

# YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

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## INITIAL REMARKS

To understand this article - written as a lecture in Curitiba two years ago, actualised here of course - and its intention in a correct way, some remarks are necessary. To anticipate the message of the text: *Even if you would like to copy the German theories of teaching history (which I warn you explicitly instead of advising you!), you could not successfully do so* (some good reasons for this warning are following). Instead of that, it may be very useful to compare German and Brazilian ideas and experiences and to decide after own reflections, what German proposals should be experimented with.<sup>2</sup>

*Cultural diversity of Brazil and Germany:* Brazil is in a post-colonial and post-slavery status, as a global player in globalization in the second generation. It is a "tiger-state" of the BRIC-group, together with Russia, India and China. This means a *threshold-state* on its way to a world-power (among others). Germany is a big (but second order) European country, though with late and little direct colonial experience (none in America), but by chance it gave the first intensive description - *Staden 1557* - of the country to Brazil (at least its natives). Germany waged an imperialistic and genocidal war of extermination in 1939/45, not only against Jews.<sup>3</sup> Now it is an old industrial society in a confederation of European states, with some actual problems.

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2 The interest is not "selling a German solution" to you, but improving a multi-cultural, inter-cultural and trans-cultural discourse, building up a meta-theoretical model, which bridges and mediates the necessarily different actions in different countries.

3 It is not easy to live in a post-criminal society, which is accepted everywhere, but controlled in all steps or movements by an international mechanism of careful observation as well. Every-one knows the heavy German mass-murders and genocides - not only against the Jews - two or three generations ago (1939 to 1945): You have no problem of guilt (though many people think so), but one of shame and one of liability (others call it responsibility). At least, young Germans may say: "Please, don't confound me with my (great-)grandfathers!" As a German therefore, you have severe interests and efforts in reconciliation.

*Special own position and state in the debate:* I am an expert of Germany (partly of Europe), but a person in the oppositional minority, politically and scientifically. In distance from the others, the mainstream of the colleges, my work is a basically empirical one. It is theoretical, pragmatic and normative as well. But very big contrasts appear between all those four approaches. I worked very hard to mitigate the problem of theory-practice-gap in two big projects during the last two decades of my career. My group strongly cooperated in text-book experiments, text-book production and in-service further teacher-training with a lot of best-practice-teachers in international contexts.

*Competence Model and Competence Measuring:* As already said, my position is not the dominating one in Germany. Now I go on working in a group from different universities ("FUER Geschichtsbewusstsein" - "In favour of historical consciousness"); but we have only published one model "Competence of Thinking Historically" (Körber et al. 2007) among some others, although done by a collective of academics and together with best-practice-teachers. Neither me nor my colleges are satisfied with the outcomes of history learning in Germany and Europe. But now we try to evaluate our competence model ("empirical verification") and to test students' (ninthgraders') historical competence/performance.

*Relation of Anglo-American and German (or Central-European) didactics:* Both try to concentrate on abilities, qualifications, competences instead of a canon of (national) historical knowledge. British-North-Americans come more from the direction of psychology, of the structures and logics of the *general* development of thinking (Piaget, Wygotski, Selman, Kohlberg), Germans more from theory of history, the logic of *historical* thinking (Droysen, Danto, Rüsen). Anglo-Americans (Seixas, Wineberg, Lee, Shemilt) prefer the notion "Second Order Concepts", Germans/Austrians adhere to the notion "historical competences" and "general historical competence". Both can be widely translated to each other, but are not yet translated sufficiently and in detail.

## **WHAT IS HISTORY? AND WHAT IS HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS?**

History is not the most important deeds and facts of the past - and not a (so-called) "photo-realistic" picture, model or simulation of the past. For fundamental epistemological and methodological reasons, this is impossible. Necessarily, history is a selective retrospection, a hypothetic construction, a sense-making narrative, an explanation from a special view-point of the present. To use an easy - and more or less non-controversial - example (avoiding the more disputed question of reasons for the differences between Brazil and the USA): "Dad, why are the Brazilians speaking Portuguese and the Surinam people Dutch?"

This rather trivial question can neither be answered by logic considerations or conclusions nor by natural science descriptions or experiments. You simply have to tell a story about past events, processes and changes with lasting impacts for the present situation. The "discovery" of "America", the pope's decision and peaceful partition of the "New World", the competition of European colonial powers, the slave-work on sugar-plantations, the life of pirates and Paulistas - as well as other particles of the past - will probably appear in this story and be combined to a sensemaking whole.

History is not a list of past facts, but a flexible set of stories about past events and structures explaining the present state of affairs and making fit for the future in one or the other way, e.g. in the case of our example: "Dad, is it better to learn Spanish, Portuguese or Dutch as a foreign language?" This dialogue between interpretation of the past, perception of the present and expectation of the future can be called "Historical Consciousness". It means coping with the past and with history, asking questions, which can only be answered historically, seeking own answers and stories, examining others' solutions and narratives, changing own concepts (interpretations of the world and the self), plans and expectations. A relation to the present, a contribution to orientation in critical moments and ambivalent situations of private, professional and political life is constitutive for historical consciousness. Human existence

is unavoidably ("anthropological condition") spanned between past and future, and this fourth dimension of reality - "Time" - is handled by coping with history.

GRAPH 1: STRUCTURAL (UN-AVOIDABLE) CHARACTERISTICS OF HISTORICAL RECOGNITION

	Narrativity: Character of Telling	Sense- Making: Liability of Results	Contribution to Identity: Relation to Person
Construction: Production of Synthesis	Hypothetical Character: Need of Theory		Alterity: Understanding Foreignness
Selectivity: Choice of Criteria and Material	Perspectivity: Structuring Leading Standpoint		Retrospectivity: Leaping Backwards in Time

(von Borries 2004b, 46)

History is not only given in a unique form or code. In the society, it occurs in rather different modes which can float, change, or be transformed to each other, but also lead to serious conflicts. The memory of a victim (like the present President Dilma Rousseff) - or a culprit - of the Brazilian military government (1964-1985) are history-narratives as well as a university professor's lengthy book. Surely, they are often far more influential in the society - and, if told authentically and in all conscience, legitimate. If we show only scientific history to our pupils, we cannot meet their experience; if we exclude the special claims and strategies of gaining distance and reflection, we rob them of a chance.

GRAPH 2: STAGES OF CODIFICATION OF HISTORY

Stage	Typical Forms and Agencies	Claims and Results
Biographical Experience	Establishment of Personal/ Social Identity from Individual Memory	Claim of Personal Witness; Construction of Biography
Communicative Remembrance	Informal Reports and Narrations in Families, Neighbourhoods, Communities, Peer-groups	Claim of Authenticity; Transference of Experience

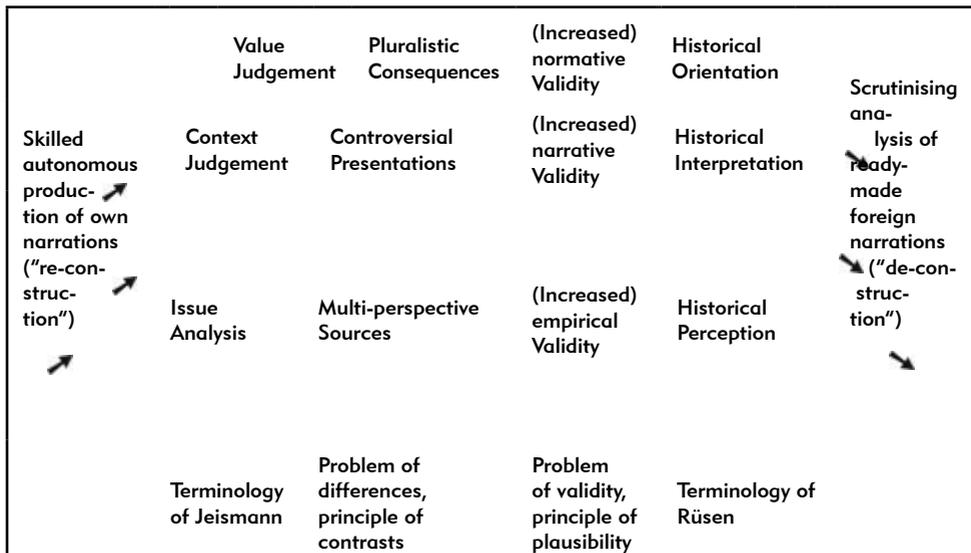
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Cultural Tradition	Institutional Fixation in State and Church (Army, School, Sermon, Ritual); but also in Parallel Minorities (Sects)	Claim of Obligation/ Commitment; Effect of Affiliation
Scientific Discipline	Methodological Regulations and International/Intercultural Exchange as Control; Systematic Change of Perspectives in un-hierarchic Discourse	Claim of Rationality; Achievement of Distance

(compare von Borries 2001, 241-247)

Even more important is the fact that investigating history, telling history, and thinking historically is not a completely homogenous action, but a complex interdependent set of approaches or methodical operations. To fix a special particle from the past via sources (issue analysis) is a rather different process from clarifying a temporal and causal process (context judgement) and a moral or political evaluation for today (value judgement).

GRAPH 3: PARTIAL OPERATIONS OF HISTORICAL COGNITION (ALSO LEARNING AND RESEARCHING)



(see Jeismann 1985, 62ff., v. Borries 2004, 245ff. and Rüsen 1983, 85ff., 1989, 93ff., 1994, 64ff., 164ff.)

Unfortunately, famous German scholars (Jeismann, Rüsen) have invented various systems of names for these operations. But a common structure and a certain translation are possible (see Körber et al. 2007). The graph 3 can clarify the structure.

If we have accepted the three steps of working in history, we meet an additional difficulty. Since historical narratives are perspective-dependent and retrospective constructs, they show different (even contradicting) versions; everyone knows that - even today - people in Paraguay tell the "Great War" (1864-1870) in a radically dissenting way, than Brazilians do - under the name "Triple-Alliance-War" or "War of Paraguay". An elaborated mode of covering history has to cope with this fact. On the other hand, we cannot omit the question of "truth", at least plausibility and exchange between different perspectives. Even if there is *not one exclusively and perfectly true version of history*, the grade of possible consent has to be tested in any case (falsification and blinders' one-sidedness are forbidden). Thus, the categories of "contrast" and of "validity" have to be respected on all three levels.

Additionally, it is clear that school students are no university professors of history - and cannot be educated to their position. Though it is necessary to keep in mind that all history is possible and assured only because of the existence of primary sources (texts, pictures, objects, even present state in some respect), normal people are often not producing historical narratives, but using and consuming those ones which have been told by others already. This mode of "doing history" needs methodological tools. In the graph, this is symbolized by the arrows representing the two basic activities and abilities of "re-construction" and "de-construction".

### **EMPIRICAL APPROACHES TO "HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS"**

This may have been abstract, but now I will present practical examples. If we are using the concept of "historical consciousness" instead of - or at least in addition to - "history", we change perspectives and focusses. We access the problem from the learner's side, not the teacher's one. We start from today's society and problems as well, not from the past and its past reality. We concentrate on communication and learning processes, not on neo-positivist or neo-historicist historical science. Perhaps the most important point is that we can

look to the phenomena with means of empirical research, qualitative ones as well as quantitative ones.

### **QUALITATIVE EXPERIMENTS: AN EXAMPLE OF AN ICON-PICTURE FROM THE HOLOCAUST**

The Holocaust has stopped to be a merely German and/or Jewish history. It has become a universal - at least European - narrative with strong normative consequences. I chose one special example (out of many) of the perception/observation of a famous icon-picture from the well-known Holocaust album of Lili Jacob (see Gutman/Gutterman 2005). The picture is given in nearly all history textbooks in Germany, but normally without the fact that it has been a proud - though secret - "report of success" by the mass-murderers in its original use in 1944 (before being transformed to a central "place of remembrance"/"space of memory" after 1945, restoring faces and names to many victims of the genocide).

The photograph shows a Jewish mother (or grandmother) "On their way to the Gas" chamber; but the official title in the perpetrators' album itself (1944) reads "No more able to work", intentionally omitting the murder procedure. Let me report the experiment of making German students comment this picture already in the eighties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (when reading, please keep in mind that these utterances of school-boys and -girls were given 30 years ago!).

"We tried to examine the suspicion of severe misunderstandings of the picture by German children and adolescents. We tested a class of twelve years old sixth-graders before official instruction on/about National Socialism and a class of seventeen years old eleventh-graders after regular lessons on/about National Socialism, both in a privileged type of education. We offered the document without caption and gave four hints for a working process of around eight minutes, but autonomously extended and willingly ended by everyone him- or herself: '1. I have observed... 2. I have felt... 3. I have remembered... 4. I have understood...'. Of course this arrangement was influenced by the method of 'thinking aloud' or 'subsequent linguistic fixation of pattern of perception'.

1. The *sixth-graders* misunderstand the situation mostly; they at best associate 'poverty' and 'flight', 'war' and 'National Socialism'. Some remain/keep extremely taciturn, e.g. '1. The misery. 2. Pity. 3.-- 4.--' (girl, No. 32) Others write more in detail and are taken in by attractive and suggestive, but comfortable and dangerous errors. '1. An old woman with children escaping. 2. Children are completely impoverished. 3. That my parents have lived that through, too. 4. That we have a life ten times better than those peoples at that time.' (girl, No. 16) Thus the children position themselves in the tradition of the victims, not of the perpetrators.

Sometimes only key words like 'concentration camp' and/or 'Jews' occur, e.g. in a stereotyped form: '1. An old woman with children. 2. She has to suffer. 3. To a concentration camp. 4. This has been a terrible time.' (boy, No. 14) The correct connexion to the mass murder is established by two students (out of twenty-four) only, for example: '1. People go gloomy. 2. It is sad. That may be Jews or Gipsies, which go to death or are exploited. 4. We might be those ourselves as well; therefore National Socialism has been a bad deed of Hitler. There are good and evil human beings. Hitler (was) evil.' (girl, No. 31) Compared with ten minutes work even this top-effort with an attempt to empathy and identification seems poor.

2. The *eleventh-graders* (17 to 18 years old) go more into details, when they write down their remarks during ten minutes. But nearly one half of them also classifies the document in a vague or even un-correct way; they generally mention 'poverty' or 'flight', at most 'war' and 'concentration camp'. A serious example of misunderstanding reads: '1. That the mother with her five [sic!] children is doing very badly. They only have old clothes to put on and have no belongings but a bag also, which one of the children carries. The surrounding is very inconsolable, too, if not even destructed. 2. That these are refugees. In my opinion they are fleeing from the Red Army to the West. With it a great poverty has seized them, which can be attributed to their flight.

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3: That this has taken place for many Germans and foreigners. 4. That war must never occur again, so that such poverty never exists again.' (No. 12) This misinterpretation has clear consequences: Playing down facts, exoneration from own responsibility, even an accusation of others, and a charging to the account of others, e.g. 'Red Army'. This is not only the function, but the unconscious intention: namely moving from the culprits'/persecutors' side to the victims' side.

Even the more rare correct classification may include incredible underestimations of numbers or cruelties, e.g.: '1. That these are Jews on their way to a concentration camp, who know what they can expect there and therefore want to stay together. 2. I have felt consternation and don't understand that human beings can be so cruel. 3. That thousands [sic!] of Jews have died in concentration camps. 4. That this must never occur again.' (No. 11) Only in three cases (out of twelve) you may speak of a rather adequate interpretation; here you have one of these examples: '1. A female Jew with her children is sent to the gas chamber. 2. The picture touches you, although you have seen many of them yet. The stoop shows the amount of dread and despair in those human beings. 3. How the Jews had to suffer, how terrificly cruel National Socialism has been. 4. That one must never hush up National Socialism; one has to look at such pictures evermore.' (No. 10)" (from an own unpublished English lecture in Cracow 1995, compare von Borries 1988, 105)

**Of course, this is not the only type or genre of photographs transmitted from the Nazi era and shown to children in our testing. E.g., there are carefully and stylized propaganda photos of the dictatorial system as well ("putting itself to stage"), serving as suggestive presentations of political and military triumphs by refined and suggestive aesthetic means. Are they effective - dangerous? - for young people even today? It is clear that short essays come rather near to the students' thinking also in this case. But it is enough to present the results of "On their way to the Gas" (perpetrators' view in 1944) - alias "No more able to work" (victims' heritage after 1945) only.**

### QUANTITATIVE RESULTS: AN EXAMPLE OF SOME GRADE AND GENDER EFFECTS

In 1992, shortly after the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the Re-Unification of Germany, we questioned about 6.500 students of sixth, ninth and twelfth grade, a representative sample, and their history teachers additionally. Here are some fundamental results, only containing the effects of grade and gender.

GRAPH 4: BASIC DIMENSIONS OF HISTORICAL LEARNING  
(1992, N = 6.480, Factorscores, Total Means = 0.00)

Grade	Gender	Cognition (Knowledge, Reading)	Wish for historical learning at school	Wish for historical entertainment outside school	Moral Judgment
Sixth grade	Boys	-0.69	+0.38	+0.46	-0.05
	Girls	-0.87	+0.14	±0.00	+0.10
Ninth grade	Boys	+0.28	-0.14	+0.05	-0.27
	Girls	+0.17	-0.36	-0.07	+0.31
Twelfth grade	Boys	+0.67	+0.06	-0.21	-0.36
	Girls	+0.43	-0.10	-0.23	+0.28

(von Borries et al. 1995, 212)

The first field represents the cognitive domain, measured by knowledge of order of epochs and big events and by correct reading comprehension. It is not at all astonishing that twelfth-graders perform much better than sixth-graders; but we did not know before that the growth between sixth and ninth grade is so much bigger than that from ninth to twelfth grade. And the advantages of boys in historical cognition could not be anticipated either. Maybe, the "male" bias of historical contents in the syllabi and/or the stereotype of "male" character of the discipline is a convincing explanation.

The second measured construct is "wish for historical learning at school". Many teachers may have suggested the shrinking from sixth to ninth grade and the higher level among boys than among girls. Perhaps the moderate restoration of motivation in the twelfth grade could not be foreseen. What is the reason of reduced motivation

in 9<sup>th</sup> grade? Is puberty, a turn of curiosity from the outside world to the inside - the self - the cause? Or are teachers responsible by hindering and rejecting the curiosity of the children? We would need qualitative studies to know better.

We were very proud to measure a second form of motivation as well (third field), called "wish for historical entertainment outside school". It shrinks constantly - at least its open articulation does so. Apparently, it can mainly be described as an adventurous access of younger boys to the world of history. It is imagination, fantasy, and hope for ones own greatness (something like a dream of "childish omnipotence").

Even more important, the fourth field shows "moral judgement in historical contexts" in the direction of "altruism and collective altruism (say universalism) instead of egoism and collective egoism (say ethnocentrism)". This ability is a characteristic of the girls, scoring much higher than the boys. Perhaps the six-graders did not yet understand those questions perfectly; perhaps the strong gender-difference comes up with puberty only.

We have not enough time to study further constructs. But you may already have noticed that the - mostly unexpected - gender effects are often stronger than the age effects. Since historical socialisation is done in common classes and the same families and does not differ for girls and boys on the surface, this is a very fundamental result, which has to be studied in detail and reflected for possible consequences.

GRAPH 5: MAIN EFFECTS OF HISTORICAL LEARNING  
(1992, N = 6.480, Factorscores, Total Means = 0.00)

Grade	Gender	Conventional Interpretations of Epochs	Conventional Explanations of Change	Conventional Operations of Historical Method	Unbroken Identification with the Past
Sixth grade	Boys	-0.72	-0.49	-0.40	+0.64
	Girls	-0.84	-0.87	-0.52	+0.21
Ninth grade	Boys	+0.10	+0.28	-0.05	+0.34
	Girls	+0.09	+0.09	-0.02	-0.29
Twelfth grade	Boys	+0.68	+0.50	+0.24	-0.23
	Girls	+0.68	+0.47	+0.30	-0.69

(von Borries et al. 1995, 225)

Cognition, (double) motivation, and morality of course influence nearly every articulation about a historical topic. We were able to measure "conventional interpretations of epochs", "conventional explanations of change", and "conventional operations of historical method". As expected, all of them were highly positively correlated. In all of them, the older ones by far surmounted the younger ones, and the boys mostly perfected a bit better than the girls. This is what is learnt in history lessons: acceptance of the conventions of the society.

But "unlearning" (or "extinction") is as common as "learning" (or "acquisition"). Younger ones identify much more with the "own" side ("nation", "religious community", "family", "city") in a historical conflict, though if those "forefathers" have committed brutal deeds - even crimes -; this means "unbroken identification with the past". But again, the gender effect of those highly moral decisions in favour of the "we-groups" (and reversely against them) is very strong. Girls are ahead in the distancing from the own collectives' criminal history for about three years. This is a very relevant contrast. To analyse the causes, of course, a combination of quantitative and qualitative empirical work is necessary.

### **QUANTITATIVE RESULTS: AN EXAMPLE OF INTER-CULTURAL COMPARISON ("HITLER")**

Histories - and therefore historical consciousness - are identity-specific and culture-specific. Therefore, an inter-cultural comparison seems necessary. In 1995 we questioned nearly 32.000 ninth-graders in 27 countries (some more samples) of Europe and the Near East. Thus, we could draw some maps of historical interpretations. My example is the simple question, whether Adolf Hitler was "A gifted orator, organizer, and leader" (Likert-scales form 1 ["totally disagree"] to 5 ["totally agree"]). Young people, about fifteen years old, normally said more of less "Yes" in Northern and Eastern Europe - Near East also - and tended to say "No" in big parts of Southern and Northwestern Europe. In the middle of the continent, especially in Germany itself, the answer was neutral. In fact, youngsters of different countries and regions have different associations to Hitler.

The intensity of calling Hitler “A cynical dictator, guilty of genocide” (Likert-scales from 1 [“totally disagree”] to 5 [“totally agree”]) also varied much. In combination of both items (“cynical dictator” and “gifted leader”) and some similar others, a typology of interpretations could be made (two factor solution); but here I will quote the results for the two core-items only. Perhaps it is important to keep in mind that these findings are now nearly twenty years old. The situation may have changed; here only the kind of possible empirical findings in international comparisons is interesting.

GRAPH 6: INTERPRETATIONS OF HITLER (INTERCULTURAL COMPARISON)  
(Ninthgraders 1995, N > 31.500, Likert-scales from 1 [“totally disagree”] to 5 [“totally agree”])

Country/Sample	“A Cynical Dictator and Aggressor, Guilty of Genocide”	“A Gifted Orator, Organiser, and Leader”
Palestine	3.08	3.43
Arab Israel	3.61	3.77
Bulgaria	3.83	3.69
Iceland	4.41	2.74
Italy	4.34	2.54
Spain	4.37	2.24
Greece	4.44	2.14
Norway	4.70	3.98
Denmark	4.66	3.35
[Jewish] Israel	4.67	3.41
Turkey	3.97	2.84
England/Wales	4.00	2.89
Scotland	4.14	2.40
Overall Europe and Near-East	4.19	3.19

(Angvik/von Borries 1997, B, 242-243)

Generally the critical and moralising items like highly “a cynical dictator and aggressor, guilty of genocide” (and similar ones) are accepted, while the descriptive and analysing characteristics like “a gifted orator, organiser, and leader” (as well as analogue expressions)

are only seen neutrally. But the situation is different in varying countries. Some samples (Arabs, Bulgarians) were sympathising more or less with the Nazi aggression and even preferred the "descriptive" phrasing to the "negative" judgment. Others (Iceland, Spain, Greece etc.) expressed the consent to "cynical dictator" and the dissent to "gifted leader" even stronger than the international average. Nevertheless, both judgments are independent dimensions (factors). In some countries (most of Scandinavia, [Jewish] Israel itself) both interpretations were stressed much more than in the overall mean. The forth type of playing down both interpretations of Hitler is also existent, especially among British ("understatement") and Turkish ("not really important, since no Turkish concern") juveniles.

Additionally, cultural differences are not only found between countries, but also between genders, regions, minorities, party-adherents. Thus, the minority of right-wing neo-fascists (or sympathetics of them) in Germany stressed the interpretations of Hitler just opposite to the - much bigger - rest of the German sample: They did not accept the version "cynical dictator" and strongly agreed to the "gifted leader". The immigrants had a gradually different picture from the "old" or native Germans also (more "critical"), the Eastern Germans from the Western (less "critical"), the boys from the girls (less "critical" also) etc. (von Borries et al. 1999, 362). The differences were not only significant, but substantial.

### **BETTER ANALYTICAL DISTINCTIONS: HISTORICAL CULTURE, HISTORICAL COMPETENCE, AND HISTORICAL IDENTITY**

Nevertheless, a short introduction to some central concepts may be useful. What is "historical consciousness"? Traditional historians and traditional history teachers did not use the word "historical consciousness". They did - and do - not understand, why the topic and purpose of history should not be "history", but "historical consciousness", since "mathematics" - and not "mathematical consciousness" - is the topic of teaching "mathematics".

History is not equal or identical with the past. Nobody can remember or reconstruct or re-present the whole past. One day of one man reconstructed perfectly and completely would need one thousand pages and twenty-four hours for reading at least. This is exactly the case in James Joyce's novel "Ulysses" (1922). And a full documentary

- if possible - would not be shorter. History inevitably and unavoidably is a selection, a synthesis, a narration, an interpretation.

History is dealing with the - claimed - remaining relevance of events and processes in the past. History is the hypothetic explanation of present problems and future options by their evolution (development, genesis) in the past. History is a dialogue of interpretations of the past, perceptions/experiences of the present and expectations of the future. History is therefore a narrative, constructive, selective and perspective dealing with past events, coping with present problems, and reflecting future chances. It is a mental and societal phenomenon: In sum, it is "historical consciousness".

But what is the theoretical connection of "historical consciousness" to other related, familiar and similar concepts like "historical identity", "historical competence", and "historical culture" (or better "culture of history")? There are different proposals to organize the field of theory. I don't believe that all of them - except my own one - are wrong. Theories can be elegant or ugly, fruitful or confusing, convincing or daunting, productive or useless. They can make things more difficult or more easy. They can be flexible or dogmatic; but "right-correct-true" and "wrong-mistaken-false" are not the best categories to describe them.

Thus, I will show you my solution of the problem of basic categories and their relations. For me, "historical consciousness" is the global generalized category, not superfluous, but to much vague and diffuse for specific, particular work about details of coping with history and the past. I distinguish three dimensions in it.

#### GRAPH 7: A MODEL OF HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Dimensions of Historical Consciousness	Aims and Achievements
Historical Culture ("Culture of History")	Willingness for Participation in/Consumption of Presentations and Discussions of History (official, medial, informal, private)
Historical Identities	Articulation of Self-Definitions as Individual and in Groups (Cities, Professions, Gender, Religious Communities, Nations)

Historical Competences	Abilities and Readiness in Elaborated Domain-Specific ("Historical") Qualifications (asking Questions, re-constructing and de-constructing Narrations, revising Orientations, using Notions and Concepts)
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(see von Borries 2014, 29-30)

The graph has to be explained: "Historical Culture" labels the way, history is produced, presented, consumed, communicated in a society. School, mass media, science, museums, memorials, public debates are typical media of this discourse. But the side of the recipients, not only of the producers, is also important. The main purpose is "participation in historical culture". This can be done by talks in families and neighbourhoods as well.

"Historical Competence" means the ability and preparedness (wish, will) of coping with history in ones private, professional and political life. It is not only a cognitive strength, but by far a wider mental approach: with aesthetics, moral, emotions, fantasies, fictions, articulated motivations, unconscious drives etc.. Different levels can be distinguished (see Körber et al. 2007): (Intermediate) competence is the ability of handling a conventional mode of history (in the group, the sub-culture, the nation...). But there are lower levels ("a-conventional", i.e. lacking of usual coping) and higher ones ("trans-conventional", i.e. reflecting and - if necessary - revising the "normal" uses and interpretations of history).

"Historical Identity" is the term for personal and collective self-definition in history between past and future. The collectives are manifold. Therefore, any person has different identities and is part of many collective identities, not only a national one (though many people associate nation to identity immediately). All identities are necessarily historical, because they relate to past events and future expectations. You are presenting your identity in telling your story. Therefore identity has a narrative structure (Ricoeur 1988/89/91, 2004).

It should be made more clear what the distinction of "dimensions" means. Every part can be (or better: always is) combined with every else one. If you look to a historical movie or TV-documentary on "Columbus and the Beginning of Colonial Genocide", you take part in "culture of history", you can fall back

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on your “historical competence” for criticism and/or acceptance and you - perhaps - will reflect your “historical identity”. This is shown more in detail by another graph:

**GRAPH 8: THREE DIMENSIONS OF HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS: HISTORICAL CULTURE, HISTORICAL COMPETENCE, AND HISTORICAL IDENTITY**



(see von Borries 211b, 385)

Among politicians and political science specialists “identity” is often used as a concept of longtime assured fundamentals. This is not meant by the term in German history didactics. In the contrary: “Identity” is necessarily fluid and flexible, changing in time.

GRAPH 9: I-IDENTITY AS A SYSTEM OF BALANCING ("MOBILE-GAME STRUCTURE")

I-Identity							
Personal (Biographical) Identity				Social (Interactive) Identity			
Course of Life		Draft of Life		Role Performances		Role Expectations	
Ideal, Pride, Joy	Shadow, Shame, Mourning	Hope	Fear	Integration	Conflicts	Acceptance	Rejection

(see von Borries 2004a, 259-262)

Look to an example: "Tell the history of your falling in love three times, once the day of the wedding with the beloved partner, once the day of your divorce from him/her and once again the day of his or her burial." The stories necessarily will be quite different, not only because of - likely - lying or suppression, but from the logic of remembrance and history itself, the inclusion of later experiences in earlier events: Once it is: "Even then... and now much more..., since meanwhile..."; at another time it reads: "Surely, at that time..., but today no more and not at all..., because later on..."

The stories, which you will tell in different situations or phases, are results and expressions of your biographical identities in different phases. An identity cannot be a fixed, once assured state of identity, but an ongoing, neverending process of flexible, balancing identity between past and future, pride and shame, hope and fear, duration and change, acceptance and criticism, exclusion and inclusion and so on.

GRAPH 10: WE-GROUP-IDENTITIES AS SYSTEMS OF BALANCING ("MOBILE-GAME STRUCTURES")

We-Group-Identities							
Diachronic (Temporal) Identities				Synchronic (Interactive) Identities			
Interpretation of the Past		Expectation of the Future		Auto-Stereotypes		Hetero-Stereotypes	
Affirmation, Pride, Joy	Criticism, Shame Mourning	Hope	Fear	Integration, Sympathy	Conflict, Antipathy	Acceptance	Rejection

(see von Borries 2004a, 262-268)

Of course, the same structure is valid for "group identities": "Tell the history of the 'Cold War' and the 'Partition of Germany' three times, in 1949 during the 'Luftbrücke' (airlift) to blocked and isolated West-Berlin, in 1970 after the construction of the 'Berlin Wall', and in 1991 after it's fall during the 'Peaceful Revolution'." Even more delicate is the case: "Report about the past, present, and future of history teaching in Brazil - and your position in it - three times, under Getulio Vargas (1953), under Juscelino Kubitschek (1960) and under Artur da Costa e Silva (1967)!"

If we approach a certain problem like the Holocaust or the Trans-Atlantic slave-trade, we need or cover all three dimensions (historical culture, competence and identity). We take part in - maybe different - versions of "culture of history", we analyse the phenomenon (or work it through) with more or less "historical competence" and we keep or change ("widen") our "historical identity", our political opinions and decisions for the future. Thus, the concept "historical consciousness" is not destroyed or substituted by the three other central notions, but it is structured, differentiated, assisted and made feasible in a better way.

### **EMPIRICAL APPROACHES TO PARTICIPATION IN HISTORICAL CULTURE, ARTICULATION OF HISTORICAL IDENTITY, AND ELABORATION OF HISTORICAL COMPETENCES**

As said before, historical culture, historical identity, and historical competence can be investigated empirically by qualitative and quantitative means. This has been done again with cultural comparisons and age groups' comparison (including university students in teacher training courses). If the three categories are really dimensions, all of them could be applied to every example; but I will concentrate to one point of view in any case.

### **AN EXAMPLE OF CULTURE OF HISTORY: TRUSTED, LIKED, UNDERSTANDABLE, AND USED MEDIA**

Audiovisual media seem to be by far more successful than school textbooks and history lessons at school. At least, this was articulated by German schoolboys and schoolgirls often from 1956 to

2006: They use other media more intensively than textbooks (lessons also) and draw more information from them. Therefore, the trust in those mass media is very important. TV-documentaries are said to be much more reliable than textbooks. Even historical novels - and historical (fictional) movies - get a status of truth and trust rather near to the textbooks (and the teachers). In the samples of some countries (among Russians, Ukrainians, Arabic Israeli, Palestinians) the novels and movies even got more trust than the textbooks (asked in 1995, shortly after the breakdown of the Soviet system!). It seems that the teachers of history in Europe do not really and explicitly rouse the topic of being trustworthy and assuring reliability.

**GRAPH 11: FUN, TRUST, AND EASINESS OF HISTORICAL MEDIA IN STUDENTS' PERCEPTION**

(Ninthgraders 1995, N > 31.500, Likert-scales form 1 ["very little"] to 5 ["very much"])

Media of Presentation of History	Germany			Total	
	Fun	Trust	Easiness	Fun	Trust
School text-books	2.20	3.31	3.08	2.43	3.18
Museums and historic places	3.32	4.18	3.39	3.62	4.15
Fictional films	3.95	2.79	4.06	3.73	2.81
TV-documentaries	3.63	3.78	3.86	3.39	3.64
Historical Novels	2.64	2.51	2.88	3.08	2.72
Historical documents and sources	2.88	3.73	2.80	3.14	3.93
Teachers telling	3.17	3.41	3.57	3.34	3.48
Other adults (eg. parents...) telling	3.20	3.05	3.48	3.48	3.36

(von Borries et al. 1999, 52)

You may not really be astonished, when young boys and girls prefer fictional films and TV-documentaries to history textbooks, though the very last position of the latter medium is a pity. Additional, the easiness of history media is estimated in a rather unfavourable way by the ninthgraders (unfortunately, these questions could be

included in Germany only). School text-books should be the most intelligible medium; but they get only the third last position among eight presentations (in Germany). Only "novels" and "sources/documents" seem to be more difficult; qualitative and quantitative empirical research has proved later on that even this moderate estimation of the easiness is over-optimistic.

GRAPH 12: METHODS OF HISTORY-LESSONS AND PREFERENCES OF STUDENTS IN COMPARISON  
(Ninthgraders 1995, N > 31.500, Likert-scales from 1 ["very seldom" respectively "very little"] to 5 ["very often" respectively "very much"])

Frequency and popularity of media in history lessons	Frequency (teachers' report)	Total		Germany		
		Frequency (students' report)	Fun of students	Frequency (teachers' report)	Frequency (students' report)	Fun of students
School text book	3.91	3.65	2.43	4.18	4.37	2.20
Historical movies			3.73			3.95
TV-documentaries	2.46	1.87	3.39	2.76	1.97	3.63
Students' activities/Museums	2.23	1.59	3.62	2.05	1.37	3.32
Teacher telling	3.49	3.43	3.34	2.90	3.51	3.17
Source Work	3.36	2.69	3.14	3.66	2.99	2.88

(von Borries et al. 1999, 66)

The comparison of teachers' and students' answers to identical questions is even more important. Similar to many other parts of the questionnaire the reports of both "partners" about the identical situation in the class-rooms vary very much. It is like different perspectives of two "tribes" to a common conflict or war. Teachers describe the practice of their history teaching more "modern" and liberal" (more film/TV, more projects, more source work, less text-book and teacher telling, at least in Germany) than students do (see v. Borries et al. 1995, 312-320) as well.

This fact is even more problematic, if we include the comparison of "fun" and "use" or "frequency". As you see, fictional films are very popular, but rarely used at school. In the contrary, textbooks are

felt to be quite boring, but they are often studied (except in some countries). Of course, teachers are not obliged to follow any wish of students for entertainment and relief. But the picture changes, if we consider that 90% of school-knowledge are forgotten soon,<sup>4</sup> that linking school to life is very important, and that audiovisual media and historical culture are much more powerful than history lessons and textbooks.

History teachers could achieve better effects by using the mass media - and picking them out as a central theme. Instead of remaining unavoidable, but unnoticed precondition and over-mighty competition of school-lessons, mass media can become a pleasant and fruitful instrument and an explicit topic of history teaching ("deconstruction"). Participation in historical culture/the culture of history is a very important goal of teaching. We have the chance and duty to promote students' explicit reflection and critical participation in historical culture/culture of history.

### **AN EXAMPLE OF HISTORICAL COMPETENCE: ABILITY TO DISTINGUISH "PAST" AND "HISTORY"**

In this case, I will use an English example researched by Peter Lee and his Chata group (2000). They simply presented two short versions about the "Fall of the Roman Empire" to students. Both had - without regard to some comic-like pictures - only twenty-seven short lines and gave 486 AD and 1453 AD as dates of the "end". The interviews about the consistency or harmony of both texts were coded systematically and thus reduced children's articulations to quantitative material (statistics). Three concepts could be distinguished.

GRAPH 13: TWO TIMES "FALL OF ROME" - 476 AND/OR 1453?

Grade	"Factual" (contradiction)	"Multiple" (complex and manifold past)	"Critical" (question of meaning)
2	90	9	0

<sup>4</sup>This is often assured by empirical studies about learning, especially in the case of "senseless syllables or words"; the famous Ebbinghaus-curve of forgetting is already known since 1885. Theory clearly states that knowledge only persists in a better proportion, if it is emotionally and practically relevant for the learners and can be linked with prior insights and abilities. In the case of history lessons, this is often disregarded, at least in the case of pupils from less educated strata (e.g. von Borries 2008, 49-53).

5	85	8	5
6	45	31	23
8	32	25	41

(Lee/Ashby 2000, 208)

In the second grade (around 7 years), the vast majority (90%) simply took "Fall of Roman Empire" as a fact and none (0%) took it as a question of criteria (exact meanings of "Fall" and of "Roman Empire"); nearly 10% found a middle way (compromise) that history is manifold and complex. Thus, second-graders were apparently overloaded with this exercise. Among the eighth-graders (mostly 13 years old), more than 30% still kept the "factual" interpretation (and therefore the logical exclusion of both versions): "One of the two texts must be wrong." Now more than 40% notice that it is a question of "criteria": The Western Roman Empire can have ended in 486 AD and the Eastern Roman Empire in 1453 AD. Since 25% have a version of "multiple" past, the majority - even among eighth-graders - does not fully understand the simple and explicitly mentioned relation of Western and Eastern Rome in both texts.

We should not be dis-encouraged too much by this result. If we analyse the task we shall see that it is an operation of historical de-construction (examining other peoples historical narratives). And this is - we proved the same phenomenon in Germany sometimes - more difficult than re-construction (production of own narratives). Maybe, it is never - or seldom - done at school.<sup>5</sup> For the moment, we only have hypotheses, why this is the case. Even in method-oriented lessons, de-construction seems to be exercised far less frequently (see von Borries 2014, 470-478). In other cases, a positive correlation of "historical de-construction" was found not to history marks, but to marks in German language and literature, where whole texts are critically analysed more often.

<sup>5</sup> To mention a rather embarrassing example: In 2002, extracts from two text-books with an identical theme but explicitly inconsistent information (Book A: Vita of St. Boniface by monk Willibald as the only written source - Book B: Existence of many letters of St. Boniface) had to be utilised (N = 838) and commented (N = 453) by school and university students of different grades (v. Borries et al. 2005, 77, 125-133). In the analysis of proved, refuted or lacking information, even the university students made 25% mistakes; nearly nobody (less than 3%) among them mentioned the open contradiction in his/her essay. Unfortunately, it is not practised to seek for mistakes - or mis-interpretations - in schoolbooks.

Though this finding warns us a bit from too high demands, an American author, Irene Nakou (2001), has found an equally fascinating result. She distinguished seven levels of "historical thinking" (in this case of interpretations of objects in a museum):

GRAPH 14: STAGES OF HISTORICAL THINKING (IN AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM)

Stage	Concept	Example
1	"A-historical thinking"	"It is a statue." (Boy, 13/14)
3	"Pseudo-historical thinking"	"It is a Mycenean vase of the 14th century." (Girl, 13/14)
5	"Rational thinking"	"The owner of this vase must have been rich, because it is gold." (Boy, 13/14)
7	"Advanced historical thinking"	"These scales were found in royal Mycenean tombs, that means the were kterismata. They are gold, which means that Mycenians used gold and that the civilisation was developed. The fact that they are so thin, engraved and elaborate shows us that people then did not only care about the practical aspect of an object but also about aesthetics as well. This poses to us some questions, whether they were used in everyday life or wether they had a symbolic or decorative use.(...) So we see the mentality of Mycenians, their great religious belief ans their artistic sensitivity." (Girl, 13/14)

(Nakou 2001, 81-82)

The interpretation may be more difficult and less sure in some cases, because the level of competence may be higher than the level of performance (linguistic problems, indolence, economy). Nevertheless, the astonishing additional insight is that all these articulations are written down by students of the same age, grade and even class after/ while the same lesson in a museum. The contrasts inside the class can often be larger than those between novices and experts (there were similar observations by Peter Lee also). This urgently puts the problem of differentiation and individualisation while teaching history. Teachers normally have not learnt adequate methods of teaching that way (to tell the truth, I, too, have not achieved it sufficiently).

### **AN EXAMPLE OF ARTICULATING HISTORICAL IDENTITY: WISH AND ARGUMENTS FOR "IRREDENTA"**

Historical identity has a narrow relation to historical orientation, often unconsciously, but consciously as well. Since it is a rather individual achievement, a quantitative measurement can be tried, but is not really easy. Anyway, we launched an approach in "Youth and History" (1995). Among other dilemmas we presented a conflict between "A-Land" and "B-Land" in respect to the possession of "New-Land", which was detected and inhabited by people from A-Land, but taken away by a war to B-Land long ago. We asked for the adequacy, value and acceptance of different strategies or arguments to get New-Land back to A-Land (Likert-scales from 1 ["very little"] to 5 ["very much"]).<sup>6</sup>

**GRAPH 15: RE-ANNEXATION OF "NEULAND" (INTERCULTURAL COMPARISON)**  
(Ninthgraders 1995, N > 31.500, Likert-scales from 1 ["very little"] to 5 ["very much"])

Sample	Arguments based on Inhabitants' Rights (scale)	Arguments based on Traditional Possession (short scale)	Annexation "Argument" Violence (single item)
(Jewish) Israel	3.29	3.02	3.33
Arab Israel	3.07	3.01	3.15
Palestine	3.16	3.07	3.55
Poland	3.81	3.35	3.43
Bulgaria	3.54	3.27	3.33
Croatia	3.47	3.15	3.18
Russia	3.62	3.08	3.15
Netherlands	3.16	3.00	3.11
(Flemish) Belgium	3.29	2.90	3.21
Scotland	3.51	3.37	3.19

<sup>6</sup> Afterwards we found out three theoretical concepts: "Tradition" (two items), "self-determination" (four items), and "violence" (unfortunately only one item). Other items for the last one, like "physical power" and "underground resistance", could have been added easily, but were not introduced in time. Therefore we can quote two scales and one single item only (see Angvik/von Borries 1997, B, 324-329).

Lithuania	3.81	3.20	3.08
Iceland	3.17	2.79	2.41
Norway	3.64	3.14	2.72
Denmark	3.43	2.78	2.78
Sweden	3.74	3.18	2.67
Finland	3.63	2.88	2.39
Czechia	3.51	3.00	2.55
Hungary	3.49	3.05	2.78
Spain	3.37	3.12	2.59
Italy	3.30	2.74	2.70
South Tyrol (Italy)	3.39	2.91	2.59
Germany	3.31	3.00	2.73
France	3.55	3.03	2.71
Total Europe and Near-East	3.47	3.07	2.93

(Angvik/von Borries 1997, B, 326-329, 330-331)

Violence or war, "military power" ( $M_{\text{Overall}} = 2.93$ ), and even tradition, "duration" ( $M_{\text{Overall}} = 2.96$ ) and "priority" ( $M_{\text{Overall}} = 3.19$ ), were not highly accepted by the ninth-graders of Europe. Voting, self-determination by the inhabitants of New-Land themselves ( $M_{\text{Overall}} = 3.66$ ) and international mediation, conference recommendation ( $M_{\text{Overall}} = 3.59$ ), were slightly preferred by most samples. Thus, the normal priority was "Inhabitants' Rights" before "Tradition" and "Tradition" before "Violence".

But there are exceptions: All three samples from Israel and Palestine accept "military power" to a higher degree than "inhabitants' rights" and put "tradition" to the last position. No wonder that among Israeli Arabs, Jews and Palestinians, the hope for feasibility of self-determination - or of international conference solutions - was rather low and the preparedness for violence even higher. In some post-socialist transition countries (like Poland and Bulgaria), the concept of "violence" wins the second position at least before "tradition" (longer duration and first settlement); the same is true in the Netherlands and (Flemish) Belgium. Maybe, this is a consequence of difficult nation building in small countries.

Scotland and Lithuania show already the normal order or graduation, but keep an over-average readiness for "violence". The rest of Northern, Western and Central Europe (including Czechia and Hungary!) clearly rejects "military power" for the "irredenta" of New-Land and puts "inhabitants' rights" much higher than "tradition" additionally. Some (Germany, Italy, South Tyrole) use all three arguments in a low (under-average) intensity. Do they oppose the idea of re-gaining, of re-annexation, itself? Maybe, the results could be clearer, if the students would not have been intellectually overburdened by a hypothetic - and insofar abstract - case. Unfortunately, this was necessary, because many such conflicts exist all over Europe, but none is known to young people in all participating countries.

History means connections from the past to present and future, just like in the case "Newland". These conclusions can have a different logic figure. Jörn Rüsen (1994) calls them "patterns of sense-making", logically contrasting types.

S If regulations or rules of the past are simply declared valid for the future, Rüsen calls this the "traditional mode of sense-making". In our case this means: "Since our grandfathers have tried to free and bring back New-Land, we have to do it again."

S Cases differ, but follow a common rule; this allows "exemplary sense-making": "The A-Land and New-Land case is just like our loss of xxx and the gain of yyy. In our experience, war - even in case of winning - was by far more expensive than useful."

S A "critical mode of making sense", rejecting tradition or antetype model, could be: "The wars about New-Land will never end, if both sides only follow their traditions. Let us find a fair common solution, at best via international moderation!" Basically, this was another one of our items.

S The case can be turned to a "genetic mode of sense-making" as well, if one says: "The rules of behaviour change. Instead of kings and dictators we prefer democracy now. Two neighbouring countries can consent and exchange instead of dominating. In the territory New-Land, the population can vote and decide its destiny itself (including an assured and internationally granted minority-shelter)."

## HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND LIFE-ENVIRONMENT, HISTORY AND FUTURE

During the last examples, I have already used the empirical findings for theoretical connections, normative suggestions and pragmatic proposals. History is relevant for practical life anyway - and various misuses occur also. History can be boring, if it is presented in an alienating mode. History can be taken as an instrument against other groups in a suggestive way - or even against ones own interests. The unconscious should - as far as possible - be made conscious. Where "It" and "Over-It" have been, the "I" should be strengthened (to use the terminology of Freud). Emotions, aesthetics, moral, fantasies are very important. History is much more than cognition. But - to avoid hatred and prejudice - history must be communicated, argued and negotiated This is a purpose of history lessons. Where - if anywhere - could these abilities be exercised?

If history is studied at school in the interest of students to master their future, to survive and live in a worthy way, this means moral standards for history teaching and history teachers. They have been listed in a minimal consensus among German right-wing and left-wing didacticians for "Civic Education", already 35 years ago. This "Beutelsbach Konsens" is applicable to history as well.

GRAPH 16: MINIMAL CONSENT ABOUT CIVIC EDUCATION IN GERMANY ("BEUTELSBACH") 1977

Civic Education	Transfer to Historical Learning
Ban of suggestive emotional overwhelming and authoritarian teacher-power	Ban of suggestive emotional overwhelming and authoritarian teacher-power
Rule of controversial presentation of controversial issues	Rule of controversial presentation of controversial issues
Qualification for the maintenance of own interests ('Self-determination' and 'co-determination' [or participation])	Qualification for the production and articulation of own identity and responsible judgments about historical interpretations
(Elaboration of methodological abilities in civic education)	(Elaboration of methodological abilities in history)

(according to Schiele/Schneider 1977, 179-180, see von Borries 2011a, 281-287)

The message is clear: Teaching does not mean "ordering/ commanding learning outcomes". It cannot and it must not. History lessons need "negotiation of meaning" (between students and teacher - and among students), not authoritarian teachers' decisions. The last of the four points is as important as the others (though not counted, but explicitly mentioned, in Beutelsbach). Nowadays, nearly 40 years later, we would call it "competences". And we would distinguish three levels of "method-orientation" of history teaching.

**GRAPH 17: THREE STAGES OF "METHOD ORIENTATION" OF HISTORY TEXTBOOKS AND TEACHING**

Name	Example	Value
Techniques and skills of working	Power-point presentation, internet use, debating abilities, producing excerpts and bibliographies	Necessary, but an aim of all subject matters and not at all specific for the discipline history
Handling media and materials	Utilize maps, tables, figures, pictures, work with films and expositions, use of primary sources, speeches, monuments	Useful, but only partly specifically historical and equally useful in other neighbouring fields of knowledge as well
Grammar of historical thinking	Distinguishing "past" and "history", selection and perspectivity, retrospection and narrative, making sense and reflecting historical identity etc.	The nucleus and core of the discipline, but often forgotten, transferable "competence of thinking historically"

(according to Wunderer 2000, see von Borries 2014, 456 [improved here])

This systematic order is a chronological sequence at the other hand. In fact, we had - according to three generations of theories about history didactics since 1945 - three generations of history textbooks in Germany - and even syllabuses and curricula of the member states - as well. Unfortunately (and to avoid misunderstanding), this was the changing ideal of textbooks and lessons, but not at all the dominating style of teachers practice in those three spans of time.

**GRAPH 18: THREE GENERATIONS OF HISTORY DIDACTICS, HISTORY TEXTBOOKS, AND HISTORICAL TEACHING**

Name and Time	Characteristics	Expressed Criticism (Risks)
Content orientated (1945/49-1968/72)	Factual knowledge and chronology National master-narratives and national loyalty	In-effectivity because of forgetting 90% of misunderstood useless and senseless words Hiding of the selection necessity and selection criteria (illusion of "the true history") Indoctrination with national myths and legendary history
Problem orientated (1968/72-1995/2000)	Exemplary cases of public interest and debate or of direct relation to students' life-environment and everyday-life Producing students' ability of own autonomous decisions and conclusions about actual and historical conflicts	Confoundation of learning at school and historical research Deliverance of history to actual conflicts and interests ("arbitrary quarry") Lack or loss of general historical overview
Method (Competence) orientated (since 1995/2000)	Promoting students' activities and applicable transferable competences like ability of independent orientation "Learning of learning" and preparation to "life-long learning"	Renunciation of most important historical contents Intellectual overburdening of students Reduction to technical and non-specific skills

(see von Borries 2014, 462 [improved here])

To tell the truth, we have many proves that German children often - and immigrant children in Germany even more often - do not understand their history-textbooks, not either in a most basic way. This was found by quantitative studies (von Borries et al. 1992, 1995, 2005) and by qualitative experiments (Beilner 2002, Langer-Plän 2003) as well. The results of an international survey (large scale assessment) in general reading ability (PISA 2000 etc., see Artelt 2001) conformed the fundamental insight. Since that time, the fact of 10% an-alphabets and 10% risk group (reading very poorly) is more or less known.

Method-orientation (of the mentioned third level) and competence orientation is one side of every history teaching. The other one is inevitably "content" ("double character"), because exercising strategies of thinking without thematic examples (e.g. "slavery", "women's vote movement", or "Cold War") is useless waste of time and motivation. And the choice and perspective of historical content should be stirred by the "regulative idea" of "human and civil rights", its detection and invention, its movement and codification, its evolution and implementation as a project and process of mankind (see von Borries 2011a).

Let me give a last example: Since the Stockholm Conference and Declaration in 2000, the Holocaust has changed from a German to a Universal crime (also master-narrative and commemoration necessity). At least this is said. But there remain some doubts. Surely, the Holocaust has become a European symbol and master-narrative (including Israel and the US), though structurally very different from country to country (e.g. between Norway and Hungary). But outside Europe, it is completely strange or absent to many countries.

Meanwhile, there has evolved another master-narrative for the twenty-first century, also about extreme crimes against humanity: This is "Transatlantic Slave-Trade". With the visit of president Obama<sup>7</sup> in Cape Coast Castle (Ghana), one of the most important slave trade fortresses. Obama went there immediately from Buchenwald Concentration Camp Memorial in Germany. This was a conscious and intended attempt to found a new and additional master-narrative for the world. The symbol seems to work perfectly successful.

Without knowing the role of the transatlantic slave trade in Brazilian historiography in detail, its importance in the rising and development of the Brazilian society cannot be ignored, at least since Gilberto Freyre (1982a, 1982b). Maybe, the Brazilian narrative has another focus-point today, perhaps "From slave deportation to non-racist - or soft-racist? - society!" Thus, Brazil seems to have its own special version of the slave-narrative, as

<sup>7</sup> Obama is not the first "black" US-president, as everyone says even in the mass media, but the first mulatto-president (is there any better, more correct expression?), like Rawlings in Ghana, who is accepted as normal person and member of the majority population without problems. He is never called the first "white" president of the independent, post-colonial country.

**Germany has its own one of the Holocaust-narration. You will immediately accept that an exchange - and (self-)reflective control - of these two master-narratives is extremely important.**

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