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Special Issue: The politics of "doing" history education

GUEST EDITORS

Maren Tribukait & Felicitas Macgilchrist

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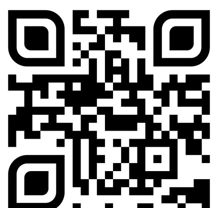

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Introduction - The politics of doing history education: Memory practices in contemporary classrooms

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ABSTRACT: Text In the introduction to this special issue on the 'politics of doing history education', we present papers contributing to an emerging paradigm of research on history education that foregrounds the *unruly practices* of doing history or enacting memory *with media technologies*, and the *indeterminate political effects* of these practices. Grounded in empirical studies, this introduction explores the potential impact of this emerging paradigm for conceptualising 'doing history (education)' after indeterminacy. Focussing on the practices of using media—in particular: (i) students' uptake, amplification, refraction, subversion and reproduction of media texts and, (ii) how non-coherence plays out in contemporary history education—provides intriguing perspectives on how knowledge and social memory circulate and shift through history education.

KEYWORDS: memory practices, doing history, indeterminacy, textbooks, educational media, politics of practices

Introduction

How do students engage with the historical accounts they meet in history education? In this special issue, this question orients not to the development of competences, historical thinking, historical reasoning or historical consciousness, but to young people's uptake, amplification and/or subversion of formalised (curricular) knowledge, that is, how they deal with mediated pasts. Much has been written over recent decades on the processes of making the past present. Under the labels of 'memory practices' or 'doing history', scholars have looked into the black box of what people do when they make the past present. An emerging body of work has examined history education from this perspective (for example, Levstik & Barton, 2015; Lévesque & Zanazanian, 2015; Loewen, 2009; Macgilchrist, Christophe & Binnenkade, 2015). We notice three areas that have received little attention thus far: educational media, student practices, and the theoretical tangle of non-coherence. This introduction offers a reading of how the papers in this special issue address these three issues. We are motived by two assumptions:

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First, empirically, to increase our understanding of history education, research needs to pay more attention to material-semiotic media practices. Since historical accounts are always presented in media formats, these practices are key to how history is done and memory enacted. Second, more politically, to interrupt hegemonic discourses, we need to take into consideration the likelihood that students will often ascertain and then amplify dominant discourses, even if teachers, the designers of teaching materials or other stakeholders aim to foster a critical approach.

A core tenet of history education holds that it is, to a certain extent, determinable and coherent: curricula, textbooks and other educational media shape the content and practices of classroom teaching and learning; teachers plan courses and lessons; students attain predefined learning outcomes. If we could not aim history education at determinable outcomes, then how could we support students' learning? Yet at the same time, a key principle of history education is that history is a constructed and open-ended process. Contemporary learning theories also prioritise students' own knowledge construction, their independent ways of making sense of the past, and an open, affective engagement with multiple perspectives. In this view, the outcomes of history education are more indeterminate, unruly and non-coherent.

This paradox – between input planning and outcome indeterminacy – sits at the heart of formal education. The 'beautiful risk' of education is that we cannot determine outcomes; that teachers give so much more than input, and students do so much more than learn (see Biesta, 2013). Will students take up mainstream views? Will their independent appraisal of diverse perspectives reproduce societal discourse? Will students 'do' unusual, alternative, marginal histories and enact postcolonial, postmodern or white supremacist social memories? Will teachers open space for heterogeneous interpretations, embracing epistemic or ontological non-coherence? Moreover, at which point will they stop their students and let them rehearse dominant interpretations of history again? How do retirees reflect on the history they learnt in elementary school? Do educational materials hold together different pasts? To explore these and related questions, the papers in this special issue engage, primarily through qualitative research methods, with the politics and practices of making the past present.

Without claiming that this special issue is grounding a new paradigm, we want to make the more humble claim that the papers provide novel insights into an emerging paradigm, which foregrounds these *unruly practices* of doing history or enacting memory *with media technologies*, and the *indeterminate political effects* of these practices. These insights are empirically grounded in several international settings (Armenia, Canada, Chile, China, Czechoslovakia, Czech Republic, Germany), utilising a range of methods, and orienting to different media used in history education. In this introduction, we introduce the papers through their contribution to this nexus of unruly practices, media technologies and indeterminate political effects. Our goal is to explore the potential impact of this emerging paradigm for conceptualising 'doing history (education)' after indeterminacy. Focussing on the practices of using media—in particular: (i) *students'* uptake, amplification, refraction, subversion and reproduction of media texts and, (ii) how *non-coherence* plays out in contemporary history education—provides intriguing perspectives on how knowledge and social memory circulate and shift through history education.

The politics of practices

This special issue arose from in-depth discussions on 'doing' history education at an international symposium on the politics of memory practices.[1] The focus lay on how the past is enacted and performed in contemporary history education, with a special focus on the role of media. Central themes from these discussions are reflected in the following papers, from the

ambivalent coproduction of truths, priorities and affects, to the contested role of eyewitnesses and technological mediations of eyewitness accounts, and the complex tensions, interconnections and interruptions when classroom practices spill out into everyday life. In this 'doing' of history or memory, school texts are interwoven into the formation of subjectivities and vice versa, students' becomings are woven into school life.

Doing history, doing memory and indeed 'doing school' (Keßler, 2017) refers to a complex dynamic among, for instance, roles (teacher, student, advisor, head teacher), materialities (desks, pencil cases), temporalities (45-minute classes, breaks), locations (canteens, classrooms, school yards), sounds (bells, loudspeaker announcements), visuals (posters, signs) and, especially relevant for this special issue, media technologies (textbooks, tablets, computers, blackboards). Each school subject is enacted into being through specific material-semiotic practices, for example, chemistry through lab coats and test-tubes, history through textbooks and hand gestures towards chronological diagrams where arrows show time moving 'forwards' from left to right (Ahlrichs, 2019).

Research on practices, however, often neglects the *content*, and thus the *political*, of teaching and learning: with which issues are students engaging as they are *becoming* and *doing* and *enacting* and *performing*? The politics of memory practices (the politics of doing history) lie, we suggest, precisely at the intersection of the ways specific contents/issues are presented in media and the ways in which they are enacted in situ. The papers address this gap by bringing together a sensibility to memory practices or doing history, and to the specificity of the (contested or contestable) issues at stake. The focus lies on the politics of making the past present when we are talking about twentieth century communism in Czechoslovakia, human rights violations in Chile, genocide in Armenia, Czechoslovakia under Nazi occupation, Eurocentrism, racism and nationalism in Germany, or communist role models for moral behaviour in China. These pasts are made present though the active use of textbooks, gaming simulations, primary school songs, and other media used in schools. Their politics lies in the potential of these practices to normalise or interrupt dominant discourses, to raise awareness for alternative histories, and to hold together apparently dissonant memories.

Shifting understandings of history education

The background to our focus on the politics of practice is formed by the shifting understandings over recent decades of what history education *is* and what history education *is for*. Modern history education in schools has always already been political insofar as it was designed to shape loyal citizens. Scholars have pointed to a paradigm shift from a 'romantic' to an 'enlightened' or disciplinary approach (for example, Carretero, 2017): With the rise of nation states since the late eighteenth century, history education became an important space where the national master narrative was conveyed to young people. The corresponding medium of this 'romantic' approach to history education was the history textbook, which told the nation's history through long lists of dates and names. This approach has been challenged in many countries since the 1970s by an 'enlightened' or disciplinary approach, which encourages students to think critically, look at different perspectives and understand the complexity of history. In contrast to the 'romantic' approach, this 'enlightened' approach did not aim to convey a narrative, but to teach students how to think historically. Textbooks changed accordingly, and included many textual and visual sources with multiple perspectives that could be used as evidence when constructing or deconstructing historical narratives. This enlightened approach was framed as an emancipatory undertaking, but at the same time also shaped a certain type of citizen, including encouraging the critical capacities deemed necessary in liberal democracies of the late twentieth century (Barton & Levstik, 2004).

While critical disciplinary thinking is still the guiding principle of state-of-the-art history teaching, this approach has been questioned for several reasons. First, empirical research has shown the difficulties of teaching students historical thinking (Borries et al., 2005). Second, its 'enlightened', orderly, dispassionate character might alienate and silence students who have strong emotional ties to a particular version of the past (Chikoko et al., 2011; McCully, 2012). Third, in practice, despite attempts by textbook authors and teachers to undo the master national narrative, students have been shown to pick up and reproduce the national(ist) narratives they meet in history education (Mielke, 2019). Students' unruly practices overflow and undermine any expectations of how they should engage with history education.

Unruly media practices: Doing history education after indeterminacy

This space of unruly media practices is where this special issue joins the conversation. As noted above, a slew of books and papers have discussed the performative dimension of history in recent decades. Historians and history educators agree that history is constructed, and that historical accounts are contingent, selective narratives written from powerful positions, often with particular functions in mind. Nevertheless, it is still a challenge to teach students that even the most apparently objective history is entangled with genre conventions, power, ideology, interests, motivations, exclusions, inclusions, control, identities and politics. The implications of embracing non-coherence and the indeterminate effects of teaching or media have not yet been the focus of discussions on 'doing history' in education.

Theoretical groundwork

Recent poststructuralist, postmodern or new materialist theorising has argued against a straightforwardly individual or humanistic understanding of meaning-making. Meaning is made not by people, but by networks of human and more-than-human actants, by socio-material assemblages or material-semiotic enactments. Laying their differences aside for this overview, these theoretical positions argue that the agency of things and/or assemblages should be recognised; human agency is discursive agency, emerging from political processes of subjectivation and social positioning. One key point we take is that 'non-coherence' is not 'incoherence':

> Let's emphasise this again: we are saying that [practices] are *non*-coherent, not *in*-coherent. 'Incoherence' is a normative label, a term of opprobrium, a way of talking about failed coherences. But this is *not* what we're saying. Quite differently, we're suggesting that different 'logics' are always at hand: not that this is a bad. Or, to put it differently, we're saying that the world, even the 'modern world', is *fuzzy* and that it always has been. The challenge is to find ways of thinking and understanding this (Law et al, 2013, p. 3, emphasis in original).

Johanna Ahlrichs' dissertation abstract, *Making the past present: The politics of material-semiotic practices in the history classroom,* foregrounds the material, semiotic, symbolic and sensual dimensions of making the past present. Her two-year ethnography in a high school in Germany explored the performative micro-practices of making the past present in history classrooms, attending in particular to the political 'effectfulness' of apparently banal activities. By showing how the 'reality' of history is negotiated, she argues it is made solid, reliable and unambiguous, while also at times appearing abstract, flexible and ambivalent. Her analysis identifies practices of 'ordering' and 'disordering' in the classroom. She argues that the temporal associations enacted by teachers drawing arrows and students turning the page uphold traditional modernist notions of linear causality and chronological progress. However, cork/noticeboards, digital databases or online hypertext enact nonlinear associations, rupturing this linearity. Overall, this dissertation abstract suggests the manifold ways media technologies

enact different realities, orders and associations, by observing how different technologies, as part of micro-practices, unravel in multiple, indeterminate directions.

Students: Adopting and amplifying societal discourse

Three papers in this special issue shed light on students' uptake of the media used in schools. A third dissertation abstract is based on ethnographic fieldwork on teaching about colonialism in high school classrooms in Germany. In *The enacting of belonging and difference. An ethnographic discourse analysis*, Patrick Mielke describes research into how students adopt society's Eurocentric, nationalist and racist imaginaries in subtle, indirect and sometimes inadvertent ways. He attends carefully to how students pick up and reproduce these imaginaries, despite adult stakeholders' explicitly stated intentions to deconstruct Eurocentrism, nationalism and racism. By analysing curricula, textbooks, classroom practices, interviews with teachers, focus group discussions with students, informal chats in the school yard, and selected popular media accounts, Mielke illustrates how 'white' students refract key discursive elements from curricula and popular media to build an understanding of the world and hierarchical global power relations that support and perpetuate an understanding of Germany as 'white'. He reads this as students' narrative competence; despite their teachers' intention to critique colonialism, students successfully tease out—and amplify—the dominant echo of colonial discourse that continues to be implicitly socially acceptable in contemporary Germany.

Teresa Oteíza's linguistic analysis of classroom interactions also orients to the complex dynamics between officially sanctioned discourse and alternative accounts. In *Language resources to negotiate official and alternative memories of human rights violations in Chilean history: A study on classroom interactions*, Oteíza closely tracks the semantic waves in a classroom exchange among teacher and students, to examine how the teacher weaves images and text on a PowerPoint presentation with specialised and non-specialised language. The paper provides researchers with a sophisticated tool for analysing interactions and evaluations in history classrooms. Drawing on systemic functional linguistics and legitimation code theory, alongside observations, video analysis and interviews with the teacher and students, Oteíza is able to demonstrate how the teacher's decision to bring her personal political positioning on human rights violations into the classroom, unfolds as the class builds historical explanations and evaluations. When asked for their reflection on the class, students from across the political spectrum value Salvador Allende as a great leader and condemn the coup d'état. They disagree on how much detail (brutality, torture, and suffering) should be included in history classrooms. Thus, the paper not only shows how personal and social memories are reformulated into broader societal discourse on history, but also points to the double move in history education. On the one hand, despite the teacher's intention to help students make their own judgements, students across the board adopt the politics suggested by the classroom talk. On the other, students' personal and social memories can never be entirely tamed; they peek in at the edges when students evaluate their class.

Whereas Mielke and Oteíza analyse settings in which adult stakeholders' intentions are interrupted by students, Katherine Bischoping and Zhipeng Gao reflect on practices in which moral teachings resonate strongly with interviewees in China, in much the way they were intended, decades after their school years. In *'Learn from Lei Feng!' Education, social context, and generational memories of a Chines Communist hero*, Bischoping and Gao demonstrate the powerful influence of making the past present through songs, films, photographs, textbooks, illustrated storybooks, diaries and other media used in early education. The historic communist role mode, Lei Feng (1940-1962), despite changes to his role over the years, has consistently been used to teach altruism and self-sacrifice. The paper describes the different ways that four 'generations' (defined by age and education) engage with the way learning about Lei Feng has

affected them ('observers', 'devotees', 'transitionals' and 'light-hearted'). A striking finding is the difference between people of the same age (born in the 1950s and 1960s) who received elementary education, including significant exposure to Lei Feng as a role model, and those who had no education. The former are 'devotees', still passionate about Lei Feng, and still evidencing a revolutionary subjectivity, in their recent interviews. The latter are 'observers'; they know of Lei Feng, but are detached from the story, reflecting from a distance on the values he was supposed to embody. What is fascinating about this difference is that these interviewees grew up in the same socio-political context. Yet their differing engagement with school-based media has made a dramatic difference to their affective immersion in Lei Feng's story and their embodiment (or not) of the values associated with his life. The 'transitionals', who met impassioned materials about Lei Feng in school but were socialised in an increasingly consumerist and individualistic society, continue to feel the impact of Lei Feng as a role model, but find sophisticated rationalisations for why they do not (need to) live up to his standards. They live within the ambivalence, finding, for instance, new poems to express the tensions of making Lei Feng present in today's China.

Non-coherence: Holding together unruly genres of practice, coexisting pasts, and authenticity and artificiality

Three papers alert us to non-coherence. In searching for a word to capture the blurring of genres of practice foregrounded in Duygu Gül Kaya's paper, we rejected 'hybrid' or 'merging'. Hybrid presupposes the existence of two separate entities which come together; merging also assumes the pre-existence of bounded entities. Yet in *Blurring the lines between history education and activism: How 100 Voices remembers the Armenian genocide*, Gül Kaya traces how a multimedia project in Canada overthrows notions of pre-existing genres boundaries. The genres of history education and of activism are no longer docile, orderly and governable, but unruly: doing history education as activism (or doing activism as history education) overflows traditional practices. Analysing the students' video testimonies (available on YouTube) about the genocide in Armenia, and interviews with the production team, teachers and students, Gül Kaya considers how digital media technologies have changed ways of making the past present. On the one hand, she shows how the *100 Voices* project creates coherent versions of the past: the Armenian genocide as an atrocity that needs to be remembered to help students to see history from below, understand human tragedy and feel empathy for the suffering of others. It aims to empower students to act as change agents. By participating in the project, young people shaped their own identities as both *specifically-Armenian* youth whose daily lives are impacted by the reverberations from past genocide, and also as activists for *universally-relevant* human rights. Their practice in the unruly blurred space of digital-history-activism-education makes the specific past present as a universal issue. On the other hand, Gül Kaya draws our attention to breaks and ruptures. While editing, the production team cut out silences, hesitations and other moments of non-coherence. What happens in these silences goes beyond the scope of the paper, but it hints at further ways the participants' identities spill beyond the two identities (Armenian youth and human rights activist) that are foregrounded through their video work. One specificity of video as a technology is that these silences may be edited out, whereas deletions in written texts are rarely perceptible to readers, the cut is visible to viewers. The work that goes into creating coherence can be seen.

A far more critical approach to remembrance activism is taken in Jaroslav Najbert's paper, *Guarding against the 'loss of national memory': The communist past as a controversial issue in Czech history education*. In the Czech Republic, young people learn from an early age that 'communism is bad', as one young person formulates it in this paper. Najbert teases out the epistemic and political impact when students realise that different accounts of the state socialist

era coexist in society, some of which are fond remembrances of life becoming easier, of foreign travel, and strong community relationships. The cognitive unrest experienced by students when family memories contradict the totalitarian paradigm promoted by remembrance activists (human rights and other non-governmental organisations) opens space for unruly ways of making the past present. When students not only engage with the coherent anti-communist histories in officially sanctioned educational media or activist educational projects, but also with family memory, pop culture and other alternative media practices, they make the past present in its non-coherence. This valuing of coexisting pasts, Najbert argues, is sorely lacking in current educational materials in the Czech Republic, since the main online sites for finding primary sources, documentaries or other materials are run by remembrance agents. Since their primary interest lies in condemning the communist past, these materials cannot support students to understand how historical narratives are created. By engaging with alternative educational media, including family narratives, alongside the dominant materials, students question the apparent consensus in society. They consider ambiguity, controversy and, perhaps, the coexistence of ontologically different pasts.

The 'authenticity' of family memory is not questioned in Najbert's paper. But what happens when deliberately artificial materials are used in history education? Although firmly rooted in constructivist pedagogy and prioritising the goals of critical disciplinary thinking (for example, student reflection, multiple perspectives, dispassionate analysis, metacognitive dimension of knowledge, active learning, independent knowledge construction), we read Jaroslav Pinkas and Tereza Hannemann's paper as holding together different paradigms of history education. In *A computer simulation in the context of history teaching in Czech schools: Using the 'Czechoslovakia 38-89' educational simulation*, Pinkas and Hannemann present an adventure game which explicitly uses non-authentic life stories to construct eyewitness testimonies. The testimonies use comic strip flashbacks and direct narratives in which an actor speaks (of a constructed life) to camera. This use of visibly artificial semiotic materials and the foregrounding of the virtual/semi-fictive stories within a game environment opens novel dynamics in history education. The students 'stay inside' the story (by, for example, controlling the game dynamics) and are simultaneously kept 'outside' the story (through the alienating artificial elements). The paper includes reflections from teachers and students on using the gaming simulation. Students, for instance, appreciated when the 'eyewitness' was able to 'act' authentically. This did not, however, lead to a critical analysis of witness testimony. A core insight is Pinkas and Hannemann's reflection on a bundle of ambivalences: Synthetic/prosthetic memories emerge under today's conditions of algorithmic control; yet it may be precisely our awareness of this artificiality that enables an autonomous, albeit perhaps uncritical, understanding of how the past is made present.

Overall, each paper in this special issue reflects on the question of how the past is made present in (history) education with the use of particular media. They focus on diverse issues to unpack this broad question into specific analyses, exploring in particular how students do history and enact memory practices, and the epistemic and affective work of holding non-coherences together, whether these are apparently non-coherent genres of practices (history education and activism), ambivalent pasts (coded as trauma or fondness) or authentic and artificial game elements. Considering the challenges currently facing the critical disciplinary thinking approach to history education, we hope this special issue contributes to the debate on the political nature of history education by bringing attention to concepts such as non-coherence and indeterminacy. We are very grateful to the contributors to this special issue, for ongoing discussions and reflections, and also for their patience during the publication process. By exploring the (unruly) practices of making the past present with media in specific educational settings, the contributors have found a fresh empirical angle beyond normative expectations. This enables them to approach the doings and sayings of the history classroom not only as

cognitive learning activities that are right or wrong, but as memory practices and the 'doing' of history, firmly situated within a wider indeterminate, material-semiotic, socio-political environment.

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Endnotes

[1] Since the theoretical advances on 'doing history', 'doing memory' and 'memory practices' are converging, and since the debates over where 'history' ends and 'memory' begins have become somewhat tired, we have decided in this special issue to use history and memory interchangeably: Our core interest is in 'making the past present', and whether this is called 'history' or 'memory' is not central to the discussions here.

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'Learn from Lei Feng!': Education, social context, and generational memories of a Chinese Communist hero

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ABSTRACT: In this paper, we investigate Chinese generations' memories of Lei Feng (1940-1962), a communist national role model famed for his countless everyday acts of serving others in a collectivist spirit. Using interviews with forty-one participants ranging from 18 to 81, we argue that four Chinese generations, as defined by their age (and education), have largely distinctive memories of, and attitudes toward, Lei Feng. The generation that received its early education during the heyday of the Lei Feng campaign largely remains devoted to him and references the "Lei Feng spirit" in characterizing contemporary China as morally declining. Their weathered predecessors, as well as the youngest consumerist generation, have a more detached or even irreverent perspective on Lei Feng's legacy. The final generation, caught in China's transition from a state-planned, revolutionary, virtuocratic society to one of free enterprise, consumerism, and meritocracy, holds the most heterogeneous perspectives. For several of this generation, the mismatch between their socio-political context and the pedagogical messages about Lei Feng has led to a painstaking interrogation of moral obligations in contemporary China.

KEYWORDS: Generational change, sociopolitical transformation, China

Introduction

In 1963, when our research interview participant, LXD, was ten years old, her elementary school class was suddenly summoned to an assembly in the schoolyard. There, for the first time, she heard stories of Lei Feng (1940-1962), an ordinary soldier whose life had progressed from a miserable childhood in the pre-Communist society, to a revolutionary epiphany. Lei Feng expressed his loyalty to the Party and love of the Chinese people in countless selfless acts in aid of others, even washing his comrades' socks. As Chairman Mao (1966) famously commented in another context, "It is not hard to do one good deed; it is hard to do good deeds all your life" (p. 215). In 1963, a few months after Lei Feng's accidental death, Mao launched a nation-wide campaign to encourage learning from Lei Feng. As a result, his stories became part of school curricula. Lei Feng's image is frequently referenced in posters, songs, clothing, and various other artefacts of daily life in China, and Learn from Lei Feng Memorial Day continues to be celebrated annually.

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Scholars and the Chinese public disagree over whether what is called “the Lei Feng spirit,” remains salient in today’s China. At one extreme, for example, Farquhar (2002) analyses the use of Lei Feng’s image in health website advertising and concludes that his hearty virtuosity must continue to inspire Chinese audiences. An example at the opposite extreme would be Mitter (2003), who contends that in a China that has shifted to capitalism, stories of Lei Feng appeal only to “a few true believers” (p. 120). We concur with Geist’s (1990) more nuanced position, in which there is no singular definition of this spirit, so much as complex and shifting constellations of ideas about politics, social change, citizenship, interpersonal relations, and – of abiding interest in Chinese discourse (Lee, 2014) – morality. The Lei Feng story presented to students and to the public, meanwhile, has also undergone its share of transformations at different instances in Chinese history (see for example, Reed, 1995).

Our research participants, who range in age from 18 to 81 years, have had a considerable range of educational experiences, and – more broadly speaking – have varied experiences of the seas changes of China’s social, political, and economic history during a tumultuous near-century. Using their interview data, we show that variations in their stances toward the Lei Feng spirit and its enactment can be understood in terms of the phenomenon of generations, which potentially coalesce around signal events experienced during a formative life stage (Mannheim, 1952), and which are lastingly informed by these events and the associated opportunity structures (Inglehart & Flanagan, 1987). Our central research contribution is to propose that these varied generational stances toward Lei Feng are powerfully influenced by whether or not the hegemonic messages that each generation of students was exposed to in their early educational years aligns with the messages offered by their broader socioeconomic context.

We will now briefly summarise key points in China’s socio-political and educational history, outline our methods, and then address how our participants’ generational memories and present-day reflections on the notion of learning from Lei Feng relate to our thesis.

An overview of Chinese sociopolitical and educational transformations

The very oldest of our participants had been born during the Chinese civil wars (1927-1936, 1946-1950), which culminated in the Communist Party’s 1949 establishment of the People’s Republic of China (PRC). Poverty was rife; enthusiasm for the new society ran high; and as factory workers and peasants’ children received new opportunities, school enrolments and literacy vaulted (Deng & Treiman, 1997). The Party collectivized agriculture and created a planned economy in which, as one participant put it, “farmers were farming, and [factory] workers were working.” In other words, lifestyles were simple, with little opportunity for entrepreneurialism. Meanwhile, Lei Feng did not yet figure in the national imaginary.

Upon being named a national hero in 1963, the deep impression that Lei Feng made on our research participant, LXD, with whom this article opened, is consistent with his indisputably influential position in the school curriculum (Reed, 1995). His prominence was aligned with the Party’s priorities in a time of peace: his self-abnegation as a “tiny screw” in the machine of socialist construction supported the values of comradeship and collectivism; his thrift and diligence were needed in the recovering economy; his childhood escape from a landlord’s exploitation to the Party’s care legitimised the necessity of class struggle. During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), such struggle escalated violently. Wang (2014) holds that Lei Feng’s star even fell somewhat during these years, owing to Communist Party factionalism and to how his brand of helpfulness could be considered too egalitarian and too uninterested in identifying the era’s new class enemies (such as former landlords’ families). More importantly, however, Chairman Mao continued to advocate for learning from Lei Feng. At the lower levels of schooling, the curriculum became focused on politics, ideology, and morality (M. Li, 1990).

While there was much scope to abide the slogan, “Learn from Lei Feng” in the classroom and in school-organised child labour, other subjects fell by the wayside (M. Li, 1990). Upon completing secondary schooling, many graduates were consigned to agricultural work, with no voice in the matter. The vocational school system was dismantled, because it was associated with a tiering that discriminated against the proletariat (Wu & Ye, 2018). Academics were termed “stinking intellectuals”, university education, which had hitherto been prized, became regarded as elitist, and enrolments plummeted.

Following Chairman Mao’s death, the Cultural Revolution ended. Under the new leadership of Deng Xiaoping, China’s economy was reconfigured in several waves of reforms that, according to Jennings and Zhang (2005), were regarded by Chinese of all ages as momentous. Beginning in 1978, the government decollectivized agriculture and permitted both entrepreneurialism and foreign investment, in other words, creating a new opportunity structure. Through educational reforms, the curriculum’s weighting toward ideology waned alongside students’ interest in it (M. Li, 1990), market-relevant vocational schools were reinstituted, and university enrolments again rose (Wu & Ye, 2018). Another turning point in the reforms came in the 1997-1998 mass privatisations of state enterprises. Thenceforth, opportunities changed further, as the state permitted further free enterprise, consumerism, and to a certain extent, greater freedom of expression. Meanwhile, significant pedagogical reforms saw increasing emphasis given to cultivating students’ curiosity, independence, and creativity (Della-Iacovo, 2009).

Lei Feng remains part of school curricula and public campaigns alike, with the state utilising his collectivist spirit to remedy social and political disorder. For instance, after students’ pro-democracy demonstrations at Tiananmen Square in 1989, the state promoted a new wave of Lei Feng-based pedagogy linked to patriotism (Kim, 2016). Yet, like other Party campaigns advocating obedience and public service, the Lei Feng campaigns have taken a consumerist guise (Steen, 2014). Lei Feng has been ‘rebranded’, becoming more individualistic (Hansen, 2015), or turning up in ‘newly-discovered’ photographs wearing a leather jacket and riding a motorcycle through Tiananmen Square (Steen, 2014).

Methods

Our research is based on interviews with 41 participants in mainland China conducted in 2015. The majority (35) lived in Hebei, a province adjacent to Beijing, China’s political centre, while the remaining six lived in Beijing and its neighbouring city Tianjin. These locales vary considerably in population size and wealth, but have close historic and economic ties: historically, Beijing and Tianjin had been part of Hebei and, currently, policy and economic initiatives are developed for what is formally called “jing-jin-ji” [Bei*jing*, Tian*jin*, and *ji,* an official brief designation for Hebei]. Several of the participants had lived in more than one of three locales. In keeping with the goals of the larger project of which this study is but one part, we selected participants purposively to range in age (from 18 to 81 years), and to vary by gender (17 females, 24 males), Party membership (nine were Party members and the remainder were not), and occupation, including bus conductor, chef, college student, doctor, editor, factory worker, government official, realtor, retired professor, shepherd, and street vendor. In interviews of four to 61 minutes duration, the participants were asked about their learnings, understandings and evaluations of Lei Feng, and about whether and how they saw the Lei Feng spirit being enacted around them. Our emphasis, thus, was on discerning the participants’ reception of messages about Lei Feng.

Results

Demarcating generations

How to distinguish one generation from another is crucial to our analysis. As Cherrington (1997) notes, following from Mannheim (1952), much of generations scholarship has marked early adulthood as crucial to a generation's potential formation (see also Clifford, 2017). Were we to simply replicate such an approach, we would demarcate generations according to the key events occurring during participants' young adulthoods, that is, the founding of the PRC, the onset of the Cultural Revolution, and different waves of economic reforms, outlined above. However, through a more empirical strategy, one more attentive to participants' voices, we have observed that participants' memories and views about Lei Feng also hinge on their early school years (Clifford, 2017). That his story began with the sufferings and communist epiphany of his childhood might have made it especially resonant with children such as LXD, the 62-year old retired salesperson whose story we presented in our introduction, or ZSY, a 67-year old retired professor, who speaks here:

> I was born in the new China, so lucky, without being oppressed by landlords, but how could Lei Feng, such a nice person, deserve to be oppressed in his childhood? Why was the landlord so evil? My thoughts at the time [of my childhood] were very simple. What I had in mind, sometimes, was that the landlord was so bad! How could he set his dog on people?

Accordingly, we divided participants into generations largely according to the period in which they had received the majority of their elementary education. However, we also draw from Sausmikat (2003) the observation that Mannheim's theory permits social factors other than age to influence people's standpoints. In particular, we will address how having no, or minimal, formal education seems pertinent to certain elder participants' stances toward Lei Feng.

Stance toward Lei Feng	Number of participants	Majority of elementary education	Participants' Birth years	Participants' ages at time of interview
Observer	6	Prior to 1963 and/or Received no elementary education	Prior to 1948, except for two participants (one born in 1951 and the other in 1956), neither of whom received elementary education	77 to 81, except for one 64-year old and one 59-year old
Devotee	15	Initial years of Lei Feng campaign and Cultural Revolution (1963-1976)	1948-1966	49-67
Transitional	12	Early economic reform years (1977-1996)	1970-1987	28-45
Light-Hearted	8	Later economic reform years (1997 – onward)	1990-1997	18-25

Table 1: Breakdown of participants

Because we are more interested in the participants' stances toward Lei Feng than their generational identity *per se*, we take these stances as the basis to structure our discussion of results instead of strictly following chronology. More specifically, we will begin with a generation of devotees, the second-oldest generation, who express an ardent and enduring desire to emulate Lei Feng. Next, we move to the opposite end of the spectrum and discuss two detached generations; the oldest generation that impassively observes Lei Feng's position as role model, and the youngest generation, whose light-heartedness about Lei Feng sometimes reaches the point of flippancy. Finally, we conclude our discussion with the remaining, transitional generation, whose members painfully search for their identity and relation to society through interrogating Lei Feng's stories.

The generation of devotees

The Devotees are the peers of LXD and ZSY, whom we introduced earlier. They had received at least middle school education (in Canada, roughly the equivalent of Grades 7 to 9), and at the 1963 outset of the Lei Feng campaign, several of them were already in elementary or middle school. By 1978, when China's economic reforms began, all had completed their early education and had also experienced the 1966-1976 Cultural Revolution. Today, this generation is popularly held to be controversial. Its activist Red Guard members' participation in the Cultural Revolution is frequently construed as manifesting an idealism that veered into brutalism and a craving for power (Jiang & Ashley, 2000). Yet, this generation has also garnered sympathy for encountering a series of misfortunes, including the Great Famine of 1958-1962, the loss of educational opportunities, and mass unemployment during the 1990s economic reform (Hung & Chiu, 2003). We dub this generation the "Devotees" because its members exhibited the most enduring knowledge of, and reverence for, Lei Feng. They also distinguished themselves in their keenness to talk about Lei Feng, and in their outpouring of memories and reflections. During one interview that was underway outdoors, TXM, a junior high school-educated factory worker-turned-realtor who happened to be sitting on a nearby bench, took over the conversation for an hour.

The essence of the "Lei Feng spirit", as TXM and other enthusiastic participants understood it, was derived from the revolutionary epiphany that had followed his childhood hardships. When a married couple looked at one photo of him reading *Selected Works of Chairman Mao*, they recounted this story together. The wife, a middle school-educated retired salesperson, spoke sympathetically of Lei Feng's "too lonely, helpless" orphaned state, and the husband, a junior high school-educated office worker and driver, chimed in to underscore how the Party's liberation had given Lei Feng cause to be thankful. The story, as they told it, closely mirrored the plot line of *Lei Feng de shaonian shidai* [Lei Feng's Childhood] (Qian & Liu, 1966), the illustrated storybook that was the most widely-circulated work written for children about Lei Feng.

To this generation, the result for Lei Feng was a spirit that abnegated the self and rejected class enemies, while determinedly embracing collectivism. Two participants, quoting a stanza attributed to Lei Feng by *Liaoning Ribao* [Liaoning People's Daily] (1963), put it this way:

> Treat comrades like the breeze in spring
>
> Work hard like summer's sunshine
>
> Conquer individualism just like autumn's wind sweeps away withered leaves
>
> And treat the enemy as ruthlessly as the cold of winter. (p. 3)

Amongst the specific examples of Lei Feng's behaviour cited by several participants was how, rather than wearing the new clothes that the army routinely issued him, he would give them

away to the poor, and make do by mending his old ones. Finally, these participants inextricably connected Lei Feng to Chairman Mao, often veering into long commentaries on Mao or the revolution without seeing a need to explicate their relevance to a Lei Feng interview. "One sentence from Chairman Mao is worth ten thousand ordinary sentences", said the retired salesperson mentioned earlier. This connection, however, was little noted by other generations.

The Devotees had acquired their knowledge of Lei Feng through state-produced mass media often circulated via schools. Photographs and films had left a lasting impression on many participants, who during the interview envisioned him wearing his eponymous padded-cotton winter cap with earflaps, or figuring in various altruistic scenes. Further, singing – a medium distinctive in that it requires no material carrier – served as a tool for simultaneously delivering knowledge about Lei Feng and creating an affective affiliation with him. During the interview, one of the participants even began an impassioned rendering of the Lei Feng song, written in 1963 by military propagandists Hong Yuan and Sheng Mao (1963):

> Learn from the good example of Lei Feng,
>
> Loyal to the revolution, loyal to the Party.
>
> Be clear about what to love and what to hate,
>
> Never forget his [proletariat] origin: stand firm with a fighting spirit (translation by the authors).

The pocket-sized illustrated Lei Feng storybooks and collectible cards that the participants recalled welcoming as children, were paralleled by the textbooks that teachers used to give regular lectures on Lei Feng's life, and the brochure, entitled "Learn from Lei Feng, the Great Role Model", that a middle school-educated retired factory worker remembered having received in school. Schools also organised various activities through which students were meant to emulate him, such as cleaning bus station windows, collecting and donating manure to farmers, or helping *wubaohu* (people receiving social assistance because of age or disability) to fetch water.

Similar to the recollections found in other sources (see for example, C. Li, 2009, p. 97), some of our participants recalled having been required to do a few good deeds every week, and then record them for a class on diary keeping. In so doing, they were again emulating Lei Feng, who was understood to have carried out his good deeds modestly, but whose diary also famously enumerated those deeds and reflected on his process of self-transformation. The idea that the children's diaries should have been intended for their teachers' eyes, defies our usual understanding of diarizing as a private means of self-examination. Instead, it became one of many means through which a selfless revolutionary subjectivity was to be accomplished, leaving no gaps between one's inner life and its outer performance (Wang, 2014). As Larson (2011) notes, diarizing became a bid for recognition in a society that Reed (1995) dubs a moral-political "virtuocracy". In a similar vein, participant ZSY, the retired professor mentioned earlier, recalled her confusion when she received a poor grade on an essay she had written about returning lost money, just as Lei Feng had.

In adulthood, most of this generation continued to consider themselves influenced by Lei Feng. For example, they spoke of how they kept public areas clean, volunteered to tutor students, and aided elders in emergencies. ZSY, who in her youth had worked at a department store, recounted how she had voluntarily mended the store's broken feather dusters in emulation of Lei Feng's mending habits, and taught herself to play simple airs from Maoist operas so as to better assist customers seeking to choose a flute. Further, the participants' eagerness to discuss Lei Feng and occasional exhortations to us to spread his message could be understood as a continued outcome of an early training to display a vigorous revolutionary subjectivity. TXM, the participant who had taken over another's interview, even proudly asked her little grandson to recite "The Twenty-four Characters," a communist slogan.

That TXM and others of her generation frequently punctuated their interviews with slogans is of additional interest because such idiomatic expressions have what Drew and Holt (1988) have called "a special robustness" (p. 398). That is, they encapsulate commonsensical – here, hegemonic – knowledge in a way that resists argument through its very familiarity. For example, take the rhyming slogan participants used to speak of Lei Feng's clothes-mending practice: *xin san nian, jiu san nian, fengfeng-bubu you san nian* [new for three years, old for three years, and lasting another three years if mended]. In it, stretching one's wardrobe is presented as unremarkably logical, enabling the giving away of new clothing. However, it would be erroneous to follow Gentz (2014) in thinking of this generation as gullibly accepting every slogan, or substituting slogans for coherent thought. Instead, several spoke as connoisseurs of the slogan genre, commenting on which would now seem foolish and which effectively reached the heart of a matter.

Finally, the Devotees used the Lei Feng spirit and the Maoism they associated with it as resources for assessing present-day China (for a similar example, see Hung & Chiu, 2003, p. 224). They frequently contrasted the virtuocratic revolutionary past, with its state-managed economy and largely poor, rural population, to the more individualistic, meritocratic, capital-driven, open, and urbanised contemporary society. TXM, for instance, was incensed to hear a famous television host comment sarcastically about Mao when "Communists fed you, gave you food and drink." Nowadays, several of this generation opined, people were too eager to seize any opportunity to make money, too selfish, and too prone to coddling children whom TXM excoriated as "so f***ing spoiled."

The Devotees also noted that a Lei Feng-like willingness to come to others' aid had eroded in what Lee (2014) has called "the stranger society" of today's China. According to Lee's critical analysis, China's drastic transition from a sociality emphasizing traditional kinship obligations to a Lei Feng-like collectivism in the communist era has left the newly capitalist China with no notion of a civil society in which strangers have obligations to one another. To Lee (2014), the Lei Feng spirit actually has contributed to China's present moral crisis. The Devotees aptly reversed Lee's argument by positing China's contemporary society as the symptom and Lei Feng as the cure. For instance, they, like many participants brought up a figure currently salient in China's moral landscape, that of the elderly swindler who feigns being in need and then blackmails Good Samaritans (Gao & Bischoping, 2018). In response to what they saw as moral corruption, the Devotees sought a renewal of the Lei Feng spirit, for in ZSY's words, "If everyone learns from Lei Feng, who will cheat others?"

The detached generations

Having introduced the Devotees, with their lasting bond to Lei Feng, we now shift to the other end of the continuum occupied by the eldest and youngest generations, both of whom know comparatively little about Lei Feng, and view him with detachment.

The generation of observers

This generation is comprised of six participants united by their lack of elementary schooling about Lei Feng. Three of them – a shepherd, a retired factory worker, and a street vendor – had no formal education. One had attended part-time school as an adult to make up for her lack of education in her childhood. The remaining two were both Party members, had both worked at a university before retiring (one as an administrator and the other as a professor of horticulture who had served for a time as a political educator), and had both completed their elementary education well before Lei Feng's designation as a hero. This group of participants is certainly small and our conclusions about it should only be read as tentative. That said, whether highly-

educated or illiterate, members of this group have some notable commonalities. First, although the socio-political contexts in which these participants learned about Lei Feng were identical to those of the Devotees, the media through which they learned about him were fewer. In contrast to the books, school-organised labor and the associated diary-writing detailed by the Devotees, these six participants had typically learned of Lei Feng through radio broadcasts or the occasional movie such *as The Days without Lei Feng* (Wang, Kang & Lei, 1996).

The less educated participants among the Observers had but a vague, limited knowledge about Lei Feng. The shepherd, for instance, thought that Lei Feng still had a father in his adulthood, even though he had been orphaned in childhood. This participant also confused Lei Feng with other communist heroes who had died spectacular deaths, for instance, by fire or in battle. Most importantly, for all the Observers, the affective immersion in Lei Feng's story which the Devotees had so palpably shown, was absent. Take for example, the musings about Lei Feng's story by YHM, the 81-year old retired university administrator. He reflected on whether Lei Feng's values were essentially communist or a manifestation of earlier Confucian values, and whether Lei Feng was indeed self-abnegating or actually tended to be so dressy as to wear leather shoes, which had been expensive in those days. In so doing, YHM located himself *outside* the Lei Feng story, both affectively and temporally, and thus able to detachedly contemplate alternate ways that he could have been written into official history.

While the Observers commended Lei Feng, they decidedly did not manifest a desire to emulate him through self-sacrifice. The data held several traces of this absence. For instance, when asked to name a Lei Feng-like deed, the street vendor in the sample pointed to another vendor, who was pouring water onto the hot pavement so as to cool it. Because a cooler street would encourage customers to linger and buy, this good deed arguably sprang more from a profit motive than from self-denial. For some other participants, it was younger people – and not they themselves – whom they expected to see emulating Lei Feng. From the opening sentences of her interview onward, WYZ, the retired factory worker, answered questions about praxis-based "learning from Lei Feng" by recollecting her children's ages and educational stages, rather than society-wide acts of learning in which she had participated. She also spoke of Lei Feng Day as a day on which others would offer her shoe repairs and free haircuts, rather than as a day on which she served others. Similarly, even when former political educator WDF recalled using Lei Feng as a pedagogical tool, she consistently spoke of her university students' interest in such learning, rather than her own.

Where WDF's greater sympathies lay, we suggest, is evident in her reminiscences about the powerful experience of visiting soldiers wounded in the Korean War (1950-1953), during which she had been 13 to 16 years old:

> WDF: We actually went to visit the injured People's Volunteer Army soldiers, who had just come home from the front for rest and treatment. We went there to console them, and they told us how tough combat was on the Korean front, how they would fight the imperialist Americans, things like that. These were all real, vivid teaching materials, right?
>
> ZG: Okay, while you consoled them, they gave you a vivid lesson.
>
> WDF: So we inherited some of the ideas from that time.

The childhoods of the eldest in this group would also have included extraordinary passages in Chinese history, marked by violence and by the reversal of fortunes of the wealthy and the impoverished. The civil war of 1946-1950, its dramatic stories of heroism, the 1949 proclamation of the PRC, the institution of collectivization and executions of landlords could have considerably impacted their formation as a generation in childhood. In Jennings and Zhang's (2005) research on how generations in Shanghai identify the most momentous event of times past, a similar generation highlights the land reforms and the founding of the PRC. Accordingly, for our eldest participants, Lei Feng's childhood hardships would not have been

all that newsworthy, nor might his particular form of exemplariness. However, perhaps as well-educated Party members, WDF and YHM similarly presented Lei Feng as continuing to be relevant, contextualizing him as "a hero of peace" and "popular in times of peace."

The light-hearted generation

Alongside the oldest and least-educated participants, we found the eight youngest to speak of Lei Feng with detachment rather than devotion. This generation was represented largely by 18 to 21year old students at a vocational college, as well as by CL, a 25-year old medical editor. They have in common that their elementary schooling had succeeded – or, in CL's case, overlapped with – the mass privatisation, and other radical economic reforms of 1997 onward. Lei Feng was allocated only scant time in the curriculum. Vocational college student RJJ recalled coming upon Lei Feng's story purely by chance when searching online for a horror movie. One of his classmates recalled that Lei Feng had been mentioned only twice in politics and ideology classes. University-educated CL said that she had learned about Lei Feng by independently reading her primary school text, as her teacher had not spoken of him at all. The educational activity that the Light-Hearted generation most frequently mentioned was copying a poster of Lei Feng onto their school blackboard's news display.

Like many of the Observers, these Light-Hearted participants' knowledge was slight. Whether Lei Feng had leapt into a manure pit to rescue someone, had been tricked into aiding an elderly swindler, or had simply been "very loving" toward others was anyone's guess. These participants' comments on photos and the "Learn from Lei Feng" song were particularly telling. As he looked at a photo of Lei Feng helping an older woman cross the road, participant RJJ guessed that this woman was Lei Feng's mother. He was startled to learn that Lei Feng's mother had died in his childhood, a point that had so touched the hearts of the Generation of Devotees. Meanwhile, when a friend of RJJ's looked at the photo of Lei Feng reading Mao's works by flashlight, he could not guess what this reading material might be. Although they had heard the "Learn from Lei Feng" song, many had not assimilated the sense of the first line of its lyrics, which calls Lei Feng as "loyal to the revolution, loyal to the Party."

These comments point to a significant change in the narrativization of Lei Feng's life. To the Devotees, the oppression that this peasant child had experienced at the hands of landlords provided the narrative's central conflict, while a revolutionary epiphany served as its climax. All Lei Feng's subsequent good deeds and self-transformatory work flowed therefrom. In the narratives of the Light-Hearted, as in the textbooks, movies, and propaganda campaigns of a now capitalist, entrepreneurial China (Edwards & Jeffreys, 2010, p. 28; Reed, 1995; Roberts, 2015), such a conflict and climax were generally absent. The narrative's teeth had been pulled, and with them, some of the specificities of historical context upon which some of the eldest had reflected. What remained to the Light-Hearted was a banal figure who was helpful for no impassioned reason.

When asked what instances of Lei Feng-like characters they themselves had encountered, this generation set the bar low. Rather than nominating people who had sacrificed themselves in incessant kindness toward strangers, they mentioned kind friends, such as the boy who had used to give RJJ bicycle rides home. Rather than appearing inspired by this friend or profoundly attached to him, RJJ spoke casually of how the two had fallen out of touch. His peers suggested lightly that it was Lei Feng-like to do routine chores, such as sweeping their homes. Part of what makes these participants' detachment from Lei Feng's helpfulness so fascinating is that they themselves had been so genuinely helpful to coauthor Zhipeng Gao. RJJ energetically rounded up potential participants from among his college student peers, one of whom gave Zhipeng an ice cream bar. However, being helpful did not seem to be the participants' end, so much as a means of passing time entertainingly; several of them injected themselves into one

another's interviews, and RJJ helped himself to Zhipeng's cigarettes, a mischievous act given their age difference. In addition, much about Lei Feng and the interviews amused them, including RJJ's discovery that Lei Feng's mother had died during his childhood. Participant CL even said that she had read about Lei Feng so as to poke fun at people who might speak of learning from him: "I tell them, you learn it: then die young!"

Such a stance was consistent with the youngest generation's socioeconomic context. They had grown up in a China in which consumerist values such as pleasure, novelty, and status made more sense than did vestiges of collectivism (Jing & Ruiming, 2013). The Party's hegemony increasingly faces market competition. In our young participants' reception of these diverse messages, the consumerism was what stuck: RJJ considered public service advertisements showing Lei Feng to look "very handsome," but CL condemned her Lei Feng satchel as, "So ugly! Makes me look like a bus conductor!" In CL's view, while certain aspects of the accuracy of communist hero propaganda could be questioned, what mattered more was that Lei Feng was off-trend: "His moment has passed. Nowadays people are not interested in his stories." Indeed, it is difficult to see the relevance of a hero known for darning his socks to a generation who can throw their satchels away.

The generation in transition

We now turn to the generation falling between the Devotees and the comparatively irreverent youth; a generation that, roughly speaking, comprises the students of the former, and the teachers of the latter. In comparison with their predecessors, few of whom had tertiary education, and whose most common occupation was as a factory worker, the majority of the 12 Transitionals had completed tertiary education and most held white-collar jobs, such as meteorologist or elementary school teacher. These participants' expanded access to university education, as well as greater exposure to the diversity of thought offered by the internet, are representative of their generation in China more broadly (Guo & Guo, 2016).

The greater portion of the Transitionals' early education had occurred during the initial post-Cultural Revolution economic reforms, and before the 1997 onset of large-scale privatisation. In their early school years, they had been exposed to a curriculum that remained nominally Communist, but that again extended beyond the narrow subject areas of politics, ideology, and moral education (M. Li, 1990). Sandwiched between well-informed Devotees and uninformed youth, members of this generation had an overall moderate, but heterogeneous, level of knowledge about Lei Feng. In their narratives, we see the drift toward those told by the youngest generation, which were devoid of any history of hardship and class struggle. For example, one Transitional factory worker who distinctly remembered having learned about Lei Feng from school textbooks was nonetheless startled to hear his Devotee father say that Lei Feng had treated the enemy "as ruthlessly as the cold of winter." He repeated the phrase twice, finding it hard to assimilate to his image of Lei Feng as "doing good things, serving the people."

The Transitionals varied in their emotional affiliation with Lei Feng, with some insisting, like the Devotees, that his spirit be conserved, while others were more detached. Likewise, their understandings of what it meant to enact the Lei Feng spirit varied considerably. As an illustration, we may contrast XHG, a teacher whom media had hailed as a "living Lei Feng" because he had aided a stricken elder, to LJC, a chef and Party member, who recalled having bought a bouquet in Lei Feng's memory. Although XHG spoke humbly of his deed, in a manner befitting a modest Lei Feng spirit, he was certain that it had sprung from innately human compassion, rather than in emulation of Lei Feng. Meanwhile, when LJC emphasized that he could have used the bouquet money to purchase a large amount of pork, his words conveyed neither the modesty nor the thrift for which Lei Feng was known. Thus, neither embraced precisely the spirit to which their elders were so devoted.

It is not only heterogeneous views that distinguish this group of participants. Several also grappled with the contradictions between their collectivist early education and an increasingly capitalist social context. Theirs was a China in which they had seen some seize entrepreneurial or university educational opportunities, and others fall behind. These contradictions seemed to play out in their psychic landscapes, in questioning of the Lei Feng spirit that members of other generations rarely evinced. Instead of scoffing at Lei Feng as passé or observing him detachedly, such participants ruminated painstakingly, as though they continued to feel accountable for failing to meet the moral demands implicit in Lei Feng's narrative. These ruminations were commonly expressed in terms of a monetary discourse, in calculations that pitted what one owed to the collective against what one owed oneself. For example, one salesperson and former soldier said:

> I am happy to learn from Lei Feng if I'm able to. But it depends on one's capacity. For example, if I have a thousand RMBs in my pocket, and someone needs help, I can give ten, fifty, or one hundred. Depending on my situation, any of those could be possible. But if I only have fifty RMBs: you ask me to donate ten to this person, I can't do it.

Participant MN, a teacher of Grades 9 to 12 at an elite school in Beijing, was so distraught by moral expectations implicit in positioning Lei Feng as a role model that she terminated the interview. After recalling her childhood admiration of Lei Feng, and a later period of contemplation of his personality and deeds, MN said, "Now I feel he has nothing to do with us." MN's criticisms echo a general dislike, discussed by MacFarquhar (2015), of incessant do-gooders, who implicitly reproach ordinary people for failing to meet their standards. Her interview also reflected a specific disillusionment with Party propaganda about self-sacrifice. After inner debate, MN had uneasily concluded that self-interest could be permissible provided that it was also the interest of the collective. Though MN presented her conclusion as personal, hard-won, and critical of the Party, it finds a surprising parallel in the Party-managed conclusion to a nation-wide debate set off in 1980, when *China Youth* magazine published a letter boldly proposing that the fundamental selfishness of human nature meant that collectivist ideals could not be realised (Peng, 2008; Yan, 2011). When MN and other Transitionals invoked concerns about the collective when pondering how much to "learn from Lei Feng," they took what Hall (2009) would call a "negotiated position." That is, they did not resist the hegemonic position, so much as speak within mental horizons that had been hegemonically determined.

Let us return, at a less abstract level, to the calculations of what one owes to others, by revisiting the figure of the blackmailing elderly swindler, mentioned by many Devotees. When reflecting on the moral threat that swindlers posed, the Transitionals maintained that one must be judicious about acting in accordance with learning from Lei Feng. Upon hearing of our inquiry, one of barber CJW's internet chat group friends sent her a rough poem to that effect:

> Lei Feng is great,
>
> The society is cruel,
>
> People's thoughts are hard to fathom.
>
> The intention to help does exist,
>
> But you need to keep vigilant.

Participants gave several examples of how they enacted such vigilance, with CJW explaining that she had decided to give money and two packets of instant noodles to an old woman because the woman had asked only for water. Wariness also extended to social organisations, with another participant refusing to donate to the Red Cross because two of its officials had squandered donations in an extravagant affair. Throughout such discussions, the Transitionals echoed the Devotees' view that China's present was crooked while its past had been simple and

pure. However, while the Devotees idealistically proposed that reinvigorating the population's Lei Feng spirit would restore the moral order, the Transitionals took a more pragmatic tack.

Conclusion

Our study of stances toward Lei Feng has served as an entry point to the understanding of intergenerational differences and conflicts as citizens of today's China cast their eyes on their capitalist, consumerist, urbanised present and their collectivist, rural past. *Contra* most generational analyses, our research pays close heed to childhood, positioning it as an unsung phase of generational formation, potentially informing attitudes and shaping enduring affects related to understandings of social change, conceptions of morality, and inclinations about altruism toward strangers. In our study, it is elementary school pedagogy that paves the way to childhood's potential significance. Among the participants who were comparatively detached and disinterested in *learning from Lei Feng* numbered those who were so old that they had been exposed to little formal Lei Feng education during China's collectivist years; so uneducated that they had, in effect, sidestepped such education; or so young as to have received only a minimal, bland Lei Feng education presented in a thoroughly capitalist, consumerist China. These detached participants contrast starkly with the two generations who received the greatest elementary school education about Lei Feng. The affectively immersed Devotees had experienced a doggedly collectivist early education that was closely aligned with, and thoroughly penetrated by, its socio-political context. However, in the heterogeneous, conflicted, and sometimes painfully soul-searching views of the Transitionals, we posit that we can perceive the consequences of the fault line between an early collectivist education and a sociopolitical context rapidly shifting toward capitalism.

The limitations of the study's conclusions need to be acknowledged. Within the scope of this analysis and our data, we could not fully examine the views of participants who were exceptions to general patterns, or extensively explore how higher education might influence participants' reflective capacities. This may particularly be the case regarding the sample of only six Observers. Further, we note that many of our sample are from China's capital, Beijing, and from nearby Hebei province, home to such notable communist legacies as the tomb of Dr Norman Bethune. Had our research been conducted in Hong Kong, site of the 2014 Umbrella Movement, we expect that participants might have voiced sharper criticism of Lei Feng. Finally, we wish to sound a note of caution about the ontological and epistemological approach to generations used herein. As is typical in generations scholarship, we have here inferred the existence of generations from the data. Such an analytic process runs the risk of reifying generations (for example, as perennially 'Light-Hearted'), without taking into account that generations are more precisely conceived as moving targets or works-in-progress, partly *real* yet also partly produced through discourses that reflect societal contestations and acts of moral regulation (Reulecke, 2008; Bischoping & Gao, 2017; Gao & Bischoping 2018).

The timing of our study leaves indelible traces in the data. When coauthor Gao was conducting the interviews in 2015, elderly Party member YHM advised him that the topic of Lei Feng was a sensitive one, a comment that bewildered us at the time. Yet, netizens (that is, citizens of the internet) alienated from the official political culture have increasingly been expressing suspicion regarding the authenticity of Lei Feng's story (Gao & Bischoping, 2019). In 2015, fuelled by this suspicion, word spread that all articles related to Chairman Mao, Lei Feng, and other revolutionary heroes, would be removed from elementary school Chinese language textbooks. The Ministry of Education swiftly declared this message a rumour, and reaffirmed the inclusion of Lei Feng in school textbooks as part of the highly valued education on China's revolutionary tradition (She, 2015). In 2018, a new *Heroes and Martyrs Protection Law* passed, prohibiting the defaming and denial of China's historical heroes, including Lei

Feng. Given President Xi Jinping's determination to revive China's socialist legacy (Lam, 2015), Lei Feng is likely to attract more attention in China's education. Last, studies such as this may well garner less forthcoming responses or become ethically fraught to conduct.

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Language resources to negotiate official and alternative memories of human rights violations in Chilean history: A study on classroom interactions

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ABSTRACT: This article explores social and historical memories of recent Chilean history in pedagogical recontextualisations of disciplinary knowledge in Grade 11 history classes. The discourse of history analysed relates to human rights violations committed during Pinochet's dictatorship (1973-1990) and the ways this traumatic past is negotiated in classroom interactions. The aim of this work is to contribute to understanding how the process of human rights violations is transmitted to new generations. The focus here is specifically on how historical processes and events are evaluated in these discourses, drawing on Martin and White's (2005) appraisal framework. As well as proposals by Oteíza and Pinuer (2012), and Oteíza (2017), for the semantic domain of APPRECIATION, an elaboration developed to take into account the particularity and complexity of the processual cline (events, processes and situations) in historical discourses. In addition, the article analyses *semantic gravity* and *semantic density* from Legitimation Code Theory (Maton, 2014, 2016), to explore the levels of abstraction that, not only build cumulative knowledge, but also integrate personal and social memories of the recent past and 'historize memories' of a sensitive period of Chilean history. This discourse analysis of classroom interactions is complemented with what teachers and students have reported regarding their experiences and memories of the recent past in interviews. The analysis of how *evaluative prosodies* of official and alternative memories regarding the recent Chilean past, are built in the discourse is informed by a socio-semiotic perspective of systemic functional linguistics (Achugar, 2016; Achugar, et al., 2014; Martin & White, 2005; Martin et al., 2010; Oteíza, 2014; 2018).

KEYWORDS: historical memories, history classroom interaction, appraisal analysis, transmission of memories, semantic density, semantic gravity

Introduction[1]

The main purpose of this article is to examine specialised and non-specialised language resources used by teachers and students to construct events and processes regarding the transmission of memories of human rights violations in Chile's recent past within high school history classroom interactions. The negotiation of historical significance regarding this period in historical discourses implies the construction of *evaluative prosodies* (Martin & White, 2005) that involve different levels of abstraction and the participation of concrete historical facts and people. The study proposes that a joint analysis using the APPRAISAL system from Systemic

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Functional Linguistics (SFL), and the dimension of semantics from Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) helps interpret this transmission of social and historical memories to new generations of Chilean young people, in a nation that was highly affected by state violence from its last dictatorship, and in which competing official and alternative memories that have different levels of visibility and hegemony co-exist in Chilean society. The historical period covered in this research goes from Allende's Popular Unity Government (1970-1973) to Gen. Augusto Pinochet's right wing conservative civilian-military dictatorship[2] (1973-1990).

The transmission of Chilean historical memories – that is, memories that are informed by historical explanations based on primary and secondary sources that collaborate with the understanding of a traumatic recent past (Jelin, 2002; Winn, et al., 2014) - regarding human rights violations, is approached from the analysis of evaluative prosodies. That is, the intersubjective meanings that work by accumulation in given discourse. Explored in this article is how teachers and students combine axiological and epistemological knowledge, which is based primarily on their personal and social memories, to legitimise certain memories regarding national recent past. Nevertheless, in this pedagogical discourse, teachers also bring to the class a recontextualisation of a specialised disciplinary knowledge with the purpose of building historical explanations that are informed by evidence elaborated from primary and secondary sources. Teachers, therefore, integrate social memories into a historical reasoning of recent events and processes, and in doing so, collaborate with the process of 'historizing' memories.

This pedagogical commemoration of the past realised in history classroom interactions is built by teachers and students in the form of historical explanations that require more or less specialised language to construct axiological semantic density, when moral, political and affective meanings are privileged; or epistemic semantic density, when empirical descriptions are favoured in the discourse (Oteíza, et al., 2015; Oteíza 2017, 2018).

This article is organised in the following manner: the first section deals briefly with the transmission of historical memories; the second section is a general presentation of the appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005) and the elaboration of the domain of appreciation in relation to the construction of events and processes in historical discourses (Oteíza & Pinuer, 2012; Oteíza, 2017, 2018). The following section deals with an extract of Grade 11 classroom interaction, as an example of a recontextualisation of history discourse. The appraisal analysis is reconsidered in relation to the sociological concepts from LCT of semantic gravity and semantic density (Maton, 2014). Presented in the following section is some of the memory positioning of the teacher and students regarding the construction of personal, social, and historical memories of the Chilean recent past. The article concludes with final remarks related to the construction and transmission of official and alternative historical memories negotiated in the space of history classroom interactions.

Transmission of historical memories

Memories are not only transmitted, but rather jointly constructed as personal and social memories by previous and new generations (Halbwachs, 1992; Nora, 1989; Jelin, 2001, 2010). This process of remembering and forgetting from the perspective of how it is built in the micro social practice of 'doing' memory inside history classroom interactions (Binnenkade, 2015; Macgilchrist, et al*.*, 2015; Oteíza, 2017, 2018) is analysed in this article.

The social memories of a traumatic past of human rights violations in Chile are constructed and transmitted in a dynamic way that always implies the mediation of cultural tools (Achugar, 2008, 2016; Jelin, 2002, 2010; Ricoeur, 2010; Wertsch, 2002). The semiotic mediation that responds to social motivations can be expressed in official or non-official commemorations, museums, education, media, artistic manifestations, among many other possibilities. In Chile,

the traumatic memory of the last *coup d'état* and human rights violations committed by Pinochet's dictatorship (1973-1990) is still a matter of dispute among the different social and political sectors of society (Lira, 2013; Stern, 2006a, 2006b, 2013).

As Stern (2006a, 2013) postulates,

> in Chilean society it is possible to identify key social mental frameworks that are used to give value and meaning to the past; the events that started on 11 September are remembered by Chileans as 'salvation', 'rupture', 'persecution and awakening', and as a 'closed box' (Oteíza, et al., 2015, p. 47).

These 'key social mental frameworks' are understood by Stern (2006a), as "sufficiently differentiated narratives" that a society, in this case the Chilean one, has constructed as the fundamental or decisive set of values and beliefs regarding the collective experience of recent traumatic past. Therefore, emblematic memories are part of the social memories that exist in a given society. In this manner, personal memories and social memories are seen as processes that have a two way of influence, which in Stern's terms, implies top-down and bottom-up social dynamics:

> on the one hand, an emblematic memory framework imparts broad interpretative meaning an criteria of selection to personal memory, based on experiences directly lived by an individual or on lore told by relatives, friends, comrades, or other acquaintances. When this happens, the mysterious vanishing of "my" son is no longer a story of personal misfortune or accident that floats loosely, disconnected from a larger meaning. The vanishing is part of a crucial larger story: the story of state terror that inflicts devastating rupture upon thousands of families treated as subhuman enemies (Stern, 2006b, p. 5).

Stern (2006b) identifies four main emblematic memories that have been constructed as official or dominant memories (*memory as salvation* and *memory as an unresolved rupture*), or as alternative or counter memories that do not have state support in Chilean society (*memory as persecution and awakening* and *memory as a closed box*). These social memories organised as key emblematic memories show that different conceptualisations and feelings about the past coexist among Chileans. These differentiated social memories have also impacted the history curriculum, and the way this period of time is represented in official history textbooks (Oteíza, 2014, 2018; Oteíza & Pinuer, 2016). In this manner, this dynamic social process of competing social memories has contributed to the development of what is considered official knowledge by the Ministry of Education in each government, which in turn has had as a consequence that what is considered an alternative or counter memory in one period has the potential of becoming official knowledge in history textbooks at a later date. Consequently, social memories of human rights' violations in Chile in the recent past are incorporated by the Ministry of Education in the history curriculum and thus in history textbooks that are distributed freely in more than 90 percent of primary and secondary schools as official social memories. Nevertheless, as will be shown in the case analysis of classroom interaction, teachers bring alternative personal and social memories into the class, which are negotiated with their students. In addition, and what is crucial regarding the pedagogical implications of learning about the national past, students' personal memories that they have constructed with the influence of family members and media and cultural realms in which they have lived in, have the opportunity to be comprehended from a historical perspective in their classes, that is, from a historical reasoning. In this manner, the fragments of personal memories that students bring to the class can be historized in the pedagogical process from determinate evaluations or evaluative prosodies that are built with a combination of a specialised and non-specialised language.

The appraisal framework

The appraisal model (Martin & White, 2005), which was elaborated under the theoretical framework of systemic functional linguistics, aims to provide a comprehensive theoretical and descriptive systematisation of the linguistic resources that authors can use to construct the value of social experience, and to have a richer understanding of the patterns of interpersonal meaning beyond the manifestation of only the emotionality across discourse (Oteíza, 2017).

From Martin and White's (2005) perspective, this framework, which works at the discursive-semantic level of language, deals with the negotiation of meanings among real or potential writers and readers, who interact in every text from a determinate social and cultural place. The evaluative meanings work by accumulation in the discourse creating determinate value positions. Consequently,

> the appraisal framework considers that every element in a text, whether considered discretely or in tandem with other meanings, is a potential instance of subjectivity; interpersonal meanings are accordingly considered as a prosody that works in a cumulative way to create a radiating pattern of evaluative meaning in discourse (Oteíza, 2019, p.179).

The appraisal framework organises interpersonal meanings in three main semantic areas (Martin & White, 2005, pp. 42-43): ENGAGEMENT, ATTITUDE and GRADUATION. The subsystem of ATTITUDE deals with the ways in which feelings are seen as socially organised system of meanings. ATTITUDE is further specified into three semantic domains: (a) emotions (AFFECT), which deals with the expression of positive and negative feelings; (b) ethics/morality (JUDGEMENT), which is concerned with attitudes toward character and behaviour of people (to admire or to criticise, to praise or to condemn); and (c) aesthetics/values (APPRECIATION), which involves evaluations of semiotic and natural phenomena according to the ways in which they are valued in a given field. The semantic subsystem of ENGAGEMENT allows an exploration of the source of attitudes, which in turn, collaborates with the identification of the dialogic nature of every discourse. In this manner, this analytical tool enables it to be determined if a discourse is built with a more heteroglossic or monoglossic orientation, depending on the extent to which authors recognise or not, alternative positions. Finally, the subsystem of GRADUATION has to do with the fact that expressions of attitude can be raised or lowered in the discourse, that is, meanings of attitude can be intensified or weakened showing different levels of alignment with the value positions advanced by the text (Martin & White, 2005). In this article, the main categories for analysing ATTITUDE created by Martin and White (2005) are followed. However, also incorporated is an elaboration of the domain of APPRECIATION to better deal with the analysis of historical discourses and its recontextualisation in classroom interaction. This proposal, that includes the categories of *power*, *impact*, *integrity* and *conflict* (Oteíza & Pinuer, 2012; Oteíza, 2014, 2017), provides an explanation in a more adequate manner how events, situations and processes are evaluated as being part of historical explanations. In the following section, these four notions are defined and illustrated.

The category of *conflict* deals with the manifestation of a social, political and/or economic tension that can be expressed with different grades of radicalism along a cline, as for example: "**A loss of control** was the distinctive feature of the last years of the 1960" (-ve APPRECIATION: high conflict)[3]. The category of *power*, which interacts with the semantic category of *conflict*, and also works as a cline, is associated with the action and influence of powerful and dominant groups (Oteíza & Pinuer, 2012; Oteíza, 2014, 2017). An example of the realisation of this meaning in the language form of a nominalisation is the "**arbitrary arrest**" that the state agents were able to do during Pinochet's dictatorship (-ve APPRECIATION: high power, integrity).

Integrity refers to moral or ethical evaluations. In historical discourse, human agency tends to be codified in an implicit way by means of impersonalisations, or in an incongruent manner

through nominalisations. For example, the nominalisation "**outbreak of cruelty**" (-ve APPRECIATION: integrity) in the context of human rights violations during Pinochet's dictatorship, although implies the action of people, is codified in the discourse as a historical process that 'happened' during the first years of the dictatorship, without any mention of human agency (Oteíza & Pinuer, 2012). The last category of *impact* deals with the importance and social value that authors attribute to historical events, processes or situations in the discourse, as for example "the 'peaceful path' was a **culminative moment** in the history of Chile" (+ve APPRECIATION: impact).

These four categories can be inscribed (explicit) or invoked (implicit), and they work together to build discourses of historical legitimation or delegitimisation. *Figure 1* presents Martin & White's categories for analysing the semantic area of APPRECIATION and *Figure 2* presents Oteíza & Pinuer's (2012) proposal for the analysis of historical events and processes:

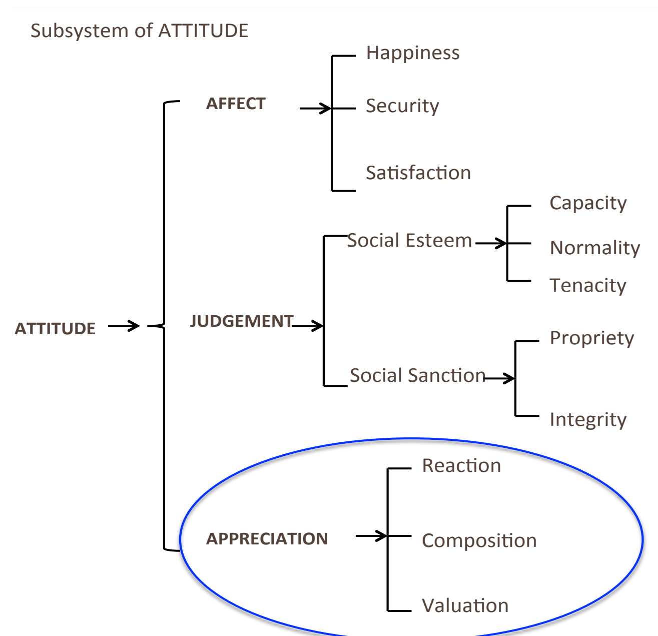

Figure 1: Appreciation domain (Martin & White, 2005)

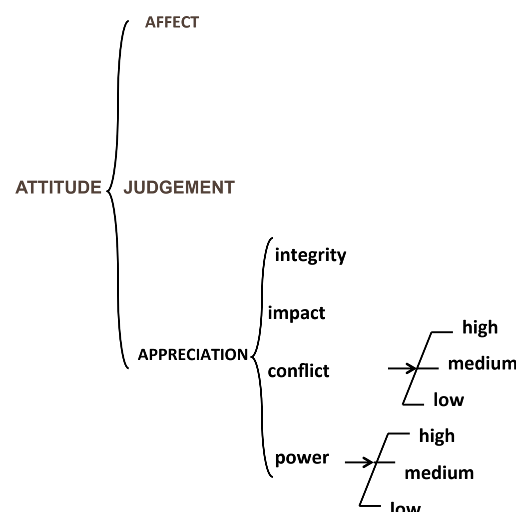

Figure 2: Appreciation domain for analysing events, situations and processes (Oteíza & Pinuer 2012; Oteíza 2014)

In the following section, the concepts of *semantic gravity* and *semantic density* from LCT (Maton 2013, 2014) are explained. The purpose is to explore the possibilities of a joint analysis between the *evaluative prosodies* and the use of *semantic waves* for analysing the transmission of memories of the recent past in history classroom interactions.

Semantic gravity and semantic density

Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) is a sociological theory that has been elaborated to analyse socio-cultural practices from a particular set of organizing principles (Maton, 2014, 2016). The dimension of Semantics and in particular on two key concepts: *semantic gravity* and *semantic density* (Maton, 2013, 2014) take focus in this article.

Semantic gravity (SG) is defined by Maton (2014, p. 110) as "the degree to which meaning relates to its context." *Semantic gravity* refers then to the different levels of meaning dependence to its context in a particular social practice. Therefore, in a determinate social practice, it is possible to realise changes over time creating recurrent movements from abstract and general ideas (weaker *semantic gravity* SG-) to concrete ideas and examples of everyday life (strong *semantic gravity*, SG+) and vice versa.

The notion of *semantic density* (SD) refers to a condensation of meaning in a given socio-cultural practice (Maton, 2014, 2016). This condensation of meaning can be expressed with higher or lower levels of abstraction of terms, concepts or actions that can be of an epistemological or axiological nature. Therefore, *semantic density* may also involve *epistemological condensation* of formal definitions of concepts and empirical descriptions or *axiological condensation* of affective, aesthetic, ethical, political and moral stances.

The movements between stronger and weaker *semantic gravity* and *semantic density* are built through language resources, in part by the process of packing, unpacking and repacking meanings (Matruglio, et al., 2013; Maton, 2014). These two notions of *semantic gravity* and *semantic density* can be very useful for analysing pedagogical practices according to Maton (2014, p. 110), because one condition for cumulative knowledge-building and learning may be the capacity to master *semantic gravity*, in order for knowledge to be decontextualised, transferred and recontextualised into new contexts.

Proposed here is that the LCT concepts of *semantic gravity* and *semantic density* can be linked with the language resources that are used by social actors in a determinate socio-cultural practice. Thus, in the case of the analysis offered in this article, special attention is paid to the language resources that teachers and students use to construct both specialised and non-specialised meanings, and the language realisations that they use to evaluate events, processes and actors in the history classroom interactions.

In the next section, an extract from Grade 11 history class interaction is presented. According to the national history curriculum in Chile, the unit *The Military Dictatorship* has as its general objective the characterisation of the main features of the *coup d'état* and ensuing military dictatorship in Chile, including the treatment of human rights violations, political violence and suppression of the rule of law in the country. The corpus of this research is composed of classroom interactions, teachers' interviews and students' interviews. For this article, the focus of the analysis is on an extract of one classroom interaction and on ideas that students and teachers communicated in their interviews.

History classroom interaction and the transmission of historical memories of human rights violations through epistemological condensation and strong semantic gravity

This section presents an extract of Grade 11 history classroom interaction from a private school. Students in this grade are 16 to 17 years old, and this is the penultimate year of the Chilean secondary education. The teacher is a very experienced female educator that had eight years of teaching recent national history in high schools. As observed in her classroom interactions, the teacher tries to develop in her students a high level of comprehension of historical processes with the purpose of helping them to move beyond their personal memories of a national traumatic past, towards a construction of a historical memory. The larger study analyses history classroom interactions from every type of school that co-exist in the Chilean educational system (government subsidised, partially government subsidised, and private schools);[4] this article includes one fragment of a private school to illustrate how historical memories of human rights violations are negotiated by teacher and students. Among the History classrooms analysed, they show similarities in terms of how teachers not only follow the curriculum very carefully, but also on how they all bring additional historical knowledge and alternative social memories through the inclusion of testimonies of political detainees, biographical documentaries, alternative historical recounts written by specialists, among others.

The selected fragment is part of the history unit entitled *The breakdown of democracy and the military dictatorship*. The proposed general learning outcome stated in the Chilean curricula establishes the development of the following two necessary skills for analysing and valuing different points of view regarding the recent national past:

(a) to critically analyse and compare different political views and historiographical interpretations of the past that led to the crisis of 1973 and the democratic breakdown; and

(b) to characterise the main features of the coup and the military dictatorship in Chile, including the systematic violation of human rights, the political violence, and the suppression of the rule of law (MINEDUC, 2015, p. 38).

Consequently, students at this year of their education are asked to achieve a high level of technicality and abstraction in order to have the analytical tools to deal with historical meanings of recent national history.

The fragment selected illustrates well one of the fundamental issues that students need to understand and that contributes to their process of historizing memory, that is, the critical issues of political and state violence during Pinochet's dictatorship (1973–1990), and their impact on the historical understanding of new generations regarding the severe human rights violations committed by the dictatorship (Oteíza, 2018).

At the beginning of the class, the teacher explains to her students the meaning of the repression that Chilean society lived during Pinochet's dictatorship. She illustrates the historical and political meanings of the process of human rights violations using concepts such as 'state of siege', 'individual freedom', 'political freedom', 'press freedom', 'restrictions to the citizenship', 'citizens' guaranties', 'deportations', 'exile', 'neutralisation of the enemy' and 'institutionalisation of the military regime'. The last two notions will be the focus of the extract of classroom interaction that is analysed here. The teacher exemplifies each concept by relating them to everyday situations that different people in the country experienced, using congruent and concrete language for these illustrations. This teacher uses a PowerPoint presentation throughout the entire class. Although, due to space restrictions, this article do not provide an intermodal analysis (visual and verbal text), the visuals presented by the teacher in her

PowerPoints (cartoons and photograph) are included here, because they are fundamental to fully understand the teacher and students' meaning construction.[5]

A reproduction of a brief fragment of the lesson as *Example 1*reads:

Example 1:[6]

Teacher:

1. The National Intelligence Directorate was also created in 1974, it is another fact that it was created in that

2. time period (2) National Intelligence Directorate organized from the Military Junta and with leaders

3. that will form part of it (1) nowadays, a great part of those who belonged to the DINA (1) are

4. imprisoned (2) are in [two or three parts/places]

Student:

6. [El Mamo][7]

Teacher:

7. As, for example, Manuel Contreras who is imprisoned, yes?

Student:

8. Ms., in what was the DINA supposedly focused?

Teacher:

9. the DINA ((signaling what was already written by her on the blackboard)) neutralize the opposition (1)

10. maintain [the population controlled]

Student:

11. [so]

Teacher:

12. [so] that there isn't dissent, dissent is not agreeing with the military government

Student:

13. So, there will be the CNI afterwards?

Teacher:

14. There will be the CNI, the DINA changes its name and becomes the CNI and the "non-identified

15. civilians" are those ((signaling the cartoon/caricature on the power point)) For this, Rufino[8] describes

16. them like this in his cartoon, these are the civilians who appear when someone is talking and they

17. take people away, arrest, arbitrary arrest of the people, he does it in a comic manner so that they don't

18. censor him (1) so, with that he is also denouncing what happens with the DINA, for example,

19. <u>another</u> (1) fact, and with this we finish this first part (2) this, for example,

20. this is Rufino says: ((the teacher reads another of Rufino's caricatures from the blackboard))

21. "We wish to have a small ideological debate with you" and this person is there, they are taking them, they 22. are like men in black with black glasses, which is like the, the typical attire of, of the security of Augusto 23. Pinochet, [and he is there singing and he has there

Student:

24. Where are they? Where are they?

((at this moment, two picket signs appear on the power point with the words: Where are they?))

Teacher:

25. Originates in 1974 also, all of this is from ‘74, its ehm the Association of Relatives of the Disappeared

26. Detainees product of this ehm search of the first detainees that began to be taken from ‘73 onwards.

27. These relatives begin to get together and to say let’s agree to go together because if we go together, the

28. majority were women, we may avoid a grave incident because many people who went alone to the

29. police station or to the penitentiary where their husbands were being held, their sons, relatives, they could 30. tell them they’re not here period (1) therefore with this they create an association, create an organism

31. that goes and gets these people (3) in September of ‘74, begins what for Chile will be called the Condor

32. Operation, I will also show you another cartoon of the Condor Operation that Calle 13 sings (--) if you

33. want more information of that (3) the Condor Operation is an operation between different Latin

34. American countries and the Secretary of State ehm of the United States, Henry Kissinger, where they

35. also look to neutralize the enemy that is outside the country (1) that is, Carlos Prats

36. (2) remember that he was the General in Chief of Allende’s Army, do all of you remember Carlos Prats?

Student:

37. Yes

Teacher:

38. Yes? Ok. Carlos Prats renounces in august of ‘73 and recommends for the position Augusto Pinochet

39. because they were close, and he considered that the institutional order would prosper, he was wrong

40. (2) and Carlos Prats receives ehm diplomatic ehm protection in Argentina (1) and in Argentina ehm

39. through a bomb attack that they place in the car, in the parking lot, he works right

40. next to the parking lot of his house there they place a bomb, so when he starts the engine (2)

41. the car explodes (2) in September of ‘74 they assassinate him, and the Condor Operation assassinates him,

42. he is assassinated by a military operation of the military intelligence in different countries of Latin

43. America, including Argentina (1) born in ‘74, as I was telling you, the Association of Relatives of

44. Disappeared Detainees and (1) is established that the Junta will exercise the constitutive legislative power

45. and the executive, but the executive exclusively in charge of Augusto Pinochet (1) the

46. Association of Relatives of Disappeared Detainees, where we have there one of its founders who is

47. Mireya García ((signaling her photo on the power point)) will function to this day and they will have

48. afterwards the support of many international organisms.

In this class interaction, the teacher tends to use technical terms ("institutionalization" of Pinochet's regime) and nominalisations ("neutralization of the enemy") to explain the historical significance of the process of human rights' violations committed during the Pinochet's dictatorship. Nevertheless, the teacher relies mainly on a strong *semantic gravity* (SG+), centring her historical recount on what social actors did, said and thought. In the first lines of the interaction (1-8), she talks about the organisms of secret police, and the discourse is centred in what happened to several of the military leaders that were part of the DINA (National Directorate of Intelligence) and of the CNI (National Intelligence Central) who, at the present, are imprisoned or dead. These social actors are evaluated with an inscribed negative social sanction of integrity for their actions. In line 5, a student mentions one of them by his nickname, "Mamo", and the teacher acknowledges his participation naming the state agent by his real name, Manuel Contreras,[9] and then changing the register of the interaction into a more formal one, as it is showed *Table 1*.[10]

CLASSROOM INTERACTION LINES	LINGUISTICS RESOURCES SPECIALIZED AND NON-SPECIALIZED LANGUAGE	VALORATIVE STANCES	INSCRIPTION AND INVOCATION	ENTITY APPRAISED HISTORICAL EVENTS, PROCESSES OR ACTORS	SEMANTIC GRAVITY AND SEMANTIC DENSITY
Teacher (1-4)	Material processes: *(DINA) created*	-ve JUDGEMENT: Social Sanction: Integrity (inscribed) Graduated by FORCE: Scope; time and Quantity: *nowadays, a great portion*	**imprisoned**	SOCIAL ACTORS: *DINA, military leaders* (technicality)	**Medium** **SG, SD**
Pupil (5)	Mention of Social Actor: *Mamo*	-ve JUDGEMENT: Social Sanction: Integrity (inscribed) (by co-text)	**(imprisoned)**	SOCIAL ACTORS: "*Mamo*" (Nick name for General Manuel Contreras)	**SG+, SD–**
Teacher and Pupil (6-8)	Mention of Social Actor in a more formal manner *Mamo/ Manuel Contreras* A student asks for the role of the DINA	-ve JUDGEMENT: Social Sanction: Integrity (inscribed)	**imprisoned**	SOCIAL ACTORS: *Manuel Contreras* (Mamo) *DINA*	**SG+, SD-**

Table 1: Analysis of classroom interaction

In line 9, the teacher answers the student's question regarding the role of the DINA, and strengthens the *semantic density* (SD+) to make a connection to the more general historical process of human rights violations, in which General Manuel Contreras had a key role in

"neutralising" the enemy. This euphemism was previously unpacked by the teacher at the beginning of the class giving voice to the state agents:

> "they use a euphemism (1) a word that doesn't sound too strong [unless] saying we are going to kill everyone that is opposed (1) neutralization (1) the idea of neutralizing the opposition means for the military government in Chile assassinate"

Regarding the level of technicality that the teacher uses to explain the process of human rights violations, it is possible to argue that the *semantic gravity* is strengthened (SG+) and the *semantic density* is weakened (SD-) with the inclusion of social actors such as the DINA, the CNI and Manuel Contreras, which are evaluated with an inscribed negative judgement of social sanction of integrity. However, those institutions are still part of the technicality of the state process of repression that operated inside the country and in the rest of Latin America. Consequently, although they constitute a general knowledge, and a part of a social memory that a Chilean secondary school student may have, the teacher incorporates them as key participants within a broader historical explanation. In the following lines (12-17), both teacher and student, maintain a *semantic gravity* (SG+) when building a historical recount, in which they refer to the material and mental actions that social actors, the DINA and the opposition to the military regime, did and thought.

CLASSROOM INTERACTION LINES	LINGUISTICS RESOURCES	VALORATIVE STANCES	INSCRIPTION AND INVOCATION	ENTITY APPRAISED HISTORICAL EVENTS, PROCESSES OR ACTORS	SEMANTIC GRAVITY AND SEMANTIC DENSITY
Teacher **(9-12)**	Nominalizations: *Neutralize the opposition; dissent*	-ve APPRECIATION: Integrity, high Power (invoked) -ve JUDGEMENT: Social Sanction: Integrity (inscribed)	***Neutralize (the opposition)*** **(no) dissent**	HISTORICAL PROCESS of human rights violations/Repression SOCIAL ACTORS: *DINA*	**SG-, SD+**
Teacher **(12)**	Mental processes: Meaning of "*dissent*": *not agreeing with the military government*	+/-ve JUDGEMENT, Social Esteem: Capacity (inscribed) Graduated by FORCE: Scope: *everyone*	**not agreeing**	SOCIAL ACTORS: *opposition to the military regime*	**SG+, SD–**
Teacher and Pupil **(13-17)**	Relational and material processes: *There will be the CNI, "non-identified civilians"; Rufino describes them; civilians who appear; they take people away*	-ve JUDGEMENT: Social Sanction: Integrity (inscribed)	**take people away** **arrest**	SOCIAL ACTORS: *"non-identified civilians" (CNI)*	**SG+, SD–**

Table 2: Analysis of classroom interaction

In line 13, the teacher displays a cartoon drawn by Rufino in which two state agents with black glasses are represented in a conceptual image with the ironic wording, "non-identified civilians" included in the bottom of the drawing (see Image 1). Here, the visual mode reinforces the DINA and CNI state agents of Pinochet's dictatorship who "arrest" and "take people away" as part of the state terrorism of the dictatorship, a political icon well known in Chilean society. This cartoon and the representation of state agents are both part of a social memory of which students are generally well aware. It is relevant to mention that these kinds of images and political cartoons are not included in history textbooks (Oteíza & Pinuer, 2016; Oteíza, 2018).

Image 1: Classroom ineraction

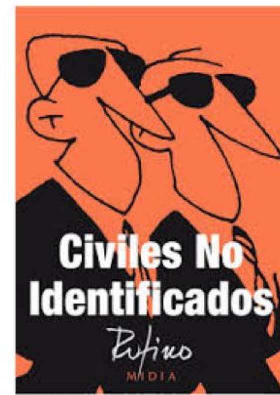

Image 2: Display of a political cartoon

INTERACTION LINES	RESOURCES	STANCES	INVOCATION AND	ENTITY AF HISTORICAL EVENTS, PROCESSES OR ACTORS	GRAVITY AND SEMANTIC DENSITY
Teacher (17)	Nominalizations: *arbitrary arrest*	-ve APPRECIATION: Integrity, high Power (inscribed)	**arbitrary arrest**	HISTORICAL PROCESS of human rights violations/Repression	**SG-, SD+**
Teacher (18-20)	Material and verbal processes: (Rufino) *he does it in a comic manner so that they don't censor him; he is also denouncing what happens with the DINA*	+ve JUDGEMENT, Social Esteem: Capacity (inscribed) -ve JUDGEMENT, Social Esteem: Capacity (inscribed) -ve JUDGEMENT: Social Sanction: Integrity (inscribed)	**comic** (manner) **don't censor** **denouncing**	SOCIAL ACTORS: *Rufino* (cartoonist) *DINA ("non-identified civilians")*	**SG+, SD–**

Table 3: Analysis of classroom interaction

While showing this PowerPoint with Rufino's political cartoon, the teacher strengthens the *semantic density* again (SD+), and specifies that the arrest was an "arbitrary arrest" (line 17), presenting a negative evaluation of appreciation of integrity and high power of the historical process in which these "non-identified civilians" were involved. Later on, the teacher makes a *semantic wave* when she weakens the *semantic density* (SD-) by specifying what Rufino needed to do in order to denounce repression in the country. A *semantic wave*, according to Maton

(2014), refers to recurrent movements between stronger and weaker *semantic gravity* and *semantic density*. This wave profile has been proved to be a key feature of cumulative knowledge building (Matruglio, et al., 2013). The *semantic wave* is created in this case by the teacher while building historical knowledge, on one hand, by means of using everyday language to indicate what the cartoonist Rufino did with his political humour to denounce the state violence that was being committed during the dictatorship ('they take away people'). On the other hand, through the use of a more technical and specialised language that allows the teacher to connect concrete events with more global and broader historical processes that the Chilean society was living during the seventies and eighties and that is codified by nominalisations ('arbitrary arrest', 'neutralize the opposition'). With this cartoon, it is possible to appreciate that "civilians" were also part of the organisation of state terror and not only the military forces of the country. This analysis is shown in *Table 3*.

The teacher again strengthens the semantic density (SD+), but now, rather interestingly by quoting Rufino's humorous words of the next cartoon that she shows in the following slide (Image 3 and 4), in which four "non-identified civilians" are involved in an action while mentioning ironically the two things that were censored in the country during Pinochet's dictatorship: to have a political opinion, especially if that was a left wing position; and to talk about your ideas ("We would like to have a small ideological debate with you"/ "Quisiéramos tener un pequeño debate ideológico con usted"). The term "ideology" was highly stigmatised and it was considered as a kind of semantic collocation of a "Marxist ideology" (Oteíza, 2018). This notion is evaluated with an evoked negative appreciation of integrity whereas the DINA is constructed with an evoked positive social esteem of capacity. These differentiated evaluations also contribute to the political humour that the teacher is trying to explain to their students, and by doing so, she offers alternative historical knowledge to their students. The irony is also built by the fact that people were arbitrarily arrested without having any possibility of talking and even less, of defending themselves.

Image 3: Classroom interaction

Image 4: Display of a political cartoon 2

In lines 20 to 23 (*Table 4*), it is possible to appreciate the wording that the teacher is saying while showing this political cartoon, and the invoked negative evaluation of integrity regarding the repression that people were experiencing.

CLASSROOM INTERACTION LINEST	LINGUISTICS RESOURCES	VALORATIVE STANCES	INSCRIPTION AND INVOCATION	ENTITY APPRAISED HISTORICAL EVENTS, PROCESSES OR ACTORS	SEMANTIC GRAVITY AND SEMANTIC DENSITY
Teacher **(20-21)**	Nominalizations: *a small ideological debate*	-ve APPRECIATION: Integrity, (invoked) Graduated by FORCE: Quantification: *small*	***ideological debate***	HISTORICAL PROCESS Repression expressed implicitly by nominalized processes of "thinking" and "saying" that were prohibited during the dictatorship	**SG-, SD+**
Teacher **(21-23)**	Material and verbal processes: (*"non-identified civilians"*) *saying and doing*	+ve JUDGEMENT, Social Esteem: Capacity (evoked)	***they are taking them***	SOCIAL ACTORS: *they DINA ("non-identified civilians")*	**SG+, SD-**

Table 4: Analysis of classroom interaction

In line 21, before the teacher refers to the photograph of Mireya García, one of the founders of the Association of Relatives of the Disappeared Detainees, one student recognises the well-known sign with the wording "where are they" ("¿Dónde están?"), which was a symbol of the fight of the relatives of the Disappeared Detainees,[11] who were claiming justice and continue to do so in the present. The image of these words as well as that of the secret agents with dark suits and dark glasses are part of the social memory that students must have learnt from home and in their communities. The historical process of human rights violations is evaluated in an evoked manner with a negative appreciation of integrity. These images are not privative of Chilean society, but rather they are well known icons or "political bondicons" of injustice and denounce (Oteíza & Pinuer, 2016; Oteíza, 2018) in many other countries of Latin America (see the verbal analysis and image in *Table 5*).

Pupil **(21-23)**	Material processes: *Where are they? Where are they?* *(¿Dónde están?)*	-ve APPRECIATION: Integrity, (invoked)	***Where are they?*** ***Where are they?***	HISTORICAL PROCESS of human rights violations **Social memory**	**Medium** **SG, SD**

Table 5: Analysis of classroom interaction. Display of political photograph

The teacher continues her historical recount using a medium *semantic gravity* in lines 25 to 31, when referring to the material actions that the state organisms did: “detainees that began to be taken from ‘73 [the year 1973]”, and she incorporates a new social actor to the recount: The Association of Relatives of the Disappeared Detainees. The teacher also refers very concretely (SG+) to the necessity, especially of women, to get together and to defend themselves from possible abuses that they could have had when inquiring after their relatives that were detained. The mention of the Association of Relatives of the Disappeared-Detainees is constructed by the teacher with a positive valuation of social esteem of capacity. This inclusion also helps to highlight the alternative political positions that co-existed during the dictatorship and the movements of resistance, which needed a great deal of courage to carry on their political and cultural actions. Later on, the teacher introduces another historical actor: Carlos Prats, who was the General in Chief of the Armed Forces during Allende’s government, relying in a strong *semantic gravity* (SG+). Prats was the one that “recommended” Pinochet to Allende and the one that was “wrong” in making that decision. Next, the teacher strengthens the *semantic density* (SD+) once again when she explains that the political motivation was to make the institution of Allende’s government more powerful.

The teacher’s historical recount that follows a chronological organisation is interrupted in several parts by the inclusion of more complex notions (SD+) that help students to situate the historical facts in which social actors are involved, that is, the material, verbal and mental actions of social actors are incorporated into a broader picture of historical significance. For example, with the mention of an “institutional order” (line 37), as it is shown in *Table 6*:

The "Condor Operation" was a coordinated action of the repression and intelligence organisms of military dictatorships from the South Cone of Latin America. Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay participated in this 'operation.' The teacher does not mention anything regarding the also well-known drawing that shows a condor (a particularly large bird that lives in the Andes Mountains, that forms part of the Chilean national emblem), and a person that is attached to a train rail, visibly hurt (tortured) and screaming (*Image 3*).[12] The use of language resources that construct a strong *semantic gravity* (SG+) helps to include agency to the social events, and this plays a crucial role in the construction of more abstract historical explanations.

Teacher **(25-31)**	Material processes: *originates; get together; people who went...*	-ve JUDGEMENT, Social Esteem: Capacity (evoked) +ve JUDGEMENT, Social Esteem: Capacity (invoked)	***detainees that began to be taken*** ***(they) created an association***	SOCIAL ACTORS: *detainees* *women* *many people* *sons, husbands, relatives* Technicality: *Association of Relatives of the Disappeared Detainees*	**Medium** **SG, SD**
Pupil and Teacher **(35-37)**	Material and mental processes: *Carlos Prats renounces; (he) recommends; they were close; he considered*	-ve JUDGEMENT, Social Esteem: Capacity (invoked) Carlos Prats +ve JUDGEMENT, Social Esteem: Capacity (inscribed) Pinochet	***renounces*** **recommends**	SOCIAL ACTORS: *Carlos Prats* *Allende* *Pinochet*	**SG+, SD-**
Teacher **(37)**	Nominalization: *institutional order*	-ve APPRECIATION: high Power, lower Conflict (inscribed)	**(would) prosper**	HISTORICAL PROCESS of human rights violations/ Pinochet's process or institutionalization	**SG-, SD+**
Teacher **(37-43)**	Material and mental processes: *(Carlos Prats) was wrong; an attempted bomb attack; they place in the car; the Condor Operation assassinated him (Carlos Prats)*	-ve JUDGEMENT, Social Esteem: Capacity (inscribed) -ve JUDGEMENT: Social Sanction: Integrity (inscribed) Condor Operation	**wrong** ***they place a bomb in the car*** **assassinated**	SOCIAL ACTORS: *Carlos Prats* Technicality: *Condor Operation*	**SG+, SD-**

Table 6: Analysis of classroom interaction

Finally, in lines 37 to 43 (*Table 7*), the teacher refers to the historical process of institutionalisation of the Military Junta. The Military Junta is constructed in the discourse with an inscribed positive evaluation of high power and, Pinochet in particular, is represented with a positive social esteem of capacity due to the fact that he is the one that became "in charge" of the executive power of the country. Here, the *semantic density* is strong again (SD+), and it is followed by a weak *semantic density* (SD-) and strong *semantic gravity* (SG+) in relation to the actions of the Association of Relatives of the Disappeared Detainees, particularly of one of its founders, Mireya García, who is represented visually in the photograph beside Rufino's comic (*Table 5*). The inclusion of a broader semiotic repertoire than the one included in textbooks

(Oteíza, 2018), collaborates to strengthen the *axiological semantic density* (SD+) that helps the teacher to construct historical significance in the classroom.

CLASSROOM INTERACTION LINES	LINGUISTICS RESOURCES	VALORATIVE STANCES	INSCRIPTION AND INVOCATION	ENTITY APPRAISED HISTORICAL EVENTS, PROCESSES OR ACTORS	SEMANTIC GRAVITY AND SEMANTIC DENSITY
Teacher (37-43)	Nominalization: *The constitutive power; the legislative power; the executive power* *Augusto Pinochet*	+ve APPRECIATION: high Power, (inscribed) +ve JUDGEMENT, Social Esteem: Capacity (inscribed) Graduated by FORCE: Intensification *exclusively*	**(The Junta) will exercise** **in charge**	HISTORICAL PROCESS of human rights violations/ Pinochet's process or institutionalization *Military Junta*	**SG-, SD+**
Teacher (43-48)	Material and mental processes: *(the association) will function; the support*	+ve JUDGEMENT, Social Esteem: Capacity (invoked) Graduated by FORCE: Scope, time: *to this day* +ve JUDGEMENT, Social Esteem: Capacity (inscribed)	***will function*** **the support**	SOCIAL ACTORS: *Mireya García (one of the founders of the Association of Relatives of the Disappeared Detainees); many international organisms* Technicality: *Association of Relatives of the Disappeared Detainees*	**SG+, SD-**

Table 7: Analysis of classroom interaction

An illustration of the *semantic waves* constructed by the teacher and students in this fragment of history classroom interaction is presented in *Figure 3*. The use of nominalisations and technical words reflects a more specialised discourse, that is, a discourse that deals with the process of human rights violations that goes beyond the common sense of everyday language and constructs a more abstract historical significance and contextualisation. This discourse, which is characterised by a strong *semantic density* (SD+), works in combination with a more familiar language that helps the teacher and her students to incorporate historical evidence and agency that was constructed in the interaction with a stronger *semantic gravity* (SG+).

Figure 3: Classroom interaction. Display of a political cartoon 3

Figure 4 shows the whole extract, in two semantic profiles (1–23 and 23–48).

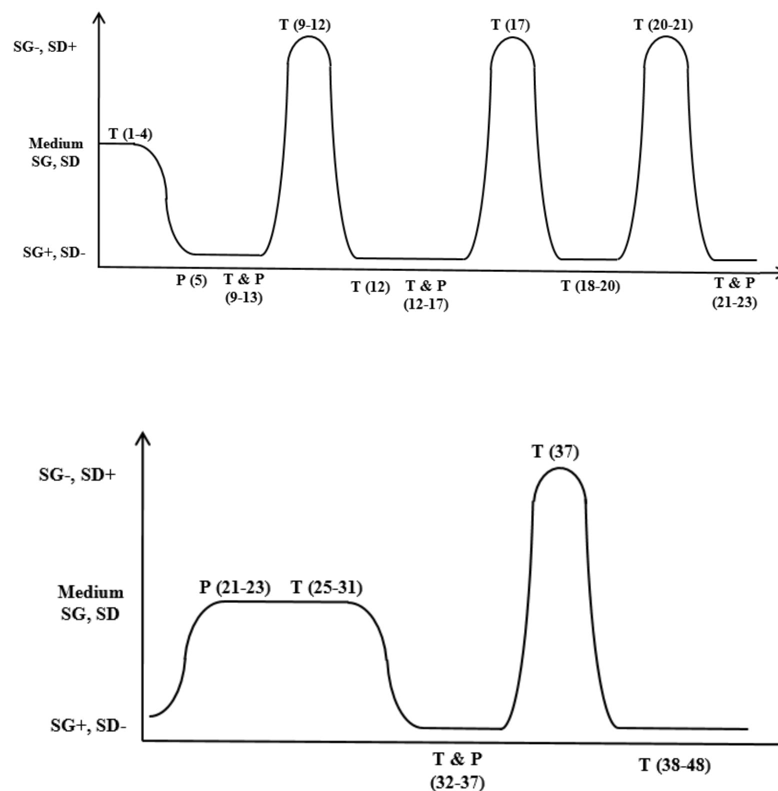

Figure 4: Semantic waves of classroom interaction

Teacher and students' positionings regarding personal and social memories

All teachers who participated in the study were interviewed; and somestudents who voluntarily accepted to be interviewed at the end of the unit on *The breakdown of democracy and the military dictatorship*. Some of the axiological and epistemological positions that teacher and students have regarding the study of human rights violations at school, and of the background knowledge that they have brought into the class from other social, cultural and political sources are outlined here. Included how the teacher dealt with this sensitive topic in her History class and exploring some of the students' positions.

The teacher highlights the importance of being explicit about her political position with her students. She thinks that teaching recent national history to young people entails a significant responsibility that can only be taken from teachers that see themselves as political and social actors. The teacher's stance is that her personal memories should be also part of her teaching: "I'm subjective and I tell that to my students openly." Therefore, the teacher's position is that her personal memories are incorporated in her pedagogical practices. She positions herself as a teacher that gives special importance to teach the subject and to include both official and alternative historical memories, such as the memories of resistance through political humour exemplified with the cartoonist Rufino, and the political cartoon about the Condor Operation that shows the brutal violence committed during Pinochet's dictatorship.

She also considers that to teach the subject of human rights violations requires a special preparation for teachers, who must be well equipped to be able to discuss this topic with his or her students from a broad variety of historical sources. For her, it is crucial to avoid teaching

from the accepted dichotomy of either a right or left wing political position. As it is possible to appreciate in the brief extract of classroom interaction analysed, she gives fundamental importance to historical facts:

> I give my opinion of the situations that happened, but I always try to ascribe my opinion in objective facts (…) one can be from the right or from the left, one can consider him or herself not being part of politics or even feel unidentified with a political movement, but one cannot validate a government imposed through violence and that has done all what it did, particularly if we think about human rights,

In this manner, the teacher makes a great effort to bring primary and secondary sources to her lesson, in an attempt to teach her students not only ethical values but also how to reason historically, which in turn, contributes to their process of historizing memories.

The Grade 11 students that agreed to be interviewed regarding this unit on the military dictatorship, similarly pointed out that teaching this subject at school is of particular relevance. They also emphasised that teachers need special training to teach national recent history. In the interview, two students openly manifested their political positions, one from the extreme left wing and the other one from a moderate right wing position. Both of them considered that what they have learned in other social spaces was relevant to better comprehend the historical perspective of memory advanced by the History teacher in her classes. In addition, both of them condemn the *coup d'état* and consider that Salvador Allende was a great leader of this country; they especially praised his integrity and values, expressing an ethical stance regarding his figure as President. The one from the right considers that all the explicit treatment of human rights violations, especially of the brutal tortures that thousands of people suffered in the country, was taught with too much detail by the teacher. However, the other student believes that it was necessary to raise sensibility amongst his classmates, and therefore, he thought that the amount of explicit and detailed references regarding the state terror was necessary to assure that this kind of violence does not occur again in the future. This positioning regarding the importance of raising sensibility among young people who did not live during the dictatorship and did not experience the human rights violations directly, also shows students' axiological stances about recent national past.

All the students interviewed across the three schools (private, partially and completely subsidised by the government) manifested that as society Chileans cannot forget what happened in the country, which shows their ethical commitment to human rights. This is also congruent with the official view of recent national past, that is, their opinion on the significance of teaching this historical period, their empathy with the suffering of others and their willingness to learn more in depth about how people who lived during that time survived and resisted the state terror. A positioning that was also very strong among them was that they think that, as part of a generation that did not witness the events, they feel the need to be well informed of the recent national past; in part because they consider that it is their responsibility as citizens, and in part because they manifest their desire of being part of a crucial social trauma that Chileans lived as society, of which they do not want to be left out because they did not live it directly.

Final remarks

It has been postulated that history classroom interactions can be understood as micro spaces of commemoration of personal and social memories (Binnenkade, 2015; Macgilchrist, et al., 2015; Oteíza 2018). The history class became a space to talk and to think about the recent past of human rights violations among classmates and the teacher. This pedagogical interaction is always mediated by a rich combination of a semiotic repertoire of official history textbooks, documentaries, images, and specialised historical discourses, among others, which are recontextualised by teachers with the purpose of historizing personal and social memories.

Students also learn how to remember and forget about this recent past in their families and in other social and cultural environments; however, the possibility of thinking about it from a historical perspective is something that needs an educational and specialised environment.

As the students of this research have reported, they need and want to know more about their national past. They need to have a denser condensation of axiological and epistemic meanings that can help them to think historically about a national trauma. This is not an easy endeavour and as teachers have reported, it is complex to teach recent national history of human rights violations in high schools, because it implies a fair amount of knowledge. Also because, as a teacher, you need to be willing to deal with your own memory positions when teaching this sensitive matter for the Chilean society. This issue could be also more relevant, as several historians, sociologists and social psychologists have highlighted, since Chilean society has not fully processed the trauma of human rights violations it experienced from 1973 to 1990 (Oteíza, 2018).

In the classroom interaction analysed, the teacher and students create *semantic waves* while building historical explanations. This process implies using a combination of specialised language, mainly manifested in nominalisations and technical words (that is, 'neutralization of the enemy', 'institutionalization of the military regime'), and non-specialised language, mainly by the use of clauses in which social actors *do* (material clauses), *think* (mental cognitive clauses) and *feel* (mental affective clauses), while showing different levels of agency as part of historical events. This learning process might help students to build onto their own personal memories and to better comprehend alternative social memories that are not included in the official History curriculum and in History textbooks. The analysis has demonstrated that for building historical significance both the specialised language and the everyday language are used. The teacher assumes that students need to incorporate historical evidence and social actors' motivations to actually understand how more abstract historical explanations are constructed by historians. Therefore, the *semantic waves* that are created by means of the combination of stronger and weaker *semantic gravity* and *semantic density* help to build more complex explanations of the past and travel beyond personal and emotional views, so it is possible to have a better understanding of the social mental frames or emblematic memories that coexist in Chilean society. As it has been demonstrated in the discursive analysis, historical explanations built as semantic waves in the classroom carried on determinate axiological and epistemological values or *evaluative prosodies*.

It has been also shown in this article that the accumulation of evaluative meanings or *evaluative prosody* that both teacher and students construct. This is relevant because what is evaluated ('entity appraised') are not only historical collective actors as the DINA, CNI, or individual actors as Pinochet, Prat, Allende or individual actors that represent alternative memories like Mireya García or the political cartoonist Rufino; but also both teacher and students evaluate historical processes, as the policies for installing a state terror or Pinochet's process of institutionalisation of his regime, which in turn collaborate to historize memories and to better understand the symbolic meanings that are part of every social and personal memory in a society.

Historical reasoning helps students to make sense of their personal and social memories. Students value what they have learnt in their History classes, since that historical knowledge contributes to make sense of the fragments of memory that they have. Students do have a personal memory that has been constructed at home and in their cultural environment. However, what the micro practice of History classroom does is to contribute to this process of weaving their fragments of memories into a broader national historical meaning and official and alternative memories of recent traumatic past of human rights violations that are still on dispute in the Chilean society.

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Endnotes

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[1] This article presents findings from research grant FONDECYT 1170331 (National Funds for Science and Technology Development, Chile).

[2] Ridenti, Marcelo (2016).

[3] "-ve" means negative evaluation; "+ve" means positive evaluation. Evaluations of power and conflict can be graded as high medium or low, depending on the meaning of the attitudinal words employed and/or if they are graduated by sub-modification. The co-text should be always be taken into consideration.

[4] The extract presented in this article was selected from a total of more than 80h of filmed history classroom interactions.

[5] For a multimodal analysis of part of this fragment, see Author 2018.

[6] Notation for the class interaction: (T): teacher, (S): student. Numbers in parenthesis indicate the length of pauses in seconds; words underlined indicate intonational emphasis/volume. Double parenthesis indicates relevant contextual information. Question marks have been added to facilitate reading the text. Square brackets: overlapping; when teacher and or students speak at the same time. The original language of the class interaction was Spanish. A semi-literal/idiomatic translation into English, trying to maintain as far as possible the kind of lexicogrammatical choices made by teachers and students.

[7] Alias or nickname for Manuel Contreras.

[8] Alejandro Montenegro Gallardo, better known as "Rufino" is a famous Chilean cartoonist who made political graphic humour during the eighties. He published a book with an anthology of his best drawings in 2009 entitled precisely: *"Non-identified civilians"*. The image that the teacher presents in her *power point* is the cover of that book.

[9] Manuel Contreras was the director of the DINA. He was charged guilty of human rights violations in 2002 and later condemned to 500 years of prison. He died in prison in 2015 at 85 years old.

[10] Inscribed evaluations of ATTITUDE are written in **bold**; invoked evaluations of ATTITUDE in ***bold and italicized***. Negative evaluations are marked with '-ve', and positive evaluations with '+ve'.

[11] The Spanish term "Disappeared" works as a technical word in Chilean context. It refers to a well-known process of forced disappearance of people that were secretly abducted and later killed by State organisms of secret police during the Pinochet's dictatorship (1973-1990).

[12] There is no verbal language, neither by the teacher nor the students, that accompanies this explicit political cartoon that shows the state terror in the form of torture. However, in previous classes, as well as in some of the classes that followed, the teacher devoted a whole session to read and reflect with her students on the concentration camps and the tortures that were well documented by *The National Commission on Torture and Political Prison* (2004, 2011).

About the Author

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Blurring the lines between history education *100 Voices* and activism: How *100 Voices* remembers the Armenian Genocide

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ABSTRACT: This article explores how a group of Armenian young adults in Toronto remember the Armenian genocide from afar, 100 years after it happened. The data comes from *100 Voices: Survival, Memory, Justice*, a multimedia project that commemorates the 100 year anniversary of the Armenian genocide. Through a detailed analysis of in-depth interviews with the project team, and a thematic and visual analysis of a sample of video clips posted on YouTube, this article claims that *100 Voices* blurs the lines between history education and activism. The production team's use of audio-visual testimony and ensuing visual and discursive strategies open up a space for project participants to address their non-Armenian Canadian peers, teaching them the history of the Armenian genocide. These choices by the production team, on the other hand, enable project participants to articulate the impact of the genocide and its ongoing denial by Turkey through the discourse of human rights.

KEYWORDS: Memory, digital media, history education, youth, diaspora, Armenian genocide

Introduction

How are collective memories of violence mediated, represented and transmitted through digital media? When survivors of the genocides have passed away, how does the use of new media technologies inform the contents and structures of memories of genocides? To answer these questions, this article explores how young adults in Canada who currently see themselves as Armenian remember the Armenian genocide by using new media technologies, especially in educational settings. Kansteiner, a prominent scholar of memory studies, has argued that "two irreversible trends" will reconfigure our memories of the twentieth century (2014, p. 413). Survivors of the genocides have passed away, while digital media is replacing more traditional forms of media through which memories of such crimes are mediated, represented, and transmitted. In the face of these challenges, Kansteiner has predicted, "the contents and structures of our collective memories of violence will have to change" (2014, p.413). This article asks whether this observation holds true for the memories of the Armenian genocide. It explores how young adults in Canada who currently see themselves as Armenian remember the Armenian genocide by using new media technologies, especially in educational settings.

This article focuses on *100 Voices: Survival, Memory, Justice* (Sara Corning Centre, 2015; Gül Kaya, 2018), a multimedia project that commemorates the centennial of the beginning of

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the Armenian genocide (1915-1918).[1] The Sara Corning Centre for Genocide Education, an Armenian non-governmental organization located in Toronto, produced *100 Voices* in partnership with senior students and teachers at Toronto's A.R.S. (Armenian Relief Society) Armenian School, the largest co-educational and bilingual private day school in Ontario, Canada. Founded in 2012, the Sara Corning Centre aims to educate Canadian youth, and to train teachers in the area of human rights and genocide education.

Project materials include lesson plans, photographs, and excerpts of Canadian press coverage before, during, and after the genocide. In addition, a total of seventy-eight video clips were posted on YouTube[2] between 15 January and 24 April 2015. These video clips include audio-visual testimonies of A.R.S. high school students, teachers and one alumnus, recitations of well-known pieces of Armenian literature by students, and the testimony of a survivor of the Armenian genocide, Kourken Mouradian. The testimonies of students, teachers and one alumnus are excerpts taken from interviews conducted and filmed by the project team, and they are available for public viewing on YouTube[3].

For this article, I carried out a thematic and visual analysis of thirty-two video clips that featured audio-visual testimonies by 25 high school students, six teachers, and one alumnus of the A.R.S. school. I also conducted in-depth interviews with the members of *100 Voices* production team, a team of two teachers and three students, all of whom had already participated in the project with their own audio-visual testimonies. In analysing these testimonies and interviews, I aim to address one core question of this Special Issue: "How is the past made present in history education with the use of particular forms of memory media?" I address this question by looking at how audio-visual testimony is used in *100 Voices*, and the implications for history education. I argue that *100 Voices* is not simply a project of history education that aims to raise awareness about the Armenian genocide among non-Armenian Canadian high school students. Particularly, because of the production team's use of the genre of audio-visual testimony, as it is used in activist contexts, *100 Voices* blurs the lines between history education and activism. In the face of Turkey's ongoing denial, and the pervasive impacts of genocide denial on the current generation of Armenian youth, *100 Voices* is aimed not only at history education, but also at recruiting public support to Armenians' collective struggle for Turkey's official recognition of the Armenian genocide.

This article is organised in four parts. The first part maps out the intersections of human rights activism and history education reform, with a focus on the use of video testimonies. The second part turns to *100 Voices* and analyses the testimonies in terms of their content and aesthetic features. What follows is my analysis of an interview I conducted with Zabel, a young Armenian adult who was a member of the production team and a participant of *100 Voices*. The final part discusses the implications of *100 Voices* in terms of the blurred lines between history education and human rights activism.

Video testimonies at the intersection of human rights activism and history education

As scholars of memory and media have pointed out, new technologies provide novel ways of collecting, arranging, displaying, replaying, disseminating, and circulating multiple media forms, such as images, texts, and moving images in a non-bounded space (Garde-Hansen, Hoskins & Reading, 2010; Hoskins, 2011; Nieger et al., 2011; Pinchevski, 2011). The proliferation of new media technologies has transformed, among other things, the ways in which the past is remembered and taught in the classrooms, as well as how it is mobilised in activism. For instance, the genre of video testimony, which emerged and was popularised in the context of Holocaust remembrance, has been turned into a transnational cultural form.

Emerging and popularising in the context of Holocaust remembrance, testimony has become the prevailing cultural form in human rights campaigns and struggles for historical justice (Kennedy, 2014; McLagan, 2006). With the advent and widespread use of digital media, various local groups and activists widely use audio-visual testimony to keep record of human rights abuses and injustices, especially in post-conflict and transitional justice processes (for example in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Canada, and Northern Ireland).

There have been considerable efforts to reform history education in these transitional contexts. As Cole has aptly defined it, transitional justice refers to "confronting past abuse as a part of major political transformation," a complex process that includes "trials and tribunals, truth commissions, the reform of the judiciary, army and police, and commemorative gestures and efforts toward reconciliation in fractured societies" (2007, p. 117). In various contexts, ranging from South Africa to Northern Ireland, scholars and practitioners have elaborately discussed the relationship between history education on the one hand, and peace building, democratic citizenship, and upholding human rights, on the other (Cole and Murphy, 2009). For instance, Duthie and Ramírez-Barat have proposed that a reformed history education can "engage society, especially the younger generations, in a dialogue on the importance of dealing with the past," hence contributing to "preventing future violence from recurring" (2018, p. 20).

To elaborate, a reformed history education in transitional contexts shifts the perspective from victors and winners to victims, survivors, and witnesses, hence revealing what Cole has called a "history from below" (2007, p. 132). Audio-visual testimony is a particularly useful tool to achieve this shift in perspective. As Kennedy has pointed out, audio-visual testimonies "bring the picture into sharp focus by looking at the people, at the faces of husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons; wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters, to feel the human tragedy deeply and to grieve for the loss" (N.D., p. 2). Watching these first-person accounts, students can develop critical skills in their interpretations of the past, question normative or official accounts of history, and make connections between the past and the present. Seeing the human side of history is also crucial for them to foster a sense of empathy for the suffering of others.[4]

Moreover, it is crucial to note that these efforts to reform history education in transitional contexts heavily rely on Holocaust and genocide education. For instance, Facing History and Ourselves (FHAO) has played a key role in expanding Holocaust and genocide education to other cases of collective violence (Cole and Murphy, 2009). Founded in Boston in 1976, FHAO initially focused on teaching Holocaust in the USA (Wells and Schaefer, 2010). Since then, FHAO has expanded its work considerably by producing numerous resources on the Armenian genocide, Rwandan genocide, Cambodian genocide, and South African apartheid, just to name a few examples. Opening its office in Toronto in 2008, FHAO has produced numerous materials for the use of Canadian teachers. It has also collaborated with other non-profit educational organizations like the Sara Corning Centre for Education, the producer of *100 Voices* project.

Significantly, the Toronto School District School Board used some of the materials and resources produced by FHAO when it developed *CHG38: Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity*, a grade eleven elective history course that is taught all across Ontario since 2008 (TDSB 2009). There are six units in the course: 1. Introduction to Human Rights and Behaviour; 2. the Armenian Genocide; 3. the Holocaust; 4. Judgment and Responsibility; 5. the Rwandan Genocide; and 6. Reflection and Social Action. Unit 6 is followed by a separate section, with ten sub-sections, entitled *Canadian Connections*. These are: Aboriginal Connections; The Internment of Ukrainians in Canada during the First World War; The Georgetown Boys; The Role of Eugenics in Canada; The Rise of Fascism in Canada and the Riot at Christie Pits; Voyage of the St. Louis; Japanese-Canadian Internment in the Second World War; Dr. James

Orbinski, MSF, and Rwanda; Civil Liberties and Hate Speech; and, The Activist Toolbox-Exploring Tools to Make Positive Changes.

CHG38 can reasonably be seen as the crystallisation of history education reform in Canada. It aims to instil in students a genuine respect for human rights and universal values by teaching them the history of atrocities and genocides. CHG38 course aims to make sure that "students will use critical thinking skills to look at the themes of judgment, memory, and legacy, and will evaluate the ways in which active citizens may empower themselves to stop future genocides" (2009, p. I-1). The underlying assumption here is that once educated about past genocides and crimes against humanity, young students will feel a sense of responsibility towards the future. They will be knowledgeable and responsible citizens who would uphold human rights and work towards a better world.

It is crucial to situate *100 Voices* project within this particular context of history education reform in Canada. Many of the project participants took CHG38 in the A.R.S. high school, while others were familiar with the course content as the latter was publicized in community settings by the Sara Corning Centre. As Raffi Sarkissian, the director and co-founder of the Sara Corning Centre for Genocide Education and the lead of *100 Voices* aptly observes, the course "encourages students to think about ethical questions involved in the history along with choices made by individuals. Students learn that choices and actions matter and that young people can, and should, be agents of change" (2011, p. 24). *100 Voices* project embraces and operates through the same rationale of history education reform, specifically, the idea that knowledge of the past will empower the current generation in making right choices and creating political change.

Aesthetics and content of *100 Voices: Survival, Memory, Justice*

In his recent article, Sarkissian (2017) provides a vivid account of the debates around the development and introduction of CHG38. In particular, he focuses on the objections from some Turkish groups in Canada because of CHG38's coverage of the Armenian genocide. Sarkissian thwarts these objections successfully, and posits that teaching the Armenian genocide to Canadian students is crucial for fostering a culture of mutual respect. Towards the end of his article, he also talks about *100 Voices*, particularly in regards to the transgenerational effects of the Armenian genocide on Canadian-Armenian youth. While Sarkissian (2017) discusses the significance of genocide education, with a special emphasis on the Armenian genocide, he does not provide detailed information about *100 Voices* project materials. In what follows, I present a more comprehensive analysis of *100 Voices* video clips in terms of both their aesthetic features and their content.

For this article, a thematic and visual analysis of thirty-two video clips was conducted. Although each of the 78 video-clips that were posted on YouTube were viewed, 32 testimonies to were selected to analyse in more detail for two reasons. First, because all of the testimonies were similar in terms of their aesthetic features and content, in-depth analysis of more testimonies was not necessary. Second, while selecting these testimonies, I aimed to create a sample that is representative of the whole group in terms of participants' different positions, such as students, teachers, and alumni.

The aesthetic similarities between these audio-visual testimonies are striking. All video clips open with the same melancholic duduk tune by Djivan Gasparian, a world-famous master of the duduk, an ancient woodwind instrument that is often described by Armenians as Armenia's national instrument. The camera is static and its angle does not allow the audience to make eye contact with the participant as s/he looks towards the interviewer, who is outside the frame of the screen, yet whose presence is implied because s/he is the one who asks the questions. All

the video clips use the same decor of twigs and pomegranates against a black background, and start with the same introductory images. Along with the decor, the black background and their black shirts also help focus attention on the participants' faces and voices. Black and white portraits of the participants are displayed in the form of a photo album on the website of the Sara Corning Centre, again diverting attention away from external factors and toward their faces.

These aesthetic decisions made by the production team situate each participant as the speaking subject of testimony of a painful collective and familial past that continues to influence her/him in the present moment. The video-editing work also contributes to this effect. The original interviews were cropped, cut, and edited in such a way as to leave out what the project team thought irrelevant to the project. What was deemed irrelevant depended on the questions that were asked to each participant. Interviews with members of the production team revealed that participants had been given the questions in advance and asked to do research on their family histories. These same questions were then asked during the interview. However, due to the editing strategy, the viewer cannot hear the questions. While transcribing the video clips, I was able to infer these questions from the answers given by the participants: From where did your family originate? How has the Armenian Genocide affected you and your family? How do you and your family remember the past? What difficulties do you face in remembering the past? How can we keep Armenians living outside Armenia intact and strong? What is your place in the continuing struggle for justice? What is justice for you? How do you persevere or stay strong? Why is it important that your voice be heard?

The video clips are all structured in the same way. Participants begin by telling where their ancestors are from, such as specific villages, cities, or regions in Western Armenia or today's Turkey, or other countries like Iran and Iraq. Then they continue with the stories of their ancestors' survival and later, their family's immigration to Canada. They also speak of how they try to unearth the unknowns of the family past, and, unable to fill in those gaps, they remain frustrated, fully aware of their temporal distance to the Armenian genocide. For instance, in regards to the question "Where did your family originate from?" many participants expressed a sense of frustration in the video clips. They explain that they feel frustrated because of "gaps in our history" (Noubar), "lack of information/resources" (Melanie), or "unanswered questions" (Taline). Another reason for this sense of frustration is Turkey's ongoing denial of the Armenian genocide. In their responses, many participants discuss the reverberating influences of the genocide by using the word trauma. They see themselves and their family members as being traumatised, especially because of Turkey's impassioned insistence that there was no genocide.

The questions "How can we keep Armenians living outside Armenia intact and strong?" and "How do you and your family remember the past?" situate project participants within the diasporic present of the local Armenian community in Toronto. They are asked to address two immediate concerns; the risk of losing Armenian identity in diaspora due to assimilation, and the risk of losing the memories of the genocide in the absence of the survivors. With respect to both issues, they underscore the significance of participating in local diaspora organisations, such as the Armenian Community Centre, the Armenian Youth Federation of Canada, and Hamazkayin, a cultural organisation. These are places that, in Taline's words, "we can refer to as our home, and will keep us Armenian and passionate about our Armenian culture." In order to keep the memories alive, they also participate in community commemorative events such as the annual gathering in Ottawa on the 24 April.

When asked "What is your place in the continuing struggle for justice? What is justice for you?" project participants insist on the pressing immediacy of genocide recognition and reparations, which they often refer to as the "Armenian cause." They identify themselves as the youth of the Armenian nation who are responsible for remembering the past and preserving

Armenian identity, which are often described as one and the same. Accordingly, they see each other as sharing a common past, as working towards the same cause, and as dreaming of the future in similar terms.

While these questions frame the testimonies in the same way, the role of the producers is obscured. As Allen (2009) points out, this is a limitation often encountered in the deployment of testimonies in human rights activism. Similarly, in *100 Voices* the angle of the camera and the framing of the project do not let the audience see who is asking the questions. The audience neither sees the interviewer, nor hears the questions that are being asked. The video clips are often abruptly cropped and compressed, leaving out any silences, hesitant moments, or irrelevant responses by the participants. Consequently, the aesthetic and visual uniformity of the video clips, as well as the centralised character of the production process, raises some questions as to what was left out. What would those edited out silences, pauses, and incomplete sentences tell us about project participants' perceptions of *100 Voices* and their own role in it, especially in reference to the overarching issues of memory and history?

A full answer to this question is outside the scope of the present article, as I did not gain access to unedited versions of the testimonies. Instead, in the next section I will address this question, albeit only partially, through a close analysis of my interview with Zabel[5], who was both a member of the production team and a participant in *100 Voices*.

"Putting a human face" to numbers and facts: History education and human rights activism

Zabel is an affable and confident young woman who defines herself as "a passionate Armenian." On 23 March 2016, we met for an interview and our conversation lasted close to two hours. Among other things, we talked about her role in *100 Voices*. Her account overlaps with my interviews with the rest of the production team. Yet, what makes Zabel's account distinct and particularly relevant for paper is her discussion of *100 Voices* at the intersection of history education and human rights activism:

> 1.5 million people died, well, they can turn around and say, World War One, World War Two, a million examples of death and destruction in this world, not genocides, you know? But I guess if you haven't been persecuted, if you're, if you don't have a history of persecution, you know? It's hard, someone wanted to end your race, wow, right? But some people can't, I mean, emotionally can't make that connection, so when you, when you let people, like, express their emotions and their family stories, you make this a human, a very human issue, you're putting a face to a one point five million people issue, you're putting a human face, that's huge. Umm, I think that, that's when you start seeing results, as far as I mean, this is supposed to be an educational tool in classrooms, right? And, and, that, history is very disconnected, I mean we read it on, in a book and if you don't see it, if you don't feel it, if you don't have a personal connection to it, you don't really internalize it, you don't really get what history is. History is more than facts, right? I mean, you can say, I mean, there's something about people putting a face to the issue and then, when you see, maybe in another high school, a public school for example, that a student a few blocks down the road, at the Armenian school actually lives their day, their day to day affected by the Armenian genocide, you say "oh, so it's not just a faraway issue in a faraway time in a faraway land, the issue is very much present," you know, and genocide transcends borders, you know, transcends time transcends space. So I think that's, that made this project especially effective and that was one of the main reasons that I, umm, joined.

Apparent in this excerpt is Zabel's position vis-à-vis the Armenian genocide. Although she did not experience or witness the genocide herself, she is still very much impacted by its reverberations. She does not experience it as a "far away" history, but as an ongoing experience of loss and pain. Moreover, she wants her experiences to be seen and recognized by her non-Armenian peers. As an educational project, *100 Voices* is a tool to achieve this goal. It can potentially render the daily struggles of Armenian youth visible for their non-Armenian peers.

In expressing this desire for visibility and recognition, Zabel embraces the broader efforts for history education reform, a point I have discussed in the preceding section. She sees *100 Voices* as an attempt to reform history education by shifting its focus from numbers and facts to personal stories. She acknowledges that testimony is both a valid source for, and a useful tool of, history education. This is what she hoped her testimony on YouTube would achieve. By moving her intimate and familial experience of suffering to the public sphere, she hoped to raise awareness among the wider Canadian public about the Armenian genocide.

Later in our conversation, Zabel elaborated on her perceptions of the audience *100 Voices* had targeted, highlighting once again the project's aim of changing students' perceptions of genocide in general and of the Armenian genocide in particular:

> […] so I think he (the project lead) wanted it to be an educational tool, and that was a guiding principal for us, how do we make this so that it's actually useful to teachers in the classroom, teaching about the Armenian genocide, how does it make history, history can be very two dimensional if your teacher doesn't really put their own spin on it. I've had great history teachers, poor history teachers, I think the great history teacher is the one that make history come off the page, great, World War One happened but how did that change the world order? How, what have we learned from World War One? I think that's a huge part of learning history, I think that's a distinct challenge, and learning history, and learning about crimes against humanity is especially tough, you know and they're not, we live in Canada they don't happen every day, we're not, I mean some of my history teachers at school said "I wish you were from war torn countries, so you would understand what this means," you know, the implications of genocide for example, of wars for example, so, so we really wanted it to be an educational tool and I think that, that's what we kinda structured it to be, but not facts. Education in the sense that we knew who our, that our target audience is students and teachers, but mostly students, right?

In talking about *100 Voices*, Zabel once again refers to history education. Similar to the descendants of other groups that fled from persecution or violence in their respective countries of origin and migrated to Canada, Zabel is faced with two uneasy questions: How can history education make people "understand" what it means to be exposed to violence when they do not have any personal connection to that particular history of violence? And, how can one render the particular history of a group interesting and relevant for Canadian students?

Her reference to crimes against humanity is telling in this respect. She believes that *100 Voices* renders the Armenian genocide meaningful for non-Armenian Canadians by presenting it as a crime against humanity that deserves utmost attention and urgency. Nonetheless, Zabel's resort to human rights discourse should not be understood simply as an instrumental gesture to advertise *100 Voices*. On the contrary, she explains her participation in *100 Voices* as part of her self-proclaimed identity as a human rights activist or human rights defender, as she variably puts it. This self-identification can be understood as her personal response to the legacies of the past:

> I think you'll find that different people deal with it differently but for me, I, I ,I'd rather, like I, I won't let myself sink into that pain because my story anymore may not be so detailed but other people's stories are detailed and that, that's just painful, I mean you don't have to be Armenian or Jewish to understand the pain, but for me, I mean, I, like, pain I try to take it, umm, so it doesn't happen again, you know, so never again, does it become again and again like they say, umm, and I try to be an activist, you know, a human rights activist not just genocide umm prevention and awareness, you know, just human rights in general, like, that's how I handled the pain, personally, so I try to be a good political citizen, for example, umm, I try to be aware of what's going on in the world in terms of like, not just the Armenian genocide denial issue, but all, you know, crimes against humanity, umm, that's how I, because I would hate, umm, the world not to have learned a lesson. From what happened, you know, and then the Holocaust, and then it happened in Rwanda and we didn't intervene, right, so this is very interesting to me, how it continually continue not to, you know once you call it the G-word you have to do something, so this is very interesting to me.

Here, Zabel draws connections between the Armenian genocide and other cases of collective violence such as the Holocaust and Rwandan genocide. Her self-identification as a human rights

activist is what enables her to move beyond her Armenian identity and make these broader connections. In her *100 Voices* testimony, Zabel also talks about how she sees herself both as an Armenian youth, and as a human rights activist. Once again, she articulates a particularistic imperative that is derived from her Armenian identity through the universalising discourse of human rights:

> If you identify as an Armenian, then you're obligated to be committed to the Armenian cause. You're obligated to support your community and your nation, you're obligated to be the best possible representative for your people and an avid defender of human rights.

The notion of crimes against humanity is a recurring theme in other *100 Voices* video-clips as well. Similar to Zabel, other participants resort to human rights discourse and present their group-specific case of claim making, which they often call the "Armenian cause," in a language that is more appealing to wider publics. For instance, Sarig, one of the teacher participants of the project, intimates that Armenian children are often more sensitive to others' suffering and other genocides. Many other participants, like Raffi and Rupen, also emphasise that their *cause* concerns not only the Armenian genocide, but also all forms of persecution and all other genocides.

In doing so, project participants derive a universal lesson from the past, while at the same time advocating for the recognition of the Armenian genocide. The use of audio-visual testimony plays a substantial role in constructing these meanings. As Torchin (2006, 2012) effectively discusses in her work on human rights and genocide activism, the medium is not a transparent delivery system for truth. On the contrary, the medium in use has a key role in the construction of meaning as it enables certain discursive practices and not others. In the case of audio-visual testimony, the medium is supposed to not only unveil and record human rights abuses, but at the same time, it reinforces the truth claim of the speaker's narrative. Presented in the form of testimony, stories of human rights abuses not only aim to elicit sympathy, but they can also make certain ethical claims on viewers and listeners, turning the audience into what McLagan (2006, p. 191) calls "witnessing publics" or what Assmann (2006, p. 265) calls "secondary witnesses." This refers to the process of hailing the audience, asking them to take responsibility and to act on the issue at stake. In other words, the use of audio-visual testimonies in activism is based upon the idea that, "if people know, they will act accordingly" (Torchin, 2012, p. 1). There is an expectation on the part of narrators or activists that testimonies will lead to recognition, which will, in turn, trigger transformative action on the part of the audience (Kennedy, 2014).

Likewise, the participants in *100 Voices* not only record the Armenian genocide as a case of crimes against humanity, but also make a political and moral claim on viewers. They present Armenians' struggle for genocide recognition not as a parochial or exclusionary identity claim, but rather as a universal moral imperative, that concerns the interests of the whole of humanity. Taken together with the Sara Corning Centre's overarching agenda of human rights and genocide education, *100 Voices* participants emerge here not only as Armenian youth who aim to teach a wider public the history of the Armenian genocide, but also as activists who try to solicit public support for historical justice in the case of the Armenian Genocide.

Conclusion

The Sara Corning Centre publicized *100 Voices* in multiple events and venues since the inception of the project in 2015. The Centre held an exhibit, "Thank You Canada," in Toronto City Hall on October 22, 2015, where some of the *100 Voices* video clips were screened. On November 7, 2015, the Centre held a panel on the *100 Voices* project during Holocaust Education Week in Toronto and screened two video clips to a predominantly Jewish audience.

On March 8, 2016, it co-organized a Toronto District School Board student conference at the Central Technical School, in cooperation with Alpha Education, Facing History and Ourselves (FHAO), Holodomor Research and Education Consortium, and the Toronto DSB Aboriginal Education Centre. The Centre participated in this conference with two workshops: *Canadian Upstanders During the Armenian Genocide* and *100 Voices: Survival, Memory and Justice*. On April 24, 2017, the Centre held a student conference titled *Armenian Genocide: A Just Resolution*. Over 180 Grade 11 and 12 students and teachers from all across Ontario participated in this conference (Sara Corning Centre, 2017).

What impacts did the *100 Voices* project have on these audiences? More precisely, how did watching *100 Voices* testimonies influence non-Armenian Canadian students, the project's targeted audience? As this article has shown, efforts for history education reform in transitional contexts are based on the presumption that once the current generations are better educated about the past, they will become responsible and active citizens of the future. How can we, as scholars, ascertain whether or not the hopes of theorists and practitioners of history education reform are realised in this specific case?

While it is difficult to measure what impact *100 Voices* has had on its targeted audience, this article has suggested that the project has played a crucial role in the formation of its participants' identities. *100 Voices* has cultivated a particular subjectivity among the project participants. The aesthetic and discursive choices made by the project team have enabled the project participants to identify themselves not only the young people of the Armenian nation, but also as activists for human rights. The production team's use of audio-visual testimony, often used in human rights activism, has played a crucial role in creating this effect. In the face of the declining number of genocide survivors who are still alive, *100 Voices* participants reconstruct the past through the medium of audio-visual testimony, a point that confirms Kansteiner's (2014) prediction about the changing character of memory making through new kinds of media. By talking publicly about their own family histories in these testimonies, project participants educate a wider public about the ongoing impacts of the genocide and its denial on the current generation. At the same time, by representing their struggle against genocide denial through the universal parameters of human rights activism, *100 Voices* participants emerge as human rights activists. Consequently, this article has argued that the *100 Voices* project blurs the lines between history education and activism. Still, assessing the long-term impacts of *100 Voices*, both on the project participants and non-Armenian Canadian youth as its targeted audience, is a task that awaits future research.

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Endnotes

[1] The Armenian genocide refers to the mass killings of the local Armenian population of Anatolia by the CUP (Committee for Union and Progress) government in Ottoman Turkey during World War One (1915-1918). An estimated 1.5 million Armenians perished in a series of premeditated and systematic mass deportations and executions. Since 1915, successive Turkish governments have denied that the Armenian genocide took place. However, countless reputable and prominent scholars have pointed out that the mass killing of Armenians in Ottoman Turkey constitutes genocide (Akcam, 2012; Gocek, 2014; Waal 2015).

[2] YouTube enables repeated viewing and replay, along with the functions of pausing, rewinding, and sharing the video clips on other social media platforms. YouTube also presents the video clips in a playlist format and it suggests related video clips on the Armenian genocide on the sidebar.

[3] Thus, the use of these video clips in my research without the participants' consent involves no potential breach of privacy and it is unlikely to adversely affect the welfare of individuals to whom the information relates.

[4] I want to thank one of the anonymous reviewers for drawing my attention to this point.

[5] Although her testimony is available on YouTube, I use the pseudonym Zabel here to ensure greater anonymity.

About the Author

Duygu Gul Kaya is a PhD candidate in Sociology at York University and holds an MA from Bogazici University, Istanbul. Her research interests include memory studies, theories of transnationalism and diaspora, and debates around citizenship and belonging. Duygu co-edited a Special Issue for *Sikh Formations: Religion, Culture, Theory* (Vol 9, Issue 3, 2013), in which she co-authored the essay article "Violence, memory, and the dynamics of transnational youth formations". Her book reviews have appeared in *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, *Memory Studies*, and on *H-Memory*. She has published articles in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (2015), *Citizenship Studies* (2018), and *Popular Communication* (2018).

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Guarding against the 'loss of national memory': The communist past as a controversial issue in Czech history education

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ABSTRACT: In the first decade of the 2000s, a wave of qualitatively new anti-communist politics of memory resulted in a specific "upsurge of memory" in Czech history education. Various remembrance agents started to influence history education with the goal of turning schools into an area where Czech society could continue the process of dealing with the troubled communist past. Using new methods and media, such as emotional TV documentaries and debates with eyewitnesses of communist repression, civic society initiatives got involved in negotiating the public consensus over the question of how to teach and remember the history of state socialism. The author examines the context and consequences of this discourse of dealing with the past for history education, especially in the way this remembrance activism utilises the totalitarian paradigm. It is evident that the mobilisation of remembrance to serve present day citizenship objectives has resulted in recent controversies, as teachers had to deal with the dilemma of how to expose the historical significance of various memory-carrier groups in their classrooms. Based on the experience from an educational project in which students investigated family memory, the author advocates that teachers should encourage students to analyse familial and pop culture narratives in order to enhance their own understanding of how these reconstruct the past.

KEYWORDS: dealing with the past, post-communist transformation, history education, historical thinking, remembrance education, totalitarian-historical narrative, Czech national memory, family and culture memory, inquiry-based learning.

Introduction

Arguably, amongst the post-socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Czech Republic implemented one of the most comprehensive policies of dealing with its troubled past. While the effects of various components of transitional justice have been the subject of intensive research interest (David, 2012; Nedelsky, 2009; Ústavněprávní Kontexty, 2003), historical and pedagogical researchers, however, have paid little attention to the process of constructing students' understanding of the communist past in school history and civic education classes. There are several interrelated factors for this lack of research. Research centres at universities had limited capacity, and there was an academic reluctance to address a topic that politicians and journalists repeatedly politicised in public political discourse (Beneš & Gracová, 2015). Importantly, for researchers it is challenging to examine the complexity of memory practices related to both the construction of students' individual historical consciousness and the

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transmission of images of the past that have been stabilised as part of the cultural memory of post-socialist Czech society (Assmann, 2010; Welzer, Moller & Tschuggnal, 2002).

How memory practices related to the issue of dealing with the past appear, and what their consequences might be, is a matter of great importance. In the first decade of the 2000s, new civic educational initiatives began to influence history education, with the goal of turning it into an area where Czech society could continue the process of dealing with its troubled communist past. The Czech Republic is an example of a post-socialist country undergoing transition where remembrance activism made a specific renaissance of the totalitarian paradigm possible, which by that time had already been overthrown in western academic debates (Mervart, 2017; Pauer, 2009).

In this paper, qualitative content and discourse analyses are combined in order to examine the implications of this process for history education. First, the work of a student who investigated family memory illustrates the multiple-perspective aspect of teaching contemporary history. Media and memory practices in both public and educational discourse are analysed in order to reveal which stories and testimonies of the communist past have prevailed in the most widely used educational materials, and which memory discourses inform the materials' production. The mobilisation of remembrance to serve present day citizenship objectives is questionable, as teachers deal with the dilemma of how to expose the historical significance of various memory-carrier groups in their classrooms. Rather than promoting unchallenged, ready-made stories, it is advocated that teachers should encourage students to analyse familial and popular culture narratives in order to enhance their own understanding of how these influential media reconstruct the past.

Inquiring into family history as an alternative to memory practice

As a starting point, an inquiry-based educational project that I coordinated at *Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů* (Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes) in 2011–2015 is used as an example. The students (aged 14–18) taking part in the project, *Velké a malé příběhy moderních dějin* (Stories of Modern History Great and Small), were encouraged to research primary sources of historical information: family memories.

Tereza was a 17-year-old secondary school student who investigated the multi-generational family experience of life in communist Czechoslovakia[1] in the Moravian village of Fryšták. In her 2014 final paper, she shared the story told by her grandmother Helena (born1949), which described the persecution of the family for opposing collectivization, which was forced upon them by the communist authorities in the 1950s. When asked to interpret life under communism, Helena condemned the violation of human rights during the era of dictatorship, explicitly mentioning the existence of the Iron Curtain[2] and the oppression of freedom of speech. However, some stories from Tereza's great-grandmother Marie (born 1925) were new and surprising. When asked the question "What did you like about life during communism?" the great-grandmother started to tell a story framed not only by repression, but also by a narrative of the everyday life in the modernised socialist village she lived in:

> What did you like about life during communism?
>
> How much we travelled, and that people no longer had to do drudge work and started to cooperate. At the beginning, working in the agriculture cooperative (JZD) was poorly paid, but as the team started working, people were paid well and they were doing fine. We had a good chairman – our tata [Marie's husband] led the people, and they earned enough, we constructed a new manufacturing plant, everything was mechanized.

As Marie went on recalling her memories of a regular socialist village, she mentioned that she was able to travel a lot thanks to the financial support of the agricultural cooperative farm. She

visited Italy once and Yugoslavia and Germany twice; she took a trip to Russia (for her 60th birthday), travelled to Cuba. This travel experience continued to challenge Tereza's preconception of the story of life under state socialism. In order to gain back her lost confidence, Tereza closed the interview with this question: "Did our family have a conflict with the communists?" "No, it did not," answered her great-grandma Marie.

I believe Tereza most likely expected her great-grandma to tell the dramatic story in which her great-grandfather would symbolize the archetype of the defiant peasant from a famous Prague Spring's movie *Všichni dobří rodáci* (All My Compatriots, Jasný, 1968). Her Grandma Helena narrated a family story using the frame of this famous Czech film:

> They would plough our roads, they would confiscate the best fields and substitute them with the one three kilometres away from Fryšták, and they kept increasing obligatory supply deliveries. Nevertheless, dad relentlessly resisted. I always say that he was like Radek Brzobohatý, who played a major role in the film Všichni dobří rodáci. With one exception – my dad was not put in prison.

Instead, Tereza heard the story of a thriving agricultural cooperative farm chaired by her great-grandfather that provided employees with recreational opportunities. Marie's conciliatory memories challenged the concept of Tereza's narrative of what life under communist rule looked like. In her final reflection, she recounted the cognitive unrest she had experienced regarding her family's attitude towards the pre-1989 regime:

> Because I have been told since my early childhood that communism is bad and I should be thankful for the freedom we have now, I was very surprised by her minimal critiques of communism. (…) I expected her to be more critical. When I recall the stories I used to hear when I was a kid, I expected my family to have been more resistant towards the regime; especially when I realize how the communists handled my family with respect to my great-grandpa's attitude toward joining the agricultural cooperative.

In this family, the school project helped to uncover different memories of the state-socialist era that coexist in the country, the first being critical and stressing the anti-communist stance, the latter being nostalgic. Thanks to the method of inquiry, Tereza learned that even in her family, there was more than one interpretation of the past. Since traditional methods of teaching history such as lecturing and reading textbooks still prevail in the Czech Republic (Borries & Magne, 1997; Gracová, 2006), talking to different family members about the past and recording their testimonies represent alternative media practices that, in Tereza's case, eventually opened up new ways of reflecting upon the communist past.

Students taking part in the family memory inquiry-based project had various experiences, depending mostly on how successful their teachers were in encouraging them to apply the oral history method. Despite the fact that Tereza's experience was rather unique in how it had captured two alternative stories, her situation can be analysed in terms of the processes of constructing historical narratives and a student's understanding of the communist past. With one sentence "I have been told since my early childhood that communism is bad," she unintentionally sums up the long and complicated process of constructing her individual historical consciousness.

What stories and testimonies had she been told? Evidently, she might have been predominantly witnessing critical comments from her Grandma Helena and her parents, who belong to the generation taking active part in the student protests during the Velvet Revolution in 1989.

However, in order to generalise her experience, other sources of her historical consciousness are focused on and the landscape of public discourse and history education in the Czech Republic is mapped. The question of what story Tereza and her peers learned about life in 1948-1989, has been perceived as a controversial and highly political issue within the Czech history education public debate.

Public memory discourse about the communist past

Every single political regime in Czech or more precisely Czechoslovak history since 1918 used and abused history for the political purpose of the formation of cultural memory. Communist politics of memory, being enforced since the late 1940s, for example, publicly celebrated only the memory of ideologically relevant social groups such as the World War II (WWII) partisans and communist resistance fighters, participants in strikes and other class struggles, while other memories were excluded from the public space (Kšiňan et al., 2012).

The essential difference in comparison to dictatorships can be found in the fact that the system of a pluralistic democracy, having been established in Czech Republic in the 1990s, created a space for free competition of group memories, which were based on the plurality of political and social identities in transforming Czech society. The fact remains that different social groups had different opportunities and strategies to pull strings to get their group experience into the reformed cultural memory. In her book, *Češi a jejich komunismus* (Czechs and Their Communism, 2009), the French historian Françoise Mayer identified different memory groups in the Czech post-communist society, such as, dissidents, political prisoners, members of the Communist Party, or the so called "silent majority" of others. Mayer (2009) gives evidence that since the 1990s, two particular collective commemorative frames, represented by victims and active opponents of the 1950s Stalinist persecution and the 1970s and 1980s dissidents have dominated the public space.

As for historiography, the former dissidents and historians persecuted in the era of Czechoslovak normalisation of the 1970s had a major influence on establishing the post 1989 interpretation of the 40 years of the communist reign, which was termed by Pullmann (2008, p. 704) as "totalitarian-historical narrative." This narrative also dominated the first issues of new history textbooks (Kopeček, 2008; Najbert, 2017). For the Czech situation, it is typical that, unlike foreign (especially Western) and even Polish historiography, the debate on totalitarianism was not practiced, and the concept itself was introduced in the local contexts rather intuitively than theoretically (Mervart, 2017). According to this simplified theory, the period of Czechoslovak communist rule from February 1948 to November 1989 was one of continuous totalitarian rule; its legitimacy was explained by stressing the fact that the communist power controlled society through propaganda, fear of repression, and social corruption. The era of the communist dictatorship was described as a painful and unnatural path of Czech national history, closed by the revolution in 1989 (Činátl & Mervart & Najbert, 2017; Kopeček, 2008; Sedlák, 2013).

At the turn of the millennium, Czech society witnessed qualitatively new politics of anti-communist memory of certain right wing and conservative politicians, who belonged dominantly to the *Občanská demokratická strana* (Civic Democrats Party, ODS). They interpreted the fact that the *Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy* (Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia, KSČM) was still successful in winning the majority of protest-votes in the national and regional elections as proof that the Czech society had not dealt enough with its communist past. In their view, as Kopeček (2008) stresses, the correct politics of liberal economic transformation should have been accompanied by uncompromising politics of anti-communist memory that strove to re-educate the nation about the totalitarian past.

This re-politicisation of memory in the Czech Republic resulted in the passing of the Act. N. 181/2007, establishing *Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů* (Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes) and *Archiv bezpečnostních složek* (Security Service Archive), which – along with the similar Institutes of National Memory in Poland and Slovakia – found its model in the 'Gauck-Behörde' (Federal Commissioner for the Records of the State Security Service of the former German Democratic Republic) in Germany. The problematic aspects of

establishing the centrally organised and state-sponsored institution based on the concept of national memory and connected to anti-communist politics of memory, have been contested in public, political and historiographic discussions (Cuhra et al., 2010; Dinuš, 2011; Kopeček, 2008; Slačálek, 2013).

The political pressure on the forms of how the Czech society would remember the communist past coincided with various civic society petitions and initiatives, which described the communist ideology as an "eternal evil" (Slačálek, 2013, p. 115) and topical threat to the democracy. The concerns of civic activists were related to the fact that communist representatives gained stable popularity in communal and regional elections, and were allowed to take a part in coalition governments with *Česká strana sociálně demokratická* (Czech Social Democrats Party, ČSSD) – mostly in regions which were structurally affected by the negative consequences of economic decline and unemployment. The petitioners even demanded that the Czech parliament impose a ban on the communist party because of its totalitarian heritage (Slačálek, 2013).

It is also noteworthy that all of this coincided with a relative public dominance of victims' testimonies, which have been receiving far more attention in public debate. The memories of the victims and resistance fighters gradually became an arbiter of historical credibility, which challenged the traditional academic production of knowledge. A group of journalists and historians, members of the civic organization *Post Bellum*, started to document the testimonies called *Hlasy hrdinů* (Voices of Heroes) in 2001. The testimonies were later made public in the Czech Republic's largest digital archive of witnesses called *Paměť národa* (Memory of Nation) and in several books. Since 2010 *Post Bellum* has also honoured several WWII veterans, holocaust survivors, political prisoners and dissidents with the *Cena Paměti národa* (Memory of Nation Award). In addition, Czech public service TV *Česká televize* broadcasted several documentary series promoting the anti-communist memory of persecution and freedom fight (Sommerová & Nikolaev, 2002). Finally yet importantly, a series of articles was published in reputable newspapers such as *Lidové noviny* or *MF DNES, which* became marketing partners of new educational initiatives (Najbert, 2017).

Following the theory of cultural trauma (Alexander, 2004), the political and civic initiatives can be conceptualised in the context of remembering and forgetting as the memory carrier groups, which tried to bridge the gap between the traumatic communist past and its current representations, which were claimed to be too conciliatory towards communist legacy. Public presentation of the activities and materials of the new memory initiatives was dominated by the 'coming to terms with the past' discourse which operated with the formula 'loss of national memory'. We may conclude, using the concept of Gil Eyal's (2004) traumatic will to remember, that the very normalcy of the future could be secured only through the confession of historical guilt and the assumption of responsibility for the crimes of communism. Memory was to protect the society from the return of the moral failures of the past. Pavel Žáček, the assistant director of in 1995 established *Úřad dokumentace a vyšetřování zločinů komunismu (*Office for the Documentation and Prosecution of Communist Crimes) and future founder and first director of The Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes, also used the metaphor of healing the social trauma through revealing *the truth* about the past in his analysis *Boje o minulost* (Fights over the past):

> If the interest in the current affairs prevails, experiences of the negative consequences are being left out without understanding the close ties of today to the communist past. The process of coming to terms with the past is a syndrome of post-communism and cannot be solved through rejecting the painful issues. The only solution to this is the repeated exposure of infected wounds to healing power of democracy and public opinion (Žáček, 2000, p. 129-131).

The relative hegemony of totalitarian-historical interpretation of the communist past, however, has particularly eroded in popular culture and public discourse. Public surveys documented the

decline in positive evaluation of post-communist transformation, caused by many factors. For example, corruption scandals of politicians and consequences of the economic crises in 2008 (Hodnocení demokracie, 2014). The phenomenon of *(N)Ostalgia*, no matter the motives of its origin were political in nature or rather fed on popular retro-fashion and counter-culture incentives, generated another frame of remembrance of the socialist past (Franc, 2007; Kopeček, 2008). From 2009 to 2012 the most popular series in the Czech Republic was the Czech public service television's series *Vyprávěj* (Tell the story*,* Arichtev, 2009–2013), which offered a family memory perspective of the everyday life of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. The popularity of the TV series, movies and other popular cultural images, which did not necessarily represent the perspective of communist repression, can be explained by their apolitical view of history. In Françoise Mayer's words, these representations returned the past to all the people "without a story", who were,

> neither communist cadres nor former prisoners or former dissidents, who were especially involved neither against them, nor for them, and who, after all, make up the vast – silent – majority of the population under communism (Mayer, 2009, p. 257–259; see also Reifová et al., 2012; Činátl, 2014).

The phenomenon of Ostalgia has aroused a counter-movement involving anti-communist activists and politicians, who opposed this version of the life under communist rule as an unacceptable form of relativisation (Drda, Mlejnek & Škoda, 2011; Kroupa, 2015; for broader context see Kopeček, 2008, pp. 82–87).

Media and memory practices in history and civic education

Since 1989, the comments on the quality of history teaching have been critical, creating the image of history education failing to achieve its goals. For example, the results of the first international comparison of the historical consciousness of European students in 1996 were seen as embarrassing by both teachers and public. The survey confirmed the low prevalence of modern methods of teaching such as activating students as well as the continuing emphasis on knowledge acquisition instead of creating an understanding of contemporary world issues (Klíma, 2001; see also Borries & Magne, 1997). The History Teachers' Association (*ASUD*) defended teachers and blamed the Ministry of Education for long-term undervaluing of history education instead. The reasons for low quality of education was explained by an unacceptably small number of hours allocated for history education, bad textbook policy, and lack of long-life education opportunities (Mandelová, 2010).

The memory shift of the first decade of the new millennium brought a new dimension to the public critique of history education. In 2004, the chair of *Konfederace politických vězňů* (Political Prisoners' Confederation), Naděžda Kavalírová made a statement in an influential teacher magazine. She expressed the concern that some teachers who were active before 1989, and thus felt morally guilty for taking part in the communist education, did not want to teach the so-called *truth* about the communist past (Šimek, 2004). The previously mentioned anti-communist civic initiatives also called for securing a more intensive history and civic education about communist crimes in Czech schools (Drda & Dudek, 2006; Na komunisty si zvykat nechceme!, 2008) and media repeatedly presented the results of surveys among students which suggested that teaching modern history ordinarily ends up with the end of the WWII (Najbert, 2017).

Since school education has became a matter of public interest, history teachers witnessed the growing activism of nongovernment initiatives entering schools in order to influence what Welzer et al. (2002, p. 10) call the "Lexicon" (of the communist past). Along with transformation of educational media, personal stories of witnesses, or documentary movies that

emotionally and visually represented the past began to supplement significantly the conservative methods of teaching as new remembrance institutions appeared.

In 2005, the new educational project *Příběhy bezpráví – Měsíc filmu na školách* (Stories of Injustice) entered schools with the goal of facilitating the discussion about the communist legacy. The human rights organization *Člověk v tísni* (People in Need), originally promoting global and citizenship education, decided to improve the way Czech/Czechoslovak history was being taught by using documentaries projections, accompanied by discussions with eye-witnesses of communist persecution. The director of the project Karel Strachota evaluated the first year as definitely successful:

> It was clear from the reactions of the young people that they often did not know what injustice had happened in our country. The testimonies of persecution of innocent people, cruel methods of interrogation, torture of prisoners, and inhuman conditions in camps were a major hit. Discussions also showed that students are thinking about guilt, punishment, and forgiveness, about values such as courage, resilience, belief and respect. And that they distance themselves from the way of dealing with the past in the form of "thick lines", in the form of forgetting and bottling up some events. This approach, on the other hand, always belonged to the Communists (2006, p. 4).

According to the statistics, the witnesses visited about 1900 schools and discussed with more than 250 000 students in the first decade of the program (Příběhy bezpráví, 2014). The program published several books for students and teachers, written by historians, publicists, and celebrities. Moreover, the day when Czechs commemorate the victims of the communist regime and the anniversary of the execution of Dr. Milada Horáková, an important victim of the political trials (27 June), the *Příběhy bezpráví* team organized an educational media campaign titled *Proti ztrátě paměti* (Against the Loss of Memory). Since 2013, among other things, students have taken part in ceremonial acts at the local memorials of the victims of the communist persecution. Walking the streets of Prague, students were dressed in the costumes of political prisoners, carrying banners claiming, "Communism still hurts". The director Karel Strachota considered a permanent anti-communist stance *"*to be equally important as anti-Nazism or anti-Racism*"* (Proti ztrátě paměti: Memorandum, 2013, para. 5). *Příběhy bezpráví* became the largest and most publicised educational project, dedicated to promoting the anti-communist and totalitarian memories of Czechoslovak past.

In 2008, another civic organization, *Občanské sdružení PANT,* gathered various activists and teachers whose aim was to convey the public, and especially the students' truthful information about communism and contemporary history (*I mlčení je lež*, 2009). Teachers presenting activities in public spaces explicitly connected the communist past and the present. Among other things, they criticised the Czech Social Democrats Party for cooperation with the communists in the communal politics.

The NGO *PANT* also organised a teachers' conference *I mlčení je lež aneb proč je potřebné mluvit a učit o komunistických zločinech* (Even silence is a lie: Why it is necessary to teach about communist crimes). It operates the web portal *Modernidejiny.cz* (Modern History), most widely used by history teachers since 2009. The portal offers educational materials in the form of power-point presentations, documentary series, and digitalised editions of primary sources.

Representatives of the new organisations celebrated the 2008 and 2009 anniversary of the Prague Spring movement and the Velvet Revolution with public events and debates held at schools (Najbert, 2017; O'Dwyer, 2014). The projects drew a lot of media attention. Marketing success in presenting their educational activities resulted in an attempt of the communist party *KSČM* to criticise the anti-communist political manipulation in current education. Petr Šimíček, one of the leading figures of *PANT*, accused *KSČM* of relativizing the crimes of communist past, and misusing the debate about the quality of education in order to mobilise their voters (Šimíček, 2009). Provoked by the critique of his project *Příběhy bezpráví*, the director Karel Strachota repeatedly refused to invite former communists to schools as partners for discussion.

He compared this option to the situation when holocaust deniers would teach about Nazism (Drda & Saparová*,* 2012).

Moreover, Karel Strachota's co-worker Adam Drda along with another publicist Stanislav Škoda, and political scientist Josef Mlejnek, set off the campaign in 2011 not only against communist accounts, but also against all accounts of the past they described as "morally relativistic" (Drda & Mlejnek & Škoda, 2011, p. 6). In their book, *Mýty o socialistických časech* (Myths about Socialist Times) any positive evaluation of the communist past was described as *"*pure demagogy,*"* and a result of "lost ability to think" (p. 6). Some of the critical reviews accused the authors of overstating and making up the reality of mythology. Instead of critical analyses of the myths, the book offered subjective myth busting and thus uncovered the weakness of the argument, which rather than being based on authentic historical research was connected to the moral credit of chosen personal experiences (Najbert, 2017).

Karel Strachota, Adam Drda and Mikuláš Kroupa stayed involved in the public debate, kept on publishing and declaring their anti-communist stances (Drda & Saparová, 2012; Kroupa, 2015; Strachota, 2013). Despite the critiques, their interpretation of the communist past remained firmly seated in the construction of binary contradictions of the communist past, such as totality and democracy, regime and powerless society, truth and lies, good and evil, and heroism and cowardice. The remembrance activism from *Příběhy bezpráví* or *Post Bellum* organisations, as well as from some historians at the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes, also became subject to criticism from historians who refused their supposedly low methodological standards and political bias in approaching the past (Randák, 2014; Vaněk, 2013).

The interest in socialistic everyday life became evident in contemporary historical and memory studies research (Činátl, 2014; Havlůjová & Najbert, 2014; Pažout, 2015; Vaněk, 2009), and it even appeared as a preferred thematic perspective for Czech teachers (Stav výuky soudobých dějin, 2012; Labischová, 2013). However, if we look for representations of the socialist modernisation of the countryside, similar to the one Tereza investigated in her family, we would find out that history education has been dominated by memories of persecuted peasants and other social groups, who describe socialisation of Czechoslovakia as a cruel and illegitimate social experiment.

The *Modernidejiny.cz* web portal offers dozens of materials for which the central theme is the experiences of persecuted peasants and the communist propaganda, for example, the documentary *Abeceda komunistických zločinů – Kulak* (Alphabet of the communist crimes). Teachers can also download a collection of testimonies of *Post Bellum* witnesses, in which the forced collectivization is evaluated as an action that in an "irreversible and barbaric way disrupted the existing social and economic ties to the country and severely damaged agriculture as a sector of the national economy" (Kolektivizace zemědělství ve svědectví pamětníků, 2010, para. 1). The *Příběhy bezpráví* project offers a school projection of the Olga Sommerová 2002 documentary *Ztracená duše národa: Ztráta tradice* (Lost Soul of a Nation: The Loss of Tradition). According to the director's note, the plot reveals "the criminality of the communist regime by bringing the testimony of four of persecuted peasant families" and reaches the conclusion that "a nation which destroys peasant families loses its own tradition." (Ztracená duše národa: Ztráta tradice, para. 1).

Despite the rare exceptions,[3] it can be concluded that the stories of socialist transformation of the countryside available in given educational materials fit into the concept of the totalitarian-historical narrative. It is almost impossible to find a perspective that would, in a dignified manner, advocate for the socialisation of the countryside, and illustrate the motivation of those who had spontaneously founded an agricultural cooperative or who lived their ordinary life in the real socialism era of the 1970s and 1980s. The disproportion among the offered testimonies

is evident whenever Czech teachers decide to pursue conflicting issues of memory associated with the communist past.

Teaching about the communist past as a controversial issue

Since the turn of the millennium, various remembrance agents, including journalists, historians, and teachers, have influenced history education with the goal of turning it into an area where Czech society can continue the process of dealing with its troubled communist past. They believed that the previous ideology and the moral complicity were still present in Czech society in the form of supressed collective trauma or uncritical evaluations of the legacy of the communist past. Thus, they saw family memories of everyday life and popular culture representations as dubious sources for history education. The arbiters of historical credibility instead became victims of Stalinist repression, anti-communist resistance fighters, or dissidents. These initiatives demanded that students should not only condemn the regime based on the synergy of repression and social corruption, but also be able to find parallels with this regime at present, whether in the form of corruption, citizens' political passivity, or violations of human rights.

Consequentially, stories of politically motivated communist crimes and acts of resistance to the mechanism of life in the dictatorship, have an essential place in history and civic education in a democratic society. They help to fulfil the aims of the Czech curriculum, which focuses teachers on creating positive civic attitudes, developing a sense of belonging to European civilization and culture, and promoting the "adoption of the values on which contemporary Europe is being built" (Rámcový program pro základní vzdělávání, 2013, p. 43). From the perspective of ethics education, it is desirable to remember the stories of people who can act as positive role models for younger generations (Barton & Levstik, 2009). The efforts to strengthen civic society and encourage students towards social action including, for example, higher voter turnout and refusing political populism, should be appreciated.

However, this concept of remembrance education is open to being questioned. With respect to the critical historical thinking approach, history teachers should perceive civic educational initiatives cautiously. It is legitimate to challenge the presumption that exposure to the emotional testimonies of freedom fighters and communist victims automatically stimulates the historical and contextual thinking that is central to history education.

Educational literature on the development of historical thinking among students characterise the presentist approach as an obstacle to thinking historically (Lévesque, 2008; Wineburg, 2001). Emotional identification with stories of injustice from the past, and critical historical thinking, are two sides that must be balanced. The remembrance agents do not adequately teach students to reflect on the actual process of creating historical narratives, which is the keystone of the constructivist critical thinking approach to history education. They approach eyewitnesses as arbiters of historical credibility (the psychological or moral "truth" about the past) and claim their interpretation should naturally dominate the "memory of the nation". Remembrance activism of this kind does not respect the established principles of diverse and multiple-perspective interpretations of the past, which after all, are also expressed in Czech curricula documents and pedagogical literature.[4] This selective attitude toward the past implies that there is only one correct historical memory of the nation. Those who see themselves as guardians of national memory ascribe historical significance only to specific memory carrier groups, excluding others from the lexicon of school history at the same time. If teachers turn themselves into remembrance activists and do not bring diverse stories to the surface, students may assume that there is a greater degree of consensus than actually exists in Czech society

(Barton & McCully, 2007). As a result, students might feel disappointed, like Tereza did, when encountering in their inquiry an interpretation of the past other than one that is anti-communist.

Public disputes over the question of whether it is legitimate to regard the communist past positively in any way reflect the highly emotional Czech historiographical discussions that appeared in relation to the attempt to revise the totalitarian paradigm. In his book *Konec experiment* (The End of the Experiment), Michal Pullmann (2014), the most influential representative of this revision, inspired by works of Alexei Yurchak (2006), allowed historical characters to abandon the role of passive subjects of totalitarian control. Instead, he described how the consensus between the regime and society were discursively formed in everyday situations (see also Bren, 2010; Kolář & Pullmann; 2016, Mervart, 2017).

If this approach is applied to history education, students must be aware of their own family backgrounds while studying the past. When Tereza reflected on her experience by stating that she was very surprised that life under communist rule had not only been about repression, we may assume that she has had only limited training in the techniques that would have allowed her to deal with a plurality of memories, and with conflicting memories in her life outside of the classroom. The project that she took part in enabled her to analyse family memories, enhanced her epistemic stance (VanSledright, 2011) and uncovered the potential of the alternative educational sources for history education.

Family memories of everyday life, movies or television series, then, offer a broader context for the past. They expose the nuances between particular periods of Czech state socialism (such as, the Stalinist 1950s, or the reformist movement of the 1960s) and reveal unexpected changes, continuities, actions, and reactions, and thus lead to the erosion of the concept of totalitarianism. The limits of the totalitarian-historical frame of interpretation are obvious when we try to examine the ambiguous life story of Tereza's great-grandfather, who turned from a persecuted farmer into the chairman of an agricultural cooperative. How could Tereza understand the life values and motivations of her great-grandparents while the totalitarian-historical narrative only offers an interpretative frame of dichotomous categories, one in which her great-grandfather could have acted only because he was either scared of repression, brainwashed by propaganda, or socially corrupt?

Growing evidence suggests that historical thinking is best cultivated when students are actively engaged in inquiry-based learning (Barton & Levstik, 2001; Levesque, 2008; Lesh, 2011; Morton & Seixas, 2013; Stearns, Seixas & Wineburg, 2000; VanSledright, 2011). Instead of simply accepting authoritative or emotional interpretations of the past, students who actively participate in studying history are more likely to ask meaningful questions about the significance of the past that they are studying. Perhaps more importantly, they engage in the process of investigating, reading, questioning, and developing evidence-based interpretations that are open to criticism and revision.

Unfortunately, the potential of family memories as an alternative source for inquiry has remained largely untapped. In a representative survey in 2012, three-quarters of the nearly 1600 teachers considered family memory to be a factor that significantly affects the formation of the historical consciousness of students (Stav výuky soudobých dějin, 2012). Almost half of the six hundred teachers and students of history responded similarly in another history education survey (Labischová, 2013). Nevertheless, only a tiny percentage of the respondents of the second survey ranked family memories among the preferred sources of information about the past, and very few of the teachers surveyed systematically used family testimonies in their history classes.

There are undoubtedly more reasons why family memory has only been reflected sporadically in teaching practice. However, when asking teachers, one explanation usually prevails: it is an alarmingly controversial terrain, as the discussions among forty teachers who

participated at the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes summer school, *Dějepis a rodinná paměť* (History and Family Memory) in 2012[5]. Also to take into account is that generally, history textbooks in the Czech Republic tend to be historicist in approach, rather than oriented towards the present or concerned with the current culture of remembrance (Kuklík & Kuklík, 2002; Kvaček, 2002).

Based on a three-year study into the techniques teachers use while approaching family memory with students like Tereza, it can be concluded that if teachers use well-developed instructive methods, and invite family memories to the classroom, this is effective in encouraging students to appreciate the past, question what they read and see in the media, and develop independent critical thinking skills (Havlůjová & Najbert, 2014). Nevertheless, in order to do so they need to be trained to critically approach current memory practices related to the very concept of dealing with the past. Unfortunately, the Czech educational system lacks a system of lifelong education for teachers, and promoting methodological innovations always takes a long time (Tematická zpráva, 2016). It is a matter of teachers' self-interest and discipline as to whether they attend any training courses.

Conclusion

Whether the phenomenon of remembering the communist past will continue to generate controversy in public discussion and to create an essential context for teaching history has been the focus here. Society is always evolving, social and cultural frameworks are changing, and teachers should prepare students for a future life that they cannot foresee. History teaching in the Czech Republic faces a fundamental challenge of how to transform history education from a discipline devoted to studying the past into a real instrument of reflection, and thus cultivation, of both the historical consciousness of the individual student and of the culture of remembrance in society. In this sense, it will be crucial if the curriculum reform, which is estimated to be finished by 2022, clearly defines the goals of history education as building historical literacy and promoting the active participation of students in society's historical culture, which is slightly different from the aims of remembrance education oriented towards the present-day (Nieuwenhuyse & Wills, 2012).

On this account, family memories and the public memorial culture version of addressing the past should be explicitly included in the curriculum, and students should be able to reflect on the respective status and benefits of, but also the limits of, these specific forms of the construction of meaning. School history must serve students and help them to reflect on the memory practices of their families and school communities, and to understand the relationships between historical narratives and the current needs and future aspirations of those who construct these narratives (Günther-Arndt, 2016; Körber 2015; Schönemann 2011; Seixas, 2000). School history cannot resolve the conflicting remembrance of the communist past of the Czech society. However, it can help to cultivate the debate about the past. The intended outcome of teaching controversial issues is not necessarily establishing a consensus, but rather moving beyond conflict by democratic, non-violent means (Barton & Levstik, 2009; McCully, 2012).

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Endnotes

[1] Please note that former Czechoslovakia split into two independent states – Czech Republic and Slovak Republic – in 1993.

[2] The term *Iron Curtain* is being used as a metaphor for strict separation of the Soviet Union and its satellite states from open contact with the West in Europe since 1945 until the end of the Cold war. This meaning originally derives from Winston Churchill's Fulton speech in 1946. In post-socialistic Czech Republic, the term has become popular within those who want to put a stress on the fact that socialist dictatorship restricted individual rights and freedoms (e.g. freedom of movement).

[3] An Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes' educational DVD *Obrazy (z) kolektivizace* (Images of Collectivization, 2011), is unique as it works with the concept of multiperspectivity in the sense of using different types of historical evidences and perspectives, for example, film representations from different decades, memories including both peasants and supporters of the collectivization.

[4] The *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* (Framework Educational Program for Elementary education), inspired by German pedagogy, emphasises that history is not just a knowledge-based subject, but also a subject promoting competencies. According to this, students should be encouraged to *"recognize the symptoms and causes of subjective selection of information* and understand that history is not about enclosed facts and definite conclusions, but *instead "it is a process of asking questions about our own current character and our possible future"* (p. 44). The mission of the educational field of history is to *"cultivate the historical consciousness of the individual and to maintain the continuity of historical memory, primarily in passing on historical experience"* (p. 43). The notion of multiperspective history teaching was introduced through comprehensive guides from British historian Robert Stradling (2001a, 2001b; translated into Czech in 2003 and 2005), and reflected by domestic authors (such as, Beneš & Gracová, 2015; Činátl & Pinkas et al., 2014; Gracová & Havlůjová & Najbert, 2014; Labischová, 2010; and others).

[5] The participants pointed out that working with family memories almost inevitably carries a conflict between the official interpretation of the past and the subjective experiences of witnesses. Some welcomed this fact, though, as it is then easier to counter the attempts to politicise and promote ideologies in history. Nevertheless, the majority of teachers warned that mastering the conflict between lecture and memories is not easy. There is always a danger that the clash of different perspectives in evaluating the past veer to an entirely personal level, that the *"confrontation of values causes negative emotions"* (Havlůjová & Najbert, 2014, p. 9-12).

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A computer simulation in the context of history teaching in Czech schools: Using the 'Czechoslovakia 38-89' educational simulation

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ABSTRACT: Educational simulations represent a substantial innovation in the formal learning process, mainly due to their dynamic structure, interactivity, and complexity. Nevertheless, these features could arguably simultaneously problematise the adaption of digital simulations to "traditional" forms of teaching. Educational simulations not only provide a concrete methodical approach but also create new educational environments ("problem spaces"), generating additional sets of goals in other areas of learning (for example, in personal and social education), thus moving beyond the limits of classical history teaching. In a case study of the *Czechoslovakia 38-89* educational simulation, we demonstrate how an educational simulation can extend educational goals from the reproduction of facts towards a deeper understanding of the multifaceted historical context. Stemming from a field survey that took place at 38 schools with more than 3500 students, this paper analyses the benefits and challenges related to the use of the above-mentioned digital simulation in the Czech formal schooling system and the acceptance of the simulation by Czech teachers and students.

The study also describes how an educational simulation benefits students in terms of reflecting on witness accounts, illustrates the benefits of using constructed memory for education, and reflects the problem of the authenticity of witness accounts in historical education.

KEYWORDS: educational simulation, teaching practice, simulation Czechoslovakia 38-89, acceptance

Introduction

While the current curriculum for elementary and high schools[1] which relies on the constructivist approach and last updated in 2017, emphasises the autonomy of schools and educators, history teaching in the Czech Republic often remains chronologically oriented and mostly focused on the reproduction of large quantities of dates. Methodological innovation in the form of an educational simulation (Šisler, Selmbacherová, Pinkas, & Brom, C, 2014) may have the potential to change this long-time trend. Educational simulation could help to reflect on the forms, methods, and goals of teaching in a broader context. This paper explores whether, and to what extent, an educational simulation can contribute to new approaches in history teaching.

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There is specific focus on the potential that simulations have in working with witnesses. Witness testimonies represent valuable historical sources, but just as is the case with other types of sources, historical criticism is necessary. As Bage (2012) notes, witness accounts, as they view the past in stories, are a common way of "consuming" history. The testimony of a witness tends not to be fully reflected on, so the authority of the witness can be an obstacle to a critical, dispassionate view and an analytical approach.

As creators of a pedagogical game and model lessons for schools, the potential that educational simulations have, using the example of "Czechoslovakia 38-89"[2] (later just CS) (see Šisler, V., Brom, C., Cuhra, J., Činátl, K., & Gemrot, J. 2012)

Pedagogic and didactic points of departure

In teaching for students' independence and to prioritise the development of students' competencies and higher cognitive knowledge over mastering encyclopaedically arranged facts, following a constructivist approach in pedagogic theory and practice can help History and sociology teachers to achieve stated learning outcomes. Such education is student-oriented, emphasising the formation, rather than mere adaptation of meanings and prioritising the democratic model of education over the authoritarian one (Henderson, 1996). Although this approach is in line with current teaching and learning theories, it is not always present in Czech teaching practice (see Strakova, 2010). Czech schools mostly rely on a traditional method of history teaching, based on the reproduction of a grand national narrative without problematising, or critically reflection (see Gracova & Labishova, 2004). For the most part, the need to reflect on traditional narratives has not yet come into practice in Czech classrooms, even though Czech history has many conflicting and traumatising situations that could be the subject of such reflections (Ahonen, 2014). With the development of the simulation *Czechoslovakia 38-89*, it is our aspiration to disrupt this traditional narrative and to show educators an alternative.[3] At the same time, we try not to differ too much from the dominant practice, and we offer solutions that will not be perceived as too radical or exclusive. We have presented innovations as 'evolutions within the system' rather than as a 'revolution' or a radical change, in order for them to be more acceptable for the more conservative teachers (see, for example, Straková 2010).

Many theoreticians (for example, Chapman, 2016; Šisler, et al., 2014) engaged in the use of digital applications in education see educational simulations as a type of constructivist learning environment. They emphasise that educational simulations support students in assuming responsibility for their learning, subject students to different experiences that may be quite varied, make educational activities more effortless and bring them closer to real life, and support social cooperation. All this is considered to be consistent with constructivist pedagogy generally, as well as with the principles of historical thinking (Reich, 2007, Wineburg, 2010). Historical simulations can also combine immersion in the historical context, more involvement in education, in addition to the cognitive uncertainty that the presentation of different perspectives evokes, with immediate feedback and a focus on problem-solving (Whitton, 2010). Furthermore, a good digital educational application not only provides a concrete pedagogical approach, but also creates a new educational environment, generating additional sets of goals in other areas of learning (for example,. in personal and social education) and going beyond the limits of classical history teaching (Watson, Mong, & Harris,2011).

Digital simulations typically have a broad approach to educational goals. They do not concentrate only on actual historical events, as would be typical in Czech classrooms, but go far beyond the general image of history as a sort of catalogue of events. This means that they are not only geared towards understanding, but also placing events in a wide framework of

memory culture or seeing historical events from multiple perspectives. In addition, there are other goals focusing on a student's self-reflection and ability to reflect on his or her position in the learning process; on his or her personality in the interaction with this application; on the learning process; and on the achievement of a metacognitive dimension of knowledge. The past in a digital simulation is no longer a verifiable grand narrative, a set of dates, stories and interpretations that are easy to test; instead it becomes a dynamic quantity consequentially built in a social context. As McCall (2011) argues, digital simulations that thematise the past illustrate reality in an accessible and attractive way. Besides this, digital simulations can also support a perception of the past as a social and cultural construct (Prensky, 2010).

A simulation is based on the principle of mediation. In our simulation, we chose to schematise historical reality in the form of model eyewitness narratives, which is the first level of representation. These testimonies are not authentic, but instead are formed out of a number of real life stories. Longer testimonies are introduced using comic strips, which are the second level of representation. Remembering thus comes in two alternative forms; it is either a "direct speech" of the witness, or a remembrance that takes the form of a comic strip, a form of a flashback. This is why the simulation includes elements that point out the "virtual nature" of the eyewitness environment. Some of the artefacts in the environment of an eyewitness are visibly 'artificial' animated, or referring to the comic environment in which a part of an eyewitness narrative takes place, thus creating a link between both spaces (the social space of an eyewitness in the *present* and the space of his memories in *the past*).

The pedagogical customisation of the witnesses' stories is driven by the effort to overcome student hesitation towards a critical assessment of the testimony of the witnesses. Students often tend to perceive everything told by the witness as being true to fact, simply because "he/she was there" or "he/she experienced it" (Foster & Yeager, 1999; Barton & Levstik, 2004; Havlujova & Najbert, 2014.). One of the aims of the *Czechoslovakia 38-89* simulation is to increase student ability to think critically and analytically about the witnesses' narratives. The principle of active learning is realised by the students' involvement in the simulation. The gaming simulation puts students in situations where they actively participate in negotiating the possible meaning of the past. This is especially the case as history is presented as an open problem to solve, rather than as a question that requires an answer. This creative involvement, where students express their viewpoints on the conduct of historical characters in historical situations, helps to develop skills that go beyond the framework of historical knowledge. Students learn to critically assess information and develop their abilities to analyse and interpret sources. This aspect of working with the simulation is based on the principles of historical thinking and inquiry-based learning (Wineburg, 2001; Levesque, 2008).

Understanding the behaviour of people in difficult historical situations is an important goal. This is a general problem of history teaching – students must overcome a double distance from the past – they must understand the completely different socio-cultural system in which the events take place, as well as (and perhaps especially) the behaviour of the adults involved. Pedagogical theory emphasises the need to know the context and to understand the different points of view; and in particular it emphasises continuity, a long-time stay in the system that facilitates this understanding. In view of this requirement, simulations seem to be an ideal tool (Husband & Pendry, 2002). Our simulation is constructed in a way that makes it possible to 'stay' in the story for a long time and to have control over its dynamics (for example, to stop the story if something is not clear), which aids in understanding the story. Students are inside the story, while also keeping their distance, due to the 'alienation elements' in the social space of an eyewitness. These alienation elements can be, for example, artefacts put into the style of the accompanying comic (for example, the yellow star that Jews were required to wear during the war is a paper cut-out rather than the real object), thus emphasising the fictional nature of these stories.

Learning history through eyewitness narratives not only supports cognitive capabilities (reflection on representations), but also affective capabilities. The simulation works as a powerful simulator of social competencies and socially desirable behaviour. The simulation can also be used as an example of the need to adjust communication to other people dependant on the context of communication. The need to be polite to eyewitnesses – elderly people – is demonstrated in a simple and spontaneous manner. The motivation stems from the gaming principle (insensitive behaviour ends the conversation), and the selection of desired communication strategies leads to a reward – the acquisition of requested information. However, the positive aspects of the affective goals are not necessarily exhausted by mere prosocial competencies but can also lead to the development of moral reflections, which is one of the most difficult goals for school education to attain. Ethical education in the Czech Republic is mostly oriented toward prosocial behaviour and lacks deeper, analytically oriented activities that help students to appreciate and reflect on values (see Lorenzová, 2011).

The theory of evaluating historical events is also developed in detail in the pedagogy of history. This evaluation has two phases. First, it is necessary to understand the historical context and to evaluate the conduct of people, using the moral vocabulary and value system of that period. Not until this phase is closed is it possible (and in fact necessary) to step out of the historical context towards our present and to evaluate the historical event, using the "present moral dictionary" (Peterson, 2011, p. 164). This is what legitimises working with the past at school (Barton & Levstik, 2004). Evaluating a historical event means charting our own standpoints; as every evaluation contributes to our own self-understanding. In the 1980s, Robert I. Smith designed a categorisation that was to remove the unclear nature of values and evaluations at school. He made a distinction among behavioural values (esteem, respect, order), procedural values (critical thinking, evidence assessment, argumentation skills) and finally, substantive values, which he defines as values in a narrow sense (Smith, 1986). He defines them as standpoints that create beliefs and value judgments. Smith asserted that school education should develop the first two value categories, while substantive values are beyond the reach of the public power represented by a school (in relation to a student). The simulation helps to develop both behavioural values (respecting communication with old people, having empathy, and understanding their opinions and perspective) and procedural values (conversation tactics, awareness of the goal, and the need to achieve it while respecting the eyewitness) (see McCall, 2011; Šisler, et al., 2014)

The characteristics of the *Czechoslovakia 38-39*" simulation

Czechoslovakia 38-89 falls under the category of "serious games"[4] (Woulters, van Nimwegen, van Oostendorp, & van der Spek, 2013, p.73), which belong in formal, non-formal, and informal education. Thus, it is primarily created as an educational, non-commercial game with a focus on content. Aspects such as playability and attractiveness played a relatively smaller role in its development than in that of commercial games. It is a series of educational simulations combining the elements of interactive comics and computer games. The simulation shows students key moments (symbolic centres, places of remembrance) of Czech and Czechoslovak modern history, allows them to 'experience' historical events from the point of view of different characters, and helps students to understand the political, social and cultural contexts. It has two variants – a single player version that emphasises gaming elements and is available through an e-shop, and a school version, designed for formal schooling. In our text, we will focus only on the latter version.

The simulation consists of three modules with the same gaming principles and overarching pedagogical goals. The elemental gaming concept is based on following the footprints of the past. The player is the one who puts together a story from the past, based on pieces of

information obtained mainly through an eyewitness narrative. In the WWII module, the player searches for the secrets of his grandfather. The story in the second module, which is about post-war Czechoslovakia, is about an old school building that witnessed many events. The future of this building with an imprinted history is being decided in this module (it is supposed to be demolished or reconstructed into a museum). The third module, which focuses on the 1950s and 1960s, is about a major public figure accused of denunciation.

The gaming principle of the first module (CS3889: Assassination) is based on the secret of the player's grandfather. The player searches in the past, taking on the gaming identity of a grandson who wants to fill in the blanks of his family's history. His grandfather was imprisoned during the war but it is unclear why. His conversation with his grandmother, and his reading of an encrypted journal that his grandfather carried during the war initiate his search. The player must obtain additional information from his neighbour, Mr. Málek, who was an activist journalist during the war, Mr. Krejcar, who participated in the resistance, Mrs. Marie Červeňáková, a Czech Romany woman imprisoned during the war, and Mr. Jakub Hein, a Czech who had Jewish and German ancestors.

Gaming principles and controls

The simulation is built on the principle of an adventure and resembles, for example, the educational game *Mission US* about US history. Unlike this game, the player does not directly participate in historical events; rather, they are communicated via an eyewitness narrative. The main gaming environment is a dialog with an eyewitness that the player can control through a selection of replications, answers and questions, thus considerably influencing the dialogue. The player can also use the back key to return to the previous game round, the skip key to move to the next game round or the stop key to stop the dialogue. They can also go to the encyclopaedia that we created, which contains basic facts concerning the story. They can also turn on subtitles if they cannot quite understand what an eyewitness is saying.

Comics, another simulation environment, capture memories that are too abstract or expansive to be expressed directly in a dialogue with an actor-eyewitness. The soundtrack in the comics is limited to sounds and noises; spoken words are shown in *speech bubbles* only. The historical reality is represented more dramatically, with a greater focus on emotional effects than in the direct dialogues with eyewitnesses. The last gaming environment of the simulation includes short activities in the form of a game related to the content of an eyewitness narrative. It is primarily about reinforcing the gaming elements of the simulation. For instance, the player must come up with such an answer to the Gestapo so that his wife would have time to hide illegal fliers. In another mini-game, the player taking on the role of the wife of one of the characters must find a suitable place to hide the fliers. Mini-games serve to focus the attention of players watching a lengthy eyewitness narrative. The student-players only have to pay attention to dialogue for limited periods of time before the mini-games renew their attention.

The design of the simulation

The structure of the simulation allows it to be used directly in the classroom. It allows for use in various ways; it is divided into many scenes representing a closed sequence similar to a movie scene. These scenes include fragments of dialogues with eyewitnesses (which always represent a meaningful thematic entirety), comics and mini-games. A scene is the lowest organisational unit of the school version and is coded for easier orientation. However, the basic organisational unit is a model lesson comprising of several scenes and usually also of other external material (audio-visual material, photographs, caricatures, and texts) outside the

application. A model lesson is a concept using the simulation as part of a regular 45-minute lesson. The additional materials are available online on a website that the teacher uses, and they mainly include audio-visual materials, caricatures, photographs, and more. The teacher usually projects and controls the simulation by means of a data projector, while reflecting on students' opinions and viewpoints. It is a form of classroom teaching that is hard to diversify, as it is necessary to keep up with the pace of the story.

Eyewitness constructions

As already indicated, all characters in the simulation are pedagogical constructions, which were created based on a synthesis of real stories. In designing the game, we opted for these constructions because we wanted to protect the privacy of real eyewitnesses, and because we were convinced that we should model the learning situations and compress the eyewitness narratives in order to include as many motives, perspectives, and historical events as possible. We chose the concept of memory constructions (based on the memories of actual eyewitnesses placed in a historical context) in view of the pedagogical goal of the simulation, which was to communicate to students model eyewitness perspectives of people from different social classes and ethnic groups. As we will show in the methodology section, the emphasis on analysis is supported by the use of other materials related to eyewitness narratives, such as videos, caricatures and photographs. In this case, the simulation is a tool helping students to create a moral dictionary and to adopt value frameworks. The construction of eyewitness identities is an advantage in this case because it allows for greater sovereignty in evaluation, as it eliminates the ethical problem of evaluating real people. In such a case, the simulation can also serve as a simulator of social skills, and of the ethical challenges of everyday life.

The construction of eyewitness identities in the simulation has another hard-to-detect implication, the pedagogical importance of which is yet to be discussed. It is about a transformation of the cultural situation resulting in a transformation of the collective way of remembering. Many theoreticians of media studies claim that one of the implications of growing connectivity is a transformation of collectively defining, among other things, the ways of relating to the past. Theoreticians, such as Zierold (2008) and Neiger, Nieyers & Zandberg, (2011) problematise Maurice Halbwachs' (1992) and Jan Assmann's (Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995) traditional concepts of reflecting on collective memory. They claim that the unprecedented media boom, and thus the general availability of visual images, has transformed the social frameworks of memory and collectivity. In their opinion, every form of collective memory is, due to this societal change, necessarily a media memory. The team of the social psychologist Harald Welzer reached the same conclusion when examining the family memories of Germans during the war. The researchers noticed that these memories were often contaminated or perforated, sometimes even performed by media representations (Welzer, Moller, & Tschuggnal, 2010). Landsberg (2004) has formulated a concept of prosthetic memory typical for the present post(modern) era characterised by high mobility, social atomisation and access to visual images. This type of memory does not depend on an immediate experience and especially, is not limited to biological kinship or social exclusivity. On the contrary, its use requires the accommodation of real, physical memory and its sharing in a virtual space. It is created based on a personal interpretation of a usually traumatic historical event communicated in media. There is no discerning between "authenticity" and "non-authenticity" with respect to memory.

Eyewitness constructions seem to be a typical example of this prosthetic memory. These are created based on traumatising events (war, dictatorship, genocide, violence, oppression, and so on) and synthesised with the goal of creating an environment for their sharing. However, prostheticity, memory artificiality, can also be an advantage in the simulation. Our media world

is in many ways similar to a hall of mirrors, where there is no difference between a real event and its image (Baudrillard, 1994). A sensible way to learn how to live in the world of mirrors is to realise a certain artificiality of these images. A continuous and multidimensional reflection encouraged by a pedagogical approach might protect young people against the prostheticity of seemingly authentic forms of memory. If they encounter dubious forms of commemoration with hidden political agendas in or out of school, they might be better prepared to deconstruct the message behind them. Paradoxically, this synthetic memory controlled by computer algorithms could open the door to an autonomous relationship of the listener to the eyewitness.

Working with time in the simulation

The CS simulation allows students to see various levels of time within the historical narration. According to Seixas (2016), orientation in time is an important outcome of history education. Ignoring or reducing this problem to mastering timelines, usually in onethematic line is, in our observation, one of the current problems of typical Czech education. Working with time is limited to mastering dates and to one-dimensional decisions about before and after (Seixas, 2016). The research of Barton and Levstik (2004) proved that younger school-age children were able to orientate themselves in historical time, although this ability stemmed from pop-culture elements rather than from school education. The simulation gives working with time the necessary depth. Eyewitness narratives are usually non-linear. Eyewitnesses mix together the different times of the past, reminisce in an undisciplined and uneven manner, compare events remote in time, or jump from one topic to another. This lack of structure of eyewitness narratives is limiting but can also be an advantage if we pay attention to their form and not only to their content. Of course, it is rather difficult to follow all the tangents of a real eyewitness. If we modify an eyewitness statement for use in school (for history education) such as, adopt (usually rewrite and edit) an eyewitness account for school purposes, we will lose this typical feature of eyewitness narratives. The simulation preserves this feature to some extent. When creating the dialogues, we paid attention to, and preserved, this element of eyewitness narratives even as we tried to save time.

It shows students the necessity of viewing the past as possessing depth and multidimensionality, and not as a series of separate, one-dimensional, chronological units implicating an inevitable causal nexus. Therefore, eyewitnesses speaking about the war also naturally talk about post-war events and often take their narratives all the way to the 1970s. Another level in time, demonstrated visually as well, distinguishes the strong memories displayed through comics from the social space of the narrative, which is staged in a similar way to current movies (an apartment and its furnishings, an eyewitness as a regular old person or another social space, like a cemetery). The comics can be considered a type of flashback.

Reflections of educators and students

We have been testing the simulation *Czechoslovakia 38-89* at state-run high schools in various regions of the Czech Republic since 2012. Thirty-eight educators have tested the simulation under our guidance, with more than 3500 students (15-19 years old).

Additionally, over 200 other educators discovered our simulation and pedagogical materials on our website on their own, but they have not been included in this research. All teachers signed up for the project voluntarily and received monetary compensation for it. The teachers were exposed to three hours of training, after which they were asked to integrate the simulation into their standard history lessons.

Five model lessons were designed, each using a specific part of the simulation, and we provided additional materials for each lesson (historical videos, caricatures, cartoons, activities for the students, historical texts). Taking the technical facilities available at the majority of Czech schools into account, the model lessons were structured using collective instruction, in which the teacher controlled the simulation and the students determined together which strategy to use with the witnesses.

The teachers' task was to:

a. Integrate *Czechoslovakia 38-89* into their regular teaching,
b. Follow the prescribed teaching methodology,
c. Fill out a detailed feedback report for each model lesson taught (questionnaire with 35 questions),
d. Collect the students' feedback to the simulation (questionnaire with 12 questions)
e. Invite a member of our development team to one school lesson,
f. Write a final report that comprehensively evaluates the use of the simulation in their school (questionnaire with 12 mainly open questions),
g. Have an evaluation Skype talk with a member of our development team.

Educators' reflections

We got feedback from the teachers through the two questionnaires. These included feedback from every model lesson taught (32 questions), and a final, concluding report on the whole testing process (11 questions). The goal of the feedback for each lesson was to rate: 1) how the lesson actually went (7 questions); 2) students' reactions (15 questions); and, 3) the model lesson that we had recommended (13 questions). Each question had two sections — quantitative and qualitative — using the six-point Likert scale, teachers chose the appropriate rating, and then were asked to comment on their answers. The teachers filled out the questionnaires immediately after the end of the instruction or at the end of school day. Teachers then filled out the concluding report on the whole testing process (11 questions). Five of these touched on the wider context of the use of simulations. As an example, for the first question: "Please give us a general evaluation and comparison of the model lessons (what worked well for you? Was anything too long? What worked for the students and what didn't?)," teachers were given a recommended length for their responses, about 400 words in total. Teachers filled in this questionnaire at the end of the whole testing process. Based on these sources of information from our three-year cooperation (2012-2014) with the educators who tested *Czechoslovakia 38-89* during their lessons, we defined four key themes that represent the benefits of using our simulation in school classes, as follows:

Understanding the deeper context of historical events

In open questions, teachers defined the ability of the simulation to reinforce the understanding of the deeper context of historical events as the most important theme. Educators very positively evaluated the alternations of an eyewitness' authentic testimony, which students could influence with their questions, and the black-and-white comics, which were not possible to influence. The dynamics created there facilitate a direct connection between the present and the past, which helps students to better understand the historical events that are being taught.

> **Teacher:** The simulation contributes considerably to a deepened understanding of historical links and to an increased fixation of the teaching materials.

Engaging students who are not interested in history

As many researchers have found, external differentiations among students largely prevail in Czech schools, and teachers' opinions on more individualised instruction are markedly contradictory. While they verbally declare the need for greater individualisation, they are often unable to put this into more concrete terms (Mouralová, 2013: Straková, 2010). These observations, which come from questionnaire-based research, also confirm our own observations.. The simulation offers space unmotivated students, and one of its effects is the reality that teachers realise that these students' passivity might be caused by an improper choice of teaching methods.

The engagement of students is a general feature of simulations, often thanks to the novelty effect, that is, the fact that something new is happening. The way educators evaluate students who are silent during history lessons is rather interesting. The following statement from one of the teachers summarises this very well:

> The student is active even if he does not want to be. He looks for more details to make his own opinion and respects the perspective of different characters while realizing that he himself creates his own interpretation that stems from, among other things, the experience of his family and thus his upbringing.

The simulation as an educational medium is able to engage many passive students (of course, not all of them), and to make stimulate interest in the given topic.

Historical contextualization

The simulation makes it possible to perceive the historical contexts of current societal events. It is not only that the event is placed into a wider historical context, but also that the value of its significance for the present is also reflected upon.

> **Teacher:** They (the students) mainly realized that we now see the migration in the 1940s in retrospect and so we are able to evaluate what was good and what failed. We are now in a situation when we do not know what to do and a solution is not simple and we may not know until later whether or not our decision was good. Students understood not only the relativity of an individual memory but also the relativity of present decisions.

The historical significance, however, is difficult to simulate because it is hard to predict which historical theme will be relevant by the time the simulation is ready for school distribution. Students who are now 17 years old were relatively indifferent toward some topics (such as, the expulsion of the Sudeten Germans) three years ago. The situation in Europe has since changed, and teachers must teach in this new context.

As Reisman and Wineburg (2008) note, the problem in considering historical events from the students' perspective often comes down to a lacking ability to place them into a wider historical context, and gauge them by import and meaning. This is exactly where the simulation's strong point lies. It does not give students a huge number of facts; instead, it tells a story that is a part of Czech cultural memory and that belongs among the most well known moments in Czech history. It does not place emphasis on the factual details, but rather on the surroundings in which they play out and on the inconspicuous details that illustrate the specificity of this period, and through the narrative arc of the story, it thoroughly historicises it.

Reflections of students

Feedback was collected from students via a questionnaire. The questionnaire included 14 questions: 12 closed questions measured on the six-point Likert scale, focused on evaluating

the work with the simulation; and two open-ended questions, focused on defining the main benefits and shortcomings of using the simulation.

Students provided less information than the teachers. Since students filled out the questionnaires at the end of the history lesson, they did not spend much time on it, and generally used only a few words rather than whole sentences as the teachers did. However, based on more than 3000 pieces of feedback, following trends in students' perceptions of the game were garnered:

- Students consider the simulation *Czechoslovakia 38-89* as an attractive and modern medium that makes it possible to imagine the era in which the simulated historical events take place, and to better understand the situation.
- Students describe the advantages of the educational simulation in the history lesson as follows: *"*I can imagine what it was like to live at that time,*" "*I like that we can decide (choose the question) ,*" "*I like the atmosphere of that era,*" "*I like it, we pay attention.*"*
- Students positively evaluated the opportunity to control the simulation through their own or collective decision-making: "I *can influence the course of the simulation."* Students liked that the simulation reacted to their decisions.
- Students using the simulation in class saw it as beneficial in the extent of the knowledge that they gained: "I learn and remember [the schoolwork] with it," "I take more away from the simulation*."*

Students see the following weaknesses of the simulation: The simulation has a limited number of questions, the simulation gets old after a while, some of the dialogues are too long, and there are technical problems.

The students state that the biggest advantage for them is that thanks to the simulation, they are better able to imagine the historical period in which the simulation plays out. Here, we once again refer to the need for a thorough contextualisation of historical events, or their "historicisation." The simulation works towards this historicisation not only through differentiations in facts and customs, but also in a formal division in the time of the past, in which the witness recollections played out, from the time of their telling, which takes place in the "present."

Authenticity and emotionality

Our testing has also confirmed the emotional effect of the simulation and thus our efforts to create as much room for analytical work as possible. The majority of students chose a videotaped dialogue with an actor that played an eyewitness (just like in a documentary movie) over very good artistic animation. They provided the following reasons:

> **Student 1:** The animation was very well done. But when the actor was animated, we could not see his real emotions.
>
> **Student 2:** I prefer the version with the videotaped eyewitness because I feel that the actor is talking to me.
>
> **Student 3:** The version with the videotaped eyewitness draws my attention more.

An important conclusion for us as the simulation creators, is that contrary to natural sciences where animation and schemes are preferred, the level of authenticity is very important for students in their approach to eyewitness accounts in history.

Although one of the project's ambitions was to emphasise the necessity of approaching witnesses critically, it was exactly the witnesses' authenticity that the students appreciated. The piloting thus proved Rainer Wirtz's (2008) thesis, that the concept of authenticity is one of the most important tools in the historical imagination.

Limits of the study

The information that we collected from the teachers and students was self-reported. We asked (through questionnaires and interviews) the teachers to evaluate the simulation, in particular whether the simulation has achieved the declared learning goals, but we did not directly verify whether this was actually the case. The students used the questionnaires (not tests) to evaluate the simulation, but we did not verify their statements either.

Conclusion

Communicating the past through an adventure, such as *Czechoslovakia 38-89*, brings many changes to the traditional concept of history teaching. Lessons could be more dynamic, which improves students' motivation and involvement. The simulation offers eyewitness perspectives of history and does not present the past as an abstract history of systems, or large national or international narratives. Instead, it focuses on the anthropological dimension of history presented in the simulation as a space where ordinary people lived and had to make decisions.

The simulation uses narratives that do not just retell the past in an attractive form and offers the possibility to systematically analyse eyewitness narratives. The reflection on eyewitness narratives should develop students' awareness of multi-perspectivity, as well as understanding that each narrative is constructed within the social, cultural, and political frameworks surrounding historical events.

One of the surprising results from the testing was the finding that students trusted the witness narrations. The testing thus did not entirely fulfill the pedagogical ambition that we had connected with the simulation. Students were able to identify the positions of the various actors who appeared in the simulation and the reasons for their positions, but they did not perceive the contradiction in the fact that the testimonies marked as authentic are synthetic constructions. Thus, the simulation primarily developed an awareness of the multiperspectivity of historical events (Stradling, 2003), and potentially even the ethical dimension of historical interpretation (Seixas, 2013), but it did not contribute to a more critical reflection on witness testimony.

The simulation testing with over 30 teachers has confirmed our expectations that it would change the form of teaching. The teachers who tested the simulation were skeptical about the broad concept of the educational goals at first, but came to appreciate the advantages of the simulation, such as, students' greater involvement, interest, and communication, even though it reduced the content of the subject-matter and disturbed the normal teaching practice.

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Endnotes

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[1] General education program for elementary schools, Prague 2017, available online: http://www.msmt.cz/file/43792/ , General education program for gymnasiums, Prague 2017, available online: http://www.nuv.cz/file/159

[2] The simulation has been developed at the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics of the Charles University in Prague and the Institute of Contemporary History of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. The development of the simulation was supported by the Czech Ministry of Culture in 2011-2014. For more see: www.cs3889.cz The simulation exists in both a commercial and a school version. In this article, we're discussing the school version.

[3] In the text we use the terms “history” and “the past.” We view the difference in meanings between these two terms according to Pierre Nora’s view, that is, as the difference between a structured story that is the result of expert research (“history”) and an unstructured field of the past (Nora, 1989).

[4] We consider the phrases “serious game” and “educational simulation” to be synonymous.

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About the Author

Jaroslav Pinkas studied history and social sciences at Charles University’s Faculty of Arts. He taught high school history and civics, and he now works as a historian, lecturer, and pedagogue at the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes and as a teacher at the Faculty of Education at Charles University. His work centers on the creation of pedagogical tools for history teachers and the use of film and other audiovisual sources in teaching. He participates in the research process for television series on Czech Television about the so-called Normalisation period. He also leads methodological courses for history teachers focused on developing historical literacy. He is currently taking part in formulating the curriculum documents for the Czech Republic’s Ministry of Education. He works as a consultant with a variety of governmental and non-governmental educational organisations.

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Dissertation Abstract
Making the past present: The politics of material-semiotic practices in the history classroom

Johanna Ahlrichs
Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, Braunschweig, Germany

KEYWORDS: Memory, Practice Theory, History Education

Introduction

This study explores how students and teachers engage with textbooks, blackboards and other materials in the history classroom and how particular 'pasts' are made present through these micro-practices. Based on a two-year ethnography in a school, it draws attention to how seemingly banal and mundane activities during class are participating in enacting a certain symbolical order and are thus highly political.

Theoretical framework

The dissertation is theoretically located at the intersection of the sociology of education and memory studies. On the one hand, it forms part of the sociological research on socio-material practices in the classroom, which has shifted the focus from speech and text, to the role of objects, bodies, and spaces during class (Alkemeyer, 2015a; Kalthoff, 2011; 2014; Röhl, 2013). By taking up questions about the (re)production of symbolic orders and power relations, the study broadens the view towards the hitherto mainly neglected *political* dimension of these practices. Inspired by studies that describe the politics of material objects in schools (Kontopodis, 2009; Sørensen, 2006; Besand, 2004), it focusses on history education as a space where the *doing* of history in the classroom harbours the potential for symbolical boundary making and epistemic violence.

On the other hand, the dissertation contributes to the research on the connections between history education and cultural memory. While previous studies in this field for a long time followed a "language-first" (Zelizer, 1995) mentality, focusing mainly on speech and text (Foster & Crawford, 2006; Alavi, 2004), the thesis expands the view towards memory *practices* (Macgilchrist, Christophe & Binnenkade, 2015; Sturken, 2008) in the classroom by focusing more closely on how mnemonic assemblages (Freeman, Nienass & Daniell, 2016) of things,

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such as humans, language and symbols, co-produce history. By drawing on a rich tradition of practice theories, with a focus on 'small events', and the close empirical attention to the performative enacting of sociality, the dissertation proposes a perspective on *performative practices of making the past present*, like the way history is presented through and in the complex but mundane classroom activities. As an analytical focus to approach these complex enactments, four core dimensions are identified: the material; semiotic; symbolic; and sensual dimension.

Methodological approach

In order to implement the intended research perspective, I entered the field of history education itself and using a set of ethnographic methods accompanied a German high school history class for two years (Breidenstein, et al., 2013, p. 34; O'Reilly, 2005). The field work entailed six weeks of intensive participant observation of the full school day, in the first stage of fieldwork, followed by two years of participant observation in History class (two hours perweek) in Grades 9 and10. This included: building rapport and trust with teachers and students; taking field notes of classroom activities; audio-supported observations for selected cases; the analysis of documents, media and teaching materials; informal chats with staff in staff room, lunch, evenings; informal chats with students in break times, lunch, and other peer-group contexts; audio-recorded individual interviews with teachers and selected students; audio-recorded individual discourse-based interviews with teachers and students on particularly controversial curricular moments; group discussions with students (random class members); friendship group discussions with students; and, participant observation of excursions relevant to the history class.

My aim during fieldwork was to observe the form (rather than the topics) of the classes, to remain open to the practices which unfold (rather than focusing on ready-made assumptions about 'good' history education), and to concentrate on the performativity rather than on the possible underlying thoughts, learning processes, or aims of the participants. The written account of my observations is not giving a broad overview of what happened in class but a selection of scenes and representations relevant for the research question. Also, I intended not to smooth the complexity of the field but to allow ambivalences and to tell a story that is enlightening and meaningful on the one hand, and also jars or interrupts ('*irritiert*') on the other (Law, 2004; Verran, 2001). The categories used in the text evolved inductively from the field. What particularly caught my attention were questions that came up during talks with the students about the objectiveness of history, the way the past is structured and the material connections that are made in representations of history. This led to three main chapters: Reality, Order and Associations.

Key findings

In the chapter *Reality*, I trace the potential of everyday classroom practices to shape the essence of history. Based on the assumption that the question of the reality of history is highly political as it allows for the exclusion of everything that is not regarded as the "real" version, as well as for the determination and essentializating of people and their stories (Spivak 2008; Castro-Varela & Dhawan, 2015; Barricelli, 2009), the chapter foregrounds activities in which the 'reality' of history is negotiated and enacted. It demonstrates how in some everyday practices, history is made present as something solid, reliable and unambiguous while in other practices, it presents itself as abstract, flexible and ambivalent. First, the chapter shows how practices of handling, touching and looking at the textbook enacts history as a material other that can be observed and bodily approached. Here, history is made present as an objective and solid block

of knowledge. Second, I describe how the semiotic and symbolic features of the textbook interplay with practices of routine usage, of caring and referencing have the potential to present history as something trustworthy and safe. Third, I analyse how practices of writing on the blackboard as well as students taking notes, signals what is to count as worth knowing, making history visible and observable, and making the past present as something univocal and definite. The analysis also identifies moments in which students appropriate the textbook for tactical goals, such as killing a wasp or teasing a fellow student. In addition, moments in which, for instance, the classroom is interrupted by students questioning the authority of the textbook or reshaping whose perspective counts as they reconfigure the textbook text in their jotters (notebooks/exercise books). And, moments in which the material practices subvert the stated goals of teaching, multiple perspectives, and constructivist theories of history.

The chapter *Order* inquiries into the ways in which classifications, systems, structures, and orderings tidy up the messiness of references to the past into neat simplifications. In this section, I ask what kind of epistemic work these orderings are doing, how they categorize and become more complex, and how they create coherence and non-coherence. The analysis suggests that in practices of taking notes from the textbook and of creating posters for classroom presentations the material-semiotic-symbolic-semiotic orders of text, layout, pages, tables or lists enact epistemic borders, and produce a theory of history in which the past is structured, orderly and straightforward. At the same time, I also describe practices of blurring these borders and of generating disorder. The political implications of these practices of (dis)ordering lay in the potential of symbolic boundary making and the negation of the ambivalent and the unfitting. Ordering systems homogenise its parts, create differences and exclude everything that cannot be classified (Bowker & Star, 1999; Law & Mol, 2002). I argue that the everyday practice of structuring, categorising and ordering in the classroom thus has the potential to foster approaches to past and present realities that exclude certain perspectives and stories.

In *Associations*, I turn towards the temporal logic of history education and explore the enacting of a linear narrativity in class. The analysis focusses on segmentations and connections in daily school life (between subjects, classes, or class levels), as well as on mundane practices of turning the page or of drawing lines and arrows. Drawing on theoretical work highlighting multiple possible understandings of time (Le Goff, 1999; Luhmann, 1988; Nassehi, 1993), the section illustrates the impact of these practices to enact chronology, linearity and causality as common sense. I argue that this has political implications since the enacted linearity, which often slides into a teleology, reproduces western/global North imaginations and narratives of modernity, of progress, of colonial distinctions and enduring global hierarchies (Chakrabarty, 2000; Barricelli, 2013). However, I also consider potential moves away from modernity by considering the flexible and nonlinear associations enabled by pinboards, digital databases, and hypertext.

Conclusions

On an empirical level, the study provides a perspective to the long-standing calls to examine how textbooks are used in practice and to what extent the ideologies, forms of knowledge, and distribution of the sensible produced in these books are reproduced or subverted in classroom practice.

On a theoretical level, the thesis proposes a conceptualisation of memory practices, shifting the focus from humans or things to complex enactments of the past. Also, it demonstrates that the way we look at the past is not only, as even recent works in memory studies continue to argue, influenced by ‘ruling groups’, but that inadvertent and apparently banal practices have a strong effect on how power relations in cultural memory unfold.

Overall, one central outcome of the study is to suggest that social inequality and exclusion are reproduced not only in large scale, but through the everyday, apparently mundane, material-semiotic practices of symbolic boundary making. The thesis demonstrates how particular theories of history, and certain perspectives on global hierarchies and social differences which are encoded into the curriculum and textbooks are creatively reproduced in everyday practices of the classroom. It draws attention to the *incidental/in-advertent* enacting of unequal (global) power relations and modernist theories of history. Despite good intentions, and occasional fissures and creative reinterpretations, overall the material, sensual, symbolical and semiotic dimensions of practices involving the textbook, the blackboard, the jotters and desks, and other entangled classroom things are intimately implicated in symbolical boundary-making. The thesis is also a plea to consider the relevance of the apparently banal in history education and to include the political dimension into research on school practices.

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About the Author

Johanna Ahlrichs studied European Studies and Intercultural Communication in Bremen and Frankfurt(Oder) and was a research fellow at the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in Brunswick. She completed her doctorate in the Department of Sociology at the University of Mainz. Currently she works in the textbook publishing sector.

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Dissertation abstract
The enacting of belonging and difference: An ethnographic discourse analysis

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KEYWORDS: History education; negotiation and appropriation processes in class; ethnography; belonging and difference; imperialism and colonialism

Introduction

The dissertation explores the significance of history for the enculturation and subjectification of the individual into society, and the production of social reality in the context of history lessons in school. Based on a two-year-ethnography in school, this research asks how *belonging* and *difference* are enacted in the contemporary history classroom of today's post-migrant societies. It does so through a detailed analysis of a selected lesson on imperialism and colonialism. It argues that three core elements of a shared European/western social imaginaries are enacted in this process: Eurocentrism; nationalism; and racism.

Methodology

The study is based on a two-year-ethnography following the history lessons of a class in Grade 9, through to Grade 10 (age 15 – 17) in a high-school in Lower Saxony, Germany. In the first six weeks, this class was accompanied to each lesson throughout their whole school day, regardless of subject. For the next two years, only their history lessons were observed. Contact with the students was not limited to the lessons, it also included taking breaks together, meetings outside of school, and participation in extra-curricular class activities. All actors of the class considered themselves to be 'white' [1] Germans without a conscious migration history. Approximately half of the students had parents with a university qualification. The setting can thus be described as relatively privileged.

The study traces meaning production across curricula, textbooks and other teaching materials, classroom practices, informal talks, and interviews with students and teachers. Its goal is not to show that Eurocentrism, nationalism and racism are reproduced in history lessons. Instead, the focus is on the question of how these imaginations are learned and produced in subtle, indirect and inadvertent ways in the course of teaching negotiation and appropriation processes, and often despite the actors' stated intentions. Particular attention was paid to "rich points" (Agar, 1994, p.231), moments in which unexpected things, breaks, contradictions or

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unvarnished reproductions become visible. Such moments guided the analysis. The focus of the study rose in part from unexpected moments during the first month about how belonging and differences are enacted in school.

Theoretical-analytical framework

The dissertation is located at the intersection of several disciplines and conceptual approaches. In particular, it contributes to the debate on racism and postcolonial education and the contents of teaching and learning (Marmer, 2013; Marmer & Sow, 2015; Mecheril & Scherschel, 2011). It orients to pedagogy and history education from a cultural-anthropological perspective and by means of cultural-anthropological methods. It adds to the research literature about postcolonial and racism-critical education in an as-yet understudied site: a 'white' privileged school. This shifts the attention from people who are directly targeted by discrimination to an understanding of nationalism and racism as social imaginations, which are important for all because of its effects on thinking and social reality. Furthermore, the study combines ethnographic analyses of the field and of the collected data with a discourse analytical look at that corpus. It does not focus on the actors, but on their practices.

In order to make sense of these processes, and some of the dimensions that structure them, the study utilises four approaches from practice theory which are set in relation to the other approaches, with each addressing gaps in the others. First, Bourdieu's (1983; 1998; 2012) cultural sociology with the key concepts, field, capital and habitus; second, Butler's (2001; 2006) understanding of subjectivation as result of performative discursive practices; third, Foucault's (1978; 2010) reflections about techniques of governance; and fourth, Taylor's (2004; 2009) analysis of modern Western societies as specific social imaginary.

Bourdieu's (1983; 1998; 2012) reflections about field, capital, and habitus enabled the inclusion of the dimensions of familial socialization and its significance for the subjectification of the actors as well as their habitus-specific behaviour in field. Butler and Foucault's approaches make it possible to include the level of communication as a powerful act. Butler's (2001; 2006) concept of subjectification as a product of performative interpellations (Althusser, 2010) shows the discursive agency of the actors and their active, dynamic role in negotiation processes. Foucault's (1978; 2010) considerations underscore the necessity to include techniques of governing and their influence on subjects and institution as well as on schools and history teaching in the analysis. Taylor's (2004; 2009) idea of social imaginaries points to a specific societal background knowledge which structure actors practices in a dynamic way.

Key findings

The complex interplay of enacting and negotiation is analysed in multiple steps. *Chapter 2: The field,* introduces (i) the positioning of the school and its specific consequences for the composition of actors, and the status of history teaching; (ii) the spatial and temporal arrangements; (iii) the researcher's creation of a relationship to the actors and associated positioning dynamics, which are a result of the ethnographer's participation. They show clearly the difficulties of handling closeness and distance in the field situation and the central importance of techniques of examining, valuation, and control in the context of the school.

Chapter 3: Imaginaries of the "self": Eurocentrism and nationalism begins with an overview of critical research on the Eurocentric and nationalist foundations of history and history education. It illustrates the intimate connections between a Eurocentric perspective and the progress narrative. According to the literature, the historic development of Europe is described as exemplary, unique, and independent from external influences, and the 'rest' of the

world as deficient (Castro Varela & Dhawan, 2015; Conrad & Randeria, 2002; Loomba, 2005). The chapter also overviews classic and critical research on nation-building and makes sense of it for this approach to analysis (Anderson, 1986; Brubaker, 1998; Geulen, 2004; Gellner, 1991; Hobsbawm, 1983).

The following outlines the steps of analysis in this research. First, the political documents which build the foundation for history teaching in Germany are analysed for the prescribed imaginations of belonging and difference (Niedersächsisches Kultusministerium, 1998, 2008). They are critiqued for the explicit statement that Christianity is a fundamental part of the cultural memory of society, and that to participate in this collective memory is a goal of schooling and history education. Second, the content, topics, and methods set by the curricula in general, and particularly for the lesson about imperialism and European colonization of the world, are elaborated and included in the analysis. Showing that they promote a national perspective by including dealing with imperialism as an aspect of the German Imperium respectively as the prehistory of World War I. Third, the textbooks are included in the analysis, which reproduce the narrow focus of the political documents. The book used in the lessons however undertakes some shifts. These shifts become visible in a more global history perspective and a focus on case studies about colonialism in Asia and especially in Africa. They find expression also in the way the history of the 'rest' is presented, the conception of their agency, the consideration of their voices as well as the used language and means of representation.

The core of Chapter 3 is a detailed analysis of teaching practices and classroom discussions. In addition, ethnographic observations, informal discussions and interviews on the subject are included. The analysis touches on several aspects: the blurring of motives and justifications which obscure the underlying capitalist logic of colonialism; an understanding of colonisation as a virtually natural and inevitable process; a relativisation of the German role as a colonial power. The chapter also includes material from interviews with the students, which shows their narrative competence to recognise the underlying discourses and make them far more explicit than it was intended for the classroom (Macgilchrist, Ahlrichs, Mielke & Richtera, 2017).

Chapter 4: Imaginaries of the "other": racism and colonial discourse begins with an overview of research on racism and the societal norms and normalisations which lead to the longevity of colonial-racist imaginaries of an 'Other' (Balibar & Wallerstein, 1992; Bhabha, 2000; Kalpaka & Räthzel, 1990; Farr, 2009; Hall, 2000; Miles, 2000). The focus is explicitly on these logics and the societal processes that make it almost impossible to live outside racist logics. The aim here is not to describe the actors as racist but to describe the racist system of differentiation and hierarchy, which in turn has strong socialization/subjectification effects on the members of society.

Based on a second detailed analysis of classroom practices, the chapter shows a variety of attempts to challenge dominant narratives and how these attempts are unsuccessful due to the habitual backgrounds of the actors, the discursive negotiation processes, and the background knowledge of society. It highlights the importance of previous images, caricatures, discourses and narratives, which, like an echo (Halbwachs, 1980) of colonial discourse, prevail even when the teaching material has changed. This was evident during a class discussion on colonial advertising images in which the teacher stresses the nakedness of the local population, even though the people in the pictures are very differently dressed. Additionally, this is underscored by a change in the language the teacher uses and the sudden recourse to colonial terminology.

The chapter explores not only what is taught, but what is not taught (for example, entangled histories, migration histories, and the creation of racial theories to justify colonial crime). Furthermore, the analysis shows how the Eurocentric and national perspectives remain dominant even in working phases that touch on aspects of the history of the 'other'.

Additionally, the chapter includes reflections about my role as an ethnographer when I took up an intervening role during a group discussion about iconic pictures in the context of the genocide on the Herero or when provoked by the students' anti-Semitic and racist language; and, the role of institutional everyday school practices, such as, whether a class is scheduled for Wednesday afternoon or Monday morning or the disruptions to cohesive lessons through vacations or illness.

Conclusion

This study clarifies the importance of the political guidelines for the negotiation processes in class by providing the central perspectives and logics as well as contents, topics and methods of history education. It points to the interpretive power of 'white' members of society regarding the question of whose story is told (Apple, 1993). Findings show that a stronger political will would need to include entangled and global-historical approaches and postcolonial, post migrant and critical race perspectives in history teaching. Instead, the students are interpellated as 'white' Germans or Europeans. At the same time, by almost exclusively telling a 'white' national story an implicit equation of being German and being 'white' is made.

Second, the analysis shows a multitude of discursive practices that reproduce dominant narratives and discourses in history lessons, even when the actors indicate other intentions or when the teaching material has changed.

Third, it also emphasises the discursive agency of the actors, which is shown in picking up, decoding and reformulating underlying narratives and discourses. The focus in the study prioritises the students' perspectives and their narrative competence in deciphering the imaginaries into which they are encultured.

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Endnotes

[1] The labeling of people and/or groups as 'black' or 'white' is a construction produced by the ideology of racism. From a critical whiteness perspective and due to the conditions of the investigated field the study focus among others on the structures, practices and processes which reproduce racism and therefore white privileges in everyday negotiations in history class, even if it might not be intended by the actors.