was introduced in the second half of the 1950s by the historian Jacques Presser who defined ego-documents as 'a term to indicate autobiographies, memories, diaries, personal letters and other texts in which the author writes explicitly about his or her own affairs and feelings.' According to Rudolf Dekker the simplest definition would be a text in which an author writes about his or her own acts, thoughts and feelings (Dekker, 2002: 13-14).

Over the course of time the definition of this notion has expanded. In general, the sources written about and by a concrete person are regarded as ego-documents (Schulze, 1996). In history didactics, ego-documents are also evaluated as sources. Diaries and letters can show the author's personal involvement, their emotions, moods and relationships with other people (Pandel, 2007: 154). To demonstrate the topic better, the participation of Estonians in World War I will briefly be looked at.

## **2. The Estonians in World War I**

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Baltic provinces were subjects of the Russian Empire and the population of the provinces – including Estonians – was obliged to serve in the army according to the law adopted in 1874. Peace-time recruitment of the rank and file of the Russian army took place annually, in late autumn. The annual quota of recruits was selected by casting lots among 21-year-old men. Able-bodied men who stayed away from active service were drafted into the national territorial defence strength. Service in the Army lasted for 3 years (in the Cavalry 4 and the Navy 5 years) and for 5 years in the reserves. Before World War I, Estonians made up about 0.7 % of annually recruited young men in the Russian army.<sup>4</sup>

The breakout of war required the mobilization of enormous human resources. Immediately after the beginning of warfare in July 1914, the army's reserves – reservists were called up, and preparations were started to mobilize the men belonging to the national territorial defence strength (Kröönström, 1994: 184-196). Prior to World War I, the territorial defence strength incorporated the whole able-bodied male population up to 43 years of age who had not been drafted into active service or the reserves. At the outbreak of war, those men were formed into supporting units of territorial defence strength for the regular army, first of all. Also, conscripts were continually recruited during the war.

During the first year of World War I in the Estonian area, mobilization of the reservists (in July), three first-rank mobilizations of the national territorial strength (in July, September and December) and regular conscriptions were carried out. In 1915, in Estonia, in addition to regular conscription (in January) two more prescheduled conscriptions (in May, August) were carried out. At the same time, four mobilizations of the national territorial strength (in April, August, September, October) were organized, while after September 1915 the second-rank national territorial strength were also called up. At the beginning of 1916, the *belobiletniki* (holders of special exemptions) were also called up (in January), and five mobilizations of national territorial strength (in February, March, August, October) as well as a prescheduled conscription (in May) were organized. In February 1917 the last prescheduled conscription was carried out. During the war, temporary regulations were put into effect according to which the casting of lots was abandoned and the recruitment of

men into active service was carried out by lists of conscripts. Considerable limitations were set to exemptions on fulfilling military service, and special regulations were established for volunteers to military service.

Available data confirms that the number of men called up to active service in the Russian army from Estonia within 1914-1917 was smaller than historical literature has offered to date, namely about 80,000 men (Tannberg, 2015: 9-20). From the viewpoint of mobilizations, the most onerous were the two first years of war when about 60,000 men were mobilized in the Estonian area. Thus from Estonia during the two first years of World War I two-thirds of the total number of those mobilized to the war were called up. The main proportion of fighters called up to active service belonged to the national territorial defence strength – about 41,700 men or 52 % of the total number of the mobilized. Thus the proportion of recruits (together with volunteers) – all in all about 20,700 men – was 26 % and of reservists (17,600 men) only 22 %. When taking into consideration also Estonians called up from outside the Estonian area (from other Russian provinces) during World War I, then one must admit that, by order of magnitude, close to 100,000 Estonians were mobilized into World War I. In comparison, about the same number of conscripts – about 100,000 men – was recruited from Estonia into the Russian army within the years of 1875-1913.

### **3. Outlines of Modern Historiography in Estonia and Russia**

World War I was a most significant breaking point in Estonian history, so far however it has largely remained 'a forgotten war' in our historical research. This forgetfulness has definite reasons. The armistice signed in November 1918 put an end to the 'Great War' but left a door open for smaller military conflicts – ongoing wars – which pushed World War I into the background of the historical memory of many people. This happened in our history because the Estonian War of Independence (1918-1920) as a key event of consolidation of independence to a great extent wiped out the immediately preceding course of events of World War I. Likewise, Soviet historiography first of all paid attention to World War I as the period when preconditions developed for the 1917 October revolution and the seizing of power by the Bolsheviks.

By contrast, spectacular celebrations of the hundredth anniversary of the beginning of World War I in Europe and all over the world in 2014 met a surprisingly wide-spread and varied response in Estonia. At the time of the anniversary of the ‘Great War’, numerous essential thematic books were published, exhibitions were displayed and conferences-seminars were organized. Such a keen interest in the history of World War I had not been seen previously in Estonia.

A central role in recent research on World War I was played by the National Archives of Estonia under the auspices of which two bulky collections of articles on the general topic ‘World War I and Estonia’ have been issued to date (Tannberg, 2014 and 2016). The National Archives also published a bulky collection of diaries, memoirs and letters (Tannberg, 2015), a book of memoirs by Kustas Viitmann (2015) and an anthology of national units (Pajur & Tannberg, 2015). Up to now, in addition to the named collection by the National Archives several other significant academic publications on the topics of World War I based on presentations at scientific conferences of 2014 appeared under the auspices of other institutions (Hiio, 2015; Hindrikus & Mattheus, 2015). Prominence should also be given to the World War I thematic issue of *Ajalooline Ajakiri* [Historical Journal] (Kuldkepp, Piirimäe & Piirimäe, 2016), Aadu Must’s (2016) monograph on Baltic Germans in World War I and Liisi Esse’s (2016) doctoral dissertation. There are also numerous other source publications which interpret different facets of World War I (Ellen, 2014; Wolsky, 2015; Markin, 2016). In short, thanks to the recent publications the research on World War I has reached quite a high level.

Besides, on the initiative of the National Archives a joint project ‘Estonians in World War I’ was launched. By 2014 the National Archives had digitized all the materials on World War I mobilizations and appealed for volunteers to contribute to finding out and indexing Estonian soldiers who had participated in World War I in archival documents. The creative online environment contains scanned lists of the men mobilized in war-time entered by volunteers into a respective database and so made available throughout the world. In April 2015, an extension to the portal was completed so as to enable the addition of materials from home archives (photos, letters, diaries) as well as more specific information about each concrete person’s biography in the database. The project has been very successful and anyone interested can access the entered data and archival sources in

the creative joint online environment at the address: [www.ra.ee/ilmasoda](http://www.ra.ee/ilmasoda).

Celebrations of the centenary of World War I substantially enlivened research on the war in contemporary Russia. Whereas earlier Russian-language historiography first of all focused on military action, their recent treatments observe war damage and losses, the role of the Orthodox Church, and the influence of World War I on different areas of social life, etc. Similar topics were also thoroughly dealt with in substantial research of Western authors (Catrell, 2005; Holquist, 2002; Lohr, 2013; Sanborn, 2003; Catrell, 1999). Likewise, more attention than before has been paid to the consequences of the 1917 revolution, the collapse of the Russian Empire and the rise of national states in its ruins. The development of various nations formerly belonging to the empire was observed in a separate collection and also in single studies (Petrovskaya, 2014). As a new research trend, the position of World War I in the historical memory of different nations is on the agenda. The role of the Russian Empire is analyzed in the international major project *Russia's Great War and Revolution*, combining the treatments by Western and Eastern authors. To date, five volumes have been published from the pre-planned 20-volume series.<sup>5</sup>

#### **4. On the Breakdown of the Russian Empire and Rise of National States in Russian and Estonian Historical Studies**

In most recent Russian studies more attention was undoubtedly paid to the subject of Ukraine (partly in connection with the Russian-Ukrainian conflict beginning in 2014), whereas the independence gained in 1917-1918 by the Baltic countries has found less keen research. Besides Ukraine, the establishing of Finland as an independent statehood has been observed more closely (Zelenov, 2017). These studies attempt to emphasize the significance of Russia in the process of gaining independence by small countries and understate the efforts and aspiration to independent statehood by the various nations themselves. More recent history textbooks of Russia observe the emergence of small national states as a consequence of the breakdown of the Russian Empire very minimally or not at all.

One of the weightiest new conclusions drawn from Estonian historical research is *that the poor situation of the soldiers of Estonian national minority serving in the Russian army in World War I could have*

*influenced their deteriorating attitude to the Russian Empire, their development of separatist views and increasing longing for everything characteristically Estonian* (Esse, 2014: 154). Thus, World War I could have possibly been seen as the history of birth of the Republic of Estonia (Esse, 2016: 10). Such conclusions were drawn, as a rule, from the letters and diaries of younger privates, former peasants with elementary education whose position was also worsened by their poor knowledge of Russian (Esse, 2016: 31).

In more recent studies on Estonian history, the focus was shifted onto the disappointment of hitherto loyal Baltic Germans at the Russian authorities, as a consequence of World War I. Since the 19th century in Estonia, Baltic Germans made up a small-numbered upper class of the German ethnic minority who also exercised their authority at the beginning of the 18th century when the Estonian area was annexed to the Russian Empire. At the beginning of World War I, Baltic Germans became an alien enemy in Russia as the war was waged between Russia and Germany. Hostility was intensified by Russia's military failure. A number of prominent Baltic-German public figures were deported to Siberia during the war (Must, 2016: 29-58).

The most recent Estonian studies reveal the wish of Baltic Germans to separate Estonia from the Russian Empire and annex it to Germany (Kuldkepp, 2016).

For example, when analyzing the texts published by Baltic-German authors in Germany in 1914-1916, it appeared that advances made by the German army in Russia raised the problem of the further destiny of the Baltic provinces. Two options were suggested: first, they would become annexed to Germany or second, they would exist as some kind of independent statehood (Roasto, 2016).

## **5. The Breakdown of the Russian Empire and the Rise of National States in the Most Recent History Textbooks in Estonia**

As stated in the Estonian National Curriculum, the learning aim in primary school is to explain the impact of World War I on Estonia, while in secondary school – on world development. The learning content of gymnasium covers the preconditions and processes of gaining Estonian statehood as well as the breaking down of empires and the rise of new national states in Europe as a consequence of

World War I. The basic school curriculum addresses only the gaining of independence of Estonia.<sup>6</sup>

All the most recent Estonian history textbooks mention the collapse of empires and the rise of independent national states as a consequence of World War I. The history textbook for gymnasium writes: *The war accelerated the commotion in Eastern European multinational empires. During World War I national minorities of all Eastern European belligerent sides made use of their situation. When the great powers became weaker, national minorities grasped at the opportunity to realize their aspirations for independence and find supporters. When seeking the recognition of their independence they proceeded from the Peoples' Right of Self-Determination. [...] The Entente countries sought the general enfeebling of the Central Powers, particularly by supporting aspirations for independence of peoples in the Austrian-Hungarian and Osman (Turkey) Empires as well as in Poland. Germans and Austrians when fighting against Russia made use of the unrest of Russian national minorities. [...] Germans organized a riflemen battalion of Finnish volunteers to fight against Russia at the Courland front and Austrians formed a Polish legion to fight against Russia in Galicia. Russia, in turn, stirred up discontent among Austrian-Hungarian Slavic minorities.* (Hiio, Lippus, 2016: 116-117). All textbooks except for the textbook of primary instruction (Antons & Hallik, 2015: 91) list new states which surfaced as a consequence of the breakdown of empires. On the breakdown of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire emerged Austria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia and Serbia-Croatia-Slovenia (later Yugoslavia). The collapse of the Russian Empire gave rise to Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland. On the basis of the Turkish Empire new independent or allies-dependent states were Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Palestine and Arab countries.

Estonian history textbooks explore thoroughly the gaining of Estonia's independence. The direct impact of World War I on the gaining of independence of Estonia is first of all connected to the political and military developments between Russia and Germany. Mainly, the impact of the February 1917 Russian revolution on Estonian independence is emphasized. For example, the textbook for primary history instruction (Antons & Hallik, 2015) writes in the chapter on Estonia gaining independence as follows:

*By 1917 it was clear that Russia could not offer resistance to a stronger and militarily well prepared Germany. The state of Russia was weaker than had been supposed. Riots in the army and people suffering from hunger and poverty required fast improvement of the situation. The situation seemed hopeless and Russian*

*Tsar Nicolas II decided to abdicate in February 1917. At first Russia became a republic where Russian people were to become decision-makers and minorities, including Estonians, were promised more liberties. Of course, we did not fail to seize the opportunity.*

Besides the named preconditions for statehood it is mentioned that *Estonia could rely on its own intelligentsia and the officer corps strengthened in the battles of World War I* (Laar & Vahtre, 2014: 78).

Other countries that had seceded from the Russian Empire and were written about at some length were Finland (Laar & Vahtre, 2014: 68-69) and Poland (Hiio & Lippus, 2016: 116, 119). It is mentioned that *the independence of Poland was guaranteed by the armed forces that were the most powerful in the region* (Laar & Vahtre, 2014: 68).

In the case of Finland it is underlined that *making use of the fact that the Tsar's power had ended in Russia, Finland declared itself independent in 1917. Hoping that power in Finland would obviously be seized by left-wing forces which would be supported also by the Russian military in Finland, Lenin recognized the independence of Finland. A civil war broke out in Finland, both sides committed atrocities. Finnish volunteers or riflemen who had fought in the German army in World War I, returned to Finland and based on them, Baron Gustav Mannerheim formed a strong Finnish army* (Laar & Vahtre, 2014: 68).

It would be interesting to compare actual history textbooks of all the countries that became independent after the breakdown of the Russian Empire so as to find out how the impact of World War I on their independence has been dealt with. An example could be given from a Finnish history textbook which among other things points out that 'the failure of Russia in World War I opened a possibility for Finland gaining independence on December 6, 1917' (Hanska et al, 2013: 11). Thinking about the common past of Europe, we could also conjointly discuss the treatment of the given problem.

When dealing with the breakdown of the Russian Empire, Estonian history textbooks also name the states which could not defend their independence later in the struggle with Soviet Russia. These countries were West-Armenia (Värä, Pajur & Tannberg, 2015: 16), Transcaucasia (Laar & Vahtre, 2014: 66), Belorussia (Laar & Vahtre, 2014: 66), Georgia (Laar & Vahtre, 2014: 68), Ukraine (Värä, Pajur & Tannberg, 2015: 16; Laar & Vahtre, 2014: 66; Seppel & Pajur, 2013: 112; Hiio & Lippus, 2016: 117). For example, the independence gained by Ukraine is described as follows: *On the territory of Ukraine, several states were established. West-Ukraine attempted to*

form its own state but the area was eventually taken over by Poland. Ukraine declared its sovereignty but had to defend its independence against both the Russian red and white armies. Eventually, Ukraine could not persevere (Laar & Vahtre, 2014: 66).

In Estonian textbooks, photos are overwhelmingly presented as sources of World War I, i.e., depicting weapons and soldiers in trenches and at the front. It is interesting to note that the result coincides with findings in actual history textbooks of other European countries. Namely, under the leadership of Augsburg University a EU research project ‘Regards croiséssur la première guerre mondiale’ was carried out, in the framework of which the iconography of Belgian, German, French, Italian, Austrian, Polish and Romanian actual history textbooks was studied (Müller & Wagner, 2010). Alongside anonymous soldiers only one photo depicting Estonian soldiers is provided with the names of people (Hiio & Lippus, 2016: 70).

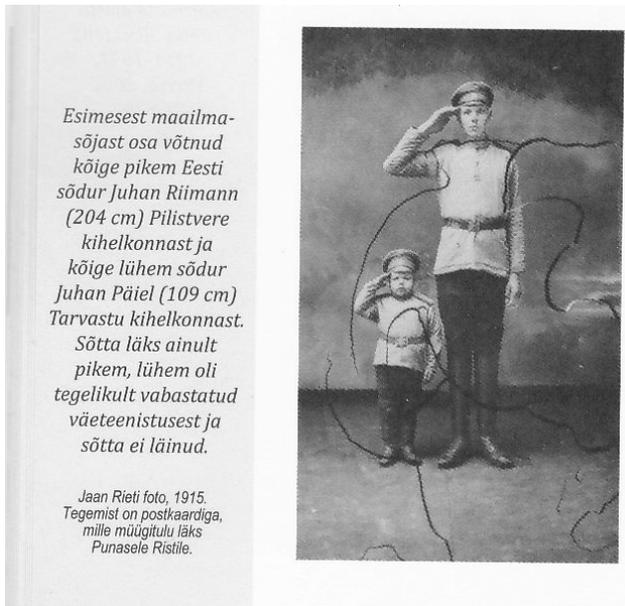


Figure 1. Estonian soldiers in 1915. The tallest Estonian soldier Juhan Riimann (203 cm) from Pilstvere parish who participated in World War I and the shortest soldier Juhan Päiel (109 cm) from Tarvastu parish. Only the taller of the two went to war, the shorter

was exempt from service and did not go to war. It is a postcard whose sale profits were donated to the Red Cross.

Comparing the results of the given project to Estonian examples there are certain differences. Whereas in Polish history textbooks 20 % of all photos on World War I were related to Poland gaining independence (Müller & Wagner, 2010: 238, 243) in Estonian textbooks this was not the case. There are very few photos related to the process of gaining independence. Three persons are depicted: Jaan Poska (1866-1920), Commander of Estonian Regiment Aleksander Tõnisson (1875-1941) and Konstantin Päts (1874-1956) (Laar & Vahtre, 2014: 78-79, 83). In addition there are two photos of a demonstration in Petrograd on 26 March, 1917 (Laar & Vahtre, 2014: 79), for the support of the Estonian Diet in Tartu, in front of the Town Hall (Hiio & Lippus: 2016, 104) in 1917, and the other depicting a large crowd of people on the declaration of the Republic of Estonia on February 23, 1918 (Laar & Vahtre, 2014: 83). Public figures of other newly independent countries shown in the photos are the Polish political and military leader Józef Piłsudski (1867-1935) (Laar & Vahtre, 2014: 68) and the Finnish officer and President Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim (1867-1951) (Laar & Vahtre, 2014: 69).

In contrast to the photo-sources related to World War I in actual Estonian history textbooks there are very few text-sources, and in some textbooks there are none (Hiio & Lippus, 2016). Apart from other textbooks there are more texts in just one textbook (Laar & Vahtre, 2014). Many of the texts in the textbook originate from Peter Englund's (2012) and Niall Ferguson's (2008) books. The impact of World War I on the rise of national states is dealt with in single texts of the textbook, the longest respective text-source (Laar & Vahtre, 2014: 69) deals with the declaration of Finland's independence and comes from Erkki Räikkänen's book *P.E. Svinhufvud and the birth of independence of Finland?* (Tartu: Loodus). Citing the excerpt:

*After the fall of Tsarist power, the Russian people have repeatedly proclaimed their intention to acknowledge the right of Finnish people to determine their destiny, a right which is based on a hundred-year development of culture. And a powerful voice has sounded above all the war atrocities that one of the most important aims of the current war will be that no people can be made dependent others against their will. Finnish people trust that the people of free Russia and its Constituent Assembly will not obstruct the aspirations of Finland to join free and independent nations. And Finnish people can work best of all in accomplishing*

*the task when independent and free and after having accomplished it, they hope to achieve an independent position among all the civilized nations of the world.*

In the analysis of Estonian history textbooks it appears that the breakdown of the Russian Empire and the rise of national states instead is a fundamental issue in the study of World War I. Alongside Estonia gaining its independence, attention is also paid to the questions of gaining and defending the independence of formerly Russian-governed Finland, Poland and Ukraine. Results of recent Estonian academic historical research have not yet made their way into the main texts of history textbooks or the lists of sources.

## **6. Diaries as Sources in the Study of the Rise of National States in History Textbooks**

Today, based on democratic principles, the elucidation of historical events from various perspectives is highly valued. From the point of view of education, students may find it interesting and worthy of discussion when they read about contemporary opinions of historical events by schoolmasters who participated in World War I.

These source-based examples originate from the diary (1917-1918) of Gustav Martinson (1888-1959), who before participating in World War I 1914-1918 was a civilian, school teacher with a secondary education degree at an elementary school.<sup>7</sup>



Figure 2. A Photo of Gustav Martinson in 1915

Gustav Martinson, an elementary school teacher, with a secondary education degree, was mobilized on July 18 (July 31 according to New Style) 1914 as a reservist. Thanks to his excellent command of languages (Russian, German, French, Latvian et al.) and good education he was appointed a scribe and did not take part in action nor was he wounded. Gustav Martinson is a positive example of young men who participated in World War I and who later did not belong to the well-known *disappointed* and *lost generation* owing to their hard experiences in World War I. The Estonian historian Jüri Kivimäe argues that apart from the West-European discourse which emphasizes the enormous losses of the 1914 generation and which became an essential cultural factor in England, Germany, France, the core of Estonian intellectuals remained intact (the majority of them never made it to the battlefield). The same generation of Estonians continued their cultural activity after the war and made sure that the continuity of cultural tradition was preserved in independent Estonia in the 1920s-1930s (Kivimäe, 2015: 62).

The letters sent home by Gustav Martinson during World War I reveal that it left him quite immune to the Europe's rapture of war. When his hopes of entering action failed, then already in August 1914 he looked forward to a speedy end to the war so that he could return to his work as a teacher.

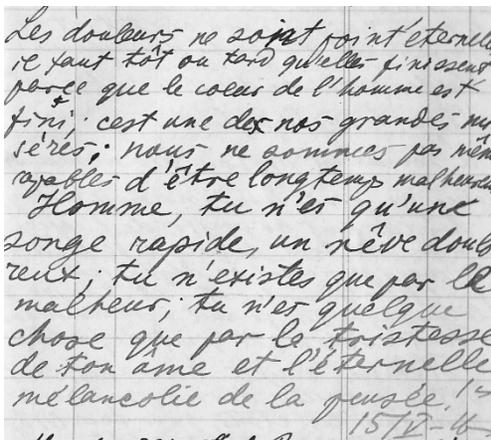


Figure 3. An excerpt of Gustav Martinson's ideas about Chateaubriand in his diary

While working as a scribe, Gustav Martinson could read books and give thought to the progressive values of life, including the value of education, despite the war atrocities around him. Two of his diaries were preserved to date: 1916-1917 and 1917-1918. He wrote about his reading impressions in the language he had read them in – Estonian, Russian and French. At that he reflected on what could be translated into Estonian. Thus, when reading François René de Chateaubriand's book *Atala*, he wrote in his diary on May 15, 1916 that 'as one of the best works on Romanticism it was fit for translation into Estonian'. After the war in 1923, Gustav Martinson did translate it into Estonian. Figure 3 presents an excerpt about his ideas in French.

In the following, a few examples from diaries of the World War I period will be analyzed as one of the options of stimulating students to think along and discuss complicated past events. Thus it enables them to develop historical and critical thinking. A diary was chosen since apart from letters, the most personal views, could be expressed in it, not limited by censorship as a rule. Although diaries as a source are fit for students of all ages, deeper understanding of the content depends on knowledge of the historical context. Selected examples focus on the thoughts and attitudes of an educated Estonian soldier in connection with the aspirations for freedom and independence of both Estonian and other colonized peoples of Russia.

In general, it was the February 1917 Russian revolution that led to the breakdown of the Russian Empire and the rise of national states. On the abdication of Nicholas II, Gustav Martinson wrote in Kimpolung, Romania, on March 4, 1917:

*What no one expected, at least not so soon, has happened. In Russia, the old government has surrendered its position to the new one. For a couple of days already there have been rumours of all kinds of events and changes. Today an official announcement was made. We received the written order on March 4, around 9 o'clock. It was read with great enthusiasm. And when reading the last order of the day given by Nicholas II in Pskov on March 3, it made me really sad. He himself seemed to have quite a good character. Yet too soft, without self-confidence... But this is the time that requires the most capable people at the head of government. Hopefully the new government with Prince Lvov presiding can lead the country out of this difficult situation and honourably end the war. Let's hope that both in Russia and in our native country life will really become better, easier and more liberal.*

When analyzing the excerpt from his diary, some questions may be raised: what the soldier's expectations as to the future of the Russian Empire were like, and what could influence his attitude towards Tsar Nicholas II. Based on World War I it is possible to discuss the reasons which influenced the eruption of the February revolution.

Gustav Martinson wrote in Falticen, Romania on August 9, 1917: *We, small nations, are not able to do anything with weapons. We cannot gain justice or independence by violence – the big ones have enough cannons and machine guns to destroy us. We demand our right to live in a peaceful manner. We do not fulfil the claims of the mighty if they go against our sense of justice, we demand the right to live for our people, native-language based instruction at school and all civil liberties, and we demand it incessantly. And when the violent majority – the ruling nation – decides to punish us, we will suffer, and go to prison to stand by our high ideals and justice.*

These lines of the diary inspire discussion about the rights to self-determination of great and small nations, equally, their preference for peaceful solutions to violence, the significance of native-language education etc.

Undoubtedly, it is a big challenge to offer sources about the rise of other national states from an Estonian perspective for writing history textbooks. One of the options consists in the perception of the independence of other nations. In his diary Gustav Martinson wrote about the independence of Ukraine and Poland. When writing his diary he served in the corps, consisting mainly of the Ukrainians together with whom he was transferred from Romania to Ukraine at the end of 1917.

In Ukraine on January 11, 1918 Gustav Martinson wrote in his diary about seeing in the New Year:

*Then lots of speeches were made in Ukrainian to honour their nation and culture, Ukrainian songs were sung. A painting of Shevchenko and Ukrainian flags were on the wall. The initiators seem to be enthusiastic, [but] where are the big crowds, I wonder? If they follow their leaders, then Ukraine could have its future.*

Based on the excerpt, questions may be put who Shevchenko<sup>8</sup> was and why he was so highly appreciated in Ukraine; what the role of leaders is like in history.

On March 26, 1918 Gustav Martinson wrote in his diary in Kamenets-Podolsk, Ukraine:

*The Ukrainian government is in great trouble. The main difficulty is the lack of hard-working intelligent personnel, they have to put up with anybody, even with*

*youngsters, often adolescents really; for example, an adolescent second lieutenant served as a commissary of our corps; and quite young people are also said to work in the central government offices in Kiev. Their language and spelling, also, are quite undeveloped. The Poles are much better off since they have their aristocracy and intelligentsia. The Ukrainians are farmers and workers rather [than intellectuals]. But why couldn't even they keep up an independent state?*

This source reveals that an Estonian soldier, formerly a school teacher, was supportive of the independence of Ukraine in 1918, yet sceptical about its continuance since in his opinion Ukrainians lacked educated leaders at that time. By contrast, he was more optimistic where Poles were concerned. Those personal thoughts and opinions had been influenced by his own experiences, but probably also by literature and the media. The future of Ukraine was being under observation of the media. Estonian soldiers including Gustav Martinson were reading the newspapers in World War I, too. For instance, the German newspaper *Kölnische Zeitung* was referred to in the Estonian newspaper *Postimees* concerning 'The Ukrainian question in German light.' The German newspaper mentioned 'the right thin layers of Ukrainian intellectuals'.<sup>9</sup>

## 7. Conclusion

Anniversaries of historical events that changed the world's history instigate the study of the past from a new angle and at a new glance. Thus in recent years the research on World War I has become more active all over the world, as well as in Estonia. Namely, as a consequence of the Great War numerous smaller nations, including Estonia, alongside the superpowers gained a possibility of shaping their own destiny and having a say in world politics in the future.

To a certain degree academic historical research and history teaching at school are related to one another, offering new approaches. Throughout the ages in history teaching, textbooks have been the central tool of developing historical thinking and helping create a system. Even such well known historical events as World War I need some freshening up; with additional materials in textbooks, for example. One of the options is to include biographical sources of soldiers who fought on different sides. The biographical approach is accepted also in historical research (cf. Renders, de Haan & Harsma, 2017: 42-52). An analysis and critical interpretation of

ego-documents can show events from the perspectives of different people and help understand history better.

The Great War experiences of Western Europe have been widely introduced, but the perspectives of Eastern Europe are not especially known. The most important question concerning the impact of World War I for Eastern European nations was statehood.<sup>10</sup> The ego-documents of Estonian soldiers who were fighting in the Russian army make it possible to explain how World War I influenced the development of the national self-consciousness of a small nation after a centuries-long domination by other nations, which led to them establishing their own independent state. When up till now World War I was a ‘forgotten war’ to a certain degree then recent studies put the great struggle in the position it also deserves in Estonian-language historical historiography. World War I, though, is not only important during the time of its anniversaries but researching and teaching its history will remain important in the whole world hereafter.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> See more closely: *2012 Yearbook of International Society for History Didactics: From Historical Research to School History: Problems, Relations, Challenges*, Schwabach/Ts: Wochenschau Verlag.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g., *Praxis Geschichte*, 2013 (6): *Der Erste Weltkrieg. Ereignis und Erinnerung*; Kost 2014; Frings 2017.

<sup>3</sup> See e.g.: ‘Ego-Documents and Official History: Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria’s Diary and the Battle for the Memory of the First World War, 1914-39’, <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/warstudies/events/2017/boff-jonathan.aspx> (22.01.2018)

<sup>4</sup> See more closely Tannberg 1998 on the management of military service and mobilizations in Estonia in 1914.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.russiasgreatwar.org> (20.01.2018).

<sup>6</sup> Estonian National Curriculum of Basic School: <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/aktilisa/1290/8201/4020/1m%20lisa5.pdf>; Estonian National Curriculum of Gymnasium: [https://www.riigiteataja.ee/aktilisa/1290/8201/4021/2m\\_lisa5.pdf](https://www.riigiteataja.ee/aktilisa/1290/8201/4021/2m_lisa5.pdf) (25.01.2018).

<sup>7</sup> All following documents and sources concerning Gustav Martinson are in Anu Raudsepp’s private collection because he was her close relative.

<sup>8</sup> Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861) was a Ukrainian national poet and artist.

<sup>9</sup> ‘Ukraina küsimus Saksa valguses’ [The Ukrainian question in German light], *Postimees* [The Postman], June 9 (22), 1917.

<sup>10</sup> See more closely: *I maailmasõda Ida-Euroopas – teistsugune kogemus, teistsugused mälestused* [Great War in eastern Europe – Different Experience, Different Memories], *Eesti sõjajaloo aastaraamat 2015* [Estonian Yearbook of military history] Vümsi-Tallinn: Eesti Sõjamuuseum, Tallinna Ülikooli Kirjastus.

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## BETWEEN DOMINANCE AND DEMOCRACY IN THE SELECTION AND CONTENT OF TEXTBOOKS IN POLAND

Stanisław Roszak

*In the 1990s, the Polish system of education has gone through important reforms. Their main objective was the relegation of encyclopedic learning (the so-called didactic materialism) and the introduction of active teaching methods. New topics from the history of everyday life, the history of material culture and the history of mentality have been introduced. Due to the limited number of hours devoted to the implementation of the new national curriculum, teachers use mostly textbooks.*

*Until 1989 there was only one history book – approved by censors, accepted by the Ministry, published by the state publishing house in Warsaw – WSiP. After the political turn many new publishers were established, who began to issue textbooks. Approximately twenty proposals for each stage of education appeared on the education market. Teachers decide which of these books is the best for their students. Such books can only be used in school, and applied to the lesson after approval by the Ministry of National Education.*

### 1. Introduction

In the years 1945-1989 (until the time of the political breakthrough and the collapse of the communist regime) one rule was strictly followed in the Polish educational system – for each school subject there existed one core curriculum, one syllabus and one textbook. As far as history was concerned, all teachers had to follow the same syllabus issued by the state School and Pedagogic Publishing House referred to as *Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne* (WSiP) in Warsaw; as a result, all students had to use the same version of one textbook.<sup>1</sup> Naturally, the information included in the textbooks reflected the official policy of the communist party. The content was carefully selected in accordance with the party's policy. For example, in the history textbook much more space was devoted to the history of the Piast dynasty as the monarchs from this dynasty conducted several conquests in Western Europe. The policy of the Jagiellonians was described quite critically since the monarchs from this dynasty conquered the eastern territories of Europe (they were in conflict with the rulers of the Grand Duchy of Muscovy and Russia). The

information connected with such conflicts was against the main idea of a long-lasting friendship among Slavic nations, between Poland and Russia (the Soviet Union).<sup>2</sup> Groups of every political description and subsequent governments have been given an opportunity to present their own vision of the past and an opportunity to instrumental, political treatment of education.<sup>3</sup>

Another case in point is the murder of Polish officers in Katyń in 1940 committed by the Soviet security service upon Stalin's order. Until 1989, this event was omitted or described as an example of German crimes against the Polish nation – it was indicated that it was Germans who murdered Polish officers in Katyń. Some authors of history textbooks tried to cheat censorship by sneaking in forbidden information not in accordance with the official version of the communist party. Andrzej Leszek Szcześniak in his textbook dated 1984 introduced tables in which he presented various evaluations of historical phenomena (Szcześniak, 1984). In the table including the evaluation of the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, one side included arguments from the official historiography, while the other side was devoted to arguments from emigration historiography – e.g. the fact that the Red Army, acting upon the orders of Stalin, refrained from taking offensive action and failed to help the participants of the uprising; Russia did not allow the planes of the Allies to land at their airports. Obviously, the author could not write explicitly that this was the stance of Polish historians who had emigrated to London and Paris; yet, thanks to the table, the students became acquainted with two versions – according to both official and emigration historiography (Szcześniak, 1984: 108-109).

## 2. Changes in Teaching History

In the 1990s the Polish education system was revolutionised, which also affected the content of history textbooks. The structure of education was changed in 1999 – three stages of education were introduced – 6 years of primary school, 3 years of lower secondary school (*gimnazjum*), and 3 years of upper secondary school (*liceum*). The second step was the reform of the curriculum. The Ministry of National Education published a new core curriculum including some general educational aims and a detailed list of contents to be taught. Preparing the curricula and textbooks to teach history became the task of scholars, teachers and experts in the field of history teaching.

Instead of one state publishing house there appeared many private educational publishers (12), which issued over 20 history curricula and textbooks.

To be allowed to be used in schools, a given curriculum or textbook had to receive four positive reviews from experts from a list of specialists suggested by universities, the Polish Academy of Science and academic societies.<sup>4</sup> Two reviews were of a substantive nature (content-related) and evaluated the scope of and the validity of the knowledge transmitted in a textbook; one review evaluated the pedagogical aspect of a textbook – how useful a book was to teaching history at a given stage of a child's life; the fourth review evaluated the adequacy of the language (Chomicki, 2005).

Finally it was the teacher who chose the textbook he wanted to work with, which initially caused some chaos – in various schools or even grades different textbooks were used. Although all of them had to include obligatory contents from the core curriculum, they put emphasis on distinct political, cultural and economic aspects.

### **3. The Present Situation**

In the years 1999-2017, 5-10 history textbooks existed on the educational market for each of the three educational stages. They rely upon the choice of the teacher. All of them have to be approved by three reviewers appointed by the Ministry of Education – two reviews have to be substantive, whilst one should evaluate the language.<sup>5</sup> It was here that the problem arose – not every historian evaluating the contents of a textbook is a specialist in teaching (Okła, 2012). What is more, not every history teaching specialist is an expert in a given historical period.

The Ministry formulated concrete evaluation criteria. The textbooks should be correct in terms of content, teaching, education and language; in particular it should:

1. take into account the current state of academic knowledge, including methodology;
2. be adjusted to a given educational level in terms of the level of difficulty, the form in which the information is presented, the careful choice of terms, names and the manner in which they are explained;
3. include textual and illustrative material which should correspond to the information presented in it;
4. have a logical construction;

5. include a range of textual and illustrative material appropriate for the number of hours which should be covered according to the curriculum;

6. include a suggestion for educational activities to activate and motivate students;

7. enable students of diversified learning capacities to acquire the skills presented in the core curriculum of general education;

8. have a comprehensible layout.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, history and geography textbooks had to follow additional requirements – to take into account recommendations issued by bilateral textbook committees. In the case of a history textbook, these are bilateral committees – Polish-German, Polish-Lithuanian, Polish-Russian, Polish-Czech.

The textbooks should focus on the aims of teaching history. At each educational level, the student should master their skills in three categories of requirements:

1. historical chronology – the student is able to locate historical events, phenomena and processes in time; to order these events in time; to establish relations between them; to discern changes in social life and the continuity in the development of civilisation.

2. historical analysis and interpretation – the student is able to search for and compare information obtained from various sources; to discern the factual content in historical sources, which provides explanation and evaluation; to explain the cause and effect relationship; to explain the importance of learning about the past to understand the current world;

3. creating historical narration – the student is able to create a historical narration; to integrate information obtained from various sources; to create short written forms such as a plan, a note, an argumentative essay; to present arguments which support their point of view.<sup>7</sup>

At each educational level the history textbook deepens and extends the requirements in these three fields – chronology, analysis, historical narration.

In 2012 the Ministry of Education introduced the possibility of publishing a textbook in electronic form, which can be fed into electronic data carriers or uploaded on the Internet.

Two years later the requirements for such electronic textbooks were specified.<sup>8</sup> They should include:

1. a description of the manner in which it should be operated and/or installed;
2. a support system including a description of how the textbook should be used;
3. mechanisms for navigation and search, in particular ones relevant to the list of contents and a list of hyperlinks;
4. an option for printing the contents of a textbook, excluding any dynamic multimedia elements impossible to print;
5. unambiguous and unique titles and subtitles;
6. clear spaces between active elements;
7. subtitles for the deaf;
8. labels for interactive elements;
9. the possibility of operating the navigation and interactive elements with the use of a keyboard.<sup>9</sup>

What is more, an electronic textbook should not include elements which flash more frequently than three times a second.

The Ministry of National Education prepared a digital platform where multibooks for each educational level are to be found [www.epodreczniki.pl](http://www.epodreczniki.pl). They included great multimedia resources, lesson plans, materials which could serve as a basis for the preparation of the teacher's own classes. Their aim was to replace paper textbooks published by private publishing houses. In practice, they did not win over teachers' approval and failed to replace paper textbooks.<sup>10</sup> The main obstacle to their introduction proved to be the technical difficulties of making them function in schools.

The suggestion of an e-book issued by the Publishing House *Nova Era* was an attempt to introduce an intermediary solution between a traditional textbook and the version of a multi-book. The e-book is available on a DVD. It includes similar information to its paper equivalent (the same structure of chapters and sub-chapters), but it also provides interactive maps, 3D models, animations, educational films and slide-shows.<sup>11</sup>

#### **4. Informal Influences**

The formal requirements concerning history textbooks are specified by the Ministry of National Education. Nevertheless, as far as history textbooks are concerned, there are also informal pressures of a

political nature. They result from the attempts to use history to achieve political objectives. A case in point here can be the critical reviews of the textbook *Ku współczesności* – Stentor Publishing House in 2012 (Brzozowski & Szczepański, 2012). The contents of the textbook, which had been formally approved by the Ministry of Education, were discussed in the parliamentary education committee. Right-wing politicians accused the authors of too liberal an approach and an insufficient exposure of Poland's contribution to the collapse of communism. In the media, politicians accused the authors of lies and to simplify history. Allegations related for example to assessment of Lech Walesa, description of the Warsaw Uprising, positive assessment of the contemporary daily newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza* and to CIA base in Poland. The claim also related to a cover of the textbook – as a symbol of political change, it shows the demolition of the Berlin Wall (instead of some Polish elements). The discussion moved to the Polish parliament. The Parliament Commission for Education called a special meeting of the reviewers. Despite these allegations the Ministry has left the textbook in schools.<sup>12</sup>

In 2013, a discussion arose concerning the contents of a textbook for upper secondary schools *Poznać przeszłość. Ojczysty Panteon i ojczyste spory* (cf. Machalek, 2013). The Ministry decided that the number of hours allocated to cover the subject should be 30. However, the core curriculum failed to say which information and which heroes should be presented to the students. In the press, journalistic and political altercations were sparked as to who is a national hero and who deserves to be in the Pantheon – and consequently in the textbook. Old conflicts reared their head; they concerned the issue of whose contribution to the struggle for Poland's independence in 1918 was more significant – that of Roman Dmowski or Józef Piłsudski. Other sore points involved the conduct of the Poles during WWII, the evaluation of martial law and Wojciech Jaruzelski, the depiction of Lech Wałęsa (who was accused of cooperating with the communist secret police).

Eventually, it was the authors of the textbooks who suggested which events from the history of Poland and which heroes should be discussed during history lessons. The choice of the textbook depended on the teacher.

The subject matter of the current discussion is also the proportion between content concerning the history of Poland and world history. In the past, any modifications in the proportions reflected political

changes; now, they are treated as the sign of patriotism (an example of such an attitude is the educational policy in Lithuania, where in the 1990s the number of history lessons concerning the history of Lithuania increased, which was supposed to weaken the tendency of the young generation to emigrate) (Šetkus, 2008; cf Visniauskas, 2013).

## **5. Conclusion**

As a conclusion we can present the changes of proportions between national and global history in school textbooks in the years 1945-2008 (Okla, 2008):

1. in the years 1947-1950 – world history was predominant (many events from the history of Russia and the Soviet Union were discussed); the proportion between the history of Poland and world history in 1950 was 1:3.

2. in 1956, after Władysław Gomułka came into power and the Stalin epoch terminated, textbooks changed; in 1957 the proportion between the history of Poland and world history was 1:2.

3. at present after the reform of 2008, the proportion is about 1:1.

Today what prevails in Poland is a printed textbook of a synthesis-substantive nature, supplemented with teaching media, balanced within the proportion of national and world history content. In 2017 a new reform of the curriculum and structure is to be launched, but this topic would require separate research on the political and educational system and a longer perspective.

The new educational reform of 2017 replaced the previous system of three cycles composed of the six-year primary, three-year lower secondary and three-year upper secondary school. At the moment under the new curriculum history will be taught as a compulsory subject in two cycles: primary school followed by the four-year secondary school. In spite of political and structural changes there still exist 4 or 5 history textbooks for each of the two educational stages. After approval by three reviewers appointed by the Ministry of Education the choice of a given textbook fortunately still remains the teacher's decision.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> There is a huge literature on the Polish educational system in the years 1945-1989 and it will be very difficult to generalize about the field. E.g. Jakubowska, 1996; Osiński, 2006; Brynkus, 2013. In English, see: Wojdon, 2012, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. Ronikier, 2002, who analyzes ways in which the history of Polish-Russian relations is presented in the textbooks.

<sup>3</sup> This topic would require separate fundamental research and a deeper insight into political and methodological problems in constructing images of the past in textbooks, see e.g. Stępnik, 2011; Wojdon, 2018; Rodden, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Ordinance of the Minister of National Education: Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 15 lutego 1999 r. w sprawie warunków i trybu dopuszczania do użytku szkolnego programów nauczania z zakresu kształcenia ogólnego oraz warunków i trybu dopuszczania do użytku szkolnego podręczników oraz zalecania środków dydaktycznych, Dz.U. nr 14, poz. 130.

<sup>5</sup> Ordinance of the Minister of National Education: Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 6 stycznia 2009 r. znowelizowane 8 czerwca 2009 r. w sprawie dopuszczania do użytku szkolnego programów wychowania przedszkolnego, programów nauczania oraz dopuszczania do użytku szkolnego podręczników, Dz.U. 2009, nr 4, poz. 18; Dz.U. 2009, nr 89.

<sup>6</sup> Ordinance of the Minister of National Education: Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 21 czerwca 2012 r. w sprawie dopuszczania do użytku w szkole programów wychowania przedszkolnego i programów nauczania oraz dopuszczania do użytku szkolnego podręczników, Dz. U., 2012 r., nr 752.

<sup>7</sup> Ordinance of the Minister of National Education: Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 23 grudnia 2008 r. w sprawie podstawy programowej wychowania przedszkolnego oraz kształcenia ogólnego w poszczególnych typach szkół, Dz.U. 15 stycznia 2009, nr 4, poz. 17.

<sup>8</sup> Ordinance of the Minister of National Education: Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 8 lipca 2014 r. w sprawie dopuszczania do użytku szkolnego podręczników. Dz. U. 9 lipca 2014, poz. 909.

<sup>9</sup> Ordinance of the Minister of National Education: Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 8 lipca 2014 r. w sprawie dopuszczania do użytku szkolnego podręczników. Dz. U. 9 lipca 2014, poz. 909, § 4. 1. and § 4. 2.

<sup>10</sup> For details see deeper analyses of Wiszewski, 2016a and 2016b.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.nowaera.pl/oferta-edukacyjna/przed-reforma-2017/szkoly-ponad-gimnazjalne/historia/poznac-przeszlosc-wiek-xx> (25.05.2018). Also Blaut, 2016.

<sup>12</sup> About political discussion which went beyond the media see e.g.: <https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/kraj/poslowie-pis-i-sp-krytykuja-podrecznik-ku-wspolczesnosci/bkbc4>, <https://wpolityce.pl/polityka/131184-z-takich-podrecznikow-bedzie-nauczana-historia-od-nowego-roku-szkolnego-manipulacje-przeklamanie-przemilczenia>, <http://docplayer.pl/51132087-Odpowiedz-wydawnictwa-stentor-na-zarzuty-wobec-podrecznika-ku-wspolczesnosci.html> (25.05.2018). On the controversies on history education which entered public debate and inspired heated discussions in Polish society see wider: Wojdon (forthcoming).

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**VICTIM THEMES  
IN CONTEMPORARY HISTORY CURRICULA  
FOR STATE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN ISRAEL  
– CAN THE PAST CONSTRUCT  
FUTURE CONSCIOUSNESS OF VICTIMHOOD?**

Sara Zamir and Lea Baratz

*National victim themes in history curricula in Israel actually present a real dilemma for any educational system which is preoccupied with the past: On one hand, many historical chapters, which include the narrative of the victim, refer to genuine suffering, historical periods and the national ethos of Jews and Israelis. On the other hand, excessive use of the victim's narrative in educational materials might in fact educate towards inherent mistrust and even perpetuate hostility. The dilemma mentioned is being portrayed in the corpus of contemporary history curricula in Israel, which include the victim's narrative of the Jewish people.*

### **1. The Merit of the Victim Motif**

The State of Israel was established in the shadow of the Holocaust to become the renewed homeland for victimized Jews from all over the world. In the process of socialization in the renewed homeland, a model of the 'new Jew' was created: On one hand, he had to be strong, independent, courageous and sun-tanned, but on the other hand, he still had to maintain his victim consciousness.

Both Israelis and Palestinians perceive themselves as 'victims'. This perception is being embedded in literature, poetry, textbooks, prayers and national ceremonies and actually helps to strengthen the collective memory of a nation. Closed-minded rejection and delegitimization of the other's narrative accompany the process of establishing a victim's narrative. The 'victim' cannot accept that the other side might be a victim as well, since acknowledgement of the other's suffering and agony might threaten his own identity in two main ways. First, the other's narrative might obscure the exclusiveness of one's narrative. Second, it also might shatter the equilibrium of 'I am the good victim' but 'the other is the bad victimizer' (Firer & Adwan, 2002; Salomon & B. Nevo, 2002). According to Wolin (2004), post-modernist rhetoric has enhanced the mindset of separatism. In his opinion, postmodernism's deep

suspicion of 'universalism', along with its endorsement of difference and identity politics, has worked against the values of toleration and mutual recognition.

No doubt, the very consciousness of being a victim helps to sharpen one's defensive instincts and as a result helps him to defend himself far better in times of war. Nevertheless, at the same time, it does not allow him to consider political wisdom in times of peace negotiations.

Israeli history is imbued with persecutions, pogroms and calamities since Pharaoh's time until nowadays. Yet, the ultimate narrative of the victim in Jewish consciousness is the story of the sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis, 22). According to this story, Abraham was commanded by God to make the greatest sacrifice of all: 'And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of' (Genesis, 22, 2). Even though the story is really about the attempted sacrifice of Isaac and actually has a happy ending, Isaac has become a rooted symbol of being a victim, a sacrifice or an offering. In Hebrew, the last three nouns are summed in one word only: 'Korban'.

Traumatic victimhood has, often with good reason, come to hold an important place in memory studies. Trauma brings out in a striking way the importance of affect and its impact on memory, pointing both to traumatic memory in the form of post-traumatic effects and to the challenge to work through them in a viable but perhaps never totally successful fashion. Still, it is important to inquire into trauma and post-traumatic effects through research and investigation involving historical documentation as well as testimony and oral history (La Capra, 2016).

Canonical narratives tend to reinforce social categories as part of the social fabric. 'Multiaccentuality' refers to the capability of a sign to receive various significances amongst the various populations. The significance changes with content according to social interests (Voloshinov, 1973). Similarly, the term victimhood also has characteristics of multiaccentuality: an historical event may be perceived as a traumatic and depriving event by one population and not by another. Trauma and its often symptomatic aftermath pose acute problems for historical representation and understanding. In his book *Writing History, Writing Trauma* Dominick La Capra provides a broad-ranging, critical inquiry into the problem of trauma, notably

with respect to major historical events. He explores theoretical and literary-critical attempts to come to terms with trauma as well as the crucial role post-traumatic testimonies – particularly Holocaust testimonies – have assumed in recent thought and writing. In doing so, he demonstrates how psychoanalytic concepts help to explain historical analysis and employs sociocultural and political critique to shed light on trauma and its after-effects in culture and on people (La Capra, 2001). According to Augé, our experience of time, which involves our efforts to construct meaningful life-stories and narratives of both an individual and collective sort, travels between remembrance and forgetting. ‘Memory and oblivion in some way have the same relationship as life and death’ (Augé, 2004: 14). Augé argues that remembrances are not solid objects of fact buried in our consciousness, only waiting to be retrieved by an act of will. Nevertheless, remembrance is more like a screen on which memory residue is projected.

## **2. The Israeli Education System in Israel: The Difference between Jewish and Arab Viewpoints**

Although the Israeli society is composed of two national groups: Arabs and Jews, the state of Israel is defined as a democratic and a Jewish state.

The rift between Jews and Arabs is unique among the numerous social divides that characterize Israeli society precisely because it diverges from the Jewish majority, which has its own divisions. According to the Israeli, the identity of Palestinian citizens of Israel is limited to formal aspects, whereas their Palestinian identity is internalized and is characterized by an emotional and ideological connection (Rouhana, 1997). Rouhana claims, that these citizens emphasize their Palestinian identity precisely because Palestinian Arabs in Israel are dissatisfied with their collective status; they preserve their Palestinian identity and, at the same time, they aspire for full citizenship in the Israeli state and its institutions.

Several researchers who examined the teaching of history in Israel have noted in their articles that Israel’s first history-teaching curriculum, dating from 1954, was intended to serve the Ashkenazi, Zionist narrative and, consequently, focused on the pogroms carried out against the Jews in Eastern Europe, in the Holocaust, and on the founding of the State of Israel (Yonah, 2005). In discussing this issue,

the late philosopher of education, Ilan Gur-Zeev, argued that critical reconstruction of the history of Zionist education enlightened the general rules of education by pointing out the general function of normalizing education in a concrete historical manner. On one hand, education reconstructs control over the memory and consciousness and on the other hand, it monitors the construction of the Israeli identity (Gur-Zeev, 2010).

The Arab education system developed as a by-product of the Israeli education system (Arar, 2012). The 1953 Education Law led to increased access to education as a resource for the Arab population in Israel. However, a comparison with inputs into Jewish education indicates disadvantages (Agbaria, Mustafa, & Jabareen, 2015), systemic flaws and other difficulties (Arar & Ibrahim, 2016). After 1975, a certain reform began in the Arab education system; special curricula, matriculation exams and separate course books were written. However, most of this did not involve members of the Arab intelligentsia, and there was no expression of the Palestinian national and cultural identity of Arab-Israeli citizens (Arar & Abu Romi, 2016). Quite the opposite – the neoliberal policy that overtook the entire Israeli education system strengthened control over Arab education and sidelined it (Arar & Ibrahim, 2016; Agbaria, Mustafa, & Jabareen, 2015).

The education system for Arab Israelis is unique compared to the Jewish education system in Israel, and it suffers from external problems and obstacles: resources, structure and organization, as well as internal problems of local politics that hinder its development and advancement (Arar, 2014; Arar & Oplatka, 2016).

The de-politicization of Arab education via prohibition of any discussion of the Palestinian narrative in schools is, in fact, a tool for continued control over and exclusion of the Arab education system (Arar, 2016) since it deepens its subordination to the ethnocentric Zionist ideology. The challenges Palestinian Arab-Israeli society faces regarding its education system are evident in both official and informal publications. They stress that every step towards building a proposed new model means taking into account the need to confront identity. Developing education in the absence of this key component is completely illogical.

Zaher (2010) points the 'Nakba' as a representative subject of the problematic nature of the Arab education system. Teaching the issue of the Nakba is prohibited by law; according to her point of view it

means a violation of the right of Arab students to learn about the history of their people from the perspective of their own people which is for them the authentic point of view of events. According to her, the law is ideological, directed against the national identity of Arabs and against their collective memory and its legitimate status as equal citizens in the country. Shenhav & Hannan (2012) noted that the exclusion of the Nakba issue from textbooks of the education system presents a superficial historical perception that educates generations of students in ignorance.

### **3. The Aims of the New (2017) Israeli History Curricula for Grades 6th to 9th of State Schools**

Schools are the most important means of constructing social reality for pupils. By using processes of sorting and selection (that is to say, a certain board decides which learning material is going to be included or excluded from the curriculum) they actually convey 'legitimate knowledge', as social beliefs, norms, myth and values. Schoolbooks are used by the entire younger generation, and they are perceived to be true and objective even though they tend to reflect merely the interests of hegemonic ideology (Apple, 1979; Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991).

Studies examining curricula show that they have the potential to construct social reality for pupils, to impart values, beliefs, norms and ideologies as well as to transfer the chosen social ethos from one generation to another. Curricula, especially of subjects as Citizenship and History have an important role in creating the national narrative and the collective memory of a society: they deal with the past but, in fact, help to construct future consciousness. The core knowledge of every history curriculum refers to the skills and insights required for understanding the human past. From the first stages of teaching history, this core provides cognitive and emotional insights.

Generally speaking, the purpose of studying history at school is not only to know the past but also to form an orderly future, logically flowing from the past to the present. In other words, educational systems hold, in the main, a teleological view of history, seeking to form the future according to some kind of plan that will create the desired order. History is constituted as a meaningful narrative in which the protagonists are well known, its aims well-defined, and the end – despite ups and downs – is a good one (Hofman, 2017).

In the Israeli setting, there is a continuous debate about the nature of history curricula. It seems that there is no agreement about a single, unified history curriculum which would satisfy the majority of the population. In other words, the division between Jewish history and General history expresses dominant cultural trends within Israeli society, and especially the broadening rift between general attitudes and the Jewish point of view. The fact that all history curricula have been unsuccessful at bridging the gap between Israel's national history and the history of other nations is not only the cause of major political debates, but also their effect (Yogev, 2010).

The main overt aims of the new History curriculum (2017) for grade 6th to 9th include the following topics: Proficiency in core knowledge in human history, understanding the history timeline, understanding the importance of historical processes and their implications for human development, portraying key personalities in the history of the Jewish and Arab people, understanding the relationship between them and their environment as well as their contribution to the construction of future processes.

The purpose of the present essay is to study the explicit as well as the implied victim's narrative in contemporary history curricula of junior high schools in Israel and to assess its implication.

#### **4. Method**

The corpus includes 96 chapters in the Israeli history curriculum for Junior high schools' 2017: In the 6th grade: 13 chapters, in the 7th grade: 28 chapters, in the 8th grade 25 chapters and in the 9th grade 30 chapters. The junior high school curriculum was chosen for its importance to identity growth during impressionable years. The Impressionable Years hypothesis proposes that learning events during adolescence is particularly important for political socialization (Vany, 2009; Zamir, 2012).

The methodology in use is the content analysis method. Content analysis is defined as a method which uses several procedures on a text in order to draw meaningful distinctions and generalizations from the very text (Weber, 1985). The content analysis method has several advantages over other research tools, which are commonly used in social science:

First, content analysis is a non-intrusive technique. Contrary to interviews, questionnaires and projection-tests; content analysis does

not involve errors of data analysis, which stem from the subject's awareness of the researcher's presence and expectations.

Second, the categories, which compose the content analysis method, can be formulated after a preliminary examination of the texts. This procedure can hardly occur while formulating structured interviews or questionnaires.

Third, content analysis is a technique sensitive to context. While analyzing texts like political documents, discussions, speeches and readers, the researcher cannot ignore the semantic characteristics of texts, the circumstances under which they originated and their overall setting. The interpretation of data actually reflects the processes that took place in reality.

Fourth, content analysis is a technique, which copes successfully with a lot of data. The researcher is not troubled by the possible fatigue of his research population (Krippendorff, 2014).

The high validity of this research tool has been achieved by following conditions:

1. Sampling validity – Using the whole sample according to the new curriculum of 2017.
2. Process oriented validity – Formulating criteria from victimhood theories.

## 5. Findings

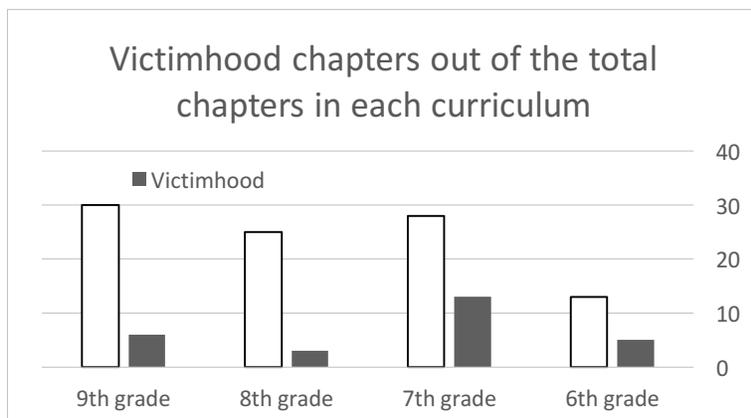


Figure 1. Out of 96 chapters in the Israeli history curriculum for junior high school, 27 convey the victimhood motive.

It was found that 27 chapters (28 %) in the Israeli history curriculum for Junior high school (2017) convey the victimhood motive.

### 5.1 *6<sup>th</sup> Grade*

In the curriculum for the 6th grade, two themes (five chapters out of a total of 13 chapters) are directly connected to the victimhood motive: the Hellenistic era as well as the Roman era.

#### 5.1.1 *The Hellenistic Era*

In 198 BC Antiochus III gave Jews an important Bill of rights that gave Jews a high degree of autonomy. Providing this bill of rights stemmed mainly from the desire to strengthen stable Yehuda as the border conflict with the Egyptian Ptolemaic border. Nevertheless, in 168 BC Antiochus Epiphanes' edicts took place. After his successful war against Ptolemy, Egypt, he passed through Jerusalem, robbed the temple of treasures like the lampstand, the Golden altar, and more. He committed an unprecedented massacre and also captured prisoners for slavery. This first unprecedented religious persecution in history, aroused the Maccabees' revolt that was formed later on with both successes and failures.

#### 5.1.2 *The Roman Era*

The Roman invasion to the land of Israel led by the Roman general Pompey, started from 63 BC and lasted until the year 324. It triggered fierce resistance among Jewish inhabitants who were the majority of the population for a long time. The Roman Commissioners, who were Syrian in their origin, were mostly corrupt, greedy and hostile towards the local population.

### 5.2 *7<sup>th</sup> Grade*

In the curriculum for the 7th grade almost half of the chapters (13 out of a total of 28 chapters) are directly connected to the victimhood motive embedded in two themes: eight chapters are related to the rise of Christianity and its attitude towards Jews; five chapters are related to the rise of Islam and its attitude towards Jews.

### 5.2.1 *The Rise of Christianity*

The Crusades were a series of military campaigns that took place between the 11th century and the 13th century, initiated by Christian Popes. During the first crusade, Crusader armies marched towards Jerusalem and looted several cities along the way. In 1099, Jerusalem was captured and both the Jewish and the Muslim populations were massacred. The first crusades unleashed an unprecedented wave of violence and massacres of Jews throughout Europe. The Crusades and their attendant destruction were firmly imprinted on the historic consciousness of the Jews (Prawer, 1963).

### 5.2.2 *The Rise of Islam*

Relations between Islam and Judaism began in the 7th century with the spreading of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula. Both religions differ on many issues, but also these monotheistic religions share some common values, principles and guidelines. In the Iberian Peninsula, under Muslim rule, Jews experienced a golden age (the period was characterized by cultural and spiritual prosperity). Nevertheless, persecution against the Jews occurred in other parts under Muslim rule, especially North Africa and Yemen, and many Jews had been given the choice between converting to Islam or death.

## 5.3 *8<sup>th</sup> Grade*

In the curriculum for the 8th grade, three out of the 25 chapters are directly connected to the victimhood motive: The French revolution, Napoléon Bonaparte and the face of modern Anti-Semitism.

### 5.3.1 *The French Revolution*

On 27 September 1791, after much deliberation and the hard struggle of the Jews of France, a law that gave full civil rights to every Jew in France was passed, but on the other hand Jewish religious autonomy was denied.

### 5.3.2 *Napoléon Bonaparte*

In March 1808, Napoléon's orders known as the 'infamous decree' set clear limits for Jewish activity in many areas. A Jew who wanted to engage in commerce, for instance, had to get an approval for only one year. Jews served in the military, but were forbidden to live wherever they wanted.

### 5.3.3 *The Face of Modern Anti-Semitism in the 19th Century*

In some countries there was discrimination in certain professions, advancement in the army and other organizations which refused to accept Jews into them. For example: the Russian Empire restricted the number of Jewish posts in military medicine to five percent and limited the number of students who studied at universities ('numerous clauses').

Blood storylines centred around the worship of the Jewish religion. For example: in Russia, Baileys, a factory worker was accused of killing a Christian boy to use his blood for ritualistic purposes. In France, Dreyfus, a Jewish army officer was found guilty of treason. Pogroms in Russia lasted three years (1881-1882). Hordes of Russians attacked Jews and looted their property. The authorities did not intervene and actually cooperated with the rioters. Government policy was discriminatory towards Jews: Jews were restricted to certain areas, whether in large cities or in special living areas of Jewish settlements. Educational propaganda based on theories of anti-Semitism was created to harm Jews. The purpose of these theories was to warn about the dangers of integration of Jews into Christian society. For example, Germany developed the theory of 'social Darwinism', based on teaching the distorted theory of Charles Darwin. In Russia a document named *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was published. The document, allegedly written by Jews, was discovered as false and phoney. It indicated, supposedly, that Jews wanted to destroy the economy of Russia and Europe and to collapse the regimes.

## 5.4 *9th Grade*

In the curriculum for the 9th grade three themes (six out of 30 chapters) are directly connected to the victimhood motive.

### 5.4.1 *Jews of North Africa*

'Crémieux Decree' of 1870 that granted French citizenship to the Jews in Algeria impacted all spheres of life and society. However, following the order, anti-Semitism increased significantly. Officials and European colonists couldn't come to terms with the fact that native Algerian Jews became equal and hence anti-Semitic acts against Jews increased. Muslim residents, belonging to the low social status of Algeria, also demonstrated hatred against Jews.

#### 5.4.2 *The Period of the First World War*

The Jews were recruited in masses to various armies and paid a bloody price. Yet, they were accused of evasion and disloyalty.

#### 5.4.3 *The British Mandate (1917-1948)*

The British mandate allowed only limited absorption of Jewish immigrants from Eastern and Centre Europe. From the beginning of the British mandate, the administrative system of British colonial service did not support Arabs and native Jews: Some of the 'white books' written by the ruling administration did not support Zionist goals, but favoured the Arabic stated position.

## 6. Discussion and Conclusions

In Israel, changes in history teaching and the publication of new curricula in recent years triggered a stormy public controversy that went far beyond the content of the curricula themselves.

The disputes over how history should be presented to students revealed different characteristics of Israeli society since the beginning of the 1990s. The perennial controversies over the history curriculum are actually a culture war over the 'space of collective memory'. This space is a battleground because it is here that the perception of normative identity and society's future image begins (Yogev, 2010). Discussion of the essence of a historical narrative is, of course, legitimate. However, sometimes the argument deviates from the limits of a debate about historiography and becomes a political issue (Hofman, 2007). For that matter, teaching the victimhood theme may well serve political platforms that wish to emphasize right wing political views.

The findings of the content analysis indicate a vast classical narrative of the Jewish victim especially among gentiles. Topics in the history curriculum are formulated in a corrective manner allegedly without judgmental characteristics. An examination of the meaning hidden behind the neutrality of the headlines of various chapters discovers many victimhood dimensions of historical subtexts.

As evidenced by the findings of this research, the Jews were continuously controlled. Furthermore, those periods in history yielded meaningful figures of speech in the Israeli existence. For example, Antiochus Epiphanies who persecuted the Jews of Judea and Samaria became a common term for evil. Another example may

be the concept 'crusades' who is associated with determination and firmness while being willing to dominate others. According to the principle of 'Multiaccentuality' that refers to the capability of a sign to receive various significances amongst various populations (Voloshinov, 1973), the reading of chapters preoccupied with persecutions by Israeli and Jewish readers would be different from the reading of other populations, worldwide.

Trauma and its often symptomatic aftermath pose acute problems for historical representation and understanding both for the victims and the victimizers. According to La Capra (2001), historical chapters may produce Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in the lives of survivors. Furthermore, La Capra accepts the idea of a 'constituent Assembly' trauma (as the Holocaust, apartheid, slavery and the atomic bomb), which becomes the basis for the collective identity of all human kind. It is widely recognized but still worth emphasizing that memory, especially traumatic memory, has a crucial role in the formation of individual and collective identities and the tense relation of memory and history is particularly fraught with respect to identity-formation (La Capra, 2016).

Even though there is only one chapter of modern anti-Semitism in the 19th century, this topic is very extensive and loaded with specific details about atrocities and the Jewish hero in the midst of them. Students are requested to be familiar with those narratives and Jewish personas, like Dreyfus, are the examples that follow the widespread Israeli saying 'Never again'.

The chapters that are preoccupied with Jewish victimhood, actually construct an exceptional identity in the minds of Israeli students, broadening their victim consciousness. The narrative of the 'Jewish victim' who has been a subject of abuse and humiliation by murderous and capricious gentiles helps to build elements of suspicion both in the individual's identity and the national identity. The idea of a persecuted nation that cannot avoid its fate. This message creates a notion of determinism: there is no escape from the blood cycle in the Diaspora or in one's own independent country. The word and concept of victim bear a heavy weight. To represent oneself or to be represented as a victim is often a first and vital step toward having one's suffering and one's claims to rights socially and legally recognized. Yet to name oneself or be called a victim is a risky claim, and social scientists must strive to avoid erasing either

survivors' experience of suffering or their agency and resourcefulness. (Jensen & Ronsbo, 2014).

According to Amos Oz (1998), a most famous and popular author, 'Perhaps the most distinct sign of the Israeli nation's coming of age will be its ability to look its historic past straight in the eye: not with hatred and denial, not with sentimental nostalgia, and not with a view to retribution or revenge' (Oz, 1998: 15). On the other hand, one cannot ignore the fact that history books, especially about the Jewish Holocaust, do not only aim to document past events, but also to establish functional memory for the public sphere. Historical understanding brings about, even symbolically, the human dignity that was taken from them by their victimizers (Friedlaender, 1979, 1997). For that reason Smith (1992) stresses the importance of distinguishing between professional history and ethno-history: the former denoting enquiry and the use of documents and artifacts and the latter drawing on myth and memory. Nevertheless, he realizes that the work of professional historians, too, is shaped, even if at an unconscious level, by ethno-history.

History curricula that portray the character of the victim actually present a real dilemma for any educational system: On one hand, many chapters which include the narrative of the victim, refer to genuine suffering, historical periods and national ethos. On the other hand, excessive use of the victim's narrative in educational materials might in fact educate towards inherent mistrust and even perpetuate hostility. A possible solution for this dilemma can be offered by the familiarity of the other's victim narrative, such as the Armenian holocaust or bombing of the civilian German population during the Second World War. According to Barnouw (2005: 25), the allies' bombing criminalized 'the whole civilian population'.

In the Israeli context, familiarity with the other's victim narrative is related to the perceived Nakba of the Palestinian people. For Israelis, the 1948 war has been seen and celebrated in terms of the achievement of an independent state. For many Palestinian sympathizers, the war was the Nakba i.e. catastrophe or disaster (Ben Solomon, 2015). According to the Palestinian narrative, the establishment of Israel occurred partly because the Israelis acquired control of the land, and partly because they had won the political battle for Palestine in the international arena. According to the Palestinian point of view, Western scholarly writing about the Middle East is in fact affected by the Zionist narrative. Only limited history

work has been done by talented Arab scholars and writers, and non- or anti-Zionist Jews, but still more work needs to be done in order 'to expose and uncover the myths' (Said & Hitchens, 1988: 13).

This dispute about the victim narrative certainly requires that the Israeli educational system will be able to produce an open-minded generation, who as a result, are well-equipped with different points of view.

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## EPOCH – A USEFUL PARAMETER FOR MEASURING TIME? AN URGENT INQUIRY

Wolfgang Hasberg

*The article broaches the issue of ‘epoch’ as a category which is still used in Western cultures for periodization in historical sciences as well as in historical culture. This practice affects history lessons because textbooks follow this kind of treatment of (historical) time. For this reason, the article argues that pupils have to learn that time patterns such as ‘epoch’ are categorical instruments for measuring (historical) time and to deal with time patterns in a critical way. This may be possible by de-constructing epochs. For that purpose the Middle Ages seems to be suitable because it is the only epoch with a determinable beginning and ending (F. Seibt). The article refers to German circumstances but would like to initiate a global debate. Exploring different ways of measuring time may be a way to explain the different ways history is used in different societies and therefore could increase tolerance.*

### 1. Epoch or No Epoch? – That is the Question

At first, it may seem that the subject of the following considerations may be specifically a German one. That is because epochal parameters arose in Germany in the 16th to the 17th centuries. But the epochal pattern occurred in nearly the whole of Western civilization wherein it was and is still used for measuring historical time, while in Eastern and other regions of the world other patterns of periodization were preferred.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the urgency to discuss the usefulness of this parameter is at least a European one, as may be proven – among others – by the last publication by Jacques Le Goff (1924-2014) who asked: *Faut-il vraiment découper l’histoire en tranches?* (Le Goff, 2014).<sup>2</sup> In fact the question of whether epochs are needed for measuring time is discussed but their usability is not rejected. Rather, the author repeats his older plea that the Middle Ages should be described as a period which reaches from the 3rd to 18th centuries (not just 550-1500 AD). So he encourages a new (or other) epochal pattern but not its annulment. At the same time the Dutch historian Peter Raeds (2016) described the ‘discovery’ of the Middle Ages by Humanists and explained that it really was an invention and that the

illusion of Humanists was, that the Middle Ages had existed. Epochs are not entities of the past but recent categories in the present for arranging past times. In this way epochs are used worldwide. Therefore the question of whether an epoch is a useful parameter for measuring past times is a global one, especially in such cultures where this pattern is not usually used.

On the other hand, considerations of patterns of managing time have a didactical perspective, too. One may learn about those aspects, among others, by reading old history textbooks. Reading the introduction to one of these books written by the well-known textbook author Karl Heinrich Ludwig Poelitz (1772-1838) one finds an apology for the style of his account. But he legitimises his flow with the following reason: 'If history is not immediately addressed to scholars but to educated citizens or businessmen, then the form of presentation cannot abstain from liveliness and freshness as well as from the equal round arrangement of periods.' (Poelitz, 1827: VIII, transl. W. Hasberg). This is a didactical argument: 'the even rounding of period construction' (*gleichmäßige Rundung des Periodenbaus*) should enable a better comprehension of history.

Do we need an arrangement of periods for dealing with the Past and History? Do we need such a periodical arrangement to learn history? And: can epochs play this role? Is 'epoch' a useable category for dealing with and learning history – that amorphous entity called history?

It seems so – at least, if one picks up the popular German standard work *Geschichte griffbereit* (*History Handy*), whose last volume deals with epochs. In its preface, Immanuel Geiss (1931-2012) explains the fundamental inalienability of this category, which he derives from the pragmatic necessity to arrange the events of the past, even if one does not apply a theory or a philosophy of history. He declares: 'Classifications are inevitable for the written parts of history. In order to master the flood of individual facts in a reasonable way' and 'in order to summarize individual knowledge into large scale drafts' (Geiss, 2002: 22 and 21, respectively).

In this way, the compulsion of dividing time or of periodization becomes obvious, but not the necessity for classification in epochs. And – as we will see later – there are other classification patterns than the one of epochs.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, Geiss does not explain what the precise meaning of epoch as a category is.

As is well known, the word or term derived from the Greek language (ἐποχή) and meant at first to pause for a moment for consideration on the way to finding the truth (Hossenfelder & Claesges, 1984: 594 f). Deriving from that, the term acquired the meaning of the beginning of a time series in the 18th century. First at the end of the century, when it was modified from a static to a dynamic concept, which – from then on – was needed to denote time series (plural) and divide time as a whole. Since then, epoch was no longer used to define a point in time but a phase or a section of time, perhaps: something like a chapter of time (Riedel, 1972: 597 f).

At this time it was combined with the idea of progress (*Fortschrittsgedanke*), arising from the Enlightenment, until Leopold v. Ranke declared in 1852, that each epoch is ‘immediate to God’ (*unmittelbar zu Gott*). That means its dignity does not depend on its importance for further developments as a pre-stage for other epochs.<sup>4</sup> According to this, the concept ‘epoch’ belongs to the fundamental categories for periodizing the past and history inside the academic field as well as inside all kinds of historical culture and living environments.

According to Heinrich Lutz (192-1986), a famous German historian, four (formal) attributes can be denominated, which belong to all kinds of periodization:

1. Integration (to a sufficient extent), that the idea of structuring time must be able to assimilate or integrate different aspects of the events of a past time (e.g. society, state, culture, economy).

2. The dimension of time must be functional, i.e. the definition of the period as well as its interior differentiation must agree with the research interest which is intended by the definition of the period.

3. Spatial relevance, i.e. the idea of time series must not only own a temporal but a spatial component: ergo the temporal definitions of events, structures, mentalities etc. are valid only in tightly confined spaces.

4. Referentiality to the past (*Vergangenheitsreferentialität*), i.e. the inaugural period may not be constructed by the present age and the historically thinking subject, but has to be addressed to/drafted in accordance to the living environment of past events, structure, mentalities etc., too.

But what degree of integration of different dimensions (politics, economy, culture etc.) has to be realized so that it may be called sufficient? And in accordance with which interest or purpose may the temporal extension be regarded as adequate? – The deficient precision of the definition indicates that all trials of defining periods in time must remain of restricted selectivity and persuasive power. Because they are drafted through the historian's or other one's point of view, who observe the past from today. Epochs are created in the process of historical reconstruction by interpretation of the past. Epochs are not entities which can be found in sources. An epoch is a construction which, as a (formal) idea of temporal development, agrees – more or less – with the mentioned criteria and is enriched with the events, persons, structures and mentalities of the past. In this way it attains the status of what is called a *Historischer Begriff* and which cannot be exactly translated into English in a precise or accurate manner (historical term or concept – cf. Hasberg, 1995: 221). Because of this formal-logical structure of the category 'epoch', the plausibility of defined epochs mainly depends on the degree of normative cogency.<sup>5</sup> For this reason, one has to ask which kind of 'period-making' (periodization) and which concrete epoch-patterns can be found in the history of historiography and which dominates historical sciences and historical culture today.

## 2. Epoch as a Category of Historiography and of Historical Sciences

The telling of historical stories needs structuring (as was already explained). The temporal arrangement is only one possible classification. While telling stories, the past can be structured by temporal, factual (*historia divina, civilis, naturalis*) or formal criteria (*historia universalis* or *specialis*), and it follows different forms of presentation (e.g. according to G. Droysen (1857): analysing, narrative, didactical, discursive). There is no doubt that these patterns of differentiation and presentation constitute a reciprocal relationship (Koselleck, 1972 ff: 678), so that all ideas of epochs depend on referencing objects (in the past) which underlie a formal and content definition.

Having a look at the history of historiography, one may find other attempts at periodizing the past since its oldest origin, unless the concept of epoch was already used. In the beginning of

historiography in the Western world the idea of the sequence of four world empires dominated, in which the decline is represented by the materials: gold, silver, bronze and iron. This concept may already be found with the Greek poet Hesiod (700 BC). And it was also widespread in Persia. So it found its way into the apocalyptic book of Daniel in the Old Testament (about 167 BC). It was taken up by the Christian historiographers and remained the main periodical pattern in Western historiography until the 18th century.<sup>6</sup>

Ideas of time were certainly modified by the expansion of Christianity. At first, the time of expecting salvation of the Old Testament was confronted with the time of gratification of salvation of the New Testament. And Augustine (354-430) appended a third period, which was related to the Parousia – the second coming of Jesus Christ (Günther, 1984: 783).

A vast dissemination can be observed regarding the pattern of the *ses aetates or doctrine of ages of human life (Lebensalterslehre)* which dates back to the Greek Church historian Eusebius of Caesarea (260/64-337/40). Translated into Latin by Hieronymus (347-419), Isidore of Seville (ca. 560-535) supported this time pattern – indeed he did not use it for structuring his own world history but he explained it in his *Etymologiae*, which had an enormous influence on the medieval school system (Pot, 1999: 168 ff; cf. Engels, 1972 ff). The history of salvation therein is divided – parallel to the six stages of human life – into six phases, each of these covers 1000 years, dependent on the Bible (Ps 90,3; 2 Ptr 3,8).

Trying to calculate the beginning of the world, medieval historiographers counted up the genealogies of the Old Testament and fixed the date of the beginning in the year 5.198 before Christ (Hieronymus). Ergo, when Christ appeared, the world was in its sixth age, in the Age of Iron. Therefore this time and the time of the *Imperium Romanum* gained the importance of the end time, because in this time people expected the Parousia, the second appearance of Christ. When the decline and fall of the Roman Empire became more and more obvious in the 5th century, it became necessary to construct the concept of a *translatio imperii*, which declared that the Roman Empire would give way to another kingdom or empire. With the function and the dignity of the emperor, the sixth or last kingdom or empire was transferred to Eastern Franks and later to the German Empire.<sup>7</sup> At the latest, after the turn of the millennium this pattern-

system was proven to be obsolete, because the recurrence of Christ did not happen until then and the preceding time could no longer be captured by the *aetates*-pattern. New patterns became necessary.

It would not have been opportune to describe the development of the periodical patterns of the Occident in this detailed way, if one could not come to some conclusions:

1. First, one can state that in Antiquity and the Middle Ages time-schedules dominated, which – for all the aberrations with regard to contents – agree with the above-mentioned formal criteria (of Lutz). Not an inductive approach was constitutive, but ideological regards were constitutive, namely in the garments of a history of decline in the metallic doctrine of valence, or in the garments of a teleological theology of history in case of the *aetates*-doctrine.

2. Both temporal patterns follow the line of universal history, whereupon Isidore substitutes the ‘all people incorporating’ Roman Empire for the ecclesia.<sup>8</sup>

3. In contradiction to Christian historiographers, who – according to the observations of Karl Heussi (1877-1961) – ‘knew the classification of historical contents by periods since the time of the early church’, ‘the Greek and Romans did not know ... an overview of the Universal history according to a periodical pattern’ or respectively they did not use it for presenting the past (Heussi, 1969: 8 and 5, respectively).

4. Finally, it can be stated, that not only the object and the form of presentation influenced the building of epochs, but culture in general. The Christian understanding of time, with its teleological focus on the end of time, when all that has happened, will be fulfilled with sense, consequently (or inevitably) evoked a new form of time division. Epochs as a parameter of periodization consequently depend upon culture to a high degree.

The traditional periodizations were strongly upset by the epochal triad of Antiquity, the Middle Ages and Modern time, which is still in use today, but was not constituted by the well-known Christoph Cellarius (1638-1707) as is often suggested.<sup>9</sup> The humanists, who – similarly to the early Christians – thought to be in a new time, detected Antiquity as a period, which should be reanimated, indicated and named the period, placed between the Antiquity and their presence, *medium tempus*, *media tempestas*, *media aetas* or *media antiquitas*. While ‘Antiquity’ was already positively connotated by Lorenzo Valla

(1405/07-1457), *medium tempus* had a negative sound *ab initio* (Neddermeyer, 1988: 101 ff). Therefore, the Italian humanists could name it *saecula barbarica*, while in German-speaking regions this period was called *neue Zeit* until the end of the 15th century (Schedel). The term *Mittelalter* (Middle Ages) was not commonly used before the 16th or 17th century. ‘The use of the word was ... neither consistent nor clear’ and the collection of single facts does not allow any reliable conclusion of the development of this concept (Günther, 1984: 786-787, 792 f).

Essential for the arising of the triad, as it is still common today, is not the use of terms like *historia nova* or new time, which first was not clearly related to the Renaissance and was not established as *Neuzeit* in German before 1800.

The consciousness of humanists to live in a new time was essential: the Renaissance. ‘Through this the concept of Antiquity, the Middle Ages and New Time emerged in the humanistic circles, first of all not as a scheme, by which history was written, but as a historical assumption, in which one lived.’<sup>10</sup>

It had been a long time until 1800, when the epochal triad was established, since Ch. Cellarius – for all that relativization he suffered because of new research – set a milestone with his *historia tripartite*.<sup>11</sup> But he was neither the inventor of the triadic picture of history nor was his publication immediately or widely adopted. Step by step the new epoch-pattern found its way into historiography.<sup>12</sup>

By the way, the motive of Ch. Cellarius was not the impudent assumption that he deduced or derived a universal schedule from the past, nor did he have the ambition to advise it to historiographers. His motive was much more modest: He had recognized the complexity of older overall views of history and was searching for a new form of presentation. The German scholar had recognized a historio-didactical problem and – putatively – solved it. Though, he substantiated the triadic arrangement not in a historio-didactical manner, nor with the indication of the potential cognitive competencies of his readers but he insisted on the factual adequacy of his disposition (Neddermeyer, 1988: 157-159).

For a long time, the internal differentiation of the triadic schedule was controversial – and it is still controversial today. Truly, it didn’t have a triumphal march until it was established in about 1800. Both universal historians of the later Enlightenment and the protagonists

of historicism denied the epochal narrowing – and remained universal historians. They seldom enough adopted the triadic schedule while writing their bulky world histories (Günther, 1984: 791 f) Still Johann Gustav Droysen's (1808-1884) chair in Kiel was nominated as a professorship for 'history, especially for old and new history' (Weber, 1987: 113; Nippel, 2008). In fact, he wrote books about Antiquity as well as about subjects of contemporary history.

However, Barthold Georg Niebuhr (1776-1831) already took a first step to establish a separate *Altertumskunde* (science of ancient history) while he introduced the historical critical method by which the antique sources should be analysed (Deiningner, 2007). This example demonstrates that – despite the nearness of all historical branches to Philology – the specific pool of sources and the specialisation of methods contributed to the spin-off of epoch-specific disciplines. This could be illustrated by the example of Medieval Studies, too, which rose in the ranks of a methodological leading discipline since Ernst Bernheim's (1889) *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode (Textbook of historical methodology)*, at the latest since Ahasver von Brand's (2007) *Werkzeug des Historikers (Tool of Historians)*. Nevertheless, while the historians of Antiquity founded their own institutes at an early stage, the denomination 'Professorship for Middle Ages and und Modern History' can be found in German Universities until today. Epochal specialization was not established earlier as it was already taken in doubt.

By the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, the triadic division was already doubted by new temporal patterns (Heussi, 1969: 29 ff). Therefore, historical sciences feel certain today that valid constructions of temporal patterns are impossible. And long ago the challenge was issued to handle epochal schedules 'problembewusst' which means to expose them and to deal with them as constructions (Vogler, 2007: 260). At the same time the call for 'multiple periodization' became audible (Moos, 1994: 33-63).

Otherwise, *Altertumskunde* (the science of ancient history), Medieval Studies, Modern History and Contemporary History seem to be uncontested dimensions.<sup>13</sup> The inertia of the triadic schedule for organizing historical sciences may be alimeted not only by the content coherence of the epochs (according to the definition of H. Lutz), but seems to have two further reasons: On the one hand, the pool of sources and – joined to that – on the other hand, the

methods, which are exercised in the specialized discipline of historical sciences.<sup>14</sup> The special pool of sources and research methods may fix the epochal approaches as well as they may liquidate them.

### 3. Epoch as a Category of Historical Culture

As well as in the academic sector of history the dominance of the triadic schedule is unbroken; the pattern persists in the area of historical culture. This may best be shown by the example of the epoch ‘the Middle Ages’, the exclusive epoch, whose beginning and end is known, the only narration of all epochs, which is closed in itself (Seibt, 1999: 13).

Especially, the finiteness of the epoch ‘Middle Ages’ makes its character of constructiveness obvious. Because humanists would like to make an epoch (*Epoche machen*), and put an end date to the time period, which in their opinion seems to be a cultural decline. In this way, they did not only create an epoch, they build a myth, which is called ‘divided Middle Ages’ by Otto Gerhard Oexle (1939-2016). According to him, ‘the Middle Ages [...] are present in bifocal perspectives [...] in a positive and in a negative interpretation of the term, as rejection and as adoption, in the form of condemnation and in the form of identification, together’ (Oexle, 1992: 7). While the humanistic perspective characterises the Middle Ages as the other, as a transparent film, whereon the peculiarity and the progress of the new times become visible, the romantic perspective emphasizes the Middle Ages as roots of the present, for which reason it seems desirable to look back. Both perspectives – as Oexle states – pervade the imagination of the Middle Ages in the present.<sup>15</sup>

Recourse to the conditions of its origin expose the epoch of ‘the Middle Ages’ not only as a construct, it identifies it as ‘practical articulation of historical consciousness in the life of society’, or as a ‘manifestation of a comprehensive and collective deal with the past’ (Rüsen, 1994: 212, 213) or in short: as a product of historical culture. Concepts of epochs are consequently dimensions of historical culture which are built into the process of historical reconstruction. They are visions of processes in time of a (past) historical culture.

As the imagination of epochs is an expression of historical culture and of the self-concept of a collective, ergo a medium of historical culture, so it is alive – as far as it stays in functional memory (A. Assmann, 1999) – in cultural history or the cultural memory

(J. Assmann, 1999) of successive history cultures. The Middle Ages are alive in the historical culture of the 21st century as well as in the educational sector (cognition), in the field of impression (aesthetics) and in the area of utility (politics),<sup>16</sup> which means that they are a subject of historical research and of school education, they conduct to (political) argumentation, e.g. if a town cultivates its own image by referring to its medieval basic fabric or if in public discourse, some phenomena are defamed as medieval because of their pretended backwardness. And frequently, leisure time facilities operate with the term 'medieval'. While the organisers of the legendary exposition of Staufer 1977 in Stuttgart were surprised by its popular success, the curators or film producers, the organisers of Christmas markets and the producers of toys or food can be sure of success if they draw a connection to the Middle Ages (Seidenfuß et al, 2008).

What sparks the fascination with this epoch, even though empirical research always makes evident that the test persons do not have larger deficits than in this period of time?<sup>17</sup> The ambivalence of the epochal concept 'the Middle Ages' and the idiosyncratic balance of knowledge and ignorance, of foreignness and familiarity seem to be the trigger for the fascination with the epoch and for its omnipresence in historical culture. This may not be valid for all epochs. Perhaps ancient excavations from Aalen (Museum of the Limes) to Xanten (Archaeological Park) may attract *Bildungsbürger* (citizens with educational ambitions), but they do not evoke a wider effect than the Medieval offers. Anyway, antiquity markets enjoy great popularity but there are rarely antique offers to find. Presumably epoch terms such as Modern Times or Early Modern Times are not quite present in historical culture. But the price for the popularity of the Middle Ages has to be paid by the instance that the imaginations relating to the epoch do more and more depart from the empirical ground of what can be called the Middle Ages.<sup>18</sup>

Perhaps none of the other epochs holds the same popularity as the Middle Ages, nevertheless it is without any doubt, that epochs are important categories of historical culture, which are developed as expressions of historical consciousness in the past and which affect impressions in the present. Because of their continuous effectiveness in historical culture imaginations of epoch require didactical reflections, namely as content saturated constructs as well as formal categories of historical thinking.

#### **4. Epoch as a Category of Historio-Didactical Reflection**

It is not possible to create or conceptualize a (scientific) discipline from its subject; this hypothesis of Thomas M. Buck Buck (2008: 49) is based on a statement from Hans-Jürgen Pandel. Following this verdict, the existence of a specific didactic of the Middle Ages is impossible. If this is true, no Middle-Age-Didactics, no epoch-didactic can exist and history didactics cannot exist, either.<sup>19</sup> Because, even although the Middle Ages, epoch and history are constructs, they are subjects of historio-didactical reflections, ergo: subjects. Hence, it needs a didactic of historical thinking. Only such a discipline could be designed exclusively from the process of conveying and receiving history or from historical thinking.

In the field of history didactics, such considerations are based on the propositions of Annette Kuhn (1990: 62): ‘critical didactics of history, which deals with the whole process of conveying history, cannot be objectively defined by its subject.’ This statement is agreeable in so far as sciences cannot be conceptualized by the object of cognition, but by their aims of interest and methods, too. But sciences also need an object of interest and cognition (Holtmann, 1986). As far as epochs can be categories and concepts as well as content of historical thinking in sciences and in the trivial matters of everyday life, because of its consistency and unbroken effectiveness in historical culture and historical sciences, it cannot be opportune to negate them in educational contexts, but it is really an obligation to integrate them into intentional processes of learning history (in school lessons, too), namely to treat or mention them as problematic categories of historical understanding by making visible that they are useful constructs, built in specific historical contexts and times.

Does not historical-didactic research always start by observing the learning individual? Doesn’t it exclusively explore its preconditions and the competencies of historical thinking? The promotion of empirical investigations and the focusing on aspects of appropriation (of history) suggest this. But may historical-didactic research not begin on the side of the object while asking what the requirements for historical thinking and the imagination of history are, which inherent qualities the objects of historical recognition have?<sup>20</sup> – It should be non-controversial, that the processes of teaching and learning are most fruitful if the objects and subjects can be brought together in a congenial manner.

Asking for the historio-didactical relevance of the less historio-scientific, more historical-cultural category ‘epoch’, the purpose cannot be to vote or plead for dealing with epochs or especially with the medieval epoch in history lessons. The question has to be: how to manage to make the constructive function categories transparent in the intentional processes of teaching and learning history, like the part epochs play in the process of historical thinking? This may be realised in re-constructive instructions in which imaginations of epochs are built successively and it can be realised in a de-constructive way if the idea of an epoch is checked for its narrative, normative and empirical plausibility.<sup>21</sup> Then in both cases, recourse to a concrete epoch as a colourful or content filled vision is necessary.

In matters of content we have to repeat, that concrete pictures of epochs are virulent in historical culture and historical sciences, too. They play an effective role in everyday life and the organisation of historical sciences is based on the division of epochs until today. The reason is – as already said – not only a definition of caesuras in time (and content), but foremost the recourse to specific sources whose critical analyses asks for a special methodology (e.g. diplomatic, numismatic, palaeography etc.). Consequently, the epoch-pattern is a kind of specialization and division of scientific work (methodology). Therefore it is opportune to ask, what are or can be the specific difficulties and possibilities of the epochal-disciplines for promoting or restraining the development of historical thinking among pupils (and other learners). In which way and with what intensity do epochal contents influence historical learning (e.g. the Middle Ages are boring)? Which special methodological skills may be especially promoted by dealing with which epoch? – Such and equal problems should be discussed, not least in constructing curricula.

Ostensibly, epochs should be reflected as formal categories. Apparently, this question requires new efforts of historio-didactical reflections. But, indeed, it is already answered by a theory of historical thinking/learning, which is bound to a narrative approach of historical theory or to an analytical philosophy of history. Whoever announces narrative competence as a central target of historical learning and instruction, has to empower his students to re-construct and to de-construct history.

<b>Re-construction</b>		<b>De-construction</b>	
Perception	Analysing facts out of sources and inventorying them (take them in stock)	Filtering out past (facts) from historical narrations, namely by taking into consideration the mechanisms of selection and pre-emphasize	Empirical plausibility
Interpretation	Re-constructing coherences in time (processes, structures) – by interpreting – by hermeneutical understanding of sense ( <i>Sinnverstehen</i> ), – by (theory-guided) explaining ( <i>Erklären</i> )	Making coherences of interpretation in historical narrations transparent, i.e. – e.g. normative assumptions of interpretation, – revealing implicit or explicit use of theories, – proving discursivity, – making the intention of assertion transparent	Normative plausibility
Orientation	Placing re-constructed coherences in relationship to the present and the future by asking ‘Does it belongs to me?’ ( <i>tua res agitur</i> )	Verifying historical narrations (or argumentative) structure of historical narrations regarding to their construction of meaning and orientation abilities (potency for orientation in the presence)	Narrative plausibility
<b>Past</b>		<b>History</b>	

Figure 1. Re-constructing and De-constructing History

As far as these operations of re- and de-construction encompass the steps registered in the table, the aim of re-construction can be intended as building an imagination of an epoch. On the other hand, epochs may be regarded as historical narrations and, consequently, may be de-constructed in the described way. In both cases, the category ‘epoch’ has to be mentioned and has to be expounded as a problem of historical thinking, primarily in the sector of interpretations or proving the normative plausibility.

If, in the mental process of re-constructing, the point is to describe the inner coherence of past events as a temporal and spatial limited framework, this may be named epoch.

Or, if in the mental process of de-constructing, an imagination of an epoch stands at the beginning, which is proved in its normative plausibility by analysing which theories and leading aspects influenced the construct, before the question has to be answered in the end, whether the events and persons, accounted for in the past, can really fit into the epoch.

From a formal point of view, epochs turn out to be imaginations of courses of time (*Zeitverlaufsvorstellungen*), which differ from other constructs of continuity (in time) only in that aspect, that they strain a high power of integration for conducting past events, (shorter) sequences of events, persons, structures and mentalities.

Concern with epochs as formal categories and ‘contentual’ patterns of periodization schemes in this manner, corresponds to what Bodo von Borries called reflection of epochs (*Epochenreflexion*), which means the critical consideration of epoch-conventions (*Epochenkonventionen*).

To broach the issue of epochs is no end in itself, yet on the one hand, it conducts the formal development of historical thinking and it produces categorical knowledge of periodical patterns which may become apparent as highly controversial offers of (historical) sense, which have effects up to the present, because they transport impositions of identities. If epochs are treated in this manner in historical education, the requirements of Peter von Moos will be fulfilled, he who demands a critical distance from traditional offers of periodization and pleads for ‘multiple periodization’.

## 5. Conclusion

Retrospectively, this article made four points which need to be reviewed in the end:

1. Not only ‘the times they are a-changing’ (Bob Dylan), but time patterns change, too. Therefore no general or universal schedule of periods can exist. Without exception they all depend on cultural preconditions.

2. In the Western World the triadic schedule of epochs has been dominating from about 1800 until today, although some historians negate the carrying capacity or the fertility of that pattern (e.g. Le

Goff).<sup>22</sup> Others point to the necessity of epochal specialization in historical sciences because of time-specific sources and methodology. Therefore the triadic pattern has survived in historical sciences until today. Also pupils should be informed about this.

3. The epochal triad persists in historical culture, too. Therefore, pupils have to build knowledge about that pattern on one hand and have to learn how to de-construct such offers of sense and identity on the other hand.

4. Ergo, epochs must broach the issue of history lessons in the form of de-constructing. The best epoch for de-constructing seems to be the Middle Ages, because this epoch has a beginning and an end (Graus).

In the end, recent considerations may return to the beginning. It was mentioned that ‘epoch’ is only one of many parameters for measuring (historical) time. This category dominates in Western cultures but not in the Eastern World. Therefore, a historio-didactical discussion about existing time patterns (all over the world) and the use of such parameters in historical sciences, historical culture and history education should be enforced. Because the categories used to deal with the past differs their applications produce different histories. Therefore, it is indispensable to know such parameters and to deconstruct them for understanding the history of others (e.g. nations or cultures). But as long as special time patterns (like epoch) are dominant in historical sciences and historical culture they must be taught in history lessons. In the long term, pupils should learn and know a selection of different time patterns (from different cultures) and become able to deal with them experimentally. The precondition is that historio-didactical efforts get off the ground. This yearbook may be the right forum for initiating and managing this urgent discussion.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the overview of Cajani (2011), wherein several patterns of periodization are mentioned. This review may be a good parallel reading to this article because it relativizes the Western perspective and the epochal pattern.

<sup>2</sup> The German translation was published two year later and was entitled: *Geschichte ohne Epochen?* [History without Epochs?] Cf. Le Goff, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the concise overview to the problem of periodisation from Vogler (2007). See basically the abundant work of Pot (1999).

<sup>4</sup> Ranke (1971: 59 f): *Jede Epoche ist unmittelbar zu Gott, und ihr Wert beruht gar nicht auf dem, was aus ihr hervorgeht, sondern in ihrer Existenz selbst, in ihrem Eigenen selbst. Dadurch bekommt die Betrachtung der Historie, und zwar des individuellen Lebens der Historie, einen ganz eigentümlichen Reiz, indem nun jede Epoche als etwas für sich Gültiges angesehen werden muß und der Betrachtung höchst würdig erscheint.*

<sup>5</sup> Cf. to the criterions of plausibility Rüsen, 1983: 90-116. Regarding the transfer to de-constrictive dealing with history cf. Hasberg, 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. to the development of periodization in the historiography of the Occident e.g. the overviews of Heussi (1969) and Günther (1984).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. to *translatio imperii* the overview of Thomas (1999). Still fundamental the work of Goetz (1958).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Engels (1972 ff: 617. Heussi (1969: 8) points out that the historians of the early church who discussed time patterns did not emphasize church history but history of humanity.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Cajani (2011) who itemizes other protagonist than the ones are mentioned in the following.

<sup>10</sup> Heussi (1969: 9): *By this way in the humanistic circles the concept of Antiquity, Middle Ages and New Time emerged, first of all not as a scheme, history was written by, but as a historical assumption, in which one lived.* (transl. W. Hasberg). Cf. Raeds, 2016.

<sup>11</sup> Neddermeyer (1988: 147) states: *The judgements about him suffer under the often not strong performed differentiation between the theoretical (triadic) view of history, the usage of the expression 'medium aevum' (a.s.o.) and the practical implementation of a tripartite division of history.* (transl. W. Hasberg).

<sup>12</sup> Günther (1984: 790): *The asynchrony of the scientific and aesthetic occupation with the Antiquity is a reason for a non-existing common 'Renaissance' of the European Nations and also, that the classicisms developed different and without a general recognition.* (transl. W. Hasberg).

<sup>13</sup> Beside the numerous introductions to single branches the relevant chapters by Goertz (2007) or Maurer (2005).

<sup>14</sup> The historiography is part of the existing sources as Benz (2008: 122) mentions.

<sup>15</sup> In the historio-didactical discourse this thesis was applied 1967 by K. Pellens and since 1978 by U. Uffelmann, cf. Hasberg (2006: 220; 2012).

<sup>16</sup> Cf. to the structuring of the research field of historical culture the summarizing article of Hasberg (2004).

<sup>17</sup> E.g. Pandel (1991: 6) in relation to pupils. Cf. the qualitative survey among pupils by Stöckle (2008).

<sup>18</sup> Towards the status of Middle Ages in historical culture in Germany cf. Hasberg & Uffelmann (2002: 227-228) and Hasberg (2016).

<sup>19</sup> By the way, a ‘didactic of Middle Ages’ is impossible although Buck (2008) wanted to frame such a theory as he regarded the lessons about Middle Ages as a subject of historio-didactical reflections.

<sup>20</sup> With Rohlfes (2008: 10, 25) one can assert that history didactics increasingly acquire their scientific qualification in the field of historio-empirical research. Consequently, the risk may arise that history didactics will no longer be based on a fundament of the expertise of historical sciences.

<sup>21</sup> To de-construction as a mental operation of historical thinking and as a method of history teaching cf. Hasberg (2007). Divergent is the approach of Schreiber & Mebus (2005).

<sup>22</sup> Newly, a famous historian of Medieval Studies (Jussen 2016) published an article wherein he argues that the Middle Ages should not be considered in school curricula because the epoch did not exist in past reality. This was already realized formerly (e.g. Hasberg 2008 and 2012). But just for that reason it has to be treated in history lessons in order that the pupils learn how to handle this category (epoch) which is omnipresent in historical culture. The latest remarks to this topic from Pandel (2017) are not just of avail.

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ABSTRACTS  
ZUSSAMENFASSUNGEN  
RÉSUMÉS

**Wolfgang Hasberg**

**Epoch – a useful parameter for measuring time? An urgent inquiry**

*The article broaches the issue of 'epoch' as a category which is still used in Western cultures for periodization in historical sciences as well as in historical culture. This practice affects history lessons because textbooks follow this kind of treatment of (historical) time. For this reason, the article argues that pupils have to learn that time patterns such as 'epoch' are categorical instruments for measuring (historical) time and to deal with time patterns in a critical way. This may be possible by de-constructing epochs. For that purpose the Middle Ages seems to be suitable because it is the only epoch with a determinable beginning and ending (F. Seibt). The article refers to German circumstances but would like to initiate a global debate. Exploring different ways of measuring time may be a way to explain the different ways history is used in different societies and therefore could increase tolerance.*

*Der Artikel thematisiert ‚Epoche‘ als eine Kategorie, die zur Periodisierung von vergangenen Zeitverläufen in westeuropäischen Kulturen nach wie vor in Geschichtswissenschaft und Geschichtskultur Verwendung findet. Dieser Gebrauch wirkt sich auch auf den Geschichtsunterricht aus, wie etwa daran erkennbar wird, dass Schulbücher dieser Zeiteinteilung folgen. Deshalb wird dafür plädiert, die Schülerinnen und Schüler mit solchen Zeitschemata wie Epochen auf kritische Weise vertraut zu machen. Dafür wird vorgeschlagen, Epochen als kategoriale Instrumente für die Messung von Zeit transparent zu machen, indem die Schülerinnen und Schüler Epochen dekonstruieren. Dazu eignet sich insbesondere das Mittelalter, weil es als einzige Epoche über einen Anfang und ein Ende verfügt (F. Seibt). Der Artikel geht von deutschen Verhältnissen aus, möchte aber einen globalen Dialog initiieren, indem er dazu auffordert, die Zeiteinteilungsschemata aufzudecken, die in anderen Kulturen dominieren, um auf diesem Wege gemeinsam nach Möglichkeiten zu suchen, Zeiteinteilungsschemata didaktisch zu bewältigen, indem ihre zeitlichen und sachlichen Determinanten für die Schülerinnen und Schüler sichtbar werden. Die Verständigung über den Gebrauch unterschiedlicher Instrumente zur Messung historischer Zeit wird als eine Basis betrachtet, den unterschiedlichen Umgang mit Geschichte zu erklären und darüber gegenseitige Toleranz zu schaffen.*

*L'article aborde la question de l'« époque » comme une catégorie qui est encore utilisée dans les cultures occidentales pour la périodisation des sciences et de la culture historiques. Cette pratique affecte les leçons d'histoire puisque les manuels scolaires suivent ce type de temps (historique). Pour cette raison, l'article plaide pour que les élèves apprennent que les schémas temporels, périodicités, en tant qu'époques, sont des instruments catégoriques permettant de mesurer le temps (historique) et qu'ils apprennent à les traiter de façon critique. Cela peut être possible en déconstruisant les époques. À cette fin, le Moyen Âge semble convenir, car c'est la seule époque avec un début et une fin qui sont déterminés (F. Seibt). Les articles proposés se réfèrent aux contextes allemands, mais apprécieraient de pouvoir initier un débat mondial faisant la*

*promotion de la transparence des schémas temporels dominants, périodicités présentes, dans différentes cultures, y compris leur développement historique et leur dépendance aux décisions idéologiques. La prise en compte des modes de mesure du temps peut être un moyen d'expliquer les spécificités de l'utilisation de l'histoire dans différentes sociétés et constitue donc une bonne possibilité de déclencher la tolérance.*

### **Denisa Labischová**

The influence of the didactic structuring of learning tasks on the quality of perception, analysis and interpretation of a historical cartoon

*This article presents the results of qualitative research conducted in 2015 and 2016 on a sample of pupils at Czech lower secondary schools (age 14-15) and upper secondary schools (age 17-18). The research drew on a pilot study carried out in 2014, whose aim was to determine the extent to which didactically structured learning tasks influence the quality of perception, analysis and interpretation of an iconographic historical source – specifically a cartoon. The research presented here applied two methods of data collection and processing: analysis of audio recordings via open axial coding, and the eyetracking method (which is still not yet widely used in history didactics research). The results showed that the didactic structuring of learning tasks has a clear positive influence on pupils' perception strategies and on the quality of their analysis and interpretation of the cartoon. If pupils are not guided to observe the image in detail, to identify the various symbols and understand their meanings, they generally overlook these significant elements entirely, and their interpretation remains on a very superficial level. This finding should encourage textbook authors and history teachers to place more emphasis on structuring learning tasks related to historical sources in such a way as to guide pupils to develop their historical thinking skills.*

*Der Beitrag stellt die Ergebnisse einer auf qualitativen Forschungsmethoden beruhenden Untersuchung aus den Jahren 2015 und 2016 vor, die mit Schülerinnen und Schülern der 9. Klasse der Allgemeinbildenden Schulen und des 3. Jahrgangs an Gymnasien durchgeführt wurde. Die Untersuchung schliesst dabei an eine vorangegangene Studie aus dem Jahr 2014 an. Sie hatte das Ziel herauszufinden, inwieweit eine durchdachte und didaktisch strukturierte Lernaufgabe die Wahrnehmungs-, Analyse- und Interpretationsfähigkeit im Hinblick auf ikonographische historische Quellen – in diesem Falle handelte es sich um Karikaturen – beeinflusst. In der vorliegenden Untersuchung wurden zwei Methoden der Datenerhebung und Datenanalyse verwendet: einerseits die Analyse von Audiomitschnitten unter Verwendung eines offenen, axialen Kodierens und Kategorisierens, andererseits die im Fach Geschichtsdidaktik bisher nur vereinzelt genutzte Methode des ‚Eyetrackings‘. Die Untersuchungsergebnisse zeigten, dass die didaktische Strukturierung von Lernaufgaben eindeutig einen positiven Einfluss auf die Perzeptionsstrategien der Schüler und Schülerinnen und auf das qualitative Niveau der Analysen und Interpretationen von historischen Karikaturen hatte. Wenn Schülerinnen und Schüler dagegen nicht gezielt zu einer gründlichen Bildbetrachtung angeleitet wurden, d. h. zur Identifikation einzelner Symbole und ihrer Bedeutung, übersahen sie diese wichtigen Merkmale und die Interpretation wurde insgesamt sehr oberflächlich. Dieses Forschungsergebnis sollte sowohl Gestalter von Geschichtsschulbüchern als auch Geschichtslehrer*

*dazu anregen, ein grösseres Gewicht auf die Konstruktion von Lernaufgaben hinsichtlich historischer Quellen zu legen, damit durch die Aufgaben bei den Schülerinnen und Schülern der Allgemeinbildenden Schulen und Gymnasien eine bessere Entwicklung der historischen Kompetenzen erreicht werden kann.*

*Cet article présente les résultats d'une recherche qualitative menée en 2015 et en 2016 auprès d'un échantillon d'élèves provenant de la neuvième année du primaire et de la troisième année du lycée. Cette recherche était basée sur une étude pilote de 2014 dont l'objectif était de découvrir dans quelle mesure une tâche d'enseignement réfléchie et didactiquement structurée influence la qualité de la perception, l'analyse et l'interprétation d'une source iconographique historique, plus spécifiquement une caricature. Deux méthodes de collecte et de traitement des données ont été utilisées dans cette recherche qualitative : l'analyse de l'enregistrement audio par le biais d'un codage axial ouvert, et par la méthode du suivi du regard, qui est encore marginalement utilisée dans le domaine de la recherche sur la didactique de l'histoire. Les résultats de la recherche ont montré que la structuration didactique d'une tâche d'enseignement a clairement un impact positif sur les stratégies de perception des élèves et sur le niveau qualitatif de l'analyse et l'interprétation de la caricature historique. Si les élèves ne sont pas amenés à l'observer l'image en détail et à identifier des symboles variés et à saisir leur signification, ils négligent dans la plupart du temps ces éléments importants et leurs interprétations sont généralement très superficielles. Ce résultat devrait encourager les auteurs de manuels scolaires d'histoire et les enseignants d'histoire à mettre davantage l'emphase sur la construction de tâches d'enseignement liées à des sources historiques afin que ces tâches conduisent les élèves à développer leurs compétences liées à la pensée historique.*

### **Mare Oja, Grete Rohi and Merike Värs**

History teaching at post-elementary school in Estonia – successes and challenges

*In 2016 the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research asked Tallinn University to find out if the provisions of the national curriculum in history (2011/2014) are feasible for students, which competences are achieved, skills developed, teaching methods and materials used, how control, assessment and evaluation is organised and in which direction further development of the syllabus should go? Based on research, it can be argued that although teachers consider the development of skills and competences to be essential, they mainly work with textbooks, and the teacher usually talks herself/himself in lessons. Analysis of historical sources has a modest place, problem solving is not considered applicable for students, and oral questioning is traditionally predominant. There is room for development in organizing learner-centred learning process and developing student creativity.*

*Im Jahr 2016 trat das estnische Ministerium für Bildung und Forschung zur Abklärung der folgenden Fragen an die Universität Tallinn heran: Erscheinen die Bestimmungen des nationalen Geschichts-Curriculums (2011/2014) praktikabel? Welche Kompetenzen werden erreicht, welche Fähigkeiten entwickelt, welche Lehrmethoden und welche Materialien werden benutzt? Wie wird die Kontrolle, Bewertung und Evaluierung gehandhabt und in welche Richtung sollte eine weitere Entwicklung des Curriculums weisen? Basierend auf den gewonnenen Forschungsergebnissen kann festgehalten werden, dass – obwohl Lehrer und*

*Lehrerinnen die Entwicklung von Fähigkeiten und Kompetenzen für wesentlich halten – sie doch hauptsächlich mit dem Lehrbuch arbeiten und meistens selbst in den Stunden reden. Historische Quellen werden nur moderat eingesetzt, Problemlösekompetenzen gelten nicht als wesentlich, das Lehrer-Schüler-Gespräch ist immer noch die dominanteste Methode. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass hier noch Raum für die Entwicklung eines stärker schülerorientierten Lernprozesses vorhanden ist, der Schülern und Schülerinnen eine aktivere Rolle zugesteht.*

*En 2016, le ministère de l'Éducation et de la Recherche estonien a demandé à l'Université Tallinn si les visées du programme national en histoire (2011/2014) étaient atteignables par les élèves, quelles compétences sont acquises, les aptitudes développées, les méthodes d'enseignement et les matériels utilisés, ainsi que comment contrôler et organiser les tâches et l'évaluation et finalement dans quelle direction devrait aller le développement du programme. Basé sur les résultats de cette recherche, nous pouvons affirmer que même si les enseignants considèrent que le développement des aptitudes et des compétences est essentiel, ils travaillent principalement avec des manuels scolaires, l'enseignant se parle généralement à lui-même durant les leçons, l'analyse des sources historiques occupe une toute petite place et la résolution de problème n'est pas considérée comme bénéfique pour les élèves, le questionnement à l'oral est traditionnellement prédominant. Dans ce contexte, il est souhaitable de développer l'organisation d'un processus d'apprentissage centré sur l'apprenant et de développer la créativité des élèves.*

### **Anu Raudsepp and Tõnu Tannberg**

The impact of World War I on the rise of national states: challenges of history textbook writing

*The main aim of this article is to address new challenges of the treatment of World War I in history textbooks. From the point of view of Estonian history, the most important consequence of World War I is the fact that along with the breakdown of the Russian Empire the rise of the independent state of Estonia became possible after its centuries-long colonization. One of the tasks of modern history textbooks is to teach students primary skills in handling reference/source materials, provided in history textbooks in the form of illustrations, written and visual sources. Thus, when dealing with the rise of national states the article will give examples of the treatment of biographical sources in history textbooks. An analysis and critical interpretation of ego-documents can show events from the perspectives of different people and help us to understand history better. The main topics of research are: on the Estonians in World War I, on outlines of modern historiography in Estonia and Russia, on the breakdown of the Russian Empire and the rise of national states in Russian and Estonian historical studies, the breakdown of the Russian Empire and the rise of national states in the most recent history textbooks in Estonia, diaries as sources in the study of the rise of national states in historical textbooks.*

*Das Ziel dieses Artikels ist, neue Herausforderungen bei der Behandlung des Ersten Weltkriegs in Geschichtsschulbüchern zu diskutieren. Aus der Sicht der estnischen Geschichtsschreibung ist die wichtigste Folge des Ersten Weltkriegs, dass mit dem Zusammenbruch des Russischen Reiches der Aufstieg eines unabhängigen Staates Estland nach jahrhundertelanger Kolonisierung möglich wurde. Eine der Aufgaben moderner*

*Geschichtsschulbücher ist es vor diesem Hintergrund, den Schülern und Schülerinnen Kompetenzen im kritischen Umgang mit Darstellungen und Quellen, die in Schulbüchern zur Verfügung gestellt werden, zu vermitteln. In diesem Artikel werden Beispiele vorgestellt, wie Geschichtsschulbücher im Zusammenhang mit dem Thema des Aufstiegs von Nationalstaaten mit biographischen Quellen umgehen. Eine Analyse und kritische Interpretation von Ego-Dokumenten kann zeigen, dass Ereignisse aus der Perspektive verschiedener Menschen unterschiedlich dargestellt werden können. Diese Erkenntnis trägt dazu bei, die Geschichte besser zu verstehen. Die untersuchten Hauptthemen sind: die Esten im Ersten Weltkrieg, Überblicke zur modernen Geschichtsschreibung in Estland und Russland, der Zusammenbruch des Russischen Reiches und der Aufstieg der Nationalstaaten in der russischen und estnischen Geschichtswissenschaft sowie in Geschichtsschulbüchern in Estland sowie Tagebücher als Quellen in Geschichtsbüchern zur Darstellung des Aufstiegs von Nationalstaaten.*

*L'objectif principal de cet article est de répondre aux nouveaux défis du traitement de la Première Guerre mondiale dans les manuels d'histoire. Du point de vue de l'histoire estonienne, la conséquence la plus importante de la Première Guerre mondiale est le fait qu'avec l'effondrement de l'Empire russe, la montée de l'État indépendant d'Estonie est devenue possible après sa colonisation de plusieurs siècles. L'une des tâches des manuels d'histoire moderne est d'enseigner aux élèves les techniques de base du traitement des documents de référence/sources matérielles, fournis dans les manuels d'histoire sous forme d'illustrations, de sources écrites et visuelles. Ainsi, en ce qui concerne la montée des États nationaux, l'article donnera des exemples de traitement des sources biographiques dans les manuels d'histoire. Une analyse et une interprétation critique de ces égo-documents peuvent montrer des événements du point de vue de différentes personnes et nous aider à mieux comprendre l'histoire. Les principaux thèmes de recherche sont : les Estoniens durant la Première Guerre mondiale, les contours de l'historiographie moderne en Estonie et en Russie, l'effondrement de l'Empire russe et la montée des États nationaux dans les études historiques russe et estonienne, des États nationaux dans les manuels d'histoire les plus récents d'Estonie, les journaux comme sources d'étude de la montée des États nationaux dans les manuels d'histoire.*

### **Stanisław Roszak**

Between dominance and democracy in the selection and content of textbooks in Poland

*In the 1990s, the Polish system of education has gone through important reforms. Their main objective was the relegation of encyclopedic learning (the so-called didactic materialism) and the introduction of active teaching methods. New topics from the history of everyday life, the history of material culture and the history of mentality have been introduced. Due to the limited number of hours devoted to the implementation of the new national curriculum, teachers use mostly textbooks. Until 1989 there was only one history book - approved by censors, accepted by the Ministry, published by the state publishing house in Warsaw – WSiP. After the political turn many new publishers were established, who began to issue textbooks. Approximately twenty proposals for each stage of education appeared on the education market. Teachers decide which of these books is the best for their students. Such books can only be used in school, and applied to the lesson after approval by the Ministry of National Education.*

*In den 1990er Jahren hat das polnische Bildungssystem wichtige Reformen durchlaufen. Ihr Hauptziel war die Abschaffung des enzyklopädischen Lernens (des so genannten didaktischen Materialismus) und die Einführung aktivierender Lehrmethoden. Parallel dazu wurden neue Themen aus dem Bereich der Alltagsgeschichte, der Mentalitätsgeschichte und der materiellen Kultur ergänzt. Aufgrund der begrenzten Anzahl von Stunden, die für die Umsetzung des neuen nationalen Lehrplans verfügbar sind, nutzen Lehrer und Lehrerinnen zur Implementierung der neuen Ziele hauptsächlich Geschichtslehrbücher im Unterricht. Bis 1989 gab es nur ein von der Zensur genehmigtes, vom Ministerium akzeptiertes und vom Staatsverlag in Warschau herausgegebenes Geschichtsschulbuch (WsiP). Nach der politischen Wende wurden viele neue Verlage gegründet, die mit der Herausgabe von Lehrbüchern begannen. Auf dem Bildungsmarkt erscheinen inzwischen ca. 20 Vorschläge für jede Bildungsstufe. Es obliegt den Lehrern und Lehrerinnen zu entscheiden, welches dieser Bücher das Beste für ihre Schüler und Schülerinnen ist. Um in der Schule genutzt werden zu können, müssen die gewählten Bücher allerdings vom polnischen Ministerium für Bildung vorab genehmigt worden sein.*

*Dans les années 1990, le système éducatif polonais a connu d'importantes réformes. Leur objectif principal était la relégation de l'apprentissage encyclopédique (appelé le matérialisme didactique) et l'introduction de méthodes actives d'enseignement. De nouveaux thèmes de l'histoire de la vie quotidienne, de l'histoire de la culture matérielle et de l'histoire des mentalités ont été introduits. En raison du nombre limité d'heures consacrées à la mise en œuvre du nouveau programme national, les enseignants utilisent principalement les manuels scolaires pour enseigner l'histoire.*

### **Barbara Silva**

History, narrative and the public: Towards a social dimension of history as a discipline

*This article seeks to reflect on public history from the problems historic narrative perspective poses to the discipline of history. We understand narrative as a shared space between public and academic history, which can address aspects regarding time, space and, especially, the social dimension of history. These are also key aspects when teaching history, and therefore related to history didactics. This article seeks to question the dichotomy between academic and public history, and to regard them as part of the same process.*

*Dieser Artikel versucht, die ‚public history‘ ausgehend von dem Problem der historischen Erzählperspektive zu beleuchten und reflektiert dabei sowohl die geschichtswissenschaftliche Perspektive als auch die Rolle des Historikers. Narrative werden dabei gleichermaßen als von der Fachwissenschaft als auch von der Öffentlichkeit gemeinsam genutzte Erzählungen verstanden, die Themen wie Zeit, Raum sowie speziell die soziale Dimension von Geschichte fokussieren. Dies sind auch zentrale Aspekte des Geschichtsunterrichts, so dass auch die Geschichtsdidaktik davon berührt ist. Dieser Artikel versucht, die Dichotomie zwischen Geschichtswissenschaft und ‚public history‘ zu hinterfragen und im Gegensatz dazu die Gemeinsamkeiten bezogen auf den Umgang mit historische Narrationen hervorzuheben.*

*Cet article cherche à réfléchir à l'histoire publique à partir de problèmes liés à la perspective historique narrative, à la discipline de l'histoire ainsi que du rôle de l'historien. Nous*

*considérons la narration comme un espace partagé entre l'histoire publique et l'histoire enseignée, qui peut aborder des aspects concernant le temps, l'espace et, en particulier, la dimension sociale de l'histoire. Ce sont également des aspects clés de l'enseignement de l'histoire, et donc liés à la didactique de l'histoire. Cet article s'interroge sur la dichotomie entre l'histoire enseignée et l'histoire publique, et cherche à les placer dans le même processus.*

### **Elias Stouraitis**

#### **Deconstructing the historical culture of Massively Multiplayer Online Games: A participatory interactive past**

*Living in the era of the fourth Industrial Revolution is characterized as a turning point in post contemporary societies since people bring together different cultures and collective memories through searching, sharing, transferring, visualizing, querying and updating several data. Within this spectrum, the constructors and players of digital games constantly produce data by creating new game material or just playing. Game data and game mechanics combined with fun provide users with a sense of the past. The greatest interaction between data and games' mechanics is well-known in Massively Multiplayer Online Games (MMOGs) through which anyone can participate and collaborate with anyone around the world. This article will clarify the origins and the meaning of Massively Multiplayer Online Games' (MMOGs) historical culture including some reflective ideas on how these games change the notion of history.*

*Das Leben im Zeitalter der so genannten ‚Vierten Industriellen Revolution‘ wird als Wendepunkt für postmoderne Gesellschaften verstanden, da Menschen verschiedene Kulturen und kollektive Erinnerungen durch Suchen, Teilen, Übertragen, Visualisieren, Abfragen und Aktualisieren unterschiedlicher Daten zusammenbringen. Innerhalb dieses Spektrums produzieren die Entwickler und Spieler digitaler Spiele ständig Daten, indem sie neues Spielmaterial erstellen oder einfach nur vorhandene Spiele nutzen. Spieldaten und Spielmechanik kombiniert mit Spaß geben den Usern einen vermeintlichen Eindruck von vergangenem Geschehen. Die größte Interaktion zwischen Daten und Spielmechanik ist in Massively Multiplayer Online Games (Massen-Online-GemeinschaftsSpiel; MMOGs) gegeben, über die jeder mit jedem auf der ganzen Welt interagieren und zusammenarbeiten kann. Dieser Artikel wird die Anfänge und die Bedeutung von Massively Multiplayer Online Games (MMOGs) für die Geschichtskultur verdeutlichen, sowie einige Reflektionen daran anschließen, wie diese Spiele historische Vorstellungen verändern können.*

*Vivre à l'ère de la quatrième révolution industrielle est caractérisé par un virage majeur dans les sociétés post-contemporaines depuis les personnes rassemblent différentes cultures et mémoires collectives en recherchant, partageant, transférant, visualisant, interrogeant et mettant à jour de nombreuses données. Dans ce spectre, les constructeurs et les acteurs des jeux numériques produisent constamment des données en créant de nouveaux éléments de jeu ou simplement en jouant. Les données des jeux et les mécanismes de jeu combinés au plaisir procurent aux joueurs un sentiment lié au passé. La plus grande interaction entre les données et les mécanismes des jeux est bien connue des joueurs de jeux en ligne majoritairement multijoueurs (MMOG) grâce auxquels chacun peut participer et collaborer avec n'importe qui dans le monde. Cet article clarifiera les origines et la signification de la culture historique des jeux en ligne majoritairement*

*multijoueurs (MMOG), y compris quelques réflexions sur la façon dont ces jeux modifient la notion d'histoire.*

### **Karel van Nieuwenhuysse**

The 'Great History Quiz': Measuring public historical knowledge and thinking in Flanders

*This article reports on the principles, aims, design and analysis of the results of a large-scale online 'Great History Quiz' organized in Flanders (Belgium). The quiz did not solely test a lay audience's historical knowledge, but particularly focused on testing its ability to debunk historical myths and its historical reasoning skills. Based on an analysis of the results of a set of 70 multiple choice questions launched among a test panel of 1013 volunteers, eighteen questions were selected to be part of the final, online quiz, in which ultimately 100,563 people participated. While the results were good regarding historical knowledge, they reveal shortcomings in historical reasoning. It is argued that the way a lay audience deals with history would benefit from a manual.*

*Dieser Artikel berichtet über die Prinzipien und Ziele, das Design und die Analyse der Ergebnisse eines groß angelegten online Geschichtsquiz (Großes Geschichtsquiz) in Flandern (Belgien). Das Quiz prüfte nicht nur das historische Wissen eines Laienpublikums, sondern konzentrierte sich insbesondere darauf, zum einen die Fähigkeit der Teilnehmenden zu testen, historische Mythen aufzudecken, zum anderen ihre Leistungen im Bereich der historischen Argumentation zu analysieren. Basierend auf einer Untersuchung der Ergebnisse einer Reihe von 70 Multiple-Choice-Fragen, die in einer Testgruppe von 1013 Freiwilligen lanciert worden waren, wurden 18 Fragen ausgewählt, die Teil des abschließenden Online-Quiz waren, an dem letztendlich 100 563 Personen teilnahmen. Während die Ergebnisse in Hinblick auf historische Wissensbestände gut waren, offenbaren sie Mängel in der historischen Argumentation. Ausgehend von den Ergebnissen der Studie wird geschlossen, dass die Art und Weise, wie ein Laienpublikum mit Geschichte umgeht, der Art und Weise entspricht, wie man mit enzyklopädischem Handbuchwissen umgeht.*

*Cet article présente les principes, les objectifs, la conception et l'analyse des résultats d'un « Grand Quiz d'Histoire » en ligne organisé dans toute la Flandre en Belgique. Le quiz ne testait pas seulement les connaissances historiques d'un public profane, mais il voulait surtout tester la capacité du public à démystifier des mythes historiques et ses compétences de raisonnement historique. Basé sur l'analyse des résultats de soixante-dix questions à choix multiples provenant d'un panel de 1 013 volontaires, dix-huit questions ont été sélectionnées pour faire partie du quiz en ligne auquel 100 563 personnes ont finalement participé. Les résultats étaient bien en ce qui concerne les connaissances historiques, cependant ils révèlent des lacunes liées à la pensée historique. Nous soutenons que la façon dont le public profane traite de l'histoire aurait tout à gagner notamment grâce à l'apport d'un manuel scolaire.*

**Karel van Nieuwenhuysse and Bernd Stienaers**

The national past according to Flemish secondary school history teachers: Representations of Belgian history in the context of a nation state in decline

*In Belgian-Flemish society, no master narrative of the national past exists. In Flemish history education, the basic frame of reference is European; the national past is only marginally present. In Flemish popular historical culture, various and often conflicting narratives of the national past circulate. This article reports on a small-scale, qualitative study examining which narratives 11th-12th grade history teachers construct while designing a lesson series of the national past, and what particularly influences them. Sixteen experienced history teachers executed a performance task in which they selected the ten historical events they considered most important to the national past, and would teach about. In subsequent individual semi-structured interviews, their selection method was addressed, in search of the use of narrative templates. No dominant template stemming from popular historical culture dominated most teachers' thinking. They rather applied a European narrative template, in which a parallel with the history education standards can be recognized.*

*In der belgisch-flämischen Gesellschaft existiert keine Meister-Erzählung der nationalen Vergangenheit. In der flämischen Geschichtserzählung ist der Grundrahmen europäisch; die nationale Vergangenheit ist dagegen nur marginal präsent. In der flämischen populären Geschichtskultur zirkulieren verschiedene und oft widersprüchliche Erzählungen der nationalen Vergangenheit. Dieser Beitrag berichtet über eine kleine, qualitative Studie, in der untersucht wurde, welche Erzählungen Lehrer der 11. und 12. Klasse bei der Gestaltung einer Unterrichtsreihe zur nationalen Vergangenheit konstruierten, und welchen Einflüssen sie dabei im Besonderen unterlagen. Sechzehn erfahrene Geschichtslehrer führten Unterrichtspräsentationen durch, in denen sie zehn historische Ereignisse vorstellten, die sie für die nationale Vergangenheit für wichtig hielten und lehren würden. In nachfolgenden halbstrukturierten Einzelinterviews wurde ihre Auswahlmethode – auf der Suche nach der Verwendung von narrativen Vorlagen – angesprochen. Es zeigte sich dabei, dass die meisten Lehrer keinen dominanten populärhistorischen Mustern folgten. Vielmehr nutzten sie europäisch strukturierte Narrative, die Parallelen zu den Standards der Geschichtsvermittlung aufwiesen.*

*Dans la société belge-flamande, il n'existe pas de grand récit lié au passé national. L'enseignement de l'histoire en Flandre possède un cadre de référence européen ; le passé national est très peu présent. Dans la culture historique populaire flamande, des récits divers et souvent contradictoires du passé national circulent. Cet article présente les résultats d'une petite étude qualitative, dans laquelle ont été examinés les récits construits, par seize enseignants d'histoire de cinquième et de sixième secondaire, en conceptualisant une série de leçons sur le passé national, et particulièrement ce qui a influencé leurs choix. Les enseignants d'histoire expérimentés ont réalisé une tâche dans laquelle ils devaient sélectionner dix événements historiques qu'ils considéraient comme les plus importants liés au passé national, et qu'ils enseigneraient. Les entretiens semi-structurés individuels subséquents avaient pour objectif de rechercher leur utilisation de modèles narratifs, ainsi leur méthode de sélection a été questionnée.*

*Aucun modèle dominant issu de la culture historique populaire n'était dominant dans la pensée de la plupart des enseignants. Ils ont plutôt utilisé un modèle narratif européen, dans lequel on peut reconnaître un parallèle avec les normes d'enseignement de l'histoire.*

### **Joanna Wojdon**

#### Museum lessons and the teacher's role

*History museums are regarded as one of the first and most important public history institutions. Their educational offer is often used by history teachers. However, it turns out that the relations between museum educators and teachers are not always smooth and unproblematic. This article discusses the mutual perceptions of the two groups and suggests the possibility of bringing them into closer cooperation for the benefit of pupils.*

*Historische Museen gelten als eine der ersten und wichtigsten Adressen, wenn es um die Vermittlung von Geschichte in der Öffentlichkeit geht. Ihr Bildungsangebot wird oft von Geschichtslehrern und -lehrerinnen genutzt. Manchmal erweisen sich jedoch die Beziehungen zwischen Museumspädagogen und schulischem Lehrpersonal als problematisch. Dieser Artikel diskutiert die gegenseitige Wahrnehmung der beiden Gruppen und schlägt Möglichkeiten einer engeren Zusammenarbeit zum Nutzen der Schülerinnen und Schüler vor.*

*Les musées d'histoire sont considérés comme l'une des premières et des plus importantes institutions d'histoire publique. Leur offre éducative est souvent utilisée par les professeurs d'histoire. Cependant, il s'avère que les relations entre les éducateurs de musées et les enseignants ne sont pas toujours simples et sans souci. Cet article traite des perceptions mutuelles de ces deux groupes et suggère des options afin de les amener à coopérer plus étroitement en vue du bénéfice des élèves.*

### **Sara Zamir and Lea Baratz**

#### Victim themes in contemporary history curricula for state junior high schools in Israel – can the past construct future consciousness of victimhood?

*National victim themes in history curricula in Israel actually present a real dilemma for any educational system which is preoccupied with the past: On one hand, many historical chapters, which include the narrative of the victim, refer to genuine suffering, historical periods and the national ethos of Jews and Israelis. On the other hand, excessive use of the victim's narrative in educational materials might in fact educate towards inherent mistrust and even perpetuate hostility. The dilemma mentioned is being portrayed in the corpus of contemporary history curricula in Israel, which include the victim's narrative of the Jewish people.*

*In den Curricula für Geschichte in Israel stellen die Themen, in denen die nationalen Opfer behandelt werden, wie in jedem Bildungssystem, das sich mit der Vergangenheit beschäftigt, ein Dilemma dar. Einerseits beziehen sich viele historische Kapitel, in denen die Opfernarrative enthalten sind, auf das wirkliche Leiden, die historischen Zeitepochen und das Nationalgefühl der Juden und Israelis. Andererseits kann die übertriebene Nutzung der Erzählungen der*

*Opfer in Bildungsmaterialien zu einem inhärenten Misstrauen führen und sogar bestehende Animositäten aufrechterhalten. Das erwähnte Dilemma zeichnet sich auch in den gegenwärtigen Curricula für Geschichte in Israel ab, die das Opfernarrativ des jüdischen Volkes enthalten.*

*Les thèmes abordant les victimes nationales dans les programmes d'histoire d'Israël constituent actuellement un réel dilemme pour tout système éducatif qui est préoccupé par le passé. D'une part, de nombreux chapitres historiques, incluant le récit de la victime, font référence à une souffrance véritable à des périodes historiques précises et à l'ethos national (c'est-à-dire au caractère commun) des Juifs et des Israéliens. D'autre part, l'utilisation excessive du récit de la victime dans le matériel pédagogique risque d'éduquer les élèves à la méfiance qui y est inhérente, voire de perpétuer leur hostilité. Le dilemme mentionné est présent dans le corpus des programmes d'histoire contemporaine en Israël ; ce corpus à analyser inclut également le récit du peuple juif en tant que victime.*



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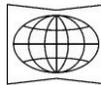
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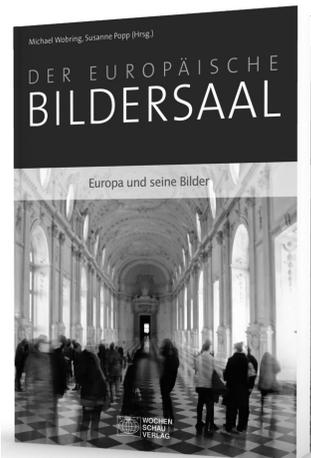
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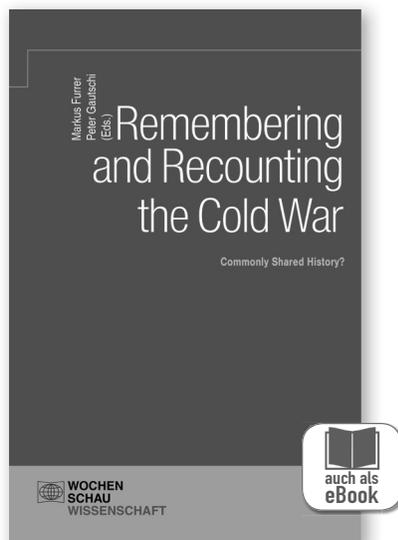
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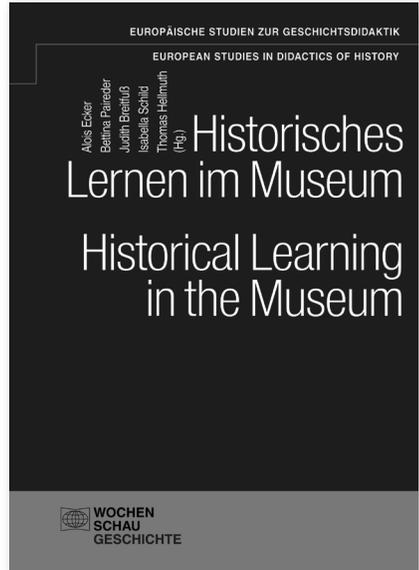
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