

Manuel Köster

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(Eds.)

Researching History Education

International Perspectives and Disciplinary Traditions

Second, completely revised and updated edition



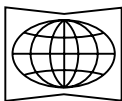
**WOCHEN
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International History Education Research: Common Threads, Research Traditions and National Specifics

1. Introduction

In many countries around the world, history education research is a dynamic and productive field of investigation. Until relatively recently, however, researchers and educators appeared to be beholden to nationally specific academic traditions while tending to disregard theoretical and empirical research on historical thinking produced abroad – particularly across language-barriers. Fortunately, the last decade was marked by an ever-increasing trend towards internationalization, which produced or invigorated discussion and cooperation across national and academic borders. This development led to the publication of a number of volumes (Davies 2011; Erdmann/Hasberg 2011; Demantowsky/Zurstrassen 2013; Carretero/Berger/Greuer 2017; Metzger/McArthur Harris 2018) documenting central concepts, ideas and results in the field of history education research. Unlike the majority of these works, the first edition of this volume, which was published in 2014, focused on providing an overview of current and historical fields and methods of *empirical* research. In particular, we were interested in empirical research on classroom history education, although most of the contributors chose to broaden the scope of their chapter and to also include research on historical thinking outside the classroom.

Three factors prompted us to take on a second edition of the volume. First, and despite one reviewer's prediction to the contrary (Hasberg 2017), the first edition did indeed get noticed and referenced, not just within Germany, but internationally, too (Seixas 2015; Carretero/Berger/Greuer 2017; Metzger/McArthur Harris 2018). The wide reception of the first edition demonstrated that an empirically-focused volume that contextualizes empirical findings in their specific theoretical and empirical traditions can be a worthwhile undertaking. More importantly, in many countries, empirical research on historical thinking and learning has intensified and diversified in the recent past, thus providing new lines of research and new findings building upon or arguing against the

studies reported upon in the first edition. Therefore, each chapter was revised and (often extensively) updated for this second edition. In order to adequately reflect the ever-growing field of research, several authors chose to bring on a co-author for the updated version of their paper. Third, a second edition provides us with the opportunity to address and hopefully rectify two issues criticized in two other reviews (Brauch 2015; Gorbahn 2015),¹ namely a lack of clarity as to the volume's aim and a missing comparative perspective on the chapters collected herein.

2. History education research: What's in a name?

Just like the school subject of "history" itself, history education research is multifaceted and differs around the world. As this volume is edited by researchers from Germany, its main focus is on neighboring countries and those whose research is considered particularly fruitful and important for the German discourse on history education. Because of this limited scope, Asian research traditions remain sadly underrepresented here. Similarly, there are no chapters on history education and its research in African and Oceanian countries. But even within this limited range, there is a broad spectrum of heterogeneity. This is true both for history education, which can occur in a designated subject or in combination with other domains (in subjects such as social studies or civic education, among others), and for the research on this subject, which is undertaken by historians, psychologists, educationalists and others. Academic thought on history education is influenced by theories and concepts from fields such as educational science, developmental and cognitive psychology, the theory of history, sociology and various fields of philosophy, to name but a few. Due to these national specifics in history education and in research traditions, the authors of the chapters contained in this volume necessarily had to choose individual focal points.

While the authors had to consider curricular specifics and nationally specific research traditions, they were asked to consider three main aspects:

1. the history of (empirical) research on history education in their respective country,
2. significant methods and results of empirical research and
3. central research desiderata.

Despite individual emphases, most of the chapters in this volume are structured along these three focal points. Due to national specifics, some authors chose to

1 For a fourth review, see Sauer 2016.

structure their chapter differently, while still reflecting on these three key areas.² Thus, the question how history is learned and taught in the context of systematic classroom education is at the core of this book. Nevertheless, a number of chapters also touch upon neighboring fields, such as textbook research, individual historical thinking or learning history in informal settings. As with the previous edition, the second edition aims to enable and to foster an international dialogue among different and often still unconnected research cultures. On the other hand, the contributions to this volume will hopefully help to increase international awareness of heterogeneous, yet remarkably rich and often very long research traditions.

3. A comparative perspective from a German point of view

As history education researchers, we (the editors as well as the readers) are sensitized to the fact that our perception of the world is influenced by the perspective we take. This perspective somewhat limits the scope of things we can perceive – however, without a perspective, we would not be able to see anything at all. Keeping this in mind, we will use this foreword to attempt an overview of central aspects reported upon in the following chapters. Instead of trying to further summarize what are already very condensed reports of (frequently very rich) research traditions, we will adopt a meta-perspective and outline the spectrum of positions in five different areas: the status of the academic discipline; central concepts; fields and focal points of research; research methods; and key desiderata and perspectives for an international dialogue. Our perspective is that of history education researchers with an academic background in history who are most familiar with the German-language discourse.

3.1 Status of the discipline

As mentioned above, the academic background of history education researchers varies considerably. In many European countries, history education is researched by historians (who are frequently also qualified history teachers), and chairs or institutes for history education research are often part of history institutes at

2 The idea for this book originally sprang from a series of workshops on research methodology. Bodo von Borries presented his thoughts on lesson protocols at one of the workshops and was the first author who agreed to contribute to the volume. Since his chapter is focused somewhat differently, the book now contains two chapters by German authors.

universities or universities of education. In Germany, the notion of history didactics as one of three historical sciences (along with historical research and the theory of history) was established in the 1970s. The discipline now regards itself as a research-based academic discipline, not simply as a teaching methodology. Similar self-concepts can be found in Switzerland, the Netherlands, France and Poland. In Great Britain, on the other hand, research usually takes place at institutes of education (as it frequently does in the Netherlands, Finland and elsewhere) and seems to have closer ties to practitioners than in other countries. Frequently, researchers are history teachers who moved into academic research. History education research in Britain (as well as in Finland, where British research proved to be particularly influential) is thus similarly influenced by certain strands of historiography and historical theory as it is by educational science. A third approach is adopted in the USA, where researchers tend not to be historians, but often psychologists and educationalists. Here, history education research is usually conducted as a sub-domain of educational psychology, not – like in Germany and elsewhere in Europe – as an independent academic discipline with close ties to the historical sciences. American research trends tended to be influential in Anglophone Canada (this influence has weakened in the 21st century), while the French-speaking part of the country is inspired by the research interests and theoretical concepts dominating in France. As Penney Clark points out in her chapter, Canada used to be (and to some degree still is) marked by two independent research communities that for a long time tended to ignore each other. This only changed recently, with increased communication and cooperation across linguistic borders. A similar situation abides in Switzerland, where researchers in different Cantons tend to have closer ties to French, German and Italian researchers than across language communities.

In several countries, historical thinking as well as (the outcomes of) history lessons have been researched since the early 20th century – often from a psychological perspective. In those countries where history didactics is a discipline unto its own, however, it is frequently a young discipline. This is pointed out in the chapters on the Netherlands, Austria, France and Canada. Several authors remark upon an unsatisfactory staffing situation: In Canada, Finland, France, Austria and the Netherlands, only a handful of professorships for history education research or the didactics of history exist. Most of the teaching is done by lecturers, who frequently do not conduct any research. In some of these countries, PhD theses on history education research tend to be sparse (and are frequently conducted in other disciplines). Some authors report that history education researchers feel underappreciated by their colleagues in the history

department or in curriculum commissions. However, an independent history didactics does not necessarily have to mean being relegated to the sidelines, as the chapters on Switzerland and Germany prove. In both countries, most institutions where future teachers receive their education have one or several professorships for history didactics as well as other (tenured and/or non-tenured) positions, and history education research tends to be a relatively prolific field. In countries where history education research is conducted mostly by psychologists and educationalists (such as the USA or Spain), whether and how much research on historical thinking and learning is conducted appears to depend as much on individual research interests as it does on funding or infrastructure.

3.2 Central concepts

As is outlined in chapter 1, history didactics in Germany is centered on the concept of historical consciousness. This concept was developed by Jeismann, Rösen, Pandel and von Borries, among others, and is very much informed by the theory of history (and not nearly as much by theories of learning). It particularly stresses the fact that historical thinking is not an end unto itself, but serves a purpose in an individual's life, helping them to orientate their life in history and to make historical sense. Like related ideas in the English-speaking world, it also points out that history is made, not found. In the last ten years, the concept has been developed into several models of historical competence which outline those historical thinking skills necessary to develop a reflexive historical consciousness (see Barricelli/Gautschi/Körber 2014 for an overview of the competing models). The German discourse has informed theoretical thinking and empirical research in other parts of the world. As Peter Seixas (2015), founding Director of the Canadian Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness, states, his model of historical thinking, which has been influential in the Canadian curriculum debate, draws upon the concept of historical consciousness. Similarly, the Australian journal "Historical Encounters. A Journal of Historical Consciousness, Historical Cultures, and History Education", translations of Jörn Rösens major works into English (1993; 2005) and Polish (Traba/Thünemann 2015a; 2015b) as well as research in Sweden (Thorp 2013) suggest that the concept has been influential not just in Germany, but also abroad. Several authors in this volume point out the importance of the concept in their respective countries, too. Historical consciousness is a central concept in Poland, Austria and germanophone Switzerland (the latter two are particularly influenced by the notion of historical competences) and it is also influential in the Netherlands and Finland. As both Carla van Boxtel as well as Esko Nikander and Arja Virta report, another the-

oretical approach is at least as important in their research communities, namely the British tradition of research into students' historical concepts, which is outlined in the chapter by Peter Lee and Arthur Chapman. Researchers in this tradition are concerned with students' ideas about history. This includes (substantive) first-order concepts such as "king" and "revolution" and (epistemic) second-order concepts such as "cause and effect" or "accounts". While this line of research is indebted to notions of the "New History", the nature of the discipline and traditions of the philosophy of history (particularly Collingwood), it sets itself apart from research on historical consciousness by both its empirical foundation and its pragmatism. It emphasizes research on what concepts students use when thinking historically, how these concepts develop – British history education research has been much more directly influenced by Piaget than was the case in Germany³ – and how they can be changed. By combining the German and British perspective with other influences, Seixas developed his model of historical thinking, while Carla van Boxtel, together with Jeanette van Drie, created a model of "historical reasoning".

Research in the United States as well as those studies in Spanish-speaking countries reported upon by Mario Carretero and Everardo Perez-Manjarrez draws upon psychology, cultural theory and anthropology rather than the theory of history. Broadly speaking, concepts of historical thinking are thus informed by Bruner rather than by Rösen. While in the past, research on historical thinking often used to mean research on factual knowledge – a tendency also visible in earlier German research –, since the 1990s, American research, especially those studies conducted or inspired by the Stanford History Education group, centers on the concept of expertise, analyzing the ways professional historians' thinking differs from that of students. Similar to British research into students' historical concepts, this is a very practice-oriented line of research which often directly leads to teaching materials or teacher training programs, whose effectiveness is then tested empirically.

The concepts employed in the different research contexts described above are derived from different theoretical traditions, drawing upon different schools of the theory of history, psychology, sociology and others. They are therefore not

3 A similar interest in Piagetian levels of development characterized German research in the 1960s. Since the shift from developmental psychology to the concept of historical consciousness in the 1970s, levels or stages have remained under-researched. This observation is likely related to the fact that because of its roots in the theory of history (rather than in psychology), German history didactics lacks a sophisticated theory of learning.

simply different terms for what is essentially the same idea. Communication and collaboration across research communities thus requires more than just translating terminology (see Seixas 2017 and Körber 2017 for a comparative discussion of central English- and German-language concepts). Rather, what we need to do is explain the concepts we employ as well as the academic traditions they draw upon. The chapters in this book attempt to do that.

3.3 Areas of research

While there are certain similarities across the countries reported upon in this volume, the different concepts employed as well as the different disciplines researchers come from lead to a rather heterogeneous situation. Apparently, history education research can mean investigating very different phenomena, ranging from a focus on historical and/or current curricula and textbooks (Poland; Austria) through a focus on the concepts and processes of historical thinking employed by students (Great Britain; USA) or the ideas and attitudes comprising their historical consciousness (Germany; Finland) to classroom research (recent developments in the Netherlands, the USA and Germany).

Despite this fact, there are also some interesting parallel developments in different research traditions. One similarity that catches the eye is the fact that across countries, early attempts at empirical research frequently equate (or equated) historical thinking with factual knowledge (and occasionally with interest and/or motivation). In many cases, this was both because of under-complex notions of historical thinking or learning and because of insufficient empirical expertise. Additionally, tests of factual knowledge were and occasionally still are used as measures of the effectiveness of school history education, either publicly and politically or academically (USA; Switzerland; Germany; Poland; the Netherlands). Just as striking is the fact that students' approaches to primary source documents are researched in many countries, often with very different theoretical and methodological approaches (cf. the chapters on research in the USA, Great Britain, Germany and Finland). While the role source documents played in history education used to differ internationally (see Erdmann/Hasberg 2011), they are of course absolutely indispensable for professional historians. It is thus no wonder that the strategies students employ when tackling them as well as the – quite substantial – obstacles they face when doing so are an area of research in many countries. Another field of research across academic traditions is the interplay of students' historical thinking and their identity (Spain and Argentina; France; Canada; Germany), which has been researched from the points of view of social psychology, sociology and historical learning. Curiously, though,

systematic research on gender specifics seems to be a desideratum across the board, despite strong evidence obtained in different countries (USA; Finland; Germany) that male and female learners (and most probably those not defining in binary terms, too) approach history differently.

Most striking, however, is the fact that many authors report a dearth of classroom research. Frequently, historical thinking, its concepts, competences and strategies are investigated in laboratory settings, with students being interviewed or solving problems individually. If actual history lessons are recorded and analyzed, researchers tend to adopt a descriptive (rather than an analytical) stance, choosing to measure the time students and the teacher spend talking or the number of materials used rather than trying to untangle the myriad psychological and communicative events that occur simultaneously. Empirical research that accounts for the complexity of the classroom thus remains a desideratum in many countries, not least because of the methodological challenges it entails.

3.4 Research methods

All in all, a wide array of qualitative and quantitative approaches are employed in historian education research (cf. Thünemann/Zülsdorf-Kersting 2016) – despite the fact that in many countries, as mentioned above, this research is conducted by historians rather than psychologists and educationalists, i.e. by academics who are not formally trained in empirical methodology. However, the level of methodological sophistication that is employed does of course differ internationally. Researchers in Great Britain, for example, appear to have utilized a broad spectrum of research methods as early as the 1980s. In their chapter, Peter Lee and Arthur Chapman report on studies using pencil and paper tests, interviews and video recordings. It seems fair to assume that the remarkable methodological pluralism employed in 20th century British research is a result of the social science background of researchers such as Denis Shemilt.

Generally speaking (and thus over-simplifying), qualitative approaches currently appear to outweigh quantitative ones. Several authors in this volume report on studies based on interviews, participant observation, student writing and discourse or content analyses. In research communities with a strong footing in historiography (e.g. Poland, Austria, Germany), hermeneutic and historiographical approaches to textbook and curriculum research tend to dominate, at least in earlier stages of research history. Recently, experimental settings with a pre-post-design are increasingly being used, especially in the Netherlands and the USA. These are often qualitative rather than quantitative experiments. Quantitative approaches appear to rely mainly on surveys and questionnaires,

which, at least in smaller projects, are frequently evaluated using descriptive statistics rather than statistical inference. In those cases where more sophisticated methods are used, researchers occasionally seek interdisciplinary cooperation (Germany), while others can utilize statistical expertise in their own ranks (Switzerland, USA). While researchers in some countries, e.g. the United States, have traditionally set store by empirical research, countries with more of a historiographical tradition often had to catch up. Since the turn of the century (and often before that), empirical research plays an important role across the board. Several authors report on a significant increase not only in the number of empirical projects, but particularly in methodological awareness throughout the past decade. This is certainly a very promising development.

3.5 Desiderata and perspectives for an international dialogue

Comparing the chapters in this volume, history education research appears to be a very heterogeneous and fragmented field of research. Singling out results or research perspectives that are relevant to all authors is therefore an impossible task. Instead, we focus on research desiderata which, from a German perspective, appear to bear potential for an international dialogue.

Although there are exceptions to this rule, four areas of research seem to be underdeveloped in different countries: classroom research (especially research focusing on the quality of history education), intervention research, projects investigating different levels of historical thinking, and research on specific aspects of individual historical thinking.

As mentioned above, while there are a handful of studies aimed at describing the morphology of classroom history education, studies investigating the quality of history lessons that account for the specifics both of classroom education as a socio-communicative practice and of historical thinking as a mental and emotional operation are lacking. In a different book (Bracke et al. 2018), we have suggested a theory of classroom history education that might provide a framework for such research. As with any empirical project, operationalizing theoretical assumptions empirically remains a major methodological challenge. The complexity of classroom education makes finding indicators for the quality of the myriad processes occurring simultaneously seem a daunting task, especially if the goal is to describe the quality of the *process* of history teaching and learning, not the quality of the results. For such future projects, the existing research based on videotaped history lessons in Switzerland and Germany might prove inspiring, as might Dutch research on the quality of students historical reasoning and the existing body of research on the quality of individual historical

thinking, e.g. students' use of concepts (see the chapters by Peter Lee/Arthur Chapman and Penney Clark).

While they cannot account directly for the quality of a history lesson, intervention designs can provide an insight, among other things, into the effectiveness of teaching methods and materials. Both Carla van Boxtel (Netherlands) and Sam Wineburg/Abby Reisman (USA) report on numerous studies employing an intervention design. Elsewhere, these designs are less common. While such designs were used in 1970s German research, these days they are quite rare (see the chapter by Bracke/Flaving/Köster/Zülsdorf-Kersting). Similarly, Peter Gautschi points out a dearth of intervention designs in Swiss research. Intervention research as it is conducted in the Netherlands and the USA as well as the kind of textbook reception research that is currently undertaken in Austria (see the chapter by Christoph Kühberger) might serve as a role model for research in other countries.

In German history didactics, particularly in the context of models of historical thinking competences, one area that is frequently deemed under-researched – theoretically as well as empirically – is the development of historical thinking along (and after) students' school careers. While empirical findings on certain skills, competences and beliefs do exist (see the chapter on Germany), there is no empirically based model of historical learning that could help relate these findings to another systematically. Research from English-speaking countries, especially from the United Kingdom and the United States, might inform future research on these aspects. As Peter Lee and Arthur Chapman report in their chapter, the approach to students' second order concepts taken in project CHATA has already proven influential in Spain, Portugal, Greece, Taiwan, and Singapore, among others. CHATA's influence is also acknowledged in the chapters by Carla van Boxtel (Netherlands) and Esko Nikander/Arja Virta (Finland). In a methodologically reflexive manner, CHATA has produced valuable insight into the development of student thinking and their use of concepts. These findings could be important building blocks in a model of historical learning. Similarly, research on historical expertise conducted by the Stanford History Education group in the United States helps shine a light on the ways in which professional historians' approaches to history differ from their students'. These findings can inform notions of historical learning beyond a school setting, in that they delineate advanced levels or stages of historical thinking. In addition to that, both projects are very inspiring in the way that research findings are translated into teaching programs and materials. They suggest one way of transferring academic knowledge into school practice. The nexus of academic research and school history education is reflected upon

by many authors in this volume, often suggesting that closer cooperation among researchers, curriculum officials and teachers would be desirable.

Finally, the state of research on individual historical thinking appears to be a particularly heterogeneous field. Without a doubt, this is due to the fact that researchers in different countries are influenced by different research traditions and concepts. For example, Peter Lee and Arthur Chapman point out that the way students utilize history to make sense of the world needs to be further investigated. Additionally, they (as well as Penny Clark) call for more research on historical thinking and learning outside school settings. In countries where the concept of historical consciousness plays an important role, such issues are at the heart of empirical research. While research methods and findings cannot simply be translated from one country to another, reading the chapters contained in this volume hopefully sensitizes readers to the close connection between academic traditions, theoretical concepts and fields of empirical research. Ideally, experiencing different approaches to history education research will spark new ideas and intensify international dialogue.

4. Concluding remark

As with the first edition, the main goals of this book are to outline national specifics in the empirical research on history education and to foster international dialogue. We believe that these two aspects go hand in hand. In order to understand and be inspired by the diverse areas of history education research in different countries, one needs to know the academic and theoretical traditions a research community is steeped in. Any success this book has in achieving these goals is due to the authors who contributed to this volume. We would like to express our gratitude for their articles, their willingness to discuss their findings and, not least, for their patience.

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SEBASTIAN BRACKE, COLIN FLAVING,
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German Research on History Education

Empirical Attempts at Mapping Historical Thinking and Learning

Due to different academic traditions, history education in Germany is usually researched by academics with a background in history and not by educational scientists or (educational) psychologists. These historians constitute a specialized academic discipline known in German-speaking countries as *Geschichtsdidaktik*, the didactics of history. It is from this perspective that the following chapter is written, thus excluding a majority of research on historical thinking conducted in neighboring disciplines.¹ Since the 1970s, the didactics of history views itself as the “science of the historical consciousness within a society” (Jeismann 1977, 12; our translation), which is to say that it is interested in historical thinking and learning processes wherever they may occur. This self-concept of course includes, but is by no means limited to, research on intentional educational processes in a school context. In the following chapter,² we limit our account of research on history education to such studies that bear upon school learning and exclude research on historical thinking and learning in more informal settings such as museums (e.g. Kohler 2016), history fairs and so on. We will also have to exclude detailed discussions of research methodology (on this topic, cf. Thünemann/Zülsdorf-Kersting 2016, a volume dedicated to the discussion of the methods used in researching historical thinking and learning). Finally, there is unfortunately not enough room here to discuss either research on the history of history education (cf. Bergmann/Schneider 1997) and curricula (cf. Jeismann/Schöne-

1 We also exclude research conducted in the former GDR, which has been documented extensively in Hasberg (2001, vol. 2), Handro (2002) and Demantowsky (2003).

2 The structure of this chapter follows Gautschi's typology of history education research (2015 [2009], 104–113; cf. Gautschi's chapter in this volume). Of course, this is by no means the only way to structure the existing body of research. For a different typology, cf. Hasberg (2001, vol. 1).

mann 1989) or the rich tradition of textbook research³ (cf. Jacobmeyer 2011; Schönemann/Thünemann 2013; Fuchs/Nihaus/Stoletzki 2014).

1. Research on History Education until the Epistemological Turn (1970) – Researching the Development of Historical Thinking

Research on teaching and learning history in postwar Germany is decidedly rare. This may be due to the fact that the didactics of history had not yet established itself as an academic discipline or reached a high degree of institutionalization. Except for those teaching at *Pädagogische Hochschulen* (universities of education), there were no full-time researchers on history education similar to those in neighboring disciplines such as educational psychology (Rohlfes 1982, 388). Therefore, influential and ground-breaking studies such as those by Heinrich Roth (1955) or Waltraud Küppers (1961) were conducted by educational psychologists rather than by researchers with a background in history. Nevertheless, empirical research did exist. Wolfgang Hasberg (2001, vol. 1, 385) lists about twenty studies for the time between 1945 and 1970. As the “didactics of history” was mainly seen as a teaching methodology in the 1950s and 1960s, all these empirical studies are closely connected to school history. In the first two decades after World War II, empirical research on the didactics of history therefore always is research on teaching and learning history in school.

Looking at empirical works from that time, it is striking that there are almost no studies at all focusing on a phenomenology of history education in the young *Bundesrepublik*. While there are several studies that evaluate history lessons or student texts produced in that context (Auerbach 1948; Mertineit 1954; Hug 1959; Küppers 1961; Roth 1965; Schmid 1967), history lessons were never investigated as a process, but only ever as a source of (verbal or written) student utterances. Hasberg (2001, vol. 1, 385) differentiates research projects based on educational psychology which investigate psychological aspects of history learning from those more oriented towards teaching methodology. The former are mainly interested in the development of historical interest, knowledge and understanding as prerequisites for genetic history lessons based on Piagetian levels of development. The latter, on the other hand, research whether different teaching methods, contents or media are suitable for history teaching. Fol-

3 For an impression of at least some of the research on history textbooks, see the homepage of the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research at www.gei.de/en/.

lowing Peter Gautschi's typology of research on history education (2015 [2009], 104–113), these studies are mainly studies on historical thinking. Phenomenon research, effectiveness research and intervention research do not yet exist at this time. Outcomes research was conducted only occasionally.

In contrast to this scarcity, academic reflection on the nature and function of history education is numerous and diverse. Between 1949 and 1970, more teaching methodologies were published than in any of the following decades (Ebeling 1953; Oltrogge 1958; Marienfeld/Osterwald 1966; Döhn 1967; Münter 1967; Metzger 1970). It is striking, however, that this reasoning on history education hardly ever takes empirical research into account. This was despite the fact that the aforementioned teaching methodologies usually mentioned theoretical and psychological aspects of history teaching, and even works in the tradition of more scholarly pedagogy considered psychological dispositions a relevant factor (e.g. Weniger 1949, 70, 79). However, references to psychology usually only vaguely pointed towards development as a process of endogenous maturation, a theoretical position taken from older traditions in developmental psychology and *Jugendkunde*, a then-current German discipline combining findings on young people's development from biology, psychology, sociology, pedagogy and other fields. Waltraud Küppers stated what was believed to be the axiom of endogenous maturation particularly succinctly: "While it is certainly true that all of us have only become what we are and are only imaginable through the social circumstances that we are situated in and live in, that we even partly think through, it is just as certain that the human approach to intellectual matters, the ability to think, in its specificity is not bound to the social world" (1961, 11; our translation; cf. von Borries 1987). It is against the background of this axiom that research on history education became a specific case of a general educational psychology. Numerous studies from this time read like verifications or exemplifications of stages of psychological development. For example, Ursula Gehrecke (1960) closely mirrors Heinrich Roth's study (1955) on the historical understanding of pupils from the lower tier of the German school system (*Volksschule*, now *Hauptschule*) and to all intents and purposes reproduces his findings for the sample of students from the highest tier (*Gymnasium*).

In this context, the so-called "earliness assumption" (*Verfrühungsthese*) has been discussed. Many studies assumed that due to psychological determinants, historical learning could only take place after the *Volksschule*, which meant from year eight onward, a premise that was not doubted. Even Erich Weniger, without any empirical proof, thought of earliness as "the basic problem of history education" (1949, 9; our translation). Hans Ebeling, referring back to Spranger's

(1924) deliberations on the psychological structure of children, deduced “the psychological problem”, which consisted of having to teach children history at the *Volksschule* although they only reached the necessary psychological maturity after puberty (1953, 27–33). Many studies were centered on this “earliness assumption”. Generally speaking, it can be said that empirical research, especially since the 1970s, has confuted this assumption as insupportable. Studies conducted before the 1970s, however, were able to uncritically adhere to this assumption, since researchers hardly ever (Schröter 1968 is an exception) set their sights on students’ encounters with history outside school settings. Given these extracurricular influences on historical thinking, clear-sighted researchers such as Heinrich Roth (1955; 1965) or the few works on educational sociology (von Friedeburg/Hübner 1964; Raasch 1964) have early pointed out the relevance of history education for younger students.

Apparently, a need for specific didactical research on history education, specifically for phenomenon research and research on historical thinking, was not felt between 1945 and 1970 (Hasberg 2011, vol. 1, 431). Given the profound turning-point of National Socialism, researchers were more interested in how to teach an appropriate view of history and its corresponding contents. Scholarly thought on history was focused on pragmatically instructing history education, not on empirically researching its phenomena.

1.1 Research on Historical Thinking

Except for very few studies, almost all empirical research conducted from 1945 to 1970 can be classified as research on historical thinking, focusing on students’ historical interest, knowledge and understanding as a prerequisite of an age-adequate history education; in other words: on their mental and developmental dispositions. Hasberg speaks of a “confusing empirical complexity in the didactics of history” (2001, vol. 1, 385, our translation), commenting on the existence of a large number of smaller studies that differ considerably in interest, method and conclusions. Typical for these studies, which were frequently conducted by in-service teachers, is their lack of mutual reference, which could have helped working on an overarching question. Rather than acknowledging each other, however, these studies referred to the widely acknowledged works by Sonntag (1932) and Roth (1955). A genuine discourse on the didactics of history therefore cannot be found in those days. In addition to that, these studies lack methodological complexity and transparency, frequently omitting any information on their methodological setting, on the collection and particularly on the analysis of data. No study reflects on its sample – teachers often collected data in their own

classrooms (Mertineit 1954; Stollwerck 1955; Gehrecke 1960; Kehrer 1961; Haller 1962; Bruns 1965). Samples usually contain students of different ages to represent lower and middle (and only very rarely higher) secondary school students (Hug 1959; 1965; Gehrecke 1960; Schmid 1967).

A large proportion of these studies was centered on children's interest in history and its development (Hug 1959; 1965; Gehrecke 1960; Haller 1962; Schröter 1968). Another stream was interested in students' knowledge of history (Mertens 1950; Stollwerck 1955; Lehmann 1958; Fackinger 1959; Kehrer 1961; Hug 1965; Emrich 1969; Mielitz 1969; Oehler 1969). The latter studies could also be regarded as outcomes research, since student knowledge is always – at least partially – a result of education. The studies themselves, however, only tentatively made that association (with the exception of Kehrer 1961). Only very few studies set their sights on the ontogenetic development of historical thinking (Mertineit 1954; Kuhlmann 1965). While results on interest in history also suggest gender differences (Haller 1962), they were mainly seen as an affirmation of the conventional wisdom of developmental levels (gradually changing from an interest in concrete events to an interest in abstract thinking). Studies on knowledge generally tend to point out gaps (Fackinger 1959; Schörken 1959; Hug 1965). Jaide's research is aimed more towards historical thinking (1955; 1963). Studies focusing on history lessons in order to document students' attitudes towards and views on history education are rare exceptions (Beyer/Odenbach 1960; Schmid 1967).

However, larger studies with considerable influence did exist in those days, too. The central point of reference for many investigations was Kurt Sonntag's (1932) pre-war study on the development of historical consciousness. Heinrich Roth's 1955 study "*Kind und Geschichte*" (child and history) certainly seems erratic today. It stands out because it is the first study after 1945 to empirically investigate children's and adolescents' understanding of history. The study by Waltraud Küppers (1961) explicitly referenced Sonntag and Roth and attempted to empirically validate Küppers' own model of the development of historical consciousness through an elaborate methodology. The works by Sonntag, Roth and Küppers are the hallmarks that almost all other, smaller studies referred to. The unpublished Ph.D. theses by Reinhold Huber (1955) and Erich Schröter (1964) were less influential. The main yield these three (or five) studies produced was to explore different models of levels and stages in the development of historical thinking. With the help of these models, it was possible to speculate about what students would be able to do at those different levels. Roth pleaded for very elementary history education which was to reduce abstractions in histo-

ry to concrete human action (personalization) (1955, 127). Küppers felt able to differentiate conducive (events and people; 1961, 104) and deleterious (political contexts, social systems; *ibid*, 118) historical content (“*affine*” and “*diffuge Stoffe*”). To her, the biggest challenge for history education was “the problem of transposition” (*ibid*, 126; our translation), i.e. “the transfer of historical content to the various levels of student understanding” (*ibid*; our translation).

Sonntag’s 1932 study can be regarded as the first empirical project on the development of historical consciousness. By today’s standards, the methodological repertoire is unusually wide (among others: interviews, participant observation and questionnaires) – however, it is also decidedly unreflective. Sonntag proposes a model of developmental stages comprised of five levels, which was repeatedly cited after 1945, among others by Roth and Küppers.

Roth centers his research interest on Hans Ebeling’s “assignments for an educational-psychological empirical research for history education” (1953, 30–32; our translation) based on the question “what aspects and problems of history can be expected of them [the children and adolescents]” (Roth 1955, 14; our translation). He interviewed *Volksschule* pupils from years 3 through 8 and conceived a developmental model of four stages, with the age of 14 marking an important threshold towards a reflective historical consciousness. To Roth, the purpose of history education was “historical considerateness”, which he understood to be “the disposition and attitude of a person who knows himself to be a responsible link between past and future” (Roth 1955, 88; our translation). Ten years later, Roth published another study with a slightly different design. He interviewed pupils aged 9 to 15 and their teachers, asked them to sort pictures chronologically, analyzed their written assignments and devised educational designs together with his students in order to increase learning efficiency. Once again, Roth conceived levels of the “awakening consciousness of time and history” (Roth 1965, 29–30; our translation), which, however, remained unpublished. In particular, he qualified the “earliness assumption” and explicitly took a stand against the mainstream of the early methodology of history: “Two factors [...] led me to write this book. One of them was the monotonous repetition of the psychological claim that historical understanding only began with puberty” (*ibid*, 25; our translation). In addition to that, Roth now pointed out extracurricular factors influencing the development of historical consciousness: “For intellectual contexts, there are no simple biologically determined stages of development. Rather, it depends very much on the role these intellectual properties play in a people’s cultural life” (*ibid*, 26; our translation). Roth’s far-reaching and empirically unfounded consequences for history education are symptomatic

for studies from the 1950s and 1960s. Personalizing history was still regarded as a valid “toe-hold” for history education (“After all, it was always [...] a Hitler who did this or that.” *ibid.*, 30–31; our translation). Although Roth aims to widen “individual singularity” with historical context through his method of changing between “exemplary and orienting procedures”, Roth’s insistence on personalizing history still seems peculiar. After all, Ludwig von Friedeburg and Peter Hübner had included Roth’s study in their secondary analysis of the previous year, where they singled out the personalization of history as the main obstacle for historical understanding.

Küppers’ stated intention was to “build upon” the works by Sonntag and Roth (1961, 13; our translation) by setting her sights on students from years 4 through 12. Her three-step research design was more ambitious than Roth’s. She conducted history lessons in 16 classrooms to gain a general impression of students’ attitudes towards history. Afterwards, she asked 40 classes to write a total of 1400 essays on various topics. In order to triangulate these qualitative methods with quantitative approaches, she designed a questionnaire of 50 knowledge items and three general questions on students’ favorite subjects, their interest in history and the source of their knowledge. Küppers devised a model differentiating three “formal levels of the development of historical understanding” (*ibid.*, 122; our translation): level I (years 5 and 6: one-dimensional, superficial understanding; preference for strong lines of events; emotional involvement; no sense for chronology yet), level II (years 7 and 8: beginning of deep structuring; appreciation of the consequences of events; judgments are based on reasoning; a sense of chronology starts to develop; abstract references are understood insufficiently), level III (years 9–12: stronger differentiation between and connection of past, present and future; understanding of superindividual systems). At each level, students were supposed to possess a distinct attitude towards history. The development of historical thinking was to be regarded as a process of differentiation, structuring and abstraction. Just as in Sonntag’s and Roth’s models, the age of 14 marked an important threshold towards a reflective historical consciousness.

Von Friedeburg and Hübner (1964) conducted a secondary analysis of the studies (quasi outcomes research) by Roth and Küppers, among others, criticizing their pragmatic conclusions in particular. The aim and the method of this secondary analysis was to research the “attitudes of the youth towards state and society by using the studies on historical knowledge and historical consciousness” (*ibid.*, 5; our translation). Von Friedeburg and Hübner referred to psychological interpretations (mainly Roth and Küppers) to see whether personalizing

history (as advocated by Roth and Küppers) was age-related and therefore a significant preliminary stage or a consolidated misconception. They argued against Roth and Küppers and viewed it as a misconception. They proved that the evidence Roth and Küppers cited for their assumption that a personalized understanding of history would later evolve into a more differentiated understanding was untenable. Quite to the contrary, personalized views of history proved to be rather resistant to change. Friedeburg and Hübner cited children's desire for role models (as it was postulated by Küppers) as the reason for this view of history, while its resistance to change was attributed to the omnipresence of this pattern of historical thinking.

Hasberg concludes that with the works by Roth (1955), Huber (1961), Küppers (1961) and Schröter (1964), "the threshold towards questions of a theory of learning" (2001, vol. 1, 369; our translation) had been reached, but not yet crossed. What was lacking was further "terminological differentiation" leading to "further aspectuation of the research interest 'child and history'" (ibid; our translation). Historical interest, knowledge and understanding had been researched as "partial moments" (ibid; our translation), yet had never been brought into a systematic context. Due to their focus on teaching methodology, post-war works on the didactics of history did not provide any support for this cause. It was not until the 1970s, when the already well-known term "historical consciousness" was developed further, that the theory of history education was systematized.

2. Research on History Education in the 1970s – Pragmatic Classroom Research

The social, political and intellectual changes of 1970s Germany exerted a profound influence on the didactics of history, too (cf. Kuhn 1982). Both scholarly history and school history had been under pressure by the "realistic turn" in the educational sciences (Heinrich Roth) as well as by the rise of the Bielefeld school and its historic social science. These challenges caused an upsurge in innovation that brought about three major changes: (1) It made the didactics of history consider a curricular revision, leading to a debate on educational objectives and contents (cf. Schörken 1977), which in turn changed the nature of history education from a subject aiming to instill knowledge and a certain persuasion within the students to a subject where students are encouraged to think (Bergmann 1998, 112). (2) The subject matter of the discipline was broadened to encompass the "historical consciousness within a society" (Jeismann 1977, 12; our translation).

(3) Empirical research was taken up as a genuine field of interest. The latter can clearly be seen in the title of the second conference of the KGD (*Konferenz für Geschichtsdidaktik*), the association of German history education researchers, held in Nuremberg in 1975: *“Ansätze empirischer Forschung im Bereich der Geschichtsdidaktik”* (approaches to empirical research in the didactics of history; Fürnrohr/Kirchhoff 1976). Throughout the 1970s, empirical research remained closely tied to school settings, yet its methodology as well as its research interests diversified. Research on historical thinking, which was to remain the dominant strand throughout the decade, was joined by phenomenon research, effectiveness research and intervention research, with the lines between these strands of research often blurring. Generally speaking, the 1970s were marked by an impressive diversity in both research interests and methodology, which was added to by the increased incorporation of the methodological repertoire of the social sciences.

2.1 Phenomenon Research

Until the 1970s, the didactics of history lacked a methodological instrument to access and describe history education from its own (as opposed to a psychological or a pedagogic) point of view. Ulrich Mayer and Hans-Jürgen Pandel (1976a; 1976b) devised a “catalogue of history-didactic categories” for the assessment of the “specific didactic quality” (our translation) of history education. A total of 16 didactic categories were ordered into four groups, to be used to observe classroom communication in history lessons: 1. Relatedness of history to the students’ situation; 2. Methods of historical inquiry; 3. Relationship between social conditions and change over time; 4. Human action within the ongoing process of social practice (1976a, 126–127; our translation). While welcoming Mayer/Pandel’s proposal, Uwe Uffelman and Andreas Cser criticized it as deficient, pleading for the addition of “teaching methods in their specific use in history education” (1977, 2; our translation). Bruno Santini employed the matrix devised by Mayer and Pandel for his study on students’ conceptions of justice to answer the question if and how an education for fairness and equality takes an effect on history education and its ensuing classroom communication (1978, 7). To this end, he developed 17 detailed assumptions for the categories devised by Mayer and Pandel. He then recorded 22 history lessons in five different year 7 classes, interviewed teachers and asked students to answer a questionnaire. Santini then analyzed the recorded lessons using linguistic and frequency analytic methodology. He came to the conclusion that references to the students’ present situation were continuously observable, especially so in “sequences charged with value judgments” (ibid, 50–51; our translation). Santini particularly underlined

the role of the teacher as a decisive factor for making these references, a fact that recent theoretical thought on history education continues to point out (Bergmann 2002; Buck 2012).

Wolfgang Hug criticized Mayer and Pandels categories for “not representing how historical thinking is learned, but what it consists of and what it refers to” (1977, 96; our translation). Hug proposed a different tool consisting of two sets of questions. One of these sets (macro analysis) was intended for the description of full history lessons or units, containing questions from categories such as lesson content, learning sequences in the lesson structure, opportunities for students to be involved, thinking processes, learning sequences of the students (ibid, 96–97). The other set was intended for the micro-analysis of sequences within a lesson, to “concretely identify single elements and describe them in isolation” (ibid, 99; our translation). To this end, Hug listed questions in four different categories, namely the analysis of the chronological perspective, historical accounts and presentation, historical and political judgments, and the experience of identity (ibid, 98–99). Hug’s 1977 study (tentative results were already presented at the aforementioned KGD meeting; cf. Hug 1976) was the first investigation from within the discipline to map various aspects of history education on an empirical basis. It consists of a questionnaire answered by 624 teachers from all three of the then-existing strands of the German school system, 20 interviews as well as “years of observing history lessons” (1977, 3; our translation) which Hug used in order to “liquefy” as well as “substantiate” his findings (1976, 75; our translation). The study not only documents teachers’ aims and motivations, it also allows insights into the educational process. A common lesson pattern seemed to consist of the following phases: (1) repetition, (2) presentation of new content, (3) classroom discussion on the new content, (4) roundup. According to Hug’s study, history education in the 1970s was very much a teacher-centered affair dominated by teacher-led classroom discussions and monologic presentations by the teacher (1977, 76). Only about one third of the lesson time was spent using media of any kind, with 80% of the teachers mainly referring to the textbook (ibid, 137). Numerous smaller studies of the 1970s were devoted to this medium, focusing in particular on the view of history presented in these books (Hoffacker/Hilderbrandt 1973; von Borries 1975; Schallenberger/Hansche 1978, among others).

Comparable to Hug’s results are those obtained by Maria Zenner (1976), who employed a closed survey to question all comprehensive school (*Hauptschule*) teachers in the Saarland region (212 of a total 250). Nearly 50% of the teachers stated to teach almost exclusively in a lecture-style, teacher-centered manner, more than 35% said that teacher-centered teaching made up 80% and

group work made up 20% of their lessons. Method-wise, 40% of the teachers preferred to lecture, while 51% opted for classroom discussions. When working with media, 82% preferred classroom discussions (ibid, 107). More than half the teachers were convinced that working on their own would overburden *Hauptschule* pupils, only 14% believed that the opposite was true (ibid, 108).

By investigating student questions, Horst Hesse researched an aspect of history learning he believed was not only “the most important indicator for student interest”, but also a “strategy of creative thinking” (1976, 186; our translation). Hesse’s observation protocols for 91 history lessons in *Hauptschule* classrooms in Augsburg (years 5 through 9) revealed that 57 of these lessons took place without a single student question. Of the 126 questions Hesse counted, 88 were documented. A typology of these questions shows that 29 of them are simple requests for information, 39 are real problem questions and 20 are questions on selective details (ibid, 192). Hesse found positive correlations of student questions with lessons where the textbook or maps were used, while working with the atlas, with worksheets and on the blackboard seemed to provoke fewer questions. The more teachers tended to control the lessons, the less students tended to ask questions. Conversely, female and older teachers as well as younger classes seemed to encourage more questions. Finally, topics from social or cultural history led to more questions than those from political history.

Further studies (Wittwer 1973; Dümmler/Graßmann 1978) focused on administrative aspects of history education by analyzing curricula and ministerial decrees, enabling a comparison of the different German states.

2.2 Outcomes and Effectiveness Research

Throughout the 1970s, the outcomes and the effectiveness of history education were repeatedly questioned. Nevertheless, only very few empirical studies on these matters exist. The attempt to measure outcomes beyond mere student knowledge brings about several methodological problems, as von Borries (1976) pointed out. It therefore seems hardly surprising that the existing studies limit themselves to student knowledge as an indicator of effectiveness. Karl Filser acted on the premise that “without historical knowledge [...], historical understanding is impossible” (1973, 10; our translation). He therefore developed a written survey on the “foundation of knowledge and conceptions” (ibid; our translation) based on the 1966 guidelines for Bavarian *Volksschulen*. This survey was taken by 1726 students after they had completed their school education. Filser concludes that “the result paints a distressing image of the effectiveness of history education at the *Volksschule*” (ibid, 67; our translation). Unfortunately, Filser does not

analyze his data any further by correlating his results with variables such as gender, social class or school career. Similarly unsatisfactory results were obtained by Dieter Boßmann (1977), who published excerpts from student essays on “What I have heard about Adolf Hitler ...”. The sample of this cohort study consisted of 3042 students aged 10 to 23 from 121 classes representing all German school types as well as all states except for the Saarland. Boßmann considered his findings “a catastrophe for educational policy”. Even in the best case, “students only had an outrageous smattering of superficial half knowledge” (back-cover; our translation) at their disposal. However, the essays were not analyzed, but simply published. Ulrike Emrich (1971b), who conducted a smaller study on student knowledge of contemporary history, judges her results in a less alarmist fashion.

2.3 Intervention Research

Intervention research with the aim to single out the effects of different aspects of history education was a concept first introduced into the discipline in the 1970s. Annegret Harnischfeger (1972) conducted such a study for the purpose of curriculum evaluation. With an innovative and elaborate design, she investigated if and how political attitudes are changed by education. For that purpose, she devised a sequence of eight lessons on National Socialism. These lessons were then taught in seven experimental classes with two additional classes acting as control groups, one of which was taught as the teacher saw fit while the other received no history lessons on National Socialism at all. Students’ attitudes were documented before, immediately after and half a year after receiving treatment. Harnischfeger concluded that it was possible to “influence attitudes in a predictable manner in a relatively short period of time” (ibid, 123; our translation). These attitudes then even proved stable.⁴ Harnischfeger noticed marked differences between male and female participants, regarding both their attitudes before treatment and the effects of the treatment (ibid, 112). Other methodological attempts at curriculum evaluation (Hoffmann 1978) are often considered to “have failed” (Hasberg 2011, vol. 1, 551; our translation) or did not go beyond first steps (Hoffmann 1976).

Intervention research was also conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of different teaching methods. Hans Müller (1972) employed lesson observations, interviews and a knowledge test to investigate differences between teacher-centered, lecture-based frontal teaching and document-based group work with year

4 Both findings are noticeably at odds with results other studies on students’ attitudes produced. Cf. Zülsdorf-Kersting 2007 as well as sections 3.2 and 3.4 of this paper.

8 grammar school (*Gymnasium*) students. Müller interpreted a gain in knowledge and lesson participation, support for students from underprivileged classes and a capacity for teamwork as well as for democratic behavior (ibid, 24) as indicators of effectiveness. Ten classes were taught two sequences (on the beginning of World War I and on the Russian Revolution), one for each method, thus constituting their own control groups. Müller concludes that document-based group work was more effective than teacher-centered lecturing. Both the gain in knowledge and student participation were “incomparably higher” (ibid, 153; our translation). However, the study is problematic in its mixing of various variables: teacher-centered vs student-centered lessons, lecture vs working with documents.

Norbert M. Seel (1979) used an early computer-based learning program to investigate whether judgments in the presentation of history add to successful learning, particularly regarding affective learning objectives and political learning. He presented 432 *Hauptschule* students with either factual and sober or judging accounts of the French Revolution, finding that students tended to adopt the judgment presented in the accounts and to also apply them to other circumstances (ibid, 196–197). Less gifted students seemed particularly prone to adopting evaluations presented in the accounts (ibid, 193).

2.4 Research on Historical Thinking and Learning

Research on history education in the 1970s was still dominated by works on historical interest, understanding and thinking, as was the case in the preceding decades. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches can be found. Rolf Schörken (1976) sketches a project documenting student utterances in “normal”, “everyday” history lessons at lower secondary schools. He intended to contribute towards ameliorating the empirical desideratum of the “cognitive build-up of students’ domain-specific thought structures” (ibid, 177; our translation) by classifying students’ misjudgments. To this end, he recorded history lessons – unfortunately without clearly laying down his methodological design. A “first perusal of the material” (ibid, 179; our translation) revealed two kinds of deficient student utterances: 1. A lack of cognitive categorical differentiation; 2. A wrong relationship of the judging person towards history. An indicator for improving the quality of judgment was seen in the “increasing differentiation of both factual knowledge and the use of the underlying categories of thinking and judgment to structure factual knowledge” (ibid, 183, our translation).

In the 1970s, the development of domain-specific thought structures was no longer explained only with endogenous maturation. Based on his cohort survey study on historical interest (n=2357, lower secondary schools, years 5–9) of