

## The Mediation of the History of One's Own Country

### A Particular Challenge for Science and Practice

The national historical dimension has always been a subject of the mediation of history. Over the past few years discussions and debates about its meaning, content and functions have, however, increased. Against the background of geopolitical frictions and in light of the complexity of the world society, regional and national relations gain in importance again. Whereas globalists can well handle the profound changes and new dynamics and derive benefit from them, the localists feel their prosperity and way of life threatened and seek protection and safety in the nation state.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, there are frequent even fierce debates going on in societies about what the profile of one's own nation or country should look like.<sup>2</sup> In the field of history education as well, substantial publications dedicated to this topic have come out in the past few years. The focus is on questions like: How do young people tell the history of their own country?<sup>3</sup> Who do they see as active doers, who as passive bystanders, who as victims of the national history?<sup>4</sup> What objectives does history teaching pursue when one's own nation is the subject of discussion?<sup>5</sup> Whereas especially in the course of competence orientation and also in the history teaching of practically applicable skills; for example, when dealing

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- 1 Cf. Stephan Bierling, *Werden wir jetzt alle wieder Stammeskrieger?*, in: NZZ, 24. August 2019, 10.
  - 2 Cf. Hans-Georg Moeller, *Der Nationalismus des verweigerten Nationalismus. Warum es sich für viele Deutsche gut anfühlt, deutsch zu sein*, in: NZZ, 27. August 2019, 10.
  - 3 Cf. here as an example with further bibliographic references: Jocelyn Létourneau/Arthur Chapman (Ed.), *Young people, national narrative and history education*, in: *London Review of Education*, 2 (2017), 149–151.
  - 4 Kate Angier, *In search of historical consciousness: An investigation into young South Africans' knowledge and understanding of 'their' national histories*, in: *London Review of Education*, 2 (2017), 155–173.
  - 5 James V. Wertsch, *Foreword to the special feature 'Negotiating the nation: Young people, national narratives and history education'*; Jocelyn Létourneau/Arthur Chapman (Ed.), in: *London Review of Education*, 2 (2017), 152–154.

with sources as well as critical thinking as target dimensions came into the focus of interest, there is more to it when conveying the history of one's own country: The building of social identities is expected to be achieved.<sup>6</sup> International studies have also pursued this issue more strongly in the last few years.<sup>7</sup>

That history teaching can help build identities, and, in fact, at an individual as well as collective level, is beyond doubt. In his work "Historik" Jörn Rüsen even writes: "Identity building is therefore one of the most important if not the most important function of historical thinking in the life practice of one's own time".<sup>8</sup>

Whoever studies the history of history teaching discovers that this school subject acquired its special status in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century precisely therefore and primarily as so-called "lore of the fatherland" and thereby, in the first place, served as a means for conveying identity. Conveying historical knowledge promised to have an effect on specific attitudes such as pride in one's own country and a national consciousness.<sup>9</sup> Also later on and during the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century there was the continuing attempt by means of history teaching to imprint the desired identities on people. Certainly, the "reference sizes of the desirable collective

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- 6 Peter Gautschi, Social Identity Through Public History, in: Public History Weekly, 3/25 (2015), in: <https://public-history-weekly.degruyter.com/3-2015-25/social-identity-through-public-history/>.
  - 7 Cf. also as an example: Edda Sant/Neus Gonzáles-Monfort/Antoni Santisteban Fernández/Joan Pagès Blanch/Montserrat Oller Freixa, How do Catalan students narrate the history of Catalonia when they finish primary education?, in: McGill Journal of Education, 2/3 (2015), 341–362; Anna Clark, Teaching the nation's story: comparing public debates and classroom perspectives on history education in Australia and Canada, in: Journal of Curriculum Studies, 41/6 (2009), 745–762; Françoise Lantheaume/Jocelyn Létourneau (eds.), Le récit du commun. L'histoire nationale racontée par les élèves, Lyon 2016; Nicole Tutiaux-Guillon (ed.), Enseigner l'histoire en contexte de pluralité identitaire, in: Raisons, comparaisons, éducations, 17 (2018). These research approaches mainly deal with concepts of national identity which are conveyed and presented outside and inside the classroom. These are common narratives and the expression of the feeling of belonging to a national, regional or local community. The way how "cultural diversity" and "national unity" can be articulated in the transmission of history, and the effects of these articulations on the definition of collective identities (social identities, socio-cultural identities) is a phenomenon still to be investigated.
  - 8 Jörn Rüsen, Historik. Theorie der Geschichtswissenschaft, Köln/Weimar/Wien 2013, 267.
  - 9 Cf. here as an example: Bernard Eric Jensen, L'histoire à l'école et dans la société en général: propos sur l'historicité de l'enseignement de cette discipline, in: Détournements de l'histoire, Strasbourg 2000, 89–104.

identities (confession, dynasty, individual state, nation, race or class)<sup>10</sup> and the attitudes striven for of the individuals (freedom, obedience, equality, self-initiative, etc.) changed, but, time and time again, individuals, groups and states instrumentalized history for overpowering political ends.<sup>11</sup> And still today, for many governments the subject history in many places has the main function in the classroom not to make students, in the first place, learn something about society and their changes, but to become the proud citizens of their respective nation.<sup>12</sup> All this makes it clear: National history is also User's history.

In the German language area the term "User's history" was coined by Guy P. Marchal: "User's history is the history which is always used to legitimize one's own positions. User's history par excellence is, for example, the one which serves the national identity, be it as national historiography which gives the state a targeted development history up to the current state in order to historically justify it; be it in general historical perceptions and in the consciousness of vivid historical images which support and promote the self-esteem, the consciousness of a national identity. [...] The term 'User's history' wants to make clear the pronouncedly utilitarian character of dealing with history."<sup>13</sup> The mediation of history of one's own country shall also provide identification offers which promote the social cohesion.

From a current perspective this social cohesion seems far more unstable than we thought a few years ago. In the social sciences and humanities different eroding factors were detected about whose causes the opinions are split. The fact is that since the end of the Cold War, globalization and, above all, advancing technological change in the last two decades have caused an accelerated change. The

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10 Bernd Schönemann, Identität, in: Ulrich Mayer/Hans-Jürgen Pandel/Gerhard Schneider/Bernd Schönemann (eds.), Wörterbuch Geschichtsdidaktik, Schwalbach/Ts. 2009, 103.

11 Cf. François Hartog/Jacques Revel (eds.), Les usages politiques du passé, Paris 2001.

12 Cf. Markus Furrer, Wissenschaftlichkeit im Geschichtsunterricht – eine Notwendigkeit?, in: Journal für Lehrerinnen- und Lehrerbildung, 1 (2012), 46–53.

13 Guy P. Marchal, Schweizer Gebrauchsgeschichte. Geschichtsbilder, Mythenbildung und nationale Identität, Basel 2007, 13; cf. in the French language area: Enzo Traverso, Le passé, modes d'emploi. Histoire, mémoire, politique, Paris 2005. Traverso refers in particular to the formula coined by Jürgen Habermas in 1987 as part of the "Historikerstreit": "The public use of history": "Ces révisions remettent en question, au-delà d'une interprétation dominante, une conscience historique partagée, une responsabilité collective à l'égard du passé. Elles touchent toujours à des événements fondateurs [...] et leur relecture de l'histoire concerne, bien au-delà de l'interprétation d'une époque, notre façon de voir le monde dans lequel nous vivons et notre identité dans le présent." (116–117).

political systems in a lot of states and their societies drifted into crises: Major parties eroded and populist tendencies became stronger and along with them unconventional and shrill personalities were elected as heads of government; elites in society and politics seemed not to be able to reach out to large population groups anymore. Instead of a formerly widespread consensus democracy in Western Europe, redistribution battles were spreading driven by rising economic inequalities. In an unusual way the disputes took on the traits of a cultural conflict. The American political scientist Francis Fukuyama in this context speaks of a policy of discontent.<sup>14</sup> He also points out that not only economic explanation patterns come to the fore, but that it is rather about a feeling of humiliation and disregarded dignity.<sup>15</sup>

The concept of identity gets a boost in such phases by looking out for common brackets. In the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century identity becomes a central political topic. This individual-psychological concept which is transferred onto collectives is subject to economic fluctuations. It was popularized in the 1950s by the psychologist Erik Eriksson.<sup>16</sup> Thus, there are phases in history in which identity plays a minor role only. But in times of abrupt radical changes identity discourses increase.

Whereas one cannot but deal with the identity concept in the mediation of history, the science of history due to its complexity for identity constructs does, in fact, not lend itself to this discourse. Through the eyes of a historian otherness as continuity is much rather brought into consciousness. Assured knowledge about who we are as a collective is hardly derived from historical analyses.<sup>17</sup> The collective “We” is undefined and is a mental construct. Historical knowledge has nothing to do with any identitarian collective rediscovering, as Michel Foucault points out. It causes the opposite effect and scatters it to the four winds.<sup>18</sup>

The mediation of history of one’s own country is also a precarious undertaking – and this even in several respects: First, it is about the user’s history which, with its utilitarian character, partially eludes itself from the scientific realm. Secondly, the science of history can and wants to contribute little to the identity dis-

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14 Francis Fukuyama, *Identität. Wie der Verlust der Würde unsere Demokratie gefährdet*, translated from the American English by Bernd Rullkötter, Hamburg 2019, 23.

15 Cf. Fukuyama, *Identität*, 68.

16 Cf. Fukuyama, *Identität*, 26.

17 Cf. also Anne-Marie Thiesse, *La création des identités nationales. Europe XVIIIe-XIXe siècle*, Paris 2001.

18 Cf. also Kurt Röttgers, *Die Lineatur der Geschichte*, Amsterdam 1998, 298. Röttgers here refers to Foucault and incorporates this thought pictorially.

course. And, thirdly, the thematization of the history of a country runs the risk of falling into the “container trap” which in light of cohesive history was thought to be overcome.

For this reason, we used the terminology “history of one’s own country” and not “history of one’s own nation” in the project upon which this publication is based and in the title of this volume. This decision stands for a historical reference to an area which spans the pre-modern period over the emergence of the nation state to the present time, for example the Canadian province of Québec. From a Swiss perspective this may seem obvious since in German-speaking Switzerland one talks of the ‘Landesregierung’ or ‘Landesmuseum’ whose word-by-word translation reads the ‘Government of the Country’ and ‘Museum of the Country’. In Switzerland one also agreed upon being a classical nation state because the country was and still is extremely heterogenous in terms of languages as well as confessions and culture, and continued to consist of political pre-modern structures of assembled cantonal small societies. Close-meshed definitions of nation states with narrow uniform criteria are, however, useless in general. Statehood is subject to a continuous process of change and, logically, also the nation-state orientation. States are exposed to great transformations in the globalization process and in Europe in particular. It would, however, be problematic to think that could be replaced by international organizations since up to now nobody could make clear how such organizations were supposed to be democratically managed.<sup>19</sup> There, however, is an ongoing process of denationalization without the fact that the state simply disappears, as the U.S.-American sociologist Saskia Sassen shows. She talks of the “paradox of the national” and emphasizes that the transition from the national to a global era is much less clear than the juxtaposition of the national and the global may suggest.<sup>20</sup> Fundamental changes in the organization of territories, authority and rights act as pivotal points and create a new logic of organization. Thus, the nation state is by no means simply a phase-out model of a past world order. Globalization takes place by far more than expected within the national. Sassen writes of a “profoundly changed construct” whose future shape cannot yet be defined.<sup>21</sup> With the here used concept of country we take these findings into account by assuming that in this way an open historical process is chosen. At the same time, this also implies abandoning

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19 Cf. Fukuyama, *Identität*, 166.

20 Saskia Sassen, *Das Paradox des Nationalen*, translated from the American English by Nikolaus Gramm, Frankfurt/M. 2008, 649.

21 Sassen, *Das Paradox des Nationalen*, 680.

the container model the way this has been implemented in historiography for quite some time. The focus thus lies on structural-historical developments and processes as well as social orders, employment and migration, but also industrialization, nation-state building, etc.<sup>22</sup> In particular in the European framework such interdependencies are observed more intensively. It often involves transnational approaches which focus less on one single European country, but developments are collected and interpreted on a pan-European basis. Entirely in the sense of “cohesive history” it is about enlarging and varying spatial framework conditions when analyzing historical phenomena by focusing on links and points of contact between worlds which previously had been looked at separately. It is a history which is disassembled and decentralized and which creates a distance from the national or regional interpretation frame with the aim to, here and elsewhere, join the endogenous and the exogenous at a global level.<sup>23</sup> Not unimportant is thereby the question as to how such processes have affected people’s lives in the specific country.

Another important aspect lies with the integration performance of the modern state. The national has become an integration formula because it conveys an abstract identity and has thus crossed regional, language/cultural, confessional and social borders.<sup>24</sup> The integration of migrants is a further level in this course of development. This integration was not always successful as we know from history. In particular where states excluded minorities or put them under pressure to assimilate, conflicts arose. Any attempts to equate civic-national circumstances with collective identity are doomed to fail, as Hermann Lübke formulates.<sup>25</sup> What is much rather needed are open formulas and concepts which include rather than exclude. Thus, Francis Fukuyama also called for an appropriate iden-

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22 The Swiss migration historian Leo Schelbert living and researching in the U.S. provides a current example for this (*Von der Schweiz anderswo. Historische Skizzen der globalen Präsenz einer Nation*, Zürich 2018).

23 Cf. Romain Bertrand, *L'histoire à part égale: récits d'une rencontre orient-occident (XVI<sup>e</sup>-XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, Paris 2011; Patrick Boucheron (ed.), *Histoire mondiale de la France*, Paris 2017; Patrick Boucheron (ed.), *Histoire du monde au XVe siècle. Aux origines de la mondialisation*, Paris 2009.

24 Cf. Siegfried Weichlein, *Nationalbewegungen und Nationalismus in Europa*, Darmstadt 2006, 26; see also: Guy Hermet, *Histoire des nations et du nationalisme en Europe*, Paris 1996.

25 Cf. Hermann Lübke, *Minderheiten und Mehrheitsregeln – Identitätsprobleme in Modernisierungsprozessen*, in: Kurt Müller (ed.), *Minderheiten im Konflikt. Fakten, Erfahrungen, Lösungskonzepte*, Zürich 1993, 49–57, here 53.

tity of professing national values which is open for the great diversity of today's societies.<sup>26</sup>

Today the term "history of the country" is, in fact, often negatively connotated and even in the German-speaking area it is used in different ways, but in contrast to "nation", "Land" (le pays, il paese, the country) is less politically, much rather spatially defined. The country is, more or less, a relatively small and homogenized living space, a "living environment" which is determined by its structures (area, economy, culture) and the people with their mentalities, languages, religions, festivities and customs.<sup>27</sup> In the country life takes place. The reign, economy, culture of the country influence the local people to a large extent, even though they do not realize. The people, on the other hand, give shape to a country, have an influence on the reign, economy, culture, and this often unconsciously and also then when they have no political participation rights. The history of the country is a term that includes. The history of the country<sup>28</sup> – understood in this way – is thanks to the limited size of the area and the living worlds capable of closely analyzing as well as linking micro- and macro-history, 'Alltagsgeschichte' that is everyday history and structural history.

The present book contains contributions from different perspectives which deal with the mediation of history of one's own country. The majority of the examples presented in this volume come from states like Switzerland or Belgium which due to their historical tradition and their development of the political system are oriented multiculturally<sup>29</sup> and where the constitutive people, from the beginning, has understood itself as being put together from different entities.

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26 Vgl. Fukuyama, *Identität*, 200.

27 Cf. also e.g. Heiko Haumann, *Lebenswelten und Geschichte – Zur Theorie und Praxis der Forschung*, Wien/Köln/Weimar 2012. Therein, in particular, the contribution 'Retreat into the Idyll or a New Access to History?' Problems and Opportunities of Regional History, 35–48, here 37; also Haumann struggles for conceptual clarity and tries to distinguish between national and regional history, which, however, is not easy at all.

28 With the choice of terminology, we try to reach what Jörn Rüsen demanded when dealing with nationality, namely a new and forward-looking interpretation of this concept, in order to thus get the historical ground of one's own present under the feet again. Cf. also Jörn Rüsen, *Nationalität – tot oder lebendig?* in: *Public History Weekly*, 6/4 (2018), in: <https://public-history-weekly.degruyter.com/6-2018-4/nationality-dead-alive/> (8 Feb. 2018).

29 We here use the term 'multiculturality' and assume that, entirely in the sense of transcultural dynamics, cultures are always dynamic structures which, through historical or intercultural changes, are in a constant flow (according to Wolfgang Welsch). The terms have not been differentiated further within the framework of the exchange project.

Plurality has, however, always been present in practically all the states, it was only suppressed through a centralist-oriented state model and regionalisms were leveled out.

Actually, already with the beginning of the modern nation state building there were demands beyond language and confessional boundaries to include minorities in a commonly shared narrative. The worldwide development of the last few decades towards modern migration societies, thus also in Japan and South Korea, only to give some examples out of this volume, extends the question raised to other states. And here also, ever since the question has arisen in all the modern nation states as to how to include minorities, be it that they are constituted linguistically, confessionally or socially.

The question concerning the identification offered in schools which should promote the social cohesion runs like a thread through the book. How shall and how can the consciousness of identity, understood as the ability of individuals and collectives to see themselves as a permanent unity in changing times<sup>30</sup>, be differentiated further. The philosopher Hermann Lübke points out how identity is represented by history. By linking identity and continuity a bridge is built between past, present and future.<sup>31</sup> Identity is thus always deduced “historically”.<sup>32</sup> Historiography unavoidably falls under the spell of identity finding and the determination of identity always implies demarcation in the sense that each determination of identity also presupposes a non-identical one. Through this, aspects of power are joined because collective identity as a tension between self-definition and foreign definition must be analyzed. In multi-cultural societies this tension can be reinforced when defining ethnic-cultural identities.<sup>33</sup> National identity thus also fell in disrepute because it went along with an exclusive feeling of belonging.<sup>34</sup> As the Swiss economic historian Hansjörg Siegenthaler aptly says, history also teaches us that in situations of crisis one is in danger of turning to mythological images. One should take this lesson seriously and

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30 Cf. Hans-Jürgen Pandel, *Geschichtsdidaktik. Eine Theorie für die Praxis*, Schwalbach/Ts. 2013, 143.

31 Hermann Lübke, *Zur Identitätsfunktion der Historie*, in: Odo Marquard/Karlheinz Stierle (eds.), *Identität*, München 1979, 277–292, here 277.

32 Cf. Johannes Meyer-Hamme, *Historische Identität in einer kulturell heterogenen Gesellschaft*, in: Michele Barricelli/Martin Lücke (eds.), *Handbuch Praxis Geschichtsunterricht*, Vol. 1, Schwalbach/Ts. 2012, 89–97.

33 Cf. also Chris Lorenz, who hereto refers to Charles Taylor (*Konstruktion des Vergangenen. Eine Einführung in die Geschichtstheorie*, Köln 1997, 405).

34 Cf. Fukuyama, *Identität*, 155.



one should evade this “history” and thereby the search and even addiction for identity for the sake of learning ability – this has to be ensured by schools.<sup>35</sup>

Weak national identities, in fact, also pose a problem for societies and are one of the reasons for the failure of states. In what doses shall and can the conveying of identity be administered? And how do schools, with a view to the necessity to convey common social references, position themselves in a modern migration society? According to the widespread current doctrine of history education, it is the task of history teaching to enable students to analyze heterogeneously, with each other competing and conflicting identities and to weigh them against each other. Content-wise preconceived identities in the sense of setting social norms are thereby not the goal, but simply the subject of history teaching with the realization that identities are inherent in historical narratives.<sup>36</sup> But is that enough? Does the mediation of a critical understanding of history not permanently go along with the transmission of collective identity?<sup>37</sup>

In the examples of this volume different approaches of the mediation of history of one’s own country are presented, be it from history textbooks and thus recounts of authors, by interviewing teachers and their beliefs or also by means of interviews of students. It is common to all contributions that they focus on the way how the history of one’s own country is told and what importance is thereby given to multi-perspectivity and controversy. Thereby, two main questions arise: What concrete histories are told and what narratives are passed on or which ones are refuted, respectively? How exactly is the history of one’s own country, for example, taught in Belgium, Cameroon, Canada or Switzerland and how is the teaching structured? The focus is thereby also put on the question as to how the teaching happens in the different regions of the country. What are, for instance, the similarities of narratives and where and why do differences appear?

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35 Cf. Hansjörg Siegenthaler, *Hirtenfolklore in der Industriegesellschaft. Nationale Identität als Gegenstand von Mentalitäts- und Sozialgeschichte*, in: Guy P. Marchal/Aram Mattioli (eds.), *Erfundene Schweiz. Die Konstruktion nationaler Identität*, Zürich 1992, 23–35, here 35.

36 Cf. also: Bernd Schönemann, *Identität*, in: Ulrich Mayer/Hans-Jürgen Pandel/Gerhard Schneider/Bernd Schönemann (eds.), *Wörterbuch Geschichtsdidaktik*, Schwalbach/Ts. 2006, 90–91.

37 Cf. also: Mario Carretero/Jose A. Castorina/Leonardo Levinas, *A conceptual change and historical narratives about the nation. A theoretical and empirical approach*, in: Stella Vosniadou (ed.), *International Handbook of Research on Conceptual Change*, New York 2013, 269–286.

The project does, however, not only list contributions with references to country-specific implementations, but it, above all, makes it possible to enter into an intense exchange and thus creates preconditions to learn from each other. Some examples in the present publication more strongly focus on what happens in the classroom on an everyday basis than similar international studies.<sup>38</sup> Taking into account the phenomena and actions taking place during history teaching the analysis of teaching and learning processes allows us to compare converging and diverging topics (the type of content, structure, effect) and to grasp the specific as well as contradictory dimensions of the teaching about the history of one's own country in different national contexts. With this objective the pilot project was supported by the "Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation".

In the present volume different findings were collected with the goal of ensuring the access to the challenges of conveying the history of one's own country in different national contexts. The book is trilingual and builds language/cultural bridges as different examples with mixed-language teams of authors. Among them are states which, in the framework of their shaping into modern state structures, were conscious of their multicultural imprint (as, for example, the Canadian province of Québec) which today combine a recognized cultural and linguistic diversity on their territory. We, in particular, ask the question: How did integrating narratives emerge? To what extent were they integrating or still excluding for autochthonous as well as allochthonous minorities? Were there or are there still any conflicts concerning this matter and how are today, with the end of the national master narratives, historical references to the history of one's own country created? Given there are examples from Belgium, Cameroon, Switzerland and the Canadian province of Québec. In the first part you thus find contributions of authors from multilingual and multicultural countries.

There follows a second part with contributions from countries with fairly homogeneous links. Among them are, for example, Japan and South Korea. These societies as well are, however, subject to a strong cultural change through migration and, thus, similar questions arise as for the first group. The starting

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**38** Cf. also: Létourneau, Chapman, Young people, national narrative and history education. The approaches in the "London Review of Education" (2/2017) can roughly be divided up into contributions whose subject of discussion is the national narrative conveyed in schools and also pursue the question as to how national narratives are "eternalized" in history textbooks; furthermore, questions arise as to how students and youths remember general and specific aspects of the national history, but also how they use history as an argument as well as for orientation and, how individual and personal links to the history of their own country or their own nation are established.

positions in a third group of states which are characterized by disputes and demands in connection with the definition of the identity of the nation state are complex. Among them you find Israel. In New Zealand we see the example of a settler society which has created a nation state and thereby, from the very beginning, has been confronted with the question of the integration of the Maori – also into the national narrative.

In the following there are three research reports on master's theses which were written at the University of Teacher Education in Lucerne and are directly connected with the research project. They investigate the mediation of history of one's own country or also the narrative about it in the conflict-laden societies of the Western Balkans and Turkey.

For *Belgium* Karel van Nieuwenhuysse shows that it is an important goal of conveying history in both the language communities (Flemish and French) in Belgium to support young people in their search for identity. Historical standards do, however, not reveal anything about what identity(ies) should in particular be supported. Thus, the direct question arises as to how teachers deal with identities in history classes and thereby convey the history of their own country. This is investigated on the basis of a rather small qualitative research project in Flemish as well as Francophone secondary schools in Brussels (the multicultural capital of Belgium). The study is based on eight class observations in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade and on semi-structured interviews with four teachers as well as on the basis of further document analyses. The findings reveal that there are teachers who promote a national identity in an implicit and explicit way whereas others ignore the topic of identities. No teacher made the attempt to critically deconstruct identity-forming processes.

Eugène Désiré Eloundou und Ndobegang Michael Mbatndah investigate history teaching in *Cameroon* where the question of national identity appears to be particularly virulent in the tension fields of post-colonial structures. They ask, with respect to learner-centered constructivist approaches, how "Cameroonian personalities" and a Cameroonian "national consciousness" are conveyed. History teachers thereby play an important role. At an individual level of the teachers the differences are, however, not very conspicuous. The authors believe this is due to the similar formative education as well as to the structural framework conditions with class sizes of up to one hundred students. Consequently, the main focus of the teaching then lies on imparting knowledge. Such structural preconditions cannot be changed easily. But both the authors believe that by means of new teaching and learning models also the analytical framework for history teaching in Cameroon could be expanded.

Several contributions deal with *Switzerland*. Helene Mühlestein in her article points out that in the modern federal state after 1848 the confessional issue had marked the content-related differences as regards the mediation of the history of one's own country for a long time. For choosing a textbook the confessional perspective in the textbooks was therefore decisive. Accordingly, the textbooks for the history teaching up to the 1970s became a regional or cantonal matter, respectively, whose reference framework was given by the confessional perspective of the respective sociocultural area. This was the only way to directly take influence not only on what was conveyed in the textbooks but how. The way the Reformation was represented remained a subject of discussion until the 1970s through which the history textbooks differed (often markedly). The Reformation was thus an event that marked the narrative. The slow dissolution of the confessionalism after 1970 led to an opening-up of the history teaching for new categories.

Next, Markus Furrer and Lyonel Kaufmann present how the history of one's own country is conveyed in the current textbooks of the French- and German-speaking Switzerland on the basis of the new compulsory curricula specific for each language region. In both the language regions the inclusion of the history of Switzerland pursues a similar approach. Two developments are particularly striking: On the one hand, the representation of the history of Switzerland moves away from the special case character, because, not being isolated or dichotomous anymore, a master narrative is inserted into the textbook. Thus, you cannot find a classical narrative of the emergence of Switzerland in any textbooks oriented on a canonized course. Furthermore, the history of one's own country is in many ways embedded in a European context and creates a new "Europe-we-feeling". With the means of the "Europeanization" the area of today's Switzerland is included into European and global processes. Thereby, it becomes clear that the history of a small country can be of interest and relevance, and that human actions have an effect as well – a positive as well as a negative one.

Nadine Fink and Peter Gautschi try to detect the particularities when conveying the history of one's own country within the framework of an intercultural analysis. They present a pilot study with comparative approaches about the analysis of history teaching in French- and German-speaking Switzerland. In the first part, they come up with thoughts about the historical culture and identity of Switzerland, then they also set out the general framework conditions of teaching. In the third part they present a history lesson chosen from the French-speaking example "The Birth of Switzerland". On the basis of this example they develop characteristics for the analysis of history lessons. The contribution closes

with an outlook and opens up the research potential. With a view to the analyzed lesson the authors ask themselves to what extent the interest in the history of the “Waldstätte” (the so-called founding cantons in Central Switzerland) can be interpreted as an expression of curiosity for “the others”, and how just therein the idea of pluralism in Switzerland is mirrored.

“It depends on the teacher”. Nicole Riedweg and Peter Gautschi point out that observation in their contribution which has a close look at the influence of history-specific beliefs of teachers when conveying the history of their own country. With regard to and derivation of theoretical concepts they show where history-specific beliefs as “powerful opinions” can be derived from. When it comes to the mediation of the history of one’s own country, different perceptions can be found in the empirically collected statements of teachers: History is seen as the “mentor of the present and the future”, moreover, as “science”, as “narrative about the past” and as “builder of identity”.

Michel Charrière looks at how much importance Swiss history has at grammar schools (secondary level II) against the background of Matura examinations in the so-called supplementary subject history. Furthermore, he also consults curricula which widely differ in scope and regulatory density throughout Switzerland as well as the cantons. With respect to this, the Swiss references are very different quantitatively as well as qualitatively. It also becomes obvious that Swiss history is of marginal importance in the written supplementary-subject Matura examinations. Only twenty percent of all the tasks include explicit or implicit references to Switzerland. Based on the assessment of the Matura examination tasks, no general statements on the importance of Swiss history in the history classes of grammar schools can, however, be made. On the basis of the supplementary subject with compulsory-optional-subject character tendencies can, in fact, be recognized.

In *Québec*, as in many other Western societies, a dominant narrative based on the experiences of the majority obstructs the diversity of other historical narratives and perspectives. Despite the ideas to include the diversity of cultural, economic and territorial perspectives, the history of Québec continues to be presented in a way that non-French-speaking students are encouraged to orient themselves on the narrative of the community of French-Canadian origin. By means of an explorative study with a group of grammar school teachers, Sabrina Moisan, Paul Zanazanian and Aude Maltais-Landry, in their contribution, investigate the different attitudes towards integration of the diversity of historical experiences in history teaching. Their findings reveal that history teachers, even if they live in the very same society, can have a completely different view of

this society, its population and its history. They likewise differ in the way they deal with this in their teaching and as to what objectives they pursue.

On the basis of a textbook analysis Akiko Utsunomiya and Nobuyuki Harada show how history teaching in *Japan* undergoes a change. They initially state that, through new framework guidelines, a change to a kind of history teaching with stronger student orientation is intended. Up to now no visible success could be observed. One reason for this, the authors believe, might be the importance of the national identity when conveying the history of one's own country. Especially with a view to the Second World War, identity formation quickly falls into a socio-political field of tension and becomes a complex and delicate undertaking in schools. A consequence of this is the fact that history teaching is strongly directed and logically teacher-centered. Both the authors come up with proposals as to how a more critical and extended dealing with identity in the classroom could be implemented which, in particular, could also be designed in a more learner-centered way. This way of teaching still stands in opposition to a concept of a comprehensive identification with a common nation and a common people which is represented as historically consecutive, inseparable and united. Whether this narrow guidance can be overcome, at this point both the authors remain critical.

Debates on the orientation and purpose of history are inevitable and crucial in democratic societies, as Sun Joo Kang in the example of *South Korea* demonstrates. Such debates are always linked with identity policy. Thus, South Korean proponents of a Korean-oriented history oppose those with an intercultural understanding of history. As the contribution shows recent changes which are characterized by globalization as well as global migration mean and require the development of multi-layered identities, including those which go beyond national self-perceptions and involve a national identity which is integrative, tolerant towards differences and flexible. Thereby, the prevailing perspectives of history teachers and their practice all of which are based upon empirical studies and analyses become a subject of discussion. Instead of building a fixed identity with the students, history in schools should help students to think about their historical identities in light of social change, and give them the opportunity to explore the complex cultural and ethnic elements which have influenced the process of identity formation and reformation.

Bob Mark, in his contribution on *Israel*, presents a project which shows how, in an educational system which is negative towards "alternative" narratives, it is possible anyway, through the work in the classroom with family histories from different parts of the spectrum, to produce material which is relevant to children

and lies out of the reach of the “gatekeepers” of Israeli history teaching. The narratives or histories, respectively, are true snapshots from the past of the families and ask the questions: What problems were these people confronted with, what opportunities did these families have, what decisions did they take and what are the consequences of these decisions? Contradictory historical narratives meet each other and have the effect of parts of a still incomplete puzzle on which joint work is now still carried out in order to find out how the parts fit together, what is still missing, how they position us and how they bring us together in the common classroom. The work thus encourages a further discussion about the kind of society which should be built.

In *New Zealand* Michael Harcourt has a close look at the settler-colonialism and the “white ignorance” in the New Zealand history curriculum. Thereby, he shows that a curriculum with high autonomy is problematic in a settler society like New Zealand, because it leads to a largely Eurocentric, outwards-oriented curriculum. Thus, many young people are not given the opportunity to deal with the controversial history of colonization and its sustainable forms of appearance of today. There are no simple answers to this, because the problem runs deeper and cannot simply be explained with a lack of information. The schools have to position themselves as active troublemakers of such “ignorance” and bring in uncomfortable viewpoints. Social tensions must, however, be overcome. The mediation of the New Zealand history of colonization cannot be left to the judgement of each individual teacher. The author detecting signs of change, is, however, not sure at all whether it will also lead to a broader critical engagement with the history of the colonization of New Zealand.

In the following research reports on aspects of the mediation of history of one’s own country in Bosnia and Serbia as well as on narratives about Turkey further examples can be found: Ljiljana Milinković investigates the mediation of history of one’s own country in *Serbia* in her master’s thesis. Therefore, she combines methods and approaches in order to be able to, as much as possible, grasp the case example in its entirety. The emphasis of the investigations lies on the focus group discussions which inquire about the historical consciousness of the participating youths. Until today, no common memory culture has been built between the post-Yugoslavian states. The contrary memory narratives opposing each other in a contradictory way dominate and manifest themselves on the different annual memorial days. The prevailing myths and negative stereotyping which are also reproduced by the youths make a normalization of the relations between the former Yugoslavian states more difficult. The demonization of the others and the self-glorification of one’s own nation is revealed in this

research project, but can also be shown on the example of other post-Yugoslavian states.

As Ivan Maros for *Bosnien-Herzegowina* can show, the three largest ethnic groups (Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs) here try to assert their own nationality. The Croatian and Serbian populations construct their own national identity in parallel in order to be independent of multi-ethnic governmental bodies. Since the end of the war there still does not exist any Ministry of Education for the whole state. The conclusion is that the educational system is strongly influenced by this. In the “national subjects” the students continue to be educated to adopt an allegedly “positive nationalism”. The political consequences of the war can still clearly be recognized today and this can be felt in the classroom as well.

Martin Basmaci interviews people from Switzerland of Turkish and Kurdish origin who have all grown up in Switzerland. He notices common as well as different perceptions about the history of the origin of *Turkey*. All the participants attributed a significant influence on the “history of Turkey” to the person of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the group of Ottomans. The interview participants with a Kurdish background emphasize the narrative of the policy of assimilation. Their narrative highlights the history of Turkey, in contrast to the interview participants with a Turkish background, mainly as a history of suppression and assimilation pressure. In contrast, the Turkish interview participants mention the Kurds only marginally. Obviously, the interview participants of ethnic Kurdish origin feel less attachment to the state. They are missing the identification offers. The fact that ethnopolitical tensions can arise from the different interpretation patterns does not come as a surprise, the author believes.

Based on the examples in this volume several main points become particularly clear: Content-related expansions are connected with the terminology of the “mediation of the history of one’s own country”. The access leads into the pre-modern era and subsequently into the time period before the classical nation-state building. Thus, the consistencies and the multiculturalism of societies are made visible. Several country case studies, in fact, also pursue the question as to how different entities and groups in the country establish the link to a common history. Apart from the classical textbook analyses, the classroom observation and the analysis of students’ narratives, the teachers’ beliefs receive additional emphasis in some of the contributions. This approach has become important and forward-looking for some studies which are presented here for the first time.

The findings and analyses from the contributions show how complex and different the history of one’s own country can be conveyed. The majority of the



authors treat current questions of the mediation of history in schools. Thereby, positive developments become clear and trends become visible: Open societies and a responsible mediation of history are characterized by the fact that several interpretations are made possible. Not “an affirmative image” is conveyed, but plausible images are offered which the users judge, compare and from which they draw their conclusions. Therefore, critical thinking is needed.<sup>39</sup> Responsible mediators of the history of the country assume that the users are willing and able to think independently and critically, and they promote this critical thinking in their contributions as authors of history textbooks and as teachers.

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**39** Marc-André Ethier/David Lefrançois/François Audigier (eds.), *Pensée critique, enseignement de l'histoire et de la citoyenneté*, Bruxelles 2018.