

# THE GRAZ CONFERENCE 2020

HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS – HISTORICAL THINKING – HISTORICAL CULTURE

Core Concepts of History Didactics and Historical Education in Intercultural Perspectives  
Reflections on Achievements – Challenges for the New Generation

## CALL FOR PAPERS



**THE  
GRAZ CONFERENCE  
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## CALL FOR PAPERS

### I - Introduction

Over the past decades, what might be called the »first generation« of scholars in history didactics has worked with enthusiasm and patience on the development of core theories/theoretical frameworks and a basic set of analytic terms and methodological tools for describing and analyzing the field of history didactics and historical education. Core concepts in history didactics such as »historical consciousness«, »historical thinking« and »historical culture« have been the subject of various approaches and definitions in the national and regional networks and schools of history didactics and historical education. However, the intercultural, transnational and global dimensions of the core concepts of history didactics and historical education have not been elaborated extensively or compared systematically.

The dynamics of the digital revolution with its innovative forms of communication, interaction and media have provoked new relations and thus new perspectives on the idea of »historical consciousness«, »historical thinking« and »historical culture«. In view of the accelerated cultural change, right now seems to be a good moment in history didactics to revise and renew the debate on the core concepts.

The Graz Conference aims to make essential steps forward in this direction by putting more emphasis on the intercultural, transnational and global dimensions of this discourse. It will create opportunities to strengthen the international ties and make them more robust in terms of international comparison and research. In this goal, the conference understands itself in the continuity of international cooperation organized for example in the framework of the International Society of History Didactics (ISHD), the International Research Association for History and Social Science Education (irahsse), HEIRNET and comparable initiatives.

### II - Purposes and Objectives

Starting from the assumption that the scientific discourse on core concepts of history didactics and historical education is still based primarily on national frameworks and networks, the Graz Conference offers an opportunity for deepening the theoretical and methodical discussions in an intercultural, global perspective. The Graz Conference 2020 aims:

- to establish a scientific framework for an intercultural discourse on core concepts in the field of history didactics/historical education,
- to empower a global discourse on the theoretical understanding and on the empirical /practical dimensions of relevant concepts such as
  - ° Historical consciousness
  - ° Historical thinking
  - ° Historical culture (including public history and memory culture),
- to create an opportunity for strengthening international collaborations and make them more robust in terms of intercultural comparison, exchange of information and results,
- to promote a sustainable network of scholars interested in enhancing the intercultural discourse on theory and methodology in history didactics/historical education,
- to identify shared, transnational research interests and trajectories, and/or to identify elements of a common research agenda among participants for intercultural comparative work,
- to promote the »Centre for Intercultural Comparative Research in History Didactics (CICR-Graz)« as a key partner in the global network of researchers in the field.



### III – General Information

Conference Date	11 <sup>th</sup> to 14 <sup>th</sup> November 2020
Conference Website	English: <a href="https://grazconference2020.uni-graz.at/en/">https://grazconference2020.uni-graz.at/en/</a> German: <a href="https://grazconference2020.uni-graz.at">https://grazconference2020.uni-graz.at</a>
Main Contact	<a href="mailto:grazconference2020@uni-graz.at">grazconference2020@uni-graz.at</a>
Venue	University of Graz (library hall) and Hotel Das Weitzer, Graz, Austria (Europe)
Registration	<a href="https://grazconference2020.uni-graz.at/en/registration/?esraSoftIdva=301068">https://grazconference2020.uni-graz.at/en/registration/?esraSoftIdva=301068</a> <a href="https://grazconference2020.uni-graz.at/de/registrierung/?esraSoftIdva=301068">https://grazconference2020.uni-graz.at/de/registrierung/?esraSoftIdva=301068</a> Deadline for Registration: Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2020
Call for Papers	Deadline 17 <sup>th</sup> August 2020 Abstract Submission: 1. Download the form from the Website <a href="https://grazconference2020.uni-graz.at/en/call/">https://grazconference2020.uni-graz.at/en/call/</a> or use the document transmitted via E-Mail. 2. Fill in the blanks in the form. 3. Submit the document by sending it to <a href="mailto:grazconference2020@uni-graz.at">grazconference2020@uni-graz.at</a> .

### COORDINATING COMMITTEE AND KEY SPEAKERS

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 Luigi Cajani (UNIV. DI ROMA, ITA)  
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## COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK TO PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

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Peter Lee (UK)  
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## CONFERENCE MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION (UNIV. GRAZ, AUT)

Bettina Paireder, Alois Ecker;  
Barbara Derler, Benjamin Ecker, Marion Hintsteiner, Georg Marschnig

## IV – Topics of interest

Topics at the Graz Conference 2020 are expected to deal with the overall theme “Historical Consciousness – Historical Thinking – Historical Culture. Core Concepts of History Didactics and Historical Education in Intercultural Perspectives. Reflections on Achievements – Challenges for the New Generation”.

Elaborating (an) aspect(s) which refer(s) to (one of) the core concepts in intercultural, transnational and/or global perspective should therefore be in the focus of all the presentations and responding discussions. The interventions which deal with the core concepts of the conference – such as historical consciousness, historical thinking, historical culture/public history – are expected to follow the lines according to the following general a/o specific questions.

### A. General Questions to the Core Concepts of History Didactics/Historical Education in Intercultural Perspective

1. What has been achieved up to date as concerns the development of core theories/core theoretical frameworks for describing, investigating and analyzing the field of history didactics/historical education and what might be a next step for empowering the intercultural discourse on the core concepts?
2. What has been achieved up to date as concerns the development of basic analytic terms, methodological tools, as well as on the empirical and practical dimensions of history didactics/historical education and what might be a next step for empowering the intercultural discourse on the raised issue(s)?
3. What are affordances, limitations and/or new challenges of the core concepts when assessing their epistemological and/or conceptual bases in an intercultural dimension?
4. Which aspects of the core-concepts are frequently discussed in the various regional communities?

### B. Specific Questions to the Core Concepts of History Didactics/Historical Education in Intercultural Perspective

Comparative questions at the conference for developing the core concepts and terminology in an intercultural perspective could comprise one of the following specific aspects (The following text modules can be regarded as descriptions of the planned main sections of the ‘Graz Conference 2020’):



## I – ‘Historical Consciousness’ in intercultural perspective

‘Historical Consciousness’ seems to be widely accepted as the key-term of history didactics/historical education. However, when asking for an epistemological base of the core concept of ‘Historical Consciousness’ to be applicable in intercultural perspective, the answers might differ quite substantially between representatives of the various communities.

An approach in this section might be, to ask in a comparative perspective, how e.g. Jörn Rüsen’s understanding of historical consciousness as a fundamental way of thinking about ourselves and ‘making sense of the past’ by ‘interpreting the past for the sake of understanding the present and anticipating the future’ has been adopted in the various communities and discourses.

Complementary, an intercultural comparison might ask, how conceptions of historical consciousness of e.g. Jörn Rüsen, Peter Lee or Peter Seixas relate to the idea, first discussed by Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur, that we as human beings are immersed in history a/o encounter the historicity of humanity. To come to a more robust terminology of ‘historical consciousness’ reflections on one or the other of the following questions might also be of relevance:

- Who are the actors /agents of historical consciousness?
- What ontogenetic concepts of ‘historical consciousness’ can be discerned when exploring the theoretical debates of the regional scientific communities?
- What specific aspects/dimensions of historical consciousness emerge in the debates of postcolonial histories?
- What concepts of historical consciousness can be discerned in the various (discourses on) indigenous narratives?
- Is there an epistemological difference between concepts of e.g. ‘historical sense making’, ‘historical consciousness’ and ‘historical thinking’?
- What is the impact of postmodern theories/discourses on the concept of ‘historical consciousness’?
- Is there an impact of (a theory of) immersion on the concept of historical consciousness?

## II – ‘Historical Thinking’ in intercultural perspective:

‘Historical Thinking’ might be regarded as the operational term for describing intentions, mental processes and/or competences of those who work on and with historical knowledge in both, historical research and historical education.

However, when asking for the epistemological ground of a concept of ‘Historical Thinking’, various disciplinary traditions could be discerned. As already mentioned in the general description, regional perspectives on the understanding of this concept differ quite significantly. Clarification and comparison in the intercultural approach is therefore expected to bring the discussion forward.

Questions of interest:

- Who are the ‘social subjects’/producer(s)/ creators of ‘historical thinking’?
- Is there a systematic/epistemological distinction between ‘historical consciousness’ and ‘historical thinking’?
- Which concepts/aspects of ‘historical thinking’ have been elaborated in the various regional discourses? What are the convergences a/o differences when exploring them in an intercultural, transnational perspective?
- If there is a specific ‘Western’ form of ‘historical thinking’, what are the challenges for an intercultural and/or a global approach to the concept?



- What specific aspects/dimensions of 'historical thinking' emerge in the debates of postcolonial histories?
- What concepts of 'historical thinking' can be discerned in the various discourses of aborigines and/or the respective indigenous narratives?
- What are the challenges for historical thinking in the digital age?
- How to conceptualize 'historical evidence' after the postmodern discourse (e.g. the simultaneous existence of various interpretations of the past)?

### III – 'Historical Culture' in intercultural perspective:

As an umbrella concept, 'Historical Culture' has been broadly described as 'people's relationship to the past'. Originating from German history didactics of the 1970ies with its prior focus on the construction and de-construction of historical knowledge in the history classroom, the research concepts of 'historical culture' (Geschichtskultur) then adopted a social constructivist approach and widened the scope of interest to all forms of social practice which contributed to the construction of 'historical consciousness', such as museums, exhibitions, film, TV, internet and/or the historically inclined cultural industries, including in recent time also computer games. A second strand in the research concept on 'Historical Culture' reacted to the 'cultural turn' in the humanities in the 1990ies and focused on 'discourse', 'representation' and 'performativity' to be considered as constitutive elements of social organization. Clarification and debate might also be useful in relation to concepts of individual and collective memory as well as to the multiple forms of (popular) 'memory culture', monuments, places of memory, imaginative constructs of collective identity in their interrelation to the core concepts of history didactics.

Questions of interest:

- Who are the actors /agents of historical culture?
- How do we conceptualize the relationship between the various agents/producers of historical consciousness [historians, teachers, teacher trainers, public historians, filmmakers, etc.], the various institutions and media [schools, corporate culture, universities, museums, archives etc.] through which their elements/narratives are circulated, and the "consumers" [students, "the public," citizens, etc.] in and for intercultural, democratic societies?
- What forms of historical culture [forms through which historical consciousness is expressed], should be discerned for the discourse on history didactics in the digital age: e.g. (textual, oral and graphic) narratives, historiography, staging and installations in museum exhibitions, performances and orchestrations via internet and social media, ...?
- Is there an interrelation/discourse between concepts of memory cultures (Individual – collective memory) and the core concepts of 'historical consciousness' and 'historical culture'?
- Is there an impact of (a theory of) immersion on the concept of historical culture?

### IV – The core concepts in their interrelation to 'historical learning'

In some communities, the sprouting interest on empirical research and on theoretical debate about the ontological and/or social dimensions of 'historical consciousness' and 'historical thinking' in relation to 'historical learning' was somehow overlapped in the new millennium by a growing normative discourse on historical learning, e.g. the requested 'historical competences' of the pupils, students and their teachers. Actual results of innovative empirical studies on 'historical learning' and/or 'historical reasoning' in the classroom might contribute to lift the discourse from its normative bonds. Other communities opted for elaborating pragmatic aspects (and the logics) of 'historical thinking'.



Questions of interest:

- How to conceptualize 'historical sense-making' – including self-reflection and identity-building – in a transnational perspective?
- Do concepts such as 'education for active citizenship education' have a meaningful epistemological/ontological relation to 'historical learning' in a transnational perspective?
- How to conceptualize aspects of 'historical thinking' in the postmodern age?
- How to relate discourses on 'historical culture' to 'historical learning'?
- How to strengthen analytic and theory-based forms of 'historical learning' for the daily practice of history didactics/ historical education?
- What is the role of first order concepts in the actual debates of 'historical learning'?

Further differentiation and debate is also needed on the (im)balance between intention and practice in the various fields and applications of 'historical learning'. To give the example: From the very beginning of the debate in the 1970ies and 1980ies there existed a dichotomy in the pragmatic use of 'historical consciousness': While in the practical application by history education a/o history instruction in school, the concept was – and to a large extent is still – used commonly as a construction of 'historical consciousness' with the goal of developing primarily the 'collective national memory', the 'historical consciousness of the nation state' at hand, – the theoretical discourse, which was based in philosophical, anthropological or sociological theories, oscillated between self-reflection and identity-building of the 'social subject' and a relatively vague definition of a collective historical identity/memory, without taking sufficiently into account the intersubjective dimensions of the concept, the communicative, socio-psychological and/or the performative aspects in the construction of 'historical consciousness'.

Questions of interest:

- How to conceptualize 'historical learning' in a transnational perspective?
- How to further elaborate historical consciousness a/o historical thinking in their relevance for 'historical learning in intercultural perspective'?
- How to teach controversial issues without 'just' producing 'subjective' and/or 'relativist' historical thinking?
- Can constructivist, communicative a/o organizational theories widen the scope of empirical research on the interrelation between core concepts and the teaching and learning practice in schools, universities or teacher education institutions?

## **V – The core concepts in their interrelation to (theories of) global political, social, economic or cultural developments**

While the trend in the development of the 'second-order' concepts of historical education/history didactics can be traced over the past decades with reference to relevant publications in the field, the interrelation between 'first-order concepts' of historiography and 'second-order concepts' of historical thinking and historical education has not been so well described, and seems even to having been neglected over this period by reflection and research in the various communities.

Reflecting upon history education without taking into account the relation to the concrete content and the factual context of historical narratives, however, might thin out the theoretical debate on historical education. Criticism which had been applied to the educational theories in former decades might come back to history didactics, when just focusing on second order concepts.



In addition, the approach in this section should be linked with the actual big challenges in history didactics/historical education with regard to global societal and political developments. This could imply the goal to make the terminology of the core concepts more robust as concerns

- the support and development of the historically thinking citizens,
- the interrelation between citizenship education and historical education,
- the development of sustainability and social responsibility through history education,
- the work on historical narratives in the and for the intercultural societies.

Intercultural comparative questions at the conference for developing the core concepts and terminology in a global perspective could therefore comprise the following:

- o Is there an impact of (theories of) political history(ies) on the core concepts?
- o What is the impact of economic and social history or area studies on the core concepts?
- o What is the impact of intercultural approaches such as gender studies, public-private histories, every-day life history, new cultural studies on the core concepts?
- o What is the impact of transnational approaches, such as narratives on Shoah, genocide, on the core concepts of history didactics/historical education?
- o Are there discourses on 'global history' which are related to the core concepts of 'historical consciousness', 'historical thinking' or 'historical culture'?

## **VI – The core concepts of history didactics/historical education in relation to core concepts of theory of history**

Interdisciplinary aspects have been taken into account by history didactics/historical education from the very beginning of its discourse, whether they came from philosophy, educational sciences, educational and/or pedagogical psychology, social psychology, sociology, communicative theories or cultural anthropology. The relationship between theory of history (Historik, Metahistory) and (theory of) history didactics was part of the initial debate on historical education and has given impulses to a series of subsequent models in history didactics/historical education.

However, up to nowadays, the relationship between theory of history and theory of history didactics/historical education remains opalescent and sometimes even enigmatic. Systematic comparison on the relationship between theory of history and theory of history didactics/ historical education might bring in additional impulses to the intercultural debate on the core concepts of historical education. Innovative impulses could be considered from e.g. the intercultural dimensions of core concepts in theory of history.

Questions of interest:

- o How to understand, how to investigate and how to discuss 'historical sense-making', 'historical consciousness' or 'historical thinking' in their relation to theory of history in transnational perspective?
- o Are there core concepts in theory of history which play a significant role in the development of theory of history didactics/historical learning (e.g. gender studies; cultural anthropology ...)?
- o What is the impact of the linguistic turn, the visual turn et al. on theory of history didactics/historical learning?
- o How is the postmodernist discourse reflected in theory-building of history didactics/historical learning?
- o What is the impact of theory building on controversial issues and diversity (such as race, gender, class, ethnicity, language) on concepts of 'historical consciousness', 'historical thinking' or 'historical culture'?



- Is the discourse of postcolonial studies and on indigenous narratives reflected in theories of history didactics/ historical education?
- What might serve as an example of good practices for the relation between theory-building of history and theory-building of history didactics in the digital age/postmodern discourse?

## VII – The Impact of the Digital Revolution on the Core Concepts of History Didactics/ Historical Education

Innovative forms of communication, interaction and media provide multiple opportunities today for historical learning in classroom, university courses, virtual museums, distance learning and beyond. The digitalization of academic work (ejournals, ebooks, open access publications; visualization, recording and performances of scientific information) has opened the global 'market' for sales and distribution of academic products in unexpected dimensions. The internet provides a dynamic space of community-building, self-representation and self-reference also in the academic world. Beyond the academic system, the digital revolution has created new possibilities in the educational and the cultural systems.

Historical cultures have changed over the past thirty years. Performances of historical narratives, such as film, TV, and especially computer games provoke new relations and thus new perspectives on the idea of 'historical consciousness', 'historical thinking' and 'historical culture'.

In addition, beyond the obvious changes in the access to and the multiple forms of sources and narratives, the concept of 'historical consciousness' might be questioned in its epistemological bases when regarding the 'habitus' and the emotional 'flow' of the players involved in historical computer games or the stressing communication in the clouds of 'social media-culture' and in consequence request additional analysis and in-depth theoretical reflection.

Empirical research on the impact of the auditive and visual communications of narratives on 'historical sense-making' of the 'social subject(s)' and/or the various social (sub-) systems are just at the beginning of scientific debate and reflection. The questions, whether the 'visualization' and/or staging of historical information contributes to the creation of formerly unknown structures of 'historical consciousness', or whether the 'hypertext' engenders new forms of 'historical thinking' (or of historical learning) demand additional debate and – more than that – request efforts of empirical research.

Presentations/respondents might therefore also discuss questions such as:

- In which aspects/dimensions is the concept of 'historical consciousness' challenged by developments in the digital age (historical sense-making; narratology; contribution/irritation of identity-building, ...)?
- Which aspects of the 'historical thinking' concept might be questioned/challenged in view of developments in the digital age (e.g. significance; evidence; cause and consequence; ...)? How about challenges for other conceptions of 'historical thinking' (e.g. esthetics, logics, functions...)?
- What forms of 'historical culture', (forms through which historical consciousness is expressed), should be discerned for the discourse on history didactics in the digital age: e.g. (textual, oral and graphic) narratives, historiography, staging and installations in museum exhibitions, performances and orchestrations via internet and social media, strategic/organizational structures of computer games, ...?



## VIII – Human dignity, Sustainability, Social responsibility in their interrelation to the core concepts

The idea of 'learning from the past' might be regarded differently in the various regions of the world. Conclusions and/or assumptions which might be common sense in one group of countries might cause rejection and misunderstanding in the other group. - When discussing scientific concepts in an international perspective, what might be common political ground in one group (such as Human rights, rule of law, democracy ...) might be easily misunderstood as political/ideological weapon by members of other communities when applying them in the international relations.

Most core concepts in history didactics/historical education integrate, what is called the ethical (moral) dimension as a basic factor/assumption of their theoretical reflection. In writing, negotiating or staging historical narratives, authors not only make factual judgements but come to explicit or implicit value judgements about past situations and developments. However, the hermeneutic approach and the epistemic understanding of factual and value judgements may be regarded differently in the various communities (e.g. focus on historical empathy vs. contemporary ethical standards).

The idea of 'Human Dignity' seems to build a common metaphor for all ethical assumptions and reflections on human conditions and human development. Although, not only with regard to the traumatic experiences of the Shoa and other forms of genocide, but also with regard to the ongoing excessive exercise a/o misuse of (state) power towards refugees, disdain towards black lives, the repression of gender diversity, ignorance of social inequality, as well as all kind of cultural and religious intolerance, this principle is challenged in many ways and requests refreshment and strengthening also from the side of citizenship education and historical learning.

Narratives on natural catastrophes, great diseases, pandemics and/or contamination of living conditions can be found in historiography back to the Middle Ages, colonial times or even Antiquity. The reactions of human beings towards such unexpected catastrophes were manifold, the explanations frequently irrational. Reactions such as fear, panic, projective defense, megalomania, paranoia, identification of scapegoats etc. resurge dramatically and become open for scientific observation and debate not only as idiosyncratic phenomena but also as collective reverberations. However, the global political governance of climate change, pollution, pandemics, the involvement of scientific expertise in the explanation of complex transnational challenges, the debate of and the search for intercultural and global solutions for these challenges, or the development of strategies and mechanism of global social responsibility, seem to be relatively new and requests innovative approaches to historical investigation, description and interpretation and reflection.

In addition, connected to the significant challenges of creating a theoretical basis for working with historical narratives in a sustainable global environment; for establishing a democratic culture of historical debate and reflection in the multicultural society; and for creating a sound theoretical framework for constructing, negotiating and questioning historical narratives in the digital age, the generation of scholars, who are (or will be) responsible for further developing the theoretical and methodological framework in history didactics/historical education today, is confronted with a number of additional expectations.

To be viable in the intercultural scientific debate, the ethical dimensions of the core concepts and their terminology therefore demand sound comparison, analytic debate and clarification.



Questions to be considered:

- How to develop historical sense-making and identity-building in an intercultural perspective?
- How to develop the core concepts in an intercultural dimension without falling into the traps of national, religious or ideological bias, stereotypes or by relying on the multiple forms of hegemonial discourses and cultural wars?
- How to contribute best to an adequate methodology for research, description and understanding of the complexity of sustainable historical processes?
- How to contribute to adequate theoretical reflection on mental processes (identity building and self-reflection) of the historically thinking and responsible global citizen?
- How to develop the intercultural discourse on human dignity without using ascientistic, antisicientistic and/or relativistic concepts of 'historical thinking'?
- How to contribute to memory culture a/o to a 'historical culture of reconciliation' with respect to the global dimension of ethical reflection?
- How can we contribute to a sustainable historical education with respect of Human dignity?
- What are adequate didactic approaches to enhance global social responsibility when working on narratives such as pandemics, climate change or racism?
- How can citizenship education serve as a form of prevention of misuse of power and as a bridge to human dignity and social equality?

## V – Type of Contribution to the Conference

### A. Paper Presentation / Presentation

A paper presentation has to be given in English and must not be longer than 20 min. If you need to present audio-/videofiles or access to Internet please let us know in advance. Up to max. two speakers per presentation can be accepted.

### B. Poster Presentation

Posters have to be delivered at the beginning of the Conference. They have to be brought physically. Please note that they can't be printed out during the conference. Posters have to be written and presented in English. Up to max. four presenters per poster can be accepted.

### C. Paper

It is also possible to submit an abstract for an article to be published in the conference publication without giving a paper or a poster presentation during the conference. The full text of the paper has to be sent not later than 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020. Publishing rules will be communicated after the proposal has been accepted by the coordinating committee.

### D. Workshop

A workshop is interactive and lasts 45 or 90 minutes. Presenters are free to organize and manage their workshop according to methodological intentions. Please let us know which technical equipment you need.

The coordinating committee will take the final decision for the program of the conference and will make suggestions how to implement your contribution to the conference within the final program.

Papers which have been accepted by the coordination committee will be proposed for publication in the conference anthology. The full text of the paper has to be sent not later than 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020. Publishing rules will be communicated after the proposal has been accepted by the coordinating committee.