# Historical Encounters

*A journal of historical consciousness,*
*historical cultures, and history education*

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## Overview

# Editorial: Perspectives on history and moral encounters

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## KEYWORDS

historical consciousness, moral consciousness, historical perspectives, history education, moral reflection, democratic citizenship

## CITATION

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## Introduction

We are at a time in world political history that seems to be on a precipice. Over the past decade, it is difficult to ignore the global growth in popularity for autocratic governments, also in some countries which for decades were either strong democracies or moving towards stable democratic governance. The current Russian attack on Ukraine brings into stark focus the political instability many citizens are facing—historical problems are causing, or used as a pretext for, current conflicts. History educators across many sectors—primary, secondary, university, and in public spaces such as museums and galleries – are curious about how these and other current events and issues can and should be approached. The events raise anew the questions of whether and how we can learn from the past, what we value as good and bad in the past, and how these insights might affect our present and future judgements. In relation to this it becomes vital to ponder how educators and members of the public can communicate the situation in Ukraine and similar events to others, while avoiding the bias that *presentism* can bring.

This special issue is a capstone of our project, History and Moral Encounters: Exploring theoretical and empirical intersections of historical and moral consciousness from a history didaktik perspective. The project, funded by the Swedish Research Council from 2018-2021 aimed to increase knowledge and understanding about intersections of historical consciousness and moral consciousness to develop new theoretical tools for history teaching that can support education for democratic citizenship. Modern history teaching is expected to contribute to developing students' critical thinking and commitment to democratic values and human rights; yet there was little research on how historical interconnections are interpreted by students and linked to their moral consciousness when the project began. Over the four years, members of the project team undertook two major research activities, with sub-projects within them. They include:

1) A large-scale theoretical overview of the research on intersections of historical consciousness and moral consciousness within history education from 1980-2019; which culminated in theoretical articles that explored the understandings of key theorists and a systematic literature review of existing publications mapped across almost four decades; and

2) An empirical comparative study of high school students from Finland, Sweden, and Australia that sought to investigate, using a history text, how students express their understanding of moral consciousness through a lens of historical understanding.

Members of the Historical and Moral Encounters research group that make up the project, include: Professor Niklas Ammert (Principal Investigator), Linnaeus University, Sweden; Professor Silvia Edling, University of Gävle, Sweden; Associate Professor Jan Löfström, University of Turku, Finland; and Associate Professor Heather Sharp, University of Newcastle, Australia.

## Comparative research

A focus on comparative research has been at the centre of the empirical component of this project, with research being carried out in high schools across three countries: Australia, Finland, and Sweden. Building on this research, comparative work that enables the exploration of traumatic, contested, and/or difficult pasts across more nations will enable a clearer picture of the differences and similarities including whether there are culturally specific norms of how high school students engage with historical texts and how they express their ideas and thought processes that can then be analysed according to notions of intersections of historical consciousness and moral consciousness.

Outcomes of the project show that there is potential to develop nuanced understandings and strategies of intersections between historical and moral consciousness that can be used in history education to stimulate students' democratic citizenship. This is an area the project team—now expanded—is investigating in further depth.

### *Publications*

In addition to this special issue, the following research outputs have been published from the funded project:

Ammert, N., Edling, S., Löfström, J., & Sharp, H. (2023, forthcoming). *Att lära från, om och med det förflutna I nuet*. Gleerups.

Ammert, N., Edling, S., Löfström, J., & Sharp, H. (2022). *Historical and Moral Consciousness in Education: Learning Ethics for Democratic Citizenship Education*. London: Routledge.

Löfström, J., Ammert, N., Edling, S., & Sharp, H. (2021). Advances in ethics education in the history classroom: after intersections of moral and historical consciousness. *International Journal of Ethics Education*, 6(2), 239-252. doi:10.1007/s40889-020-00116-w

Edling, S., Löfström, J., Sharp, H., & Ammert, N. (2021). Mapping moral consciousness in research on historical consciousness and education - a summative content analysis of 512 research articles published between 1980 and 2020. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 54*(2), 282-300. doi: 10.1080/00220272.2021.1970817

Edling, S., Sharp, H., Löfström, J., & Ammert, N. (2020). The good citizen: Revisiting moral motivations for introducing historical consciousness in history education drawing on the writings of Gadamer. *Citizenship, Social and Economics Education*, 19(2), 133-150. doi:10.1177/2047173420936622

Sharp, H., Edling, S., Ammert, N., & Löfström, J. (2020). A Review of Doctoral Theses Since 2000: Historical Consciousness in the Australian Context. *International Journal of Research on History Didactics, History Education and History Culture*, 41, 123-142. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/1959.13/1426491

Löfström, J., Ammert, N., Sharp, H., & Edling, S. (2020). Can, and should history give ethical guidance? Swedish and Finnish Grade 9 students on moral judgment-making in history. *Nordidactica : Journal of Humanities and Social Science Education*, 4, 88-114. Retrieved from https://journals.lub.lu.se/nordidactica/article/view/22345/19929

Ammert, N., Sharp, H., Löfström, J., & Edling, S. (2020). Identifying aspects of temporal orientation in students' moral reflections. *History Education Research Journal*, 17(2), 132-150. doi:10.14324/HERJ.17.2.01

Edling, S., Sharp, H., Löfström, J., & Ammert, N. (2020). Why is ethics important in history education? A dialogue between the various ways of understanding the relationship between ethics and historical consciousness. *Ethics and Education*, 15(3), 336-354. doi:10.1080/17449642.2020.1780899

Sharp, H. L., Ammert, N., Löfström, J., & Edling, S. (2017). Bridging Historical Consciousness and Moral Consciousness: Promises and Challenges. *Historical Encounters Journal*, 4(1), 1-13. doi:10.52289/hej4.100

In addition, to the joint publications listed above, the project team guest edited a special issue of Historical Encounters Journal (HEJ) in 2017 that provided a basis for the project that was subsequently funded the following year. In this first special issue, scholars investigated what it might mean to bridge historical consciousness and moral consciousness from a predominately theoretical perspective, including: examining the ethics of teaching, proposing models to analyse historical and moral consciousness, investigating plurality in education, developing historical consciousness through teaching democracy; analyzing teenager reasoning about historical

responsibility using social psychology, and exploring historical consciousness and the moral dimension.

## Moral encounters and historical consciousness

Members of the public, which also extends to high school students, are fascinated by what happened in the past and how and why it is relevant today. We can tell this by the growth in genealogy over recent decades, popularity of blockbuster films that depict historical events, popular historical fiction through novels and picture books, visits to museums and memorials, and commemoration of key historical events such as national and international wars to mention just a few ways history is practiced and learnt about outside of the formal school or university classroom. There is, or at least it appears this way, to be a need to navigate and orient in time as a foundation for individuals to interpret the past, to understand the present, and to consider possible futures. This process may seem abstract, but in everyday life people do consider themselves and positions they take regarding what has happened before, what is going on around them, and what may occur into the future. The process is an expression of a historical consciousness, a central concept in this research. The fascination and the perceived relevance of the past and intersections between the past, the present, and the future is often based on ethical 'problems' or fueled by moral reflections—interpretations of current upheavals in world politics impacting civilians are an example of this.

The aim of the four-year project that this special issue capstones, was to increase knowledge about intersections of historical consciousness and moral consciousness to develop new theoretical tools for history teaching that could support education for democratic citizenship. As the Swedish Research Council funded project comes to a close, and our project team moves into an ongoing research group, *Historical and Moral Encounters*, we reflect on our research outputs across the duration of the project. Most recently, our book *Historical and Moral Consciousness in Education: Learning Ethics for Democratic Citizenship Education* was published by Routledge. Sectioned into two parts, this book reflects the aims of the project. First, it examines the theoretical component of our research into the intersections of historical consciousness and moral consciousness and second, its application in empirical research with a focus on educating for democratic citizenship is examined.

Stepping back before the project began, in 2015 the Historical and Moral Encounters research group, whose core formed the Swedish Research Council grant application, organized a workshop in Helsinki, Finland, with invited experts from several countries to explore and discuss what intersections between historical consciousness and moral consciousness could mean, especially in an educational context. A strength of this workshop was that is drew on scholars from a range of disciplines, meaning interdisciplinary insight was at this project's inception. The authors who contributed to the resulting special issue published in this journal ranged from backgrounds in history didaktik to social psychology to philosophy of education—central in research addressing historical consciousness and moral consciousness. Sample sub-questions posed at the workshops included: *do intersections exist, how could we search for them, how could we identify them, how could we analyse them and how could we explain them?* The workshop helped to define and to frame the project. From the 2017 HEJ special issue through to this one, the project team has learnt a lot about the intersections of historical consciousness and moral consciousness and how this can then be applied to support students in learning for democratic consciousness.

## Special issue overview

Towards the end of the funded project, in 2020 a group of international colleagues were invited to a new symposium. This time they were asked to reflect on the results of the project team, namely through key research outputs, and to position the research in relation to, or in light of, new or other theoretical perspectives and interpretations. This second special issue presents an

opportunity to report on how scholars in the field reflect on the work conducted throughout the project's duration.

From the invited researchers to the symposium, this special issue contains articles by the following authors:

Tyson Retz examines what he considers to be the three largest ethical challenges faced by history educators in the Anthropocene. The challenges he outlines include: locating the human in the immensity of geological time; navigating the paradox of human agency; and leaving open the future to individual and collective decision-making.

In consideration of the empirical data of high school students in Finland and Sweden from the Historical and Moral Encounters research group, Liisa Myyry and Mia Silfver-Kuhalampi analysed student responses to a source document meant to encourage historical perspective-taking through consideration of how history teaching could contribute to the moral development of adolescents. They looked at integrating historical and moral consciousness and identified common elements that were shared, including: reflecting on others' perspectives to understand their motivations and emotions for action; and how cognitive development facilitates the development of the two consciousnesses identified here.

Fredrik Alvén and Jorge Ortuño-Molina focused on temporal orientations through a comparative study of initial teacher education students from Spain and Sweden. Informed by perspectives of institutionalised gender inequalities, his research examined how the students use temporal orientation when they reason about a subject deeply influenced by moral perspectives. This research has the potential to be far reaching beyond the personal to other topics of interest to historians and history teachers that seek to understand change and continuity in cultural contexts and on matters requiring historical empathy or perspective-taking.

Ethics as an organising concept in history education is the topic of focus for the article by Lindsay Gibson, Andrea Milligan, and Carla Peck. They contend that ethics remains an under-acknowledged, under-emphasized, misunderstood, and contested aspect of history education. They examine intersections between ethical judgements, history education, and citizenship education, emphasizing the importance of ethical decision making within the study of history via school curriculum. Linking to historical consciousness, and acknowledging the complexities of schools, the authors assert that making ethical judgements about the past in terms of what should be celebrated, commemorated, and otherwise remembered connects between the past, present, and future. It is important, as part of developing students' citizenship, for them to understand the role they can play—from a historical standpoint—now and into the future.

## About the Authors

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**Silvia Edling,** PhD, is a professor and excellent teacher at the Academy of Education and Business Studies, University of Gävle, Sweden. She specialises in research questions concerning democracy, teacher profession, ethics, and historical consciousness in education and higher education. Edling is particularly interested in developing teacher perception in the crossroad between past, present, and future as well as between knowledge, democratic citizenship, and equity. In 2019 she was appointed as the scientific director of the Programme Democracy and Equity: Learning Processes for Social Sustainability at the University of Gävle.

**Jan Löfström,** PhD, is an associate professor of History and Social Studies education in the Department of Teacher Education, University of Turku, Finland. In 2020–2021 he was a visiting professor at Linnaeus University, Sweden. His interests in research include historical and moral consciousness, historical reparations, history and social studies curriculum, and young people's civic knowledge and attitudes. Among other topics, he has focused on historical apologies as gestures of symbolic inclusion and exclusion, young people's views on historical responsibility, and the meaning of History to students.

**Heather Sharp,** PhD, is an associate professor in education with a focus on History education at the University of Newcastle, Australia. In 2015 and 2019 she was a visiting scholar at Linnaeus University, Sweden and in 2016 was awarded a competitive residency Fellowship to the prestigious Georg Eckert Institute in Braunschweig, Germany. She is a founding member of the HERMES research group, convenor of the Tertiary History Educators' Australia group (THEA) and founding special issues editor of the Historical Encounters Journal. Sharp's research interests include historical representations in school curriculum particularly around topics of significance to a nation's history, connecting outbound mobility experiences with public history, and students' views on the history they study.

# Teaching history on the scale of the Anthropocene: Three ethical challenges

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## ABSTRACT

The Anthropocene strikes at the heart of the principle that making moral judgements involves a rich understanding of historical context. This article elaborates three subsequent challenges for history educators. First, locating human beings in geological time requires us to upscale our temporal conceptions of the human while downscaling our existential conceptions of the human. Second, we must make sense of a humanity that has combined an overwhelming power with a frightening loss of control, reviving the question of whether historical agents are to be morally judged by reference to their purposes and intentions. Third, history educators must be on guard against conceptions of the future that dispense with important notions of human and political agency. The challenges amount to a need to rethink the categories of scale employed by history educators to situate and explain human experience in time and space.

## KEYWORDS

Anthropocene, history education, historical thinking concepts, historical consciousness, narrative forms

## CITATION

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## Introduction

History as we know it grew out of the humanistic tradition. There have been iconoclasts and innovators who have pushed the boundaries into other fields. For example, the *Annales* group may be the most celebrated example of an approach to history grounded in the social sciences and the historical geography of the *longue durée*. But overall historians have identified their craft with the ethics of looking individuals in the eye, of reconstructing the experiences of people who lived in the past from the singular perspective of their time and place. In the educational sciences, when there arose a view that the school subjects were to be modelled on the forms of knowledge said to structure their corresponding academic discipline, it was to the humanistic tradition of thinking historically that history educators looked to establish a conceptual basis for teaching the subject (Retz, 2016). The second-order, procedural or historical thinking concepts that play so central a role in contemporary research and practice embody the ethics of a discipline committed to combatting what Thompson (1980, p. 8) memorably described as the "enormous condescension of posterity," a commitment to restoring posthumous dignity and respect that has even led one historian to call for a "Declaration of the Responsibilities of Present Generations Toward Past Generations" (de Baets, 2004, p. 130).

In the past two decades, the rise of the Anthropocene has challenged this humanistic foundation on which history has identified itself. The Anthropocene is the name of a new geological epoch, currently being considered by a scientific panel for inclusion in the Earth's official geological record, in which humankind has become a power on the level of a planetary force. In subject matter, it encompasses everything from global warming, environmental degradation and biodiversity loss to new schools of thought on the relations between humans and nonhumans, human time and geological time, how best to conceptualise the current predicament in which humanity finds itself, as well as its wide-ranging ethical and sociopolitical implications. Debates surrounding its starting date, which are debates about when human beings began to leave a permanent mark on the Earth's sedimentary strata, like all historical periodisations, reflect deep ideological and interpretive commitments, with some placing the emphasis on capitalism (Capitalocene) or global economics (Econocene), others the massive mixing of the world's biota (Homogenocene), plantations (Plantationocene) or the disproportionate contributions of Great Britain and the United States to global carbon emissions since the Industrial Revolution (Anglocene). Whatever their individual merits, the emergence of this *neologismcene* reflects the wide appeal of the Anthropocene as a new master concept for interpreting and addressing the current ecological transformation of the planet. Zoltán Simon (2020) calls it an *epochal event* requiring new *connective concepts* that could make sense of the radical novelty of humanity's current predicament.

For history, the Anthropocene could mean the end of the *verum factum* principle that has sat at the heart of the discipline's self-definition since the time of Vico. According to this principle, history is the story of what human beings have created with their own hands. Vico argued against his rival Descartes that it is in fact the natural world, as God's creation, that is unknowable to human beings, whereas the human world, as humankind's own creation, is knowable from the *inside*. The fundamental insight of the Anthropocene spelling trouble for the humanistic conception of history is this: what human beings have created with their own hands has accumulated to such an extent that it now exercises an independent agency of its own. It is a *technosphere* created by human beings that operates independently of their pretensions to mastery over nature and beliefs in rational, deliberative and self-determining action.

If the Anthropocene challenges basic humanistic principles on which the modern conception of history has been based, it should then also concern history educators who for decades have looked to the theory and philosophy of history for inspiration and guidance on how to teach the subject in ways proper to history's status as a distinct discipline, school subject, and form of knowledge (I also note that history education research has influenced in its turn the theory of history). With the shift several decades ago to discipline-specific forms of knowledge, it was thanks to an intentionalist philosophy of history that educational reformers were able to develop

a concept-based approach to historical teaching and learning. Now with the Anthropocene, it is not what human beings intended that serves as the kernel of historical explanation, but rather how their actions, each in itself tiny and insignificant, accumulate to take on the power of a planetary force. The ethical challenge is less about how to judge the actions of individuals who may or may not have acted purposefully than how to make sense of a human species that has combined an overwhelming power with a frightening loss of control.

In what follows, I elaborate three ethical challenges for history education that ensue from the arrival of the Anthropocene. I track back and forth between key themes in the burgeoning literature on the Anthropocene and their ethical implications for the theory and practice of historical teaching and learning. Collectively, the challenges amount to a need to think afresh about the categories of *scale* employed by history educators to situate and explain human experience in time and space.

## Challenge 1: Locating the human in the immensity of geological time

"The shallow chronology of history as a national project provides a compelling reason to expand historical scale" (Aslanian et al., 2013, p. 1435). So added the Australian historian Ann McGrath to the conversation 'How Size Matters' in the *American Historical Review*. An explorer of *deep time* and leading practitioner of *deep history*, her censure of the discipline's restrictive boundaries, relegating "whole categories of humankind to a timeless void" (Aslanian et al., 2013, p. 1435). while edifying the comparatively brief lifespans of nation-states, will be familiar to history educators who have adopted an increasingly critical posture towards the teaching profession's own complicity in the myth-making of the nation-building project. Without doubt, the massive enlargement of the timeframe within which historians work is the most fundamental change that the discipline of history has undergone this century. As Helge Jordheim (2014) has explained, on the one hand, globalisation has introduced diverse and more complex temporal relations in which the global time of commerce, technology and media has clashed with the different rhythms in the variety of cultures and societies. On the other hand, the deep time of climate change and the new geochronological periodisation of the Anthropocene has challenged the comparatively short-lived temporal horizons of social relations and political decisions. According to the historian Dipesh Chakrabarty (2018, p. 6), "if we do not take into account Earth-history processes that outscale our very human sense of time, we do not quite see the depth of the predicament that confronts humans today."

Chakrabarty has been the foremost member of a history discipline recalibrating its temporal coordinates. Beginning in 2009 with 'The Climate of History' and continuing with a string of essays since, Chakrabarty has maintained that the humanist distinction between natural history and human history no longer obtains in a world where human activities have become entwined in nature. "To call human beings geological agents is to scale up our imagination of the human," Chakrabarty (2009, p. 206) contends. History as the attempt to gain 'inside' knowledge of historical agents may be a worthy ambition when humans are regarded solely as biological agents. Indeed, historical agents traditionally speaking have been nothing but living and breathing entities acting upon the world in the limited context of their lifespans and circumstances. But we become geological agents only "when we have reached numbers and invented technologies that are on a scale large enough to have an impact on the planet itself. To call ourselves geological agents," according to Chakrabarty (2009, pp. 206–207), "is to attribute to us a force on the same scale as that released at other times when there has been a mass extinction of species."

Time is off-kilter in the Anthropocene. The upscaling of its conception of the human to the category of a geological force does more than furnish us with an Earth-moving strength; it undercuts the very temporality that has enabled history to model itself as the science of human efforts to make and remake the world. Geology and historiography operate on radically different temporal scales. The scale of geological time is *compressed* — processes that unfold over hundreds, thousands or millions of years, such as glaciation or the evolution of *homo sapiens*, can be comprehended as a coherent sequence (Horn & Bergthaller, 2020). Geological time is *uneventful*,

if by 'event' we follow William James (2014) and Mikhail Bakhtin (1990) in regarding events as eventful when they exceed the circumstances that created them, when an action is taken among a field of possibilities, where agents are responsible for taking *this* action as opposed to *that* action (Retz, 2021). In contrast to the flattened vista of geological time, the temporal scales employed in history tend to be calibrated to the pace of human lives, generational change, political conflicts, and social and cultural change. Questions of finding the correct temporal scale to study a period—that is, questions of periodisation—tend to revolve not around the changes to the planet that have occurred over the previous millennia. As exemplified by Jacques Le Goff in his final book *Must We Divide History Into Periods?*, the attention remains squarely on debates concerning a few decades or centauries; in Le Goff's case, the question of whether the Renaissance should be included in what he attempts to introduce as the 'long Middle Ages'. Classes in modern history debate the credibility of a 'long nineteenth century' beginning in 1789 or a shorter period taking the 1815 Vienna Congress as the ushering in of a new order. Supervisors hoping for successful completion would in general be reluctant to support postgraduates proposing to investigate a period of 100 years or more, with timescales of roughly a generation still the norm.

History textbooks, syllabi and curricula are also modelled after the arrangement of the past into bite-sized, digestible chunks. Human societies seen from the vantage point of the Anthropocene appear grainy and irresolute. It is difficult to determine what can count as an event and, moreover, what its causes were. The smallness of human time in the vastness of geological time thus compels history educators to rethink the categories of periodisation that order, organise and structure their study of the past. David Christian's 'Big History' has of course already mapped a study of the past at all possible scales, hoping history can restore to our lives some of the enchantment modernity replaced with its secular-scientific mindset (Christian, 2004, 2010). But it is not an immodest 'modern creation myth' that the Anthropocene demands. Quite the opposite. The upscaled human being implies an ethics of *downsizing*—among its 'posthumanist' advocates, of acknowledging the 'symbioses' between human and nonhuman species, culture and nature (Haraway, 2016; Latour, 2013). The posthuman attitude might be put thus: humans need to get over themselves.

The Anthropocene's pitching of humanity into the expanses of planetary time carries with it the ethical challenge of rethinking the category of the human in a world where human beings have become a force of nature, where trusty distinctions separating humans from nonhumans and culture from nature, which were central to the nineteenth-century development of academic disciplines, and at the end of which history emerged as the master discipline, have lost their shine.

History educators have not begun to consider the ethical implications of this reconfiguration of time. Andreas Körber (2017) has drawn attention to the way in which the temporal and moral dimensions of historical consciousness are interlinked in 'orientation processes', by which he means that our standards for judging the past are moulded by the temporal structures that conceive differently the relations between the past, present and future. The moral implications of different temporal orientations have also been explored by Ammert, Sharp, Löfström and Edling (2020) in their research into students' readings of Christopher Browning's work on the 'ordinary men' who were the perpetrators of the Holocaust. At the core of such studies are concerns about the 'presentism' of judging the past by present-day standards, values and ways of thinking, an attention to learning about others from the perspective of one's own tradition that has seen Gadamer become a mainstay of educational thinking on the subject (Edling, Sharp, Löfström & Ammert, 2020; Levisohn, 2017; Retz 2015; Seixas, 2004; Wineburg, 2001).

Built on notions of historical consciousness that were central to the humanist project of securing history's autonomy against the natural sciences, the moral dimensions explored in such research pivots on questions regarding historical context and the extent to which students develop an ability to evaluate past actions by reference to the specific context that gave rise to them. Thus, in my own work on empathy I have argued that the historical context to be uncovered is that in which it was *possible* for past agents to hold their beliefs as true and to act upon them accordingly, and why it is widely believed that taking historical perspectives must accompany any

attempt to judge the past (Milligan, Gibson & Peck, 2018; Bellino & Selman 2011, 2012). Such fine-grained optics are hard to find on the scale of the Anthropocene.

## Challenge 2: Navigating the paradox of human agency

The Anthropocene brings into question the humanistic foundation that has enabled historians to locate meaning in the intentions with which agents acted. To the conversation on "how size matters", Sebouh Aslanian (2013, p. 1454) pitched in that the new forms of deep history "have absolutely no place for what used to be called source criticism." The reading of historical sources, whether written or otherwise, has been the vehicle through which historians have interpreted and explained the past. Identifying how human beings have exercised agency has been a prime component of this interpretive and explanatory enterprise. A close reading of historical texts reveals the diverse ways that individual actors and groups have made and remade history by shaping or adapting to their environment. "One of the risks inherent in supersizing our scales or optics when it comes to historical work," according to Aslanian (2013, p. 1444), "is that we will eclipse philology, if not totally remove it from the historian's craft." At risk are the very principles of source criticism that have enabled historians to claim that they provide insights into human experience at a level of individual detail like no other discipline.

The first challenge introduced the paradox of a downsized ethics—of viewing the place of human beings within the biosphere in more modest terms—combined with an upscaled conception of the human to the category of a geological force. The recognition that human beings have become such a force requires in response that they develop an ethics of humility towards the more-than-human world. The second challenge operates on the horns of the same dilemma, but this time with regard to identifying the human subject of historical understanding, knowledge and explanation. The paradox of human agency in the Anthropocene is the combination of immense power with a frightening loss of control. The 'human' from whom the Anthropocene takes its name is not the purposeful and self-determining agent of traditional historiography and historical thinking; it is the human who exists both naturally and unnaturally, who acts as both a part of nature and apart from nature, whose goal-oriented actions produce side-effects that accumulate to exert their own agency. Human beings in the Anthropocene are at once an intentional power and unintentional force, and the ethical challenge for anybody wishing to downscale the impact of human beings upon the Earth system consists first and foremost in translating the naturalistic category of 'force' into the humanistic-existentialist category of 'power', in particular with the latter's emphasis on notions of consciousness and responsibility. Chakrabarty (2018) has come to see this balancing act as a type of code-switching that allows problems on the scale of Earth history to be grasped on the human timescales of politics and world history. The politically, culturally and economically differentiated human subject of the humanities runs up against the scientific perspective that views the cumulative effects of human activities.

A language for working with these tensions is Chakrabarty's 'pragmatic distinction' between the human as *homo* and the human as *anthropos*. *Homo* designates that familiar Vichian handicraftsman of the humanities who carved out for history a distinct methodological identity that went on to supply the school subject of history with a model for teaching and learning. It is that human who stands outside nature and modifies the environment purposefully, differentiated by culture, gender, race and socioeconomic situation, but in possession of universal rights and freedoms as well as the ability to think rationally and morally. *Anthropos*, on the other hand, refers to the human as a biological species, capable of changing its environment but in the limited sense of satisfying its physical needs and depending for its survival upon natural forces and successful coexistence with other species (Horn & Bergthaller, 2020, p. 70). It is a causal term stripped of any sense of moral culpability that describes the condition of human beings a force within nature (Chakrabarty, 2015, p. 157). *Anthropos* is not entirely new to the scene of history—environmental historians may have established the field in the 1950s and 1960s by locating the *homo* behind ecological destruction and decline, but they have long since turned a considerable portion of their attention to the discovery of nonhuman agency. Alfred Crosby in *The Colombian Exchange* showed

in 1986 that the European conquest of the New World owed less to the technological and military superiority of the European settlers than to the 'portmanteau biota'—the heady mix of microbes, plants and animals—that they carried with them across the Atlantic, which wreaked havoc on the local ecology and population.

Human actions have become tantamount to the great forces of nature, though they are not the *res gestae* or 'great deeds' of traditional historiography. Rather, they are the tiny and quotidian actions, each one insignificant in itself, that accumulates to take on the power of a planetary force. The Anthropocene may be the best example of Tolstoy's view that history is the story not of people's intentions but of what happened *in spite of* their intentions. When human agency is conceived according to models of "mutual, symbiotic entanglement" and "tangled feedback loops" in the style of new materialism and ecological posthumanism (Horn & Bergthaller, 2020, pp. 72–75), human beings appear as purposeless as other geological forces. Anna Tsing inverts causality entirely. Rather than having cultivated cereals that fed the growth of human society, "Cereals domesticated humans" (Tsing, 2012, p. 145), leading humans down a path that has not been good for them—a sedentary way of life, population growth and the development of cities and states and consequently to highly hierarchical social structures.

Under the label of the "technosphere," human agency is marginalised even further (Horn & Bergthaller, 2020, pp. 78–80). According to the geologist and environmental engineer Peter Haff (2013, 2014), the technosphere is an independent dimension of the Earth system, created and maintained by humans, but where the reverse is also true: humans are created and maintained by the technosphere. While humans service the system and ensure its energy supply, their own bodies run on technically produced calories, are kept warm, dry and healthy by machines. The dependency is mutual and there is no reason to believe that the whole assemblage is the sum result of the actions taken by individual human beings. Within the technosphere, human beings are little more than 'minor components', elements of a larger system to which they ultimately have no access. Haff argues that humans can interact with things only of the same scale as their own bodies—what he calls Stratum II. Smaller elements belong to Stratum I, and larger elements belong to Stratum III (Haff, 2014). In a transport system, for example, humans have access to the car they are driving and its various interfaces (steering wheel, brakes, air conditioning), all of which are of the same human scale. But they have access neither to the technical micro-level of Stratum I (the electronics, the physics and the chemistry of the process of combustion in the engine), nor to the macro-level of Stratum III (the urban traffic system, the petroleum industry or the carbon dioxide emissions of global traffic). Our actions accumulate on a magnitude that becomes impossible to grasp.

On what basis are students to make moral judgements about past actions when action itself is regarded as springing not from the intentions of historical agents but in combination with smaller and larger scale phenomena to which they had no access? On what basis are they to judge past actions when there is no identifiable ground on which past agents are seen to have thought, deliberated and acted? How is it possible to judge past actions when unintentionality replaces intentionality as the prime category of historical explanation? What hope is there of identifying a historical context that serves to explain why people acted the ways they did when that historical context becomes viewed as comprised of tangled feedback loops the most of which exist beyond the ken of human understanding? It seems the 'epochal event' that is the Anthropocene is a truly 'unprecedented change' (Simon, 2019, 2020). "Little wonder," writes Simon (2020, n.p.), that "its challenges to modern historical thinking leave the historical profession and historically minded scholars and educators puzzled."

## Challenge 3: Leaving open the future of individual and collective decision-making

Perhaps nothing has seized the attention of researchers in history education more than Jörn Rüsen's (1987, p. 284) account of historical consciousness as giving "structure to historical

knowledge as the medium for understanding present time and for anticipating the future", the achievement of which is to be found in the narrative forms specific to history. Narration, according to Rüsen, is a process of historical sense-making, of translating the experience of time into something meaningful and intersubjectively communicable. Since human beings experience time differently, it follows that there are different forms of historical narration. Rüsen's chief point is that being historically conscious entails having the narrative competence to distinguish the different narrative forms while also being able to work within them and across them. The *moral dimension* consists in recognising the moral standards and assumptions bound up in these narratives as well as how, in Gadamerian language, our own prejudices and traditions are stirred up in our encounters with historical others (Retz, 2015, 2018; Edling, Sharp, Löfström & Ammert, 2020). A 'moral turn' in historical studies, George Cotkin (2008) argues, has been characterised by a greater willingness on the part of historians to recognise the moral background and consequences of their own research.

An attention to narrative forms is especially important when it comes to the moral implications of the Anthropocene. A recurrent trope is that the Anthropocene acts as a kind of alarm bell, awakening humanity from its slumber and jolting it into action against climate change, environmental degradation and species loss. Chakrabarty (2015, p. 158) summarises the view that motivating human action in the Anthropocene "entails the difficult task of making available to human experience a cascade of events that unfold on different scales, at once human and *in*human." If we are to accept Haff's argument that only elements of the same scale as human beings (Stratum II) are accessible to human cognition, this task would appear not difficult, but impossible.

Even if we did not accept it, a distinct feature of the narrative form of the Anthropocene still prevents it from generating the motivation for such moral action—its special variety of future-perfect determinism (Nordblad, 2021). The temporal structure of the Anthropocene is such that it is presented to us today as a series of unfolding events that *have already happened*. From the perspective of geology and Earth system science, what is unusual about the Anthropocene is that it is the first geological epoch to be declared in the present, without a delay of several millennia (the time it takes to distinguish one sedimentary layer in the earth's surface from another). But even this is misleading, for the fact that the Anthropocene can be declared in the present is possible only because it enlists the perspective of an imaginary geologist located millions of years into the future from now. The Anthropocene, to be sure, is a thought experiment, one that has done much to raise awareness of the grim reality on the ground and the dubious inheritance that recent generations are bequeathing to future generations, but also one that closes down rather than opens up the future to creative thought and decision-making.

The Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin (1984, 1990) spent his life trying to free the characters of novels from the closed structure imposed on them by the novelist. His efforts to do so are instructive for us in our present moment as subjects in the Anthropocene, illuminating that creativity, choice and ethics are only real when the events of life are *eventful*, which for Bakhtin meant looking upon an action as but one of a number of different possible actions. Central to the idea of ethics is that agents may take certain actions as opposed to other actions, for there can be no moral judgment when what happened is the only thing that could have happened. We can judge the actions, ideologies and belief systems of historical agents only to the extent that they were able to pursue alternatives. What is so illuminating about the study of the 'ordinary men' of Reserve Police Battalion 101 is that the overwhelming number of them carried out the order to commit murder even when offered an alternative (Ammert, 2015, p. 22). It is only because the events were eventful that students can judge these men and evaluate the merits of the intentionalist and functionalist accounts of the Final Solution. Viewed within a narrative structure that removed the criterion of responsibility, there would be little purpose in trying to judge their actions. Agency and action would be regarded as a mere unfolding of events, doing little to inspire thought on how the men perceived their situation and acted upon it.

The view of the present from the dizzyingly distant future denies the present moment of this eventness. It is this temporal setup that relates specifically to the attempt in history education to

engage with the past in ways that sharpen perceptions of the present and expectations of the future. Jeremy Davies (2016) is a representative of the widely held belief that the picture depicted from the deep future is the key to a contemporary green politics of the Anthropocene. Imagining how the Earth will look in that deep future, so the argument goes, serves as a means for concentrating on the concrete realities at hand. A 'geology of the future' becomes the blueprint for a politics of the here and now in the immensity of geological time. Against this view we could ask whether this temporal structure engenders apathy and political disengagement. After all, why act at all if the future is already determined?

Indeed, the future geologist of the Anthropocene could be described as the author of a narrative of *foreshadowing* (Morson 1994), a type of backward causation implying that the future is already there, already sufficiently well formed to send signals back to us. It is not that the past pushes life and events forward into the future, but rather that life and events are pulled from the future. The narrative establishes a fixed pattern to which time-bound events conform. The achievement of historical consciousness in such a narrative form would consists in appreciating the inevitability of historical events as well as those yet to come. History loses its eventness, becomes a series of mere occurrences, while expecting the future becomes thinking about how to navigate a course through a set of pregiven stages. By contrast, Bakhtin's hero was Dostoevsky, the literary master of *sideshadowing*, able to cast shadows obliquely over his characters of an alternative present. Unlike foreshadowing where agents walk forwards into a shadow cast from the future, the multiple shadows laying across the path in a narrative of sideshadowing enables agents to experience time as a *field of possibility* (Retz, 2021). Their past is one in which historical agents were responsible for their actions, as they are responsible for their actions in the present and in the open futures they create.

## Conclusion

The Anthropocene comes with all sorts of tensions and paradoxes. In the three challenges that I have elaborated, we have encountered a need to upscale our temporal categories while downscaling our existential categories, to come to terms with the combination of our immense power and lack of control, to raise accident as perhaps the more important category than intentionality, to see agents as operating freely within a narrative structure that closes down the future. The three challenges are no more than rough guideposts to the advent of a new knowledge regime that strikes at the humanistic foundation upon which history secured for itself the status of a distinct academic discipline and school subject. From the developmental logic behind such second-order concepts as 'progress and decline', 'continuity and change' and cause and consequence' to our habitual modes of historicisation that explain phenomena by reference to previous phenomena, it may be that we lack the mental furniture to deal with our Anthropocene predicament.

And yet I worry about what happens to historical thinking when it operates on a scale that loses sight of the fine texture of historical context. I worry about how we are to conceptualise, understand, explain and judge the past. Perhaps part of the answer lies in what Marnie Hughes-Warrington (2021) describes as 'scale-switching', moving between times, slowing down, speeding up, zooming in and zooming out again. Historians and history teachers are, in a way, already expert scale-switchers. They move back and forth between periods and events, movements and counter-movements, groups and individuals, the general and the particular. Now with the Anthropocene, the discovery of history might be characterised by evaluative thinking about what is good, fair and just in terms of different optics and levels of resolution—the big, the small, the micro and the macro. Each sets groups and individuals in a different relief and in relation to different constellations of nonhuman factors. As for the kind of political consciousness that will emerge from this new knowledge regime, one of the great benefits of an education in history is learning to spot the sideshadows that lurk in every foreshadow, learning to see how things could have been different, which is to appreciate how things can be different now and could be different in the future. I only hope that the compressed historical time of the Anthropocene will not

represent the final triumph of necessity over freedom, that history will continue to reveal life as an open-ended field of possibility.

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## About the author

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# Integrating historical and moral consciousness in history teaching

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to explore historical perspective-taking from a social psychological perspective and reflect on the role of social identities and conceptions of human nature in perspective-taking. The sample consisted of 160 Year 9 students in Finland who responded to a historical perspective-taking task based on an edited excerpt from the book *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (Browning, 1999). Based on qualitative content analysis, four types of answers were identified: all groups have the potential for good and evil; in-group is morally superior; lessons learned from history; and in the future similar situation would be possible. Social identity as an in-group – out-group distinction was essential in the responses as well as moral and historical empathy. Our empirical data shows that many students are willing and able to reflect on complex ethical questions on history lessons, and therefore we suggest that open discussions and consideration of different perspectives should be encouraged in history teaching. In addition, connecting historical topics to current day issues would help students to recognize the patterns of thinking that may lead to intergroup conflicts and violence.

## KEYWORDS

historical consciousness, moral consciousness, empathy, perspective-taking, social identity

# Introduction

## *Similarities between historical and moral consciousness*

According to Jörn Rüsen (2005), historical consciousness refers to a kind of narrative competence, the ability to generate interpretations of the world where there are meaningful interrelations between the past, the present, and the future. Generating these interpretations includes awareness of different contextual aspects that influence the thinking and experiences of historical characters. Rüsen believes that there is a moral element in historical consciousness, because according to his empirical observations, people are predisposed to give history moral meanings. Ammert, Sharp, Löfström, and Edling (2020) suggest that in the context of history teaching, addressing issues connected to moral values can deepen knowledge and stimulate students' historical consciousness, which in turn can contribute to students' moral development. They showed in their empirical analysis that more than a third of their sample of 15-year-old high school students from Finland and Sweden were able to reflect the interrelations between the past, the present, and the future, when they were given a task concerning morally relevant historical events.

Research on moral psychology has identified several important components of moral development and moral behavior, many of which share similar elements with historical consciousness. James Rest's (1986) Four Component Model of moral behavior is a widely used framework to assess the psychological processes involved in moral functioning. The components identified by Rest are: (1) moral sensitivity (interpreting the situation); (2) moral judgement (judging which action is morally right/wrong); (3) moral motivation (prioritizing moral values relative to other values); and (4) moral character (having courage, persisting, overcoming distractions, implementing skills). Of these components, moral sensitivity and moral judgement in particular share similar elements to historical consciousness. Moral sensitivity can be defined as an awareness of how our actions affect other people immediately and in long-term (Rest, 1986). It includes being aware of who are the parties concerned in the situation, what lines of action are possible, and what might be the consequences of different behaviors to different parties. Moral sensitivity requires the ability to reflect on the other's viewpoint, and cognition and affect are interconnected in moral sensitivity in the form of perspective-taking and empathy (Rest, 1986).

Moral reasoning is another crucial component in morality. In a cognitive-developmental approach, perspective-taking or role-taking forms the basis of moral development. Both in justice reasoning (Kohlberg, 1984) and ethics of care (Gilligan, 1982; Skoe, 1998) approaches, moral reasoning is thought to form a developmental path from egoistic perspective to balancing and coordinating all conflicting perspectives involved in the situation. Hence, the more advanced levels of moral thinking are also by definition more reflective and complex, considering more perspectives compared to lower levels of moral reasoning. While Kohlberg's theory, 'The ethic of justice' is concerned with equality, fairness, and individual rights, 'the ethics of care' is concerned with responsibilities in relationships, focusing on avoiding hurting others and maintaining relationships. Justice reasoning is claimed to be universalistic reasoning with its assumption that the same justice principles are applied across situations (Kohlberg, 1984), whereas care reasoning is more particularistic and considers the specific characteristics of the situation and different parties (Gilligan, 1992). An interesting question is, would justice reasoning be more related to historical consciousness than care reasoning, if the latter were more focused on relationships? Some studies have indeed shown an increase in students' level of justice reasoning, when discussions considering different perspectives have been added to history lessons by trained teachers (Nucci, Creane, & Powers, 2015).

For both moral sensitivity and moral reasoning, the ability and willingness to try to take other people's perspectives is essential. This means that the person can imagine what kind of perceptions, interpretations and motivations people can have in different situations. Perspective-taking generates understanding for different morally relevant issues that the situation

involves and makes it possible to judge, which course of action would be the right and just one in the given circumstances.

Martin Hoffman (2000) has created a developmental theory of empathy, which emphasizes the role of cognitive perspective-taking. According to the theory, even newborns react to others' distress, but only older children understand better what the other is feeling, because they realize that he or she has inner states independent of their own, and they may react differently than they themselves would. Mature emotional empathy means that a person can understand the other's life circumstances more broadly and feel empathy for another's experience beyond the immediate situation. Hoffman believes that the cognitive development that enables the child to differentiate between self and the other also transforms self-focused empathic distress into compassion for the victim. Moreover, empathy is seen to be the base for guilt. According to Hoffman (2000), guilt is characterized by tension and regret which arise when a person feels empathy for the victim and understands that she/he is responsible for the victim's distress. Therefore, guilt motivates attempts to alleviate others' distress.

In the domain of history research, a concept of historical empathy has been used to assess the cognitive aspect of perspective taking, or perspective recognition, but also the affective responses to the past, historical empathy as caring (Brooks, 2011; Endacott & Brooks, 2013; Nygren, 2016; Nolgård & Nygren, 2019). Thus, the cognitive aspect of historical empathy is conceptually near moral perspective-taking, whereas historical empathy as caring – caring that people of the past were treated unjustly, or still are – can be seen as parallel to emotional empathy. Recent studies among school students show that when thinking about the history of national minorities, historical empathy as caring is prominent (Nygren, 2016; Nolgård & Nygren, 2019). Students can be simultaneously critical and caring in their historical thinking (Brooks, 2011; Nolgård & Nygren, 2019). A previous study also shows that empathy expressed by students in historical writing tasks is related to the instructions they receive before the task (Brooks, 2008).

From a philosophical point of view, it is important to remember that although psychology researchers write about 'understanding' and 'perspective-taking', it is never fully possible to take other peoples' perspective or understand their experiences, motives, or emotions. How would a person know whether he or she has understood what the other person is thinking or feeling? Empirical evidence shows that people often have difficulties to infer another person's thoughts and feelings accurately (Ickes, 2001). Furthermore, all individuals are unique in terms of their biological characteristics and life experiences. At best, it can be an effort to take the other person's perspective or to reflect the possible thoughts or emotions the other person could be experiencing. Heidi Maibom (2019) claims in her paper *What can we learn from taking another's perspective?* that accuracy might not be the main goal in perspective-taking. Understanding other's viewpoint may be more approximate, a blend of the self and another. According to Maibom (2019), this kind of attempt to extend our understanding beyond ourselves is nevertheless important and useful in social relationships, and it can be an important tool for developing one's moral characteristics.

### *Morality and social identity*

Recent social psychological research has emphasized the influence of social identity in terms of moral thinking and moral emotions. According to social psychologist Jonathan Haidt (Haidt, 2012; Lukianoff & Haidt, 2018), people have a strong, evolution-based tendency towards tribalism, favoring their own in-group and ignoring or demonizing the out-group, as research about empathic bias also shows (Cikara, Botvinick & Fiske, 2011). Labeling groups of people as good or evil creates "common enemy identity politics" which is likely to hinder perspective-taking and understanding between different groups. Instead, Lukianoff and Haidt (2018, p.244) suggest that schools should embrace "common humanity identity politics" which means emphasizing the uniting values and similarities between different people. Value researcher Shalom Schwartz (2007) has presented a similar concept, inclusiveness of the moral universe,

which refers to the breadth of the community to which people apply moral values, such as equality and rules of fairness.

Many historical topics are likely to activate conceptions related to social identities, for example nationalities or political groups. In the case of historical injustices that were encountered in Finland in the Civil War of 1918, or in the Second World War, for instance, group identity may be activated. There are two cognitive processes involved in transforming group membership into group identity. Categorization takes place when individuals classify people based on their membership in various groupings. The most critical classifications are in-group (the group one belongs to) and outgroup (the group one does not belong to). Identification occurs when individuals take on the qualities and characteristics of the group to which they belong (for example, Turner et al., 1987). Therefore, it is possible to feel guilt or shame on behalf of a group to which one belongs (Lickel et al., 2005). This so-called collective guilt or shame has inspired a lot of research in recent years. Also, in this context perspective-taking and empathy are relevant concepts: collective guilt and shame can motivate repairing collective injustices, when people feel empathy towards the victimized group (Brown & Cehajic, 2008).

### *Social identity and limitations of empathy*

Many authors have pointed out that empathy has some limitations as a driving force for prosocial behavior. In empathic over-arousal the level of empathic distress becomes so high that it turns into personal distress, which inhibits people from acting on behalf of the victim (Houston, 1990; Strayer, 1993). High level of empathy may also increase the tendency to perceive situations as negative and distressing (Chikovani et al., 2015). Cognitive abilities to regulate emotions are therefore important for preventing personal distress reactions. In addition, empathic distress might be biased in favor of one's in-group, family, or friends (Hoffman, 2000; Stürmer, Snyder & Omoto, 2005). People tend to feel more empathy towards in-group than out-group members and thus help in-group members more (Stürmer, Snyder & Omoto, 2005), and empathy is especially reduced when the out-group members are seen as rivals (Richins, Barreto, Karl, & Lawrence, 2019). Sometimes the failure of a competitive out-group may even cause pleasure and motivation to harm the out-group (Cikara, Botvinick, & Fiske, 2011). Rieffe and Camodeca (2016) found in their study about adolescents' empathy and different social roles that adolescents who were more often nominated as being bullies by their peers reported lower cognitive empathy (such as perspective –taking) than their non-bullying peers.

We can conclude that perspective-taking is an important element in moral development, and it would be an important question whether this skill can be practiced thought history teaching aimed at developing students' historical consciousness. However, several social psychological phenomena, for example social identities, are important to consider when planning such history lessons.

## The present study

In this study, we analyze students' responses to a historical perspective-taking task. Our research question is, how different ways of constructing social identities and different conceptions of human nature are observable in students' written answers? We also discuss different strategies to address the questions of social identities and perspective-taking in history teaching.

### *Methods*

Participants were 15 and 16-year-old Year 9 students in the University of Helsinki practice schools (N=160). University students who are studying to become teachers have their traineeships in this type of school, and these schools represent general Finnish population in terms of student sociodemographic background. The schools were in the metropolitan area (one school), in towns of 50-80,000 inhabitants (three schools), and in rural municipal centres (three

schools). The gender distribution was equal, with no dominant majority of any gender in the classes. In terms of its socio-economic profile, one rural area school's demographic was lower middle class and working class, compared to the other schools. In the classes that participated in the study, there were, in total, less than five students with migrant backgrounds. Students answered an electronic questionnaire in class. Students and their custodians had given informed consent and the study was reviewed by research ethics board.

Students first read an edited excerpt from the book *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, by the historian Christopher Browning (1999). The excerpt described a massacre in a Polish village during the World War II. The students were asked to reflect the experiences of Major Trapp, who was ordered to kill the villagers, and his soldiers, who he decided to give a choice not to participate in the killings. Having read the excerpt the students were asked to answer eight open questions, which were about the excerpt and the conduct of the soldiers and about the relationship between history discipline and moral judgments. This same material has been used as a part of another study focusing on a different theoretical perspective, temporal orientation in student's reflections (Ammert et al., 2020).

We analysed the data using qualitative content analysis. Our approach can be described as inductive content analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The idea is that the analysis is mainly data-driven, and the coding categories are not pre-defined based on previous studies or theories. The data is first coded by open coding, then the codes are grouped and finally groups of codes are described by abstracts concepts. In this study we focus on how different social groups and human nature in general are described in students' answers. We analyze the social-psychological aspects of perspective-taking; how different social identities are reflected in perspective taking?

Original quotes were in Finnish, and we attempted to translate the examples shown here as accurately as possible. Both authors read the material carefully several times. The first author developed the first version of themes, which was then refined based on discussions. Because this is a purely qualitative study with no predefined theoretical categories, reliability cannot be evaluated by quantitative methods, but instead it is important that the reader can follow the logic of the analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Flick, 2002) Our aim was to describe the diversity of the data comprehensively and to illustrate the content of different themes by providing quotes from the students' written answers.

For this study, we analyzed how different social groups and identities are addressed in the answers to questions 2 and 3:

2: "Does the story have some kind of message to you? Do you think that it has some kind of message to today's people? Explain you answer."

3: "Could a similar situation, as described in the text, take place in Europe today or in the future? Why or why not?"

## Results

Based on qualitative content analysis we identified four themes representing different ways of understanding social identities or human nature in general: all groups have the potential for good and evil; in-group is morally superior; lessons learned from history, and in the future a similar situation would be possible.

### *All groups have the potential for good and evil*

In the theme all groups have the potential for good and evil, respondents presented an understanding that a similar situation could be possible in Europe, because most people can act in good or evil ways due to changes in circumstances:

> It is possible to brainwash people to do horrible things, and it is important to learn from the past.

Some respondents also pointed out that the story presented the protagonists from a multi-faceted perspective, showing that there is a capability for goodness in everyone:

> ...The story showed that no one is completely evil. Afterwards it is easy to blame the parties who did more bad things, but in my opinion, in war all are losers. Something was done profoundly wrong when things got into that point...

> I think the story is meaningful because it gives a more humane picture of the SS-soldiers.

These responses highlight that people in general are capable of cruelty when manipulated in certain ways, and some members of demonized groups may be willing to make moral choices in difficult circumstances.

### *In-group is morally superior*

The second theme, in-group is morally superior, refers to responses where good and moral in-group members were differentiated from unmoral out-group members. Only the out-group may be capable of carrying out such terror:

> I don't think that at least in Finland or in other European countries [this could happen] because they are quite safe countries and most of them are led by presidents. And many of them are democracies.

> I don't think so [that this could happen], because in Europe human rights are quite good compared to for example Africa or Middle-East.

> It is not very likely [that this could happen], except by some terrorist organization.

In these responses different arguments are presented to justify, why Finns or Europeans today are different from the Germans during the World War II. The responses seem to lack historical knowledge in many cases (for example, Germany was a democracy before the Nazi party attained power through democratic election).

### *Lessons learned from history*

For both questions, the respondents presented ideas that there is a lesson to be learned from history and for that reason, the story is significant:

> It is significant, for people to learn and not to repeat mistakes of the past.

> In my view, this has or should have an impact on present-day people, because present-day people hopefully do not want to do anything so sadistic again.

Statements indicating that the world and people are better now, represented viewpoints that this kind of situation could not take place in Europe again, because people in general have developed to be more humane since the World War II:

> No, because I believe there is more humanity and mercy in the world.

> No, because in today's world the majority is against discrimination. It would cause a huge uproar in the social media.

> No, because humanity does learn from its mistakes and nothing good came out of that war.

The respondents also stated that the main message of the story was to endorse moral values, such as equality, tolerance, and freedom of speech:

> What stood out for me from the story was equality and that everybody is equally important, men, women, elderly people.

> The message is that everyone should be given freedom of speech and all opinions should be listened to. I feel that all people should read this and learn a lesson.

Moreover, there were arguments that the story emphasized the importance of independent moral judgement even under pressure:

> Perhaps one message for contemporary people could be to dare to come forward to show one's opinions and conscience.

> Sense of morality and expressing one's own opinion. All people can refuse to do some things that they think are not right morally or in any other way.

This way of thinking reflects higher levels of moral judgement in Kohlberg's theory: morality is not defined as merely following rules and authorities, but as independent reflection of moral values and principles.

### *In the future a similar situation would be possible*

In the fourth theme, not now but maybe in the future, the respondents expressed the view that a similar situation is not possible now, but perhaps some time in future this could happen. In some answers, the time frame was very wide:

> Could not for decades yet, but perhaps after thousands of years.

Some students also reflected the question of which kind of circumstances could lead to this change:

> I think that a persecution that would be so bad and extensive and concern all people that belong to a certain religious group or race could not arise in the world today. --- In the future, if things change for the worse, it could be possible.

> Of course it could, human beings are unpredictable and self-centred, and "big bosses" in particular might want more than their due, instead of fostering peace.-- I don't believe though that it is going to happen at present or in the near future, because youngsters and kids are being told about war in schools, and anyway there is more information on everything.

In the first answer it is indicated that something like holocaust could not happen in today's world, but perhaps in the future if things change, it would be possible. However, there is no precise explanation about what those "things" could be. In the latter answer, genocide is presented as unlikely in today's world, because children are taught about war in schools and there is so much information available. This is interesting view, considering how much media attention different human right issues in different parts of the world have received.

## Discussion

Our aim was to explore historical perspective-taking from a social psychological perspective and reflect on the role of social identities and conceptions of human nature. We concluded that a central concept in developmental moral psychology, perspective-taking, is also very relevant in the context of history teaching. Drawing on the theory by Hoffman (2000), we differentiate between perspective-taking, emotional empathy, and personal distress. Although emotional

empathy can motivate moral behavior, it may be biased towards in-group or it can turn into personal distress and motivate avoidance. Perspective-taking is an effective antidote to both weaknesses: it helps to identify with the more distant out-group members and to differentiate between self and the other. These concepts are also parallel to cognitive and affective aspects of historical empathy (Brooks, 2011; Endacott & Brooks, 2013; Nygren, 2016; Nolgård & Nygren, 2019).

In this study we provided Finnish 9th grade students with a demanding perspective-taking task: we asked them to imagine how a Nazi officer and soldiers would think and feel when ordered to kill civilians in a Polish village. They were asked to argue whether the story had message for them or for people in general, and could a similar situation, as described in the text, take place in Europe today or in the future. The respondents were also asked to justify their arguments. Applying qualitative content analysis, we identified four themes representing different types of arguments: all groups have the potential for good and evil; in-group is morally superior; lessons learned from history, and in the future similar situation could take place.

The first theme, all groups have the potential for good and evil, represents arguments that do not differentiate in-group and out-group in their capability of being humane. The answers emphasize that people can turn to be good or evil due to the changes in circumstances. These arguments reflect mature empathy, ability to understand other's perspective and the other's life circumstances more broadly (Hoffman, 2000), and to overcome the distinction of in-group and out-group (Cikara, Botvinick & Fiske, 2011; Lukianoff & Haidt, 2018). In Schwartz' (2007) terms, these responses refer to a large inclusiveness of the moral universe, ie. that moral values apply also to the out-group members.

In the theme, in-group is morally superior, it is highlighted that this could not happen in Europe, but possibly in another continent or by some outer organization. Thus, the respondents clearly differentiate the characteristics of in-group and out-group. These arguments refer to the categorization process of group membership (Turner et al., 1987), and are in line with results about empathic bias towards in-group (Stürmer, Snyder & Omoto, 2005; Cikara, Botvinick & Fiske, 2011; Rieffe and Camodeca, 2016; Richins, Barreto, Karl & Lawrence, 2019). Moreover, this can reflect the lack of empathic accuracy, the difficulty to infer another person's thoughts and feelings accurately (Ickes, 2001). Perspective-taking exercises, especially towards out-groups, could possibly reduce this type of polarized attitudes.

The respondents stated that there are several lessons to be learned from history. Some expressed an optimistic view that this kind of situation could not happen anymore because people have developed to be more humane and wiser since the World War II. Rejection of the idea that people are still capable of cruelty towards other human beings, may reflect the personal distress dimension of empathy (Houston, 1990; Strayer, 1993). Thinking that something horrible could happen in the near future, may cause distress that leads to search counterarguments for that.

Some respondents stated that the story could teach us the importance of moral values and independent moral judgment. These responses referred to moral motivation aspect of morality (Rest, 1986), endorsing moral values such as equality. In addition, stressing the capability for independent moral judgment, concern for equality and individuals' right to state their opinion, emphasizes justice as a crucial foundation of moral thinking (Kohlberg, 1984). On the other hand, focusing on avoiding hurting others, reflects ethics of care (Skoe, 1998). Thus, it seems that both justice and care approaches are present in the students' answers.

The last theme, in the future similar situation could happen, represents understanding that things can change in time and that circumstances in societies affect peoples' behavior. According to cognitive-developmental models, this signifies reflective thinking, where different perspectives are considered simultaneously (Kohlberg, 1984; Skoe, 1998; Hoffman, 2000). Moreover, it reflects historical consciousness, ability to generate interpretations of the world where there are meaningful interrelations between the past, the present and the future (Rüsen, 2005). This category is similar as the genetic type of historical consciousness in Ammert et al. (2020).

Reflecting how and why certain behaviors occur or change in time is perhaps the most relevant intersection between historical and moral consciousness.

### *How to enhance historical perspective-taking in school?*

Our empirical data shows that many students are willing and able to reflect on complex ethical questions on history lessons, as pointed out also by Brooks (2011), Nygren (2016), Nolgård & Nygren (2019) and Ammert et al. (2020). Furthermore, a relatively recent study suggests that students' level of moral reasoning can be enhanced by integrating discussions on moral issues in history teaching (Nucci, Creane, & Powers, 2015). However, it is important to do this in the right way: instead of offering predefined ways of interpreting historical events, the teacher should encourage open discussion that considers different perspectives to the issue at hand. Asking the students to describe the perspectives of different people belonging to different groups could potentially develop both historical and moral consciousness.

Practicing perspective-taking can play a significant role in moral development (Kohlberg, 1984; Skoe, 1998; Hoffman, 2000). Our task was an example of a demanding perspective-taking exercise: the students were asked to imagine how a Nazi officer (or soldier) thinks and feels (a member of an out-group that is labeled as purely evil). Carretero (2017) emphasizes the importance of presenting the variability of the out-group in history teaching: Some people were perpetrators, but some of them could be also victims, passive or active bystanders and even heroic helpers. This kind of realization has been associated with willingness to reconcile problematic intergroup relations.

The latest Finnish high school curriculum, which took effect in 2021, explicitly states that "historical empathy strengthens a student's ability for multi-faceted ethical reflection," i.e., moral judgment (LOPS 2019, p. 282). However, moral reflection is not a very pronounced theme in the curriculum as a whole. Still, it allows the teachers to integrate perspective-taking exercises and moral reflections in their lessons if they wish to do so. Current research in social psychology suggests that this can be a good way to enrich the students moral thinking and improve intergroup relations (Nucci, Creane, & Powers, 2015; Carretero, 2017).

Another relevant issue is whether history teaching should question the view held by many students that the events of the World War II are in the past and unlikely to happen again. Addressing current (or more recent) conflicts and human right violations in different parts of the world, including Europe, might help to see similar patterns of thinking and behaving that may lead to intergroup violence or even genocide. Ammert et al. (2020) come to the same conclusion: they suggest that teachers could connect historical topics to current day issues. This could enhance understanding, which could lead to learning important lessons from history and developing both historical and moral consciousness.

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# Temporal orientation in Spanish and Swedish teacher students' narratives about gender equality

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## ABSTRACT

The main objective of the study was to analyze how Swedish and Spanish pre-service teachers' temporal orientation influences their narratives and moral conceptions about gender inequality. 55 Spanish students and 76 Swedish students participated. The narratives were analyzed through a separate process of coding by both authors and the subsequence crossing of information in order to achieve agreement and reliability for the codes used. The analysis shows differences depending on cultural context, which may reflect the learning of narrative templates in History Education instead of a reflexive and critical learning. Mainly Spanish students described time under the concepts of change and continuity while Swedish students oftener saw time more as abrupt changes when describing the differences of current gender inequality regarding past times. Likewise, in almost all the narratives there is a naive way of understanding the sense of change over time. In the narratives there are no calls for individual action or descriptions of what possible actions there are for us to fight for a better future probably because history education does not provide examples in the past which mirror current social issues. These reflections make us to question why we teach history and how we do it.

## KEYWORDS

Temporal orientation, Gender Equality, History teacher education, Moral, Historical consciousness, Narration.

## CITATION

## COPYRIGHT

## Introduction and purpose

The fight for gender equality in a broad sense has become a worldwide issue as the MeToo hashtag movement, circulating in almost 100 countries, has demonstrated (Gill & Orgad, 2018). The campaign has provided opportunities to participate in an eager public debate on gender inequality, sexual harassment, sexism and sexual violence (Keller, Mendes & Ringrose, 2018). The intersection of sex and power has been explicitly addressed and has focused on it in terms of morality and justice, and already we have seen proof of organizational, legal, policy and cultural changes (Gill & Orgad, 2018). The movement, finding its force in digital media, has not least engaged young people (Keller, Mendes & Ringrose, 2018).  With this as a starting point we understood the theme gender equality as something that engages the students and as something they reflect upon and seek answers for. As they do this, they do it in a wider context, and both history and perceptions of the future as well as ethical values are occurring in this debate.

From the perspective of gender inequality embedded in past structures and cultural behaviors, this paper concerns history teacher students from Spain and Sweden and their reasoning about gender inequality over time. In concrete: how the students use temporal orientation when they reason about a subject deeply influenced by moral perspectives. Such knowledge could not only help us understand how the students orient themselves morally in time, furthermore, it could help the discussion about the connection between history teaching, and the students´ temporal orientation and history as a subject with moral connections.  Three overall research questions are examined:

- How do the students orient in time as they reason about gender equality?

- Are there any differences between the Spanish and the Swedish students´ orientations?

- What moral implications are there in the students´ orientations?

The advances in gender equality in both Spain and Sweden are evident both on the legislative and  social levels, and that has allowed reducing the wage gap, a greater presence of women in public positions and in companies, as well as a greater awareness on the part of the population, among others. Both countries are among the top positions in the European Union's gender equality index, issued by the European Institute for Gender Equality (2020). Specifically, Sweden ranks first with an index of 83.8 out of 100, and Spain the eighth place with an index of 72. The different positioning in the inequality index of Sweden and Spain is the result of differences in the conception of the social welfare model, with a more pronounced development in the Swedish case than in the Spanish one. This has had the consequence that the effects of the pandemic COVID-19, for instance, have not had the same impact in both countries. In the Spanish case, for example, there has been an aggravation of conciliation, a greater burden on family tasks that has been carried out by women, mainly, by impacting both on their health and on their labour situation. In part, the existence of different models of social welfare is conditioned by the history of each country, and that is the point we are interested in: the manner in which history education might influence by facing new relevant social issues.

In Sweden, the importance that the teaching of history has acquired in recent decades has been remarkable, becoming a political issue, where it has opted for a more international vision of history and focused on the understanding of processes, rather than a purely nationalist vision. The presence of conflicting issues such as the Holocaust and other genocides, as well as the development of tolerance, democracy, and human rights, plays an important role in teaching issues, as well as the role given to the "forgotten" of history (Nygren, 2016).  The fact that the

subject of history explicitly has a place for issues of gender equality is nothing more than the result of the universal model of social welfare that has developed in Sweden since the end of World War II. The Swedish model aims to combine the idea of equality (state monopoly of an interventionist nature and predominance of the public sector in management in the areas of social welfare) with that of equity (co-responsibility of citizens in the taking or adoption of responsibilities, especially at the local level) (Pulido-Montes, France & Ancheta-Arrabal, 2021). The maintenance of broad social coverage, financing the services of the care of dependent persons with public resources, contributed to greater participation of women in the labor market and needed the school world for the creation of a collective conscience that assumed gender equality policies as a key element for the social and economic development of the country. In this sense, sex education is taught at all levels from kindergarten to Upper Secondary School. This subject aims to promote gender equality and equal dignity for all, while aiming to avoid social problems such as sexually transmitted diseases, sexist language, sexual exploitation, gender violence, or oppression. Since 2011, terms such as sexuality, relationships, gender, and gender equality are presented in different subjects of different courses. Thus, these topics must be treated both in subjects of natural sciences (Biology) and in social sciences (History, Religion, Geography, and Civics) as in Mathematics and Language. In all of them, as we say, the contents of the subject must respond at some point to these aspects of gender equality, respect, dignity, and equal opportunities. In the case of history, students should have the opportunity to learn about how the view of gender, sexuality, and human relationships have changed over time (Skolverket, 2014).

On the other hand, in Spain, in recent times, an important effort is also being made to introduce new themes and historical agents in the teaching of history (Estepa, 2017). As in Sweden, this fact is motivated by the need to create a civic awareness that defends the social model of organization. In the early Eighties the current model of social welfare began to develop in Spain, which advocates the universalization of rights such as education or health, and active policies to avoid discrimination based on sex, religion, ideology, etc. However, the Spanish welfare model is not fully developed if we compare it with the Swedish model or other European social democratic models, due to the tradition of Francoism and the national-Catholic ideology that permeated everything. This implies that the role of families (and not so much of the State) is key as the main institution of welfare, and an essential reference for determining class and gender power relations. The scarcity of care and assistance services means that care falls on the family, and within these on women (Pulido-Montes, France & Ancheta-Arrabal, 2021). The educational correlation to this welfare state in progress might be found in how gender equality is dealt with in schools. While it is true that the educational legislation of recent years maintains certain transversal contents that are related to equality policies, the truth is that de facto it lacks formal spaces in the educational curriculum of the subject matters, which means that gender perspective, according to Ferrer and Bosch (2013), is not a reality in the classrooms. This is so, to a large extent, due to the existence of the hidden curriculum that continues to transmit the hegemonic culture (Calvo González, 2021). In the case of history classrooms, the influence of Franco`s dictatorship times still conditions the prevalence of master national narratives and the predominance of a very positivist type of historical agency (Gómez and Vivas-Moreno, 2019). Therefore, despite sharing similar objectives in terms of social and citizen competence development both in Spanish and Swedish curricula, there are notable differences in the apparent teaching of history.

## Theoretical Framework

History education has a great potential to deal with morality and ethical problems as history has a double condition: First, temporal dimensions can give meaning to humans´ values and therefore guide their moral actions. Understanding these processes may help us to understand what people perceive as moral challenges and what they want to do (Rüsen 2004). Second, traditionally the subject of history has been used to make a sense of citizenship and belonging by

using past behaviors to exemplify and direct contemporary action (Rüsen 2001; Selman & Barr, 2009; Bermudez, 2015). History education therefore implies much more than mere knowledge about the past, namely moral values and civic education. Nietzsche (1980, p. 7.) stated that "history serves life", and described how history in different manners can be used by humankind to make life meaningful. Other scholars presume that there is no human way of life that does not have a perception of the past that guides their actions in the contemporary. For example, Rüsen (2017, p.13) states that "everywhere and at all times human beings draw on the past to understand the present and to anticipate and plan for the future." The most common concept to capture this deeply human mental process is that of historical consciousness. There are, of course, related concepts like historical recollection and historical memory. These are also concepts that help us to understand the power of our perception of the past to form our actions in the contemporary society. Historical consciousness, however, stresses the understanding of humans´ being in time: the past, the present and the future. Using the concept of historical consciousness, the human being has been described as partly being history and partly being an emancipated creature able to orient in new directions and to break cultural traditions, and in that way doing history (Jeismann, 1979; Levstik & Barton, 2011). Being history, or being in time, appeals to humanities' historicity, while doing history can be interpreted as our ability to recognize our own being in time, a temporal orientation, and thereby act voluntarily (Gadamer, 2006; Ricoeur, 1988). Individuals' understanding of where they come from, who they are, and where they are going are thus part of their historical consciousness, and a more developed historical consciousness is said to be able to link the three time-dimensions as it orients towards the future (Rüsen, 2004). By creating a clear connection over time, our historical consciousness helps us create historical meaning (Ricoeur, 1988). Here is also a moral imperative. If we understand humans as mainly emancipated from the shackles of history and able to do history, they also are more easily dressed in a moral responsibility for their actions. On the other hand, if we understand the human being as mainly a product of history, predestined to handle through an inherited moral code, moral responsibility can be harder to understand.

The temporal orientation historical consciousness gives us, becomes understandable when it takes the shape of a narrative (Ricouer, 1984; Rüsen, 2005). Historical time, or history, must be narrated to be understandable, Ricouer (1988) argues. At the same time, a developed historical consciousness that is orienting over time, is also expressed through meaningful and understandable narrative forms, which are culturally formed (Rüsen, 2004; Rüsen, 2005; Straub, 2005). The best way to see expressions of temporal orientations from a historical consciousness would therefore be by narratives moving through all the tenses – past, present and future. Narrations have similarities to historical consciousness in more ways than the diachronic move through time. A narration always starts in a language deeply anchored in a certain culture. In that way language frames our possibilities to narrate as well as our ability to understand others´ narrations (Ricoeur, 1984; Bruner, 2004). This shows that being history frames the abilities to narrate. Wertsch (2008) calls this limitation of narrations narrative templates.

In other words, we can understand historical narratives as an expression of temporal orientation culturally contextualized. At the same time convincing research shows that students belonging to different minorities often react negatively to school history teaching. These students feel excluded by the metanarratives in the school (Nordgren 2006; Epstein & Schiller 2009; Peck 2011; Wertsch 2002; Rosenzweig & Thelen 1998). It is not unreasonable that they may understand, interpret and narrate history in different ways than what is expected from their history teacher. Nevertheless, cultural forms and expressions are not essential, but formable and change over time. Innovative or critical narratives seem to be an effective tool for moving the narrative templates in a certain culture, and both Polkinghorne (2005) and Rüsen (2004) point to this narrative possibility.

## Method

In order to answer the overall research questions arisen, the main objective of this paper is to analyze how the temporal orientation of Swedish and Spanish teacher students affects their moral conditions on gender inequality. This is specified in the following specific objectives:

- Identify how time is comprehended in the Swedish and Spanish teacher students´ narratives.
- Analyze the sense of voluntariness of agents involved in the narratives. What is the distribution between being history and doing history for the agents?

To fulfill these objectives a research design based on content analysis has been constructed. All discourses can be interpreted in a direct and manifest way (description of elements) or in search for a latent meaning (Strauss & Feiz, 2014). As we accept that language is the tip of the iceberg that hides a vast body of socially constructed knowledge and culturally shared information (VanDijk, 2016), we understand text and context as two fundamental aspects in the content analysis. The content analysis is conceived as a research technique that allows us to make inferences and identify in a systematic way, specific characteristics of a text (O'Connor 2019). Being aware of the subjectivity that textual analysis implies, an attempt is made to limit this effect through a standardized procedure that allows the text to be converted into data to be analyzed more mechanically. To accomplish this task, the categories used to analyze the narratives had to be designed to conform to criteria of homogeneity, exhaustiveness (they exhaust the entire text), exclusivity (the same unit cannot be at the same time two codes of the same category), objectivity (duly specified), and adequacy (adapted to the content and objectives). Categorization is the basis of the qualitative method in this study. Categories help us to classify or group the units of analysis and understand them in a broader context (Charmaz, 2015). With inspiration from Rüsen´s typology (2018) of narratives we started to categorize four ways of describing time in narratives:

- Continuity by tradition – Time exists, but is not experienced or described.

- Continuity by principles – Looking back in time we find principles that can guide us in time.

- Abrupt change – Time is separated through abrupt changes.

- Change and continuity – Time is interlinked and is characterized by both change and continuity, i.e., being and doing history.

While conducting this categorization, we found new important categories in the narratives (table 2). Inspired of Charmaz´ (2006) methods we followed the steps of initial coding, focused coding and theoretical coding as we further coded and categorized the narratives.

To achieve reliability in the analysis process, we acted through individual and simultaneous coding of all the narratives, subsequently comparing through Excel spreadsheets the degree of similarity in the coding for each of the narratives, proceeding to the discussion of the results until reaching a consensus.

The quantitative procedures have been carried out both through simple calculations of per cent and frequencies, and multivariate statistical methods such as correspondence analysis and cluster analysis by using the Jaccard index (values from 0 to 1 where proximity to 1 shows the highest correlation). All the analytical work was completed through the qualitative data analysis software program *Nvivo 12 pro*.

The selection of participants was intentional 131, 55 from Spain and 76 from Sweden. All of the student participants were newly involved in Education programs. The reason for this was to seek valuable information on prospective teachers' perceptions, assumptions and values about a relevant issue for the school as well as for historical understanding and its temporal dimension (McMillan & Schumacher, 2005). All the Spanish narratives are written by students from Murcia

University (N=55), whereas the Swedish narratives are composed by students from the University of Malmö (N=24), University of Stockholm (N=8), University of Uppsala (N=24) and University of Linneaus (N=20). In all cases, the average of age is around 20, and all are involved in three to five-year education programs. The 131 narratives collected were given a code, noticing their nationality (SP=Spanish, SW=Swedish) and in the case of the Swedish narratives the universities of origin, and a correlative number (SP1, SP2…, SWM1, SWS2…).

The students´ narratives were collected through a questionnaire of three open-ended questions which appropriately addressed the specific aims of this research. The heading of the questionnaire contextualized the problem to be discussed - opinions about gender equality in the past, present and future - which was concretized in the subsequent open-ended questions. A few students answered the questions separately whereas the other composed a continuous narrative. But all of them the arguments are connected with the past, the contemporary and the future. The questions were:

- What does gender equality look like in Spain/Sweden [depending on the country] today?

- What was the gender equality situation in the past in Spain/Sweden [depending on the country]? What has led to the current situation?

- What will gender equality look like in the future in Spain/Sweden [depending on the country]?

## Findings

First, it should be noted that the two types of temporal orientation most codified in the narratives were the so-called Change and continuity, and the Abrupt change, a distinct break with the past (Table 1). Describing time as change and continuity is, however, the most coded category by far. An interesting element is the fact that a national variable seems to influence how time is described in the narratives.

|  | Spain (55) | Sweden (76) | Total (131) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Continuity by culture** | 0 | 13.1% | 7.6% |
| **Continuity by principals** | 11% | 6.7% | 8.4% |
| **Abrupt change** | 18% | 42.1% | 32% |
| **Continuity and change** | 71% | 38,1% | 52% |

Table 1. Types of temporal orientation in the narratives by nationality (per cent)

After analyzing the narratives by these four main categories we were interested in checking out the construction of the narratives by incorporating elements of the narrative structure. For this reason, we decided to check to what extent there was an explicit link between the past, the present and the future, if the narratives described long-run or short-run phenomena, and if the narratives were finished or ongoing with an open future. These categories we then related to the type of time category that we already had coded (Table 2). The result shows that the two most frequent types do indeed present a temporal reasoning consistent with the implications of the type of head-category identified. Thus, the category Abrupt change supposes a temporal inflection, a process of radical change and difference from the previous time, and a predominance of short time for explanation (in terms of what the present means in terms of equality), although without much difference with respect to the long run explanation. For its counterpart, Continuity and change implies a temporal connection, a process still unfinished and an overwhelming predominance of a long run explanation.

| | Continuity by culture | Continuity by principals | Abrupt change | Continuity and change |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Linked** | 63% | 64% | 26% | 76% |
| **Separated** | 37% | 36% | 74% | 24% |
| | | | | |
| **Finished** | 78% | 30% | 62% | 19% |
| **Ongoing** | 22% | 70% | 38% | 81% |
| | | | | |
| **Short run** | 83% | 0% | 55% | 17% |
| **Long run** | 17% | 100% | 45% | 83% |

Table 2. Types of historical narratives and their narrative reasoning (per cent)

If we check the structure of the narratives by country, we see that in the Swedish students' narratives, the category of Abrupt change prevails, although very close to the category of Continuity and change. In Spain, on the contrary, Change and continuity clearly dominates.

If we add the element of the voluntariness of the actions together with the category of temporal orientation, we also find an interesting pattern. The category of Change and continuity implies, in most cases, that the will of acting is mentioned (Table 3), while the category of Abrupt change is better associated with the omission of voluntariness. It is very significant too, that depending on the cultural context, the meaning of acting seems to be varied. In that sense, the Spanish narratives seem to indicate explicitly the sense of voluntary action more often than the Swedish narratives do. This coincides with the notion of Abrupt change that the Swedish narratives contain (see Table 1), where a notion of a sudden break between past and present can be elicited. Overall, the Spanish narratives are quite homogeneous in their narrative reasoning and category of sense of time, where the category Continuity and change dominates. A sense of time as an ongoing process, a connection between tenses and voluntariness for actors makes a distinct cluster. The Swedish narratives are less homogeneous, although a tendency can be observed where narratives with a sense of time as an abrupt change are structured coherently in their narrative reasoning and their implications. The Swedish narratives also imply non voluntariness, no links between past, present and future and a narrative that is ended.

| | Abrupt change | Change and continuity | Spanish | Swedish |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Non voluntary** | 0.35 | 0.24 | -- | -- |
| **Voluntary** | 0.14 | 0.48 | 0.47 | 0.27 |

Table 3. Association between type of narrative and degree of voluntarity (Jaccard index)

This means that in their narratives, the Spanish students use time/temporality to a greater degree as something that changes over time, but still influences the contemporary through mental, societal and juridical structures. Time is thereby temporalized in these narratives. A starting point that seems to take into account more what Gadamer (2006, p. 336) called a historically effected consciousness – a consciousness aware of both the historicity of the past and that of the contemporary, a consciousness that addresses that we both are but also do history (Jeismann 1979). In the passage below we see a lot of reasoning that is consistent with such a way of understanding history and the meaning of time:

> Nowadays, in Spain, women enjoy a lot of equality but some aspects, like the salaries that the companies give to them, are really frustrating. They earn about 30 percent less than men for the same job, besides, if a woman is pregnant, she is at risk of being dismissed. This is another problem since women don't want to have children because of this. In a lot of cases, if they have children, they are

> the responsible person of looking after them, so they are obligated to do it and work at the same time while the husband works or is unconcerned about the homework. However, the women have the freedom to do whatever they want without any problem due to living in a developed country which is within European Union that looks after the women rights. But those rights are still insufficient to secure the full equality between women and men. If we see other countries, like Syria or Saudi Arabia, where women can't choose their husband or even, they can't drive! Which is really shocking for us. (SP15)

In the quote we see both change and continuity through time and an awareness of the human being as a product of the history they live in, the culture that is. The narrative contains an awareness of the changes through time in the very first word *nowadays*, which marks a difference from the past. Things have changed for the better, as we understand the narrative. But the past still strongly affects the contemporary, due to a lot of injustices to women. This is outrageous by contemporary measures of justice and is an obsolete remainder from the past (Koselleck 2004). The women, however, as actors, voluntarily act in the situation they are given and choose not to have children. That means they are history as they act in a context affected by past tradition, but also do history as they act within these structures, continuity, and change. From this standpoint, according to the Spanish narrative, gender equality seems to be moving in the right direction, namely by comparing it to countries where inequality is even stronger. This could be seen as a sense of historicity of the past and the contemporary (Nordgren, 2019). However, to a much greater degree, the Swedish narratives, perceive time with deep disruptions. In these narratives the narrator looks back at history from a position that gives the chance of making judgments about historical events and values:

> The present gender equality in Sweden are at the highest point according to me and keeps going strong for better results. If you look at the past not so much. The gender equality in the past was rubbish. It took a long time for women to vote and was abused without justice. As I wrote about the present, I also think about the future we are going strong and the gender equality are just getting better and better. (SWL85)

According to this reasoning, the past was *rubbish* when it came to gender equality, but the narrator lets us know that today is a clear dividing line to the past where gender equality nowadays is *at the highest point*. This narrative clearly shows the narrator's willingness to judge the past from the contemporary. As it is said, future is *just getting better and better*, a time where fully developed contemporary ideas will be implemented. This narrative has a strong sense of justice, and clearly disagrees with past injustices, but does not contextualize or temporalize time and in that way shows changes in contrast with continuity. There are no actors and naturally no voluntariness, and the tenses do not link into each other.

## Discussion

So, what moral implications can we find in these narratives? This reasoning must be perceived as tentative. Still, the way we understand our being in time most certainly has moral implications. The narratives that explain time in change and continuity give more room for the individual actors, both in the past and in the contemporary. With an opportunity to act and influence the processes in time you also have a more moral responsibility. Both the actors in history and yourself as a contemporary narrator can be seen as moral creatures acting in contexts framed by historical structures, but still with room for individual maneuver. This means, that persons can be morally responsible, and must bear this liability. These kinds of narratives, at the same time, show that time and change are intertwined processes. The past, the contemporary, and the future are linked together and there are no abrupt changes. The judgement of the actors takes this process in consideration, telling us that humans both are and do history as the change between the tense is procedural. In this process it is not as easy for an

actor to become an anomaly as in the abrupt change narratives. At the same time, the change and continuity narratives do not close their analyses. This means that the moral responsibility is still current, as history is not at the end. With individual voluntariness and an open narrative into the future you must take responsibility for your own actions, trying to shape the future.

The other main group of narratives, the abrupt change, have other moral implications. The past acts like a mirror to show who you are and what you believe in. You moralize over the obsolete past using contemporary values. Here you must distinguish between using moral perspectives on history and moralizing history. Using moral perspectives still allows you to understand history as another time with another frame for actions but still respect history´s difference, while moralizing history means you compare the past to the (better) contemporary without historizing time or using historical empathy. Instead of empathy, sympathy is used as a historical tool, and the question becomes: Do I sympathize with past values and actions? Most often we do not, and the comparation becomes a division between good and bad, were the contemporary, or the self in the contemporary, almost always is the morally good. The moral implications and the understanding of history can however be destructive. Some historians mean that we live in a time where history has become uninteresting, a time where we have left the history behind us as something archaic and instead the contemporary becomes the verity for everything (Koselleck, 2004; Hartog, 2015). We are what history is not. If we understand ourselves and time like this, we cannot see the processes that lie behind changes. If we cannot do that, nor can we understand ourselves as historized. Instead, we must guard our contemporary values so they will not be contaminated from past times. This moral imperative hinders us from understanding human in time and as a creature both being history and doing history, while the demand is to build a clear dividing line to the past. On the contrary, these narratives describe time as separated structural conservating time capsules, where humans have no moral responsibility. They live in another time with strange and incomprehensible values. The moral imperative must be to never be influenced by this, and therefore these narratives almost always are finished, since the future must be more of the contemporary. People with old and thereby wrong values also become obsolete, a relic from a bygone era, totally irrelevant and uninteresting to talk to.

The differences shown between Spanish and Swedish narratives could be influenced by their cultural context. Taking into account the Gender Development Index (as a part of the Human Development Index) of United Nations Development (2018), Sweden is on top of the ranking of gender equality countries in the world, number 8, while Spain, well positioned also on the ranking at number 25, is nevertheless a bit from Sweden. This of course proves some differences between the two countries regarding gender equality. The Spanish students in their daily lives probably deal more frequently with inequalities than the Swedish ones, which could introduce nuances about the notion of changes and continuities with the past regarding gender inequality for the Spanish students. If so, it would be an outcome of cultural differences affecting the narratives and temporal orientation. Maybe the context that we are in, affects our understanding in time and our temporal orientation.

Nonetheless, in both cultural contexts the sense of permanent progression dominates the narratives (Zerubavel, 2004). As change and continuity is the most coded concept, it could be congruent with history-didactic research that points out that this is an advanced way of understanding time and underpins trustworthy historical narratives (Rüsen, 2005). In the narratives coded as change and continuity there are better foundations for a more advanced historical reasoning. Time is interrelated all the way and an ongoing process, there are also actors that act voluntarily, and this shows the emancipating force in history. Overall, the narratives coded as change and continuity more addresses an awareness of historicity and that we both are and do history.

However, the temporal orientation in either of the categories cannot be considered optimal if there is no deep understanding and critical analysis of the problem addressed, in this case gender inequality. History is supposed to be useful as it provides a tool for understanding and acting in present days. It is not enough to say that the problem existed and that it still persists in

some ways (continuity), and that we are now better off (change), and that it will be better in the future. Consciousness should imply that we know what we are facing up to and what sort of actions this leaves us (Jeisman, 1979; Carr, 1986).

The plot of the narratives shares the narrative template of historical narratives prevailing in the western world, where a long period of time of backwardness is solved by the new forms of thought and organization leaded by liberal nation-states (Castells, 2005, VanSledright, 2008; Gómez & Miralles, 2017). It implies to omit that any revolt (action) that ends in a reform (legislative work that defines a different reality) necessarily requires revolutionary thought (Wangdi, 2017). However, little attention is often paid to the fact that revolutionary ideas are born within a collective memory that identifies the needs of that community along time. This assumption allows us to understand change not so much as an event but as a process. In this way, the idea of spontaneity is avoided and the need to understand moral problems in their complexity (in their long and short run dimensions) is given more meaning. Only in this way, we can manage to solve the problem of exposed presentism, more represented in the Abrupt change narratives. The idea of change as a process also implies didactic approaches that involve displaying information about, and dealing with, relevant social issues that provide the necessary motivation to understand history, also as a tool to act morally in the present (Levstik & Barton, 2011). Teaching the gender equality perspective in history classes, for example, does not only imply introducing historical references, but understanding the problem as a cultural context that has given women and men different power relations in the contemporary. In this way we provide students with the analytical preparation necessary to combat inequality today. On the contrary, if we assume changes as something that just happens, the problem remains (Miralles-Cardona, Cardona-Moltó & Chinter, 2020).

Do we or do we not want history as a subject to prepare citizens who take moral responsibility and act voluntarily? With our current history teaching, does it empower people, or does it just show how things happened, a chronicle of events?

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# Appendix

| Temporal orientation (family of codes) | Links or breaks between tenses (Past, Present and Future) | |
|---|---|---|
| **Linked** | Projection on different tenses. The situation described has connection at least with two different tenses | Sweden have not been the best in the past but I see a bright future in gender equality in Sweden. Because we have getting a lot better these past decades and improving year by year. It´s absolutely not perfect yet, but our politicians' parties are raising the question about feminism, and we talk more about it on daily basis. This will lead to that more and more people realize how important it is with equality and follow the rest of the people. (SWU53) |
| **Separated** | There are not explicit implications of actions in one tense that influence on the others | As hard as predicting the future of a society may be, I would say the future of Spain in regards of gender equality depend a couple of variables. One of these variables would be the political situation and their measures to stop gender issues, but most importantly in my opinion, the education the future generations receive inside and outside schools and whether or not they are taught values such as respect, democracy, empathy and gender equality. (SP28) |

| Narrative constructions (family of codes) | Composer's narrative reasoning where situations described are expressed to be finished or unfinished, the kind of explanations made and the temporal roots of it | |
|---|---|---|
| *Duration* (family of codes) | Whether situations expressed in accounts have been fulfilled or unfulfilled | |
| **Finished** | Telling stories, the narrative is closed with a clear start and end | In the future, it is expected that women occupy the appropriate place, for it is intended that laws and equality plans will help to achieve this. It shall promote employment and entrepreneurship feminine trying more education for equal opportunities, greater incorporation of women in society and more support to women living in rural areas. All this accompanied without gender-based violence, affecting women more than men. (SP26) |
| **Ongoing** | Living stories, the narrative is opened and reaches into the future | Although every political party claim to embrace equal rights the path ahead is disputed. I don´t think gender equality will decline however. (SWU49) |
| *Narratives actors/actions* (family of codes) | Composer explicit the intentionality of the situations shown in the account | |
| **Voluntary** | Emancipated actors that can change direction for history | What has led to this current situation have been continuing mobilizations by women who have struggled to achieve improvements in their working conditions, creating even to trade unions, strikes… (SP26) |
| **Non voluntary** | Actors acting in tight frames predestined to act in certain ways | Today women are supposed to be as "good" as men, and they are supposed to have the same rights as men, but I don´t really think they do. (SWM19) |
| *Narrative time* (family of codes) | Temporal scope of the accounts described in narrations | |
| **Long run** | The story begins at least a hundred years ago | Gender equality in Spain has always been a very unfair issue. It has always been a battle for which we had to fight and we keep fighting. (SP17) |
| **Short run** | The story begins in the 20th century | Well, I think we are going in a good direction. Many other countries in Europe can take a lesson. I don´t feel that there is a lot of woman hatred where I live. But again, I am a man, so yes. (SWS25) |
| *Sense of time* (family of codes) | The understanding of the temporality of historical experience. | |
| **Continuity and Change** **Continuity and change** | Developments in which ways of life change in order to remain dynamic. Time is temporalized as meaning (Rüsen, 2018) | If we consider the situation of women today, they have more privileges on account of the constant protests that people have been involved in. For instance, in the workplace, the differences between girls and boys have decreased throughout history. Nevertheless, men tend to earn more money than women. This also happen with famous people. (SP29) The gender situation in Sweden is a better one if compared to the United States. However there is still a lot to do to get 100% equality. Today jobs like in the police force have different pay for the different genders. If we look to the present women has for the first half of the 1900´s got given halv the pay that men have. And if we look to the future there is a lot to do for complete gender equality. Like: equal pay for both genders. (SWU46) |
| **Continuity by principles** **Rules/historical examples/historia magistrate** | Timeless validity of rules of human life that encompasses temporally different ways of life. Time is spatialized as meaning (Rüsen, 2018) | Although we are closer to reach a total gender equality, there is still a long way to do since the amount of people who is narrow-minded is huge and it would be needed a mentality change and also a different way of education. So it is very difficult to achieve a society change, therefore gender inequality is something that is always going to be here in Spain. Of course it will continue improving but there are always going to be situations in which the woman will be dealt in an inferior way to the man. (SP27) In my opinion, the Swedish society are very forthgoing about gender equality on the brink of stupidity. I think there should be equality between man and woman and different ethnicities, however, quotas just from gender is not the way to go. The expression of the right man/woman in the right place is the way to |

| | | go. We have a history of being first or rather among the first to embrace women's rights. But like all countries women have been dominated by men. I hope it won't matter if you are a man or a woman. The opportunities should be the same no matter your gender.(SWM11) |
|---|---|---|
| **Continuity by tradition** | Time is immortalized as meaning (Rüsen, 2018) Time is but is not experienced or described. | Swedish gender equality is far come, but not yet there. We've have always been leading to a degree, at least in the sense that on awareness of gender roles and their impact. I'm not 100% aware of the earlier history, but today I'd call Sweden leading in the field. However, the patriarchy still exists and gender roles are prevalent. My expectation is that we have reached a dead end. Reactionary politics seems to have halted the feminist movement, or at least slowed it. (SWU52) In the Swedish society of today, I would say that we are quite equal regarding many facets of everyday life. Equal pay, equal rights to work/vote and equal right of freedoms and opportunity. There are rising concerns regarding oppression among immigrants from certain areas, but my belief is that Swedish society is well prepared to contain it. Sweden has been very progressive for many years regarding gender. More debates and hopefully rights for trans/non-gender people in the future. (SWU45) |
| **Abrupt change** | Disruptions, discontinuity, contradictions. Time is assessable as meaning (Rüsen, 2018) Time is separated through abrupt changes. | A new generation is trying to change it explaining what is wrong in gender equality and explaining what is the problem. We can see the improve of gender inequality easily just looking to the past and analyzing the society our country has years ago. (SP49) Gender equality in Sweden in the past has been rough. Women were inside, cooking, taking care of children and excetera. It wasn't until the 20th centry that women started to get their rights as human beings. The present day for gender equality is much more free as women have taken their role in society. They are part of the working society and no longer house wives. The future will not change as much as a lot is already accomplished. But! We might see a woman in charge of the country. (SWM21) |

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# Addressing the elephant in the room: Ethics as an organizing concept in history education

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## ABSTRACT

Ethics is the proverbial 'elephant in the room' in history education in settler-colonial nations. It is foundational to teaching and learning history and engaging with the ongoing effects of the past in the present. Yet its place in history curricula and teaching continues to be ignored, understated, confused, and challenged. This article illustrates how ethical judgment is central to four commonly identified rationales for teaching history in schools: citizenship education, historical consciousness, historical thinking, and difficult histories. The article urges more explicit attention to ethics as an organizing concept in history education to enable students to appreciate the complex lived realities that constitute history and to explore the diverse perspectives that have contributed to sometimes-difficult decisions. We argue that ethics can humanize history, enrich students' historical understandings, and offer a usable past. However, given the varied approaches to ethical judgment across the four orientations to teaching history, we stress the need for the mindful deployment of ethical judgment in curriculum design. Using an example from the 2021 draft Aotearoa New Zealand's Histories curriculum, we demonstrate what "ethical judgment" could be called upon to do, and the impoverished approach to history education that would exist without it.

## KEYWORDS

Ethics; ethical judgment; history education; social studies education; citizenship education; historical thinking; historical consciousness; difficult history

## Introduction

Although there is growing scholarly interest in the contributions that ethics can make to teaching and learning history (Ammert et al., 2017, 2020; Edling et al., 2020; Gibson, 2018; Milligan et al., 2018), ethics remains an under-acknowledged, under-emphasized, misunderstood, and contested aspect of history education (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Peterson, 2011, 2017). Ethics is rarely included as a goal or purpose in history curricula or as an organizing concept. When it is included, it is vaguely described, given less priority than other concepts, or its inclusion is controversial. In Fogo's (2014) US Delphi study, ethical judgments, defined as "how people judge the actions of historical actors and how historical interpretations reflect contemporary moral frames" (p. 178), were not included in 11 expert high school teachers' and 16 history educators' final list of core history teaching practices. In Canada, although the K–12 social studies and history curricula in Ontario drew on Seixas' (2006) conception of historical thinking as an organizing framework (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013b, 2013a, 2015), ethical judgment was not included as a key historical thinking concept in the curriculum. In Australia and New Zealand, the ethical dimension is identified as a cross-curricular expectation (Australia Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, n.d.; New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2007). However, the expectations are poorly elaborated within the humanities and social sciences learning areas, and in the case of Australia, the linkages between the ethical understanding capability and the history curriculum enervate the contribution ethics can make. In both countries there is insufficient clarity about and distinction between ethics and a host of cognate terms (Milligan & Reynolds, 2015).

The previous examples appear emblematic of a broader issue in settler colonial nations and other countries, in which ethics is the proverbial 'elephant in the room' in history and social studies education. Ethics is foundational to different conceptions of teaching and learning history, and central to engaging with the ongoing effects of the past, yet its place in history curricula and teaching continues to be ignored, understated, confused, and challenged. In this article, we illustrate how ethical judgment is central to four commonly identified rationales for teaching history in schools: citizenship education, historical consciousness, historical thinking, and difficult histories. We urge more explicit attention to ethics as an organizing concept in history education because of its potential to enrich historical understandings and offer a usable past to students. However, in light of the varying approaches to ethical judgment across the four orientations to teaching history, we stress the need for the mindful deployment of ethical judgment in curriculum design. Using a recent example of the draft *Aotearoa New Zealand's Histories* curriculum (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2021), we demonstrate what "ethical judgment" could be called upon to do and, concomitantly, the impoverished approach to history education that would exist without it. This example is particularly relevant to curriculum design in countries reworking history education in response to the continued effects of colonization, injustices, and calls to honour Indigenous worldviews.

## Conceptual background: Ethics and ethical judgements

Ethics is the branch of philosophy concerned with the systematic study of "what is right, fair, just or good; about what we ought to do, not just what is the case or what is the most acceptable or expedient" (Preston, 2007, p. 16). Ethics focuses on understanding what individuals or communities take to be right/wrong or good/bad, how those decisions are arrived at, and the ongoing contemplation of what we could or should do. Philosophers of ethics do so through deliberation, judgment, and reasoning (Burgh et al., 2006). We view ethical judgments – whether made about present or past actions – as a complex process of coming to an understanding of, and reflecting upon, a range of perspectives about social action. Ethics may therefore be seen as a verb, that is, a practice rather than a set of conclusions (Milligan et al., 2018). Few philosophers would suggest that ethics provides a single right answer to dilemmas and controversial issues, but ethics can provide several, perhaps least-worst, answers that assist in the ongoing (re)negotiation of the past and present. Furthermore, and as we stress later in this article, ethical lives are not simply a matter of rationality; they are relational, embodied, situated, and involve different voices and experiences.

In history education, ethical judgments involve assessments of past actions that consider historical and contemporary ethical standards and perspectives (Stipp et al., 2017). Ethical judgments can focus on how past actions and decisions were justified, which people or groups are ethically responsible for past actions, what ethical lessons can be drawn from the past and inform the present, and what obligations those in the present owe to victims, heroes, and others whose actions continue to impact the present (Gibson, 2020). Making historical ethical judgments is complex because it requires extensive historical contextualization to understand what occurred before, during, and after the historical event; the social, political, cultural, and ethical norms that existed at the time; the circumstances, constraints, options, and motivations that initiated or limited historical people's actions; and the values, beliefs, attitudes, and intellectual frameworks that different people held about what was considered ethical (Milligan et al., 2018). It also includes an understanding of the excruciating choices, including between equally defensible "right" courses of action, and the constraints to agency and free will experienced by historical actors. Such an understanding tempers ethical judgments as binaries of admiration or condemnation and introduces considerably more nuance in appreciating historical and contemporary ethical lives.

## The inescapable presence of ethics in history education

In this section, we outline the centrality of ethical judgments in four conceptions of history education.

### Ethical judgements, history education, and citizenship education

History education has always played a role in citizenship development and, more recently, in supporting students to respond to controversial issues and take justified positions. Ethical judgment is a nexus between history and citizenship education and is central to decisions about the particular kinds of citizens to be developed, past and present societies which children and young people are invited to examine, and the ethical tensions involved in teaching citizenship.

The relationship between history and citizenship education has been established since history was first included in school curricula in democratic countries at the end of the nineteenth century. History was perceived to strengthen moral training of newly enfranchised citizens and recently arrived immigrants and contribute to the transmission of a sense of national heritage and citizenship (Arthur & Phillips, 2002; Ward, 1975). Anything that contributed to the building of the nation was described as good, anything that did not was either condemned or ignored as irrelevant (Osborne, 2008). Ethical judgments were presented to students in the form of authoritative narratives established by experts and there was little room

for interpretation. Students were expected to both learn the story and learn from the story (Low-Beer, 1967).

In the 1960s and 1970s many historians, teachers, and curriculum developers questioned the patriotic and moralistic uses of history as unjustifiable modes of indoctrination (Partington, 1979, 1980). In its place they offered a vision of history and social studies education that promoted participatory, activist, and democratic citizenship and the development of engaged, knowledgeable, ethical, and critical citizens. This conception of citizenship defines ideal citizens as those who are,

> knowledgeable about contemporary society and the issues it faces; disposed to work toward the common good; supportive of pluralism; and skilled at taking action to make their communities, nation, and the world a better place. (Sears, 2011, p. 353)

Barton and Levstik (2004) argue that historical ethical judgments are central to conceptions of participatory, pluralist, and deliberative democracies "because the decisions we make in the public sphere are invariably about our vision of the common good, and about what we hope to achieve together as a society" (p. 92). Making the possible influences of past actions on contemporary society explicit, and engaging young people in considering how they should respond to the past in the present and future, contributes to one of the central expectations of contemporary history and social studies curricula—that students participate in debates about controversial issues and learn to take justified positions in relation to these issues. Two points are central here. First, societal issues are controversial because different ethical perspectives have been and continue to be in play (Noddings & Brooks, 2017). Second, deliberative approaches to teaching controversial issues emphasize critical thinking and affiliation to democratic values, ethical stances in and of themselves. For example, Ammert et al., (2017), hold that the study of ethical injustices in history can teach students to create "ethical relationships for themselves," (p. 3) and enhance their commitment to democratic values and human rights, which is important for preventing future injustices. Helping students establish their personal identity is an important part of the participatory approach to citizenship, which includes helping students see themselves as individuals with a personal past shaped by the society and communities they are part of, the development of their values, opinions, and beliefs, and an expanded view of humanity (Van Straaten et al., 2016).

Evidence from civics and social studies education research suggests that an open classroom climate where students are encouraged to express their views, examine issues from multiple perspectives, and make ethical judgments about historical topics have several benefits. These include increased engagement and discussion, improved knowledge of and engagement in social and political issues, increased student confidence and ability to engage in democratic civil discourse with opposing viewpoints, and improved argumentation and reasoning ability (Barton, 2009; Goldberg & Savenije, 2018; Ho et al., 2017; Kahne et al., 2013; McAvoy & Hess, 2014; Torney-Purta & Amadeo, 2013). Nevertheless, research on controversial issues has found that many teachers are reluctant to teach about controversial issues because of a

> complex terrain of institutional and curricular constraints; societal discourse and expectations; national, group, and individual histories; local, state, and national policies; personal beliefs; and multiple and overlapping identities involving ethnicity and religion. (Ho et al., 2017, p. 323)

Teaching controversial issues in history education is, therefore, arguably worthwhile but tricky ethical terrain.

### *Ethical judgements and historical consciousness*

Ethics is central to two influential ideas in the theory and practice of history education: historical consciousness and historical thinking. Although the terms are often used interchangeably, they

are different, but interrelated. In this section we discuss the relationship between ethical judgments and historical consciousness, and in the following section we do the same for ethical judgments and historical thinking.

Historical consciousness is defined as the "complex interaction of interpretations of the past, perceptions of the present, and expectations towards the future" (Bracke et al., 2014, p. 23), and can be conceptualized in terms of three interrelated aspects. First, it focuses on the practical relationship between historians' interpretations of the past and how these interpretations are used by the larger culture to reshape thinking about both the past and contemporary issues (Megill, 1994). Second, historical consciousness focuses on a person's orientation in time, the mental operations used to make sense of temporal changes, orient practical life, and guide ethical decision-making (Rüsen, 2004). Third, historical consciousness is expressed through narratives that are shared in various forms of historical culture including schools, historical scholarship, public history, media, family and community histories, heritage, and museums (Ahonen, 2005). These narratives play a central role in making sense of the past and its relationship to the present, providing a sense of orientation in time, and constructing identity and a sense of belonging in distinct communities (A. Clark & Peck, 2019; P. Clark, 2018; Rüsen, 2002).

Schools are complex sites of historical consciousness where public expectations about what is important to learn, memory practices, personal narratives, and the historical discipline all collide (A. Clark & Grever, 2018). Although historical consciousness is shaped by various forms of historical culture, scholars are unequivocal in their belief that school history can play an important role in shaping the development of students' historical consciousness over time (Kölbl & Konrad, 2015; Körber & Meyer-Hamme, 2015; Rüsen, 2004).

Enhancing students' historical consciousness has been identified as a goal for school history curricula in Germany, Sweden, and the Netherlands. According to Körber (2011), the central goal of historical consciousness in school curricula is to enable students "to take part in the historical and memorial culture of their (pluralist) societies" (p. 147). Rather than see historical consciousness as simply a state of mind, Körber (2015) conceptualizes historical consciousness in terms of competencies—capabilities, dispositions and skills needed to use historical information to orientate "independent actions as an emancipated member of society" (p. 4).

Making ethical judgments about the past, deciding what should be memorialized, celebrated, or remembered, judging how to respond to the past in the present, and connecting past, present, and future, are central to the notion of historical consciousness. Historical consciousness is communicated through historical narratives that reveal the moral orientation of the person who created the narrative. Narratives communicate principles, guidelines for behaviour, key ideas, and perspectives that suggest how we should behave and act in situations where various options exist (Edling et al., 2020). In this sense all historical narratives present ethical stances interpreted through the lens of present-day values and norms (Ammert et al., 2017). Exploring ethical judgments further underscores the relationship between past, present, and future by inviting reflection about why ethical codes, behaviours, and values enmeshed in historical narratives may differ throughout time. Furthermore, Seixas and Morton (2013) argue that learning to think critically about the injustices, horrors and heroism of the past helps students see the links between past, present, and future, and become more capable of negotiating the ethical dilemmas they encounter in their lives. Thus, ethical judgments have the potential to help students make sense of who they are, where they stand, and what they can do—as individuals, as members of multiple, intersecting groups, and as citizens with roles and responsibilities in a complex, conflict-ridden, and rapidly changing world.

### *Ethical judgements and historical thinking*

In the last fifty years historical thinking became a standard in the theory and practice of history education in Western Europe and North America before spreading globally (Berg & Christou, 2020; Harris & Metzger, 2018). If the past is everything that has ever happened, and history is

comprised of narratives that are told about the past, then historical thinking is the process of interpreting and assessing historical evidence to understand, evaluate, and construct narrative accounts about the past (Gibson & Seixas, in press). The discipline of history provides a guiding framework, but there is an immense gap to be navigated between the practices of the academic discipline and what is possible or desirable in the school classroom.

Lee and Ashby (2000) conceptualized the structure and form of historical thinking by distinguishing between first-order substantive knowledge, "what history is about" (for example, enslavement, freedom, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the Underground Railroad) and second-order disciplinary knowledge (for example, evidence, cause, consequence, perspective taking, historical significance, continuity and change) that shape "the way we go about doing history" (p. 199). Rather than measuring students' accumulation of substantive knowledge, students' increasingly sophisticated ability to apply their disciplinary understanding of second-order concepts like change, significance, evidence, consequence, and ethical judgments to historical content defines their progress in learning history (Seixas, 2017). Although second-order disciplinary concepts shape history as a form of knowledge, they also function as generative problems, tensions, or difficulties inherent in doing history that require "comprehension, negotiation, and, ultimately, an accommodation that is never a complete solution" (Seixas, 2017, p. 597).

Prior to the conceptualization of historical thinking in the 1960s, ethical judgments were often presented as authoritative conclusions established by experts, shared by teachers, and passively accepted by students (Diorio, 1985; Low-Beer, 1967; Osborne, 2011). The orthodox view among historians and philosophers of history was that making ethical judgments was neither permissible nor desirable in the discipline of history because they are too subjective and irrational, irrelevant to the purpose of history, lie outside historians' expertise and responsibility, and are inherently presentist in that contemporary ethical frameworks are used to assess the past. Cracraft (2004) argues that historians' long-standing aspiration for scientific objectivity is at the root of their objections to ethical judgments, and acknowledging ethical judgments as inescapable undermines history's orientation towards objectivity, denies the academic character of the historical discipline, and reduces historians' authority, credibility, and respectability (p. 37).

Inspired by the social, cultural, and postcolonial turns in the discipline of history, historians and philosophers challenged the possibility of objectivity in history by arguing that ethical judgments are unavoidable when researching, writing, and teaching history; ethical judgments are the end results of historical inquiry, and that historians are capable of avoiding presentism and making reasoned ethical judgments (Bedarida, 2000; Boobbyer, 2002; Gaddis, 2002; Megill, 2004). Rather than avoid responsibility, Vann (2004) maintains that historians should embrace the role of ethical commentators because when they evaluate what the dead have done, they are not passing final judgment, they are communicating their ethical opinions to their readers and inviting them to enter into a dialogue about the past actions of the dead. Cotkin (2008) claims that since the beginning of the 21st century, historical scholarship has undergone a "moral turn" and "historians are presently treading upon a landscape full of moral topics" focused on questions of justice and injustice and right and wrong (p. 312).

Few historical thinking models and frameworks include ethical judgments as a key concept except for Barton and Levstik (2004) and Seixas (1996, 2006). Seixas and Morton (2013) argue that ethical judgments imbue the study of history with meaning and help students learn from past wrongdoings, judge the past more fairly, and deal more effectively with present-day ethical dilemmas. These approaches encourage considerably more depth in students' ethical judgments because they ask students to understand the historical context, distinguish between the values and climate of moral opinion in the past and present, and weigh individual agency against structural factors, including social contexts, environment, and social conditions. Furthermore, asking students to make informed ethical judgments requires them to draw upon their knowledge of substantive content and second-order disciplinary concepts like continuity and change, cause and consequence, and historical perspectives to make reasoned decisions about

how to respond in the present (Van Straaten et al., 2016). Several scholars have illustrated how an understanding of historical perspectives supports students to avoid presentist ethical judgments, that is, imposing contemporary ethical norms on the past without considering norms of the time period under investigation (Gibson, 2014; Seixas & Ercikan, 2011; Seixas & Morton, 2013; Selman & Barr, 2009). This does not mean that students must be adept at taking historical perspectives before making an ethical judgment, only that explicit teaching about historical perspectives should accompany any focus on ethical judgments (Bellino & Selman, 2011, 2012).

Several scholars have criticized historical thinking approaches to ethical judgment for being rooted in Western, European traditions of Enlightenment philosophical thought that restricts "what counts as knowledge and what counts as valid ways of assessing that knowledge" (McGregor, 2017, p. 12). Lévesque and Clark (2018) ask whether it is possible for historical thinking approaches drawn from Western intellectual traditions to accommodate other ways of understanding the past. In this view, the explicit or implicit normalization of European philosophical frameworks to define universal ethical codes is yet another example of colonial imposition on cultures that have their own forms of temporal orientation, different ways of understanding the relationship between the past, present, and future, and different standards and methods for assessing knowledge claims and ethical decisions and actions. The unfortunate upshot is that Indigenous traditions of engaging with the past are often measured against Eurocentric ethical procedures and standards.

### Ethical judgements and difficult histories

In history classrooms around the world, students regularly learn about historical injustices including genocides, war crimes, enslavement, torture, forced conversions, and mass expulsions of people. Scholars use a variety of terms to describe these historical injustices including difficult knowledge (Britzman, 2000), the violent past (Cole, 2007), the sensitive past (van Boxtel et al., 2016), traumatic pasts (Psaltis et al., 2017), and difficult history (Epstein & Peck, 2018; Gross & Terra, 2018). Epstein and Peck (2018) define difficult history as "historical narratives and other forms (learning standards, curricular frameworks) that incorporate contested, painful and/or violent events into regional, national or global accounts of the past" (p. 1). Gross and Terra (2018) expand on this definition and identify five characteristics of difficult histories. They are central to a nation's history; refute broadly accepted versions of the past or stated national values; connect with questions or problems facing us in the present; involve collective or state sanctioned violence; and as the result of the other four conditions, create disequilibria that challenge existing historical understandings. Difficult histories highlight the relationship between ethical judgments and the complex web of power relations that influence what historical narratives are legitimated, and how they are constructed, appropriated, contested, and shared in schools and societies (Epstein & Peck, 2018).

Ethics is integral to the various rationales for teaching and learning about difficult histories that have been theorized and conceptualized including increased ethical/moral reasoning and thinking, commitment to social justice, and civic engagement (Barr et al., 2014; Schweber, 2004). It is commonly accepted that learning about difficult histories helps students become "ethical subjects" and "ethical agents" who make decisions about how to act ethically in the present and future (Levy & Sheppard, 2018, p. 368). The aim is for students to learn ethical and moral lessons from the past and transform their understanding into action in the present and future. For example, one of the goals of Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies in Jerusalem is that students' "encounter with the past and with its ethical dilemmas will be internalized over the years and will contribute to the construction of his or her own identity and personal ethics" (Imber, n.d.).

Ethical judgments are central in engaging students in learning about difficult histories and deepening their understanding of present obligations that arise from these events. The Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) urged making curriculum about Indian Residential Schools part of a broader history education that integrates First Nations, Inuit, and Métis voices,

perspectives, and experiences; builds common ground between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples; rejects the racism embedded in colonial systems of education; and treats Indigenous and Euro-Canadian knowledge systems with equal respect (p. 239). The TRC's articulation of the ethical dimension of history in its final report closely mirrors Seixas and Morton's (2013) guideposts for generating powerful understandings of the ethical dimension:

> Students must be able to make ethical judgments about the actions of their ancestors while recognizing that the moral sensibilities of the past may be quite different from their own in present times. They must be able to make informed decisions about what responsibility today's society has to address historical injustices (p. 241).

Scholars have emphasized the significant impact that emotions have on students' understandings and responses to difficult histories and warned against a purely rational cognitive-disciplinary approach to learning about difficult histories (Ammert et al., 2017; Endacott & Brooks, 2013; Garrett, 2014; Simon, 2011; Zembylas, 2014). Barton (2009) claims that ignoring emotive and identity-relevant issues sterilizes history teaching, leaves student needs unanswered, and decreases motivation to learn. Furthermore, Barton and McCully (2012) found that in societies divided by ethnicity, religion, language, or other social identities, emotive responses are often an essential step towards more rational engagement. Encountering difficult histories can disrupt the meaning students make of events, and provoke negative emotions including anger, shame, grief, and disgust, but it can also evoke new thoughts and deeper understandings (Levy & Sheppard, 2018). LaCapra (2001) argues that the purpose of studying difficult histories is not just to be affected by their suffering, or document what happened, but to be transformed in the pursuit of meaningful questions regarding what it means to be human and to live together in this world.

There is limited empirical research that demonstrates that learning about difficult histories leads to the development of moral reasoning, ethical thinking, commitments to social justice, or civic engagement (Barr et al., 2014; Levy & Sheppard, 2018; Schweber, 2004). This does not mean that current approaches to teaching about difficult histories are ineffective and should be rejected, but it underscores the need for research that considers the complexities of teaching about difficult histories that often evoke emotional responses that can resist and deflect intended learning outcomes and understandings. Like Zembylas and Kambani (2012), we believe that when inviting students to ethically respond to difficult histories, teachers need to attend to students' cognitive, ethical, social, political, and emotional selves. To do this, teachers need support in considering the role that place, identity, temporality, and other contextual factors play in shaping students' understanding of difficult histories, and how to create pedagogical strategies that support emotional engagement, critical analysis, and transformative action.

## Ethics as an organising concept in history curriculum design

We have argued so far that ethics is central to four common conceptions of history education. An examination of any orientation to history education, and indeed any approach to social education, would reveal not simply matters of pedagogical preference but of differing conceptions of the relationship between learning and society. As Evans (2004) has pointed out, the perennial debates over the purposes of social studies in North America are intrinsically ethical controversies, representing "competing visions of the good society" (p. 32). Ethics is a central, integrative feature of history education curricula; it persists no matter which approach, organising principles, or combination thereof predominates. In other words, ethics has an inescapable presence precisely because we may argue about the proper purposes of the subject. Even the most descriptive orientations to history education cannot be separated from decisions about what should constitute a good society. Conversely, "normative theory itself must be based

on some descriptive theory of how the world works; and, of course, normative theories influence the formation of policy and the construction of institutions" (Frazer, 2008, p. 282).

On this basis alone, ethical judgments are worthy of greater consideration as an organizing concept in history curricula. However, as we have identified, how the concept is conceptualized in curricula depends on the purposes of history education selected. Additionally, ethical commitments and conceptions of ethics can also vary within orientations to teaching history (Edling et al., 2020). To the extent that commensurability exists across the orientations we have discussed in this paper, the varying conceptions of ethical life and ethical judgment embedded in each cognize something more than rationality. A sense of embodied corporeality infuses the notion of "difficult" histories or "the contributions, sacrifices, and injustices of the past" (Seixas & Morton, 2013. p. 11). Critical thinking and deliberation can certainly support an understanding of how alternative visions for society have been weighed and which have predominated, as well as the consideration of actions that could now be taken. We have argued previously that approaches to teaching ethical judgment as a historical thinking concept warrants a stronger engagement with the philosophy of ethics (Milligan et al., 2018). However, as we and numerous others - including philosophers of ethics - have also stressed (See for example, Chinnery, 2013; Edling et al., 2020) ethical judgment is not simply reducible to a reasoning exercise. A more expansive and encompassing notion recognises that emotion, experience and intuition, for example, also guide ethical judgments, invigorate the participatory dimensions of history education, and feed the sense that there are pressing, complex societal issues at hand. Ethical decision-making and action are a central dimension of being *in* society, that is, what children and young people do with historical thinking, historical consciousness and/or difficult histories to navigate their daily lives and complex, plural societies.

Careful attention is needed to the constructions of ethical judgments that are imported into the pages of curriculum documents and, in particular, the ways of knowing, doing and being that are privileged. In Canada, scholars have theorized diverse types of Indigenous historical consciousness and ways of knowing the past (Brownlie, 2009; Carlson, 2010; Marker, 2011, 2019), and have debated the degree to which historical thinking can accommodate Indigenous ways of knowing (Cutrara, 2018; Gibson & Case, 2019; McGregor, 2017; Seixas, 2012). Similarly, it is an open question about the extent that Western philosophies of ethics can and should accommodate other ways of determining what living a worthwhile life consists of. Yet, it would seem to us that if ethical judgment is to mean anything at all in understanding historical actors and interpretations, then it must invoke as full an appreciation as possible of whose ethical voices have guided curriculum choices, or been silenced or fallen by the wayside. In this respect, ethical judgment may be called upon to do a great deal of heavy lifting.

The recent draft *Aotearoa New Zealand's Histories* curriculum (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2021) provides an example of why such heavy lifting is nonetheless important in settler colonial societies. The curriculum, which will form part of the social sciences learning area, identifies "interpreting past decisions and actions" as one of three inquiry practices. The document states that students should "take account of the attitudes and values of the time and people's predicaments and points of view. By acknowledging the benefits of hindsight and reflecting on our own values, we can make ethical judgments concerning right and wrong" (p. 2). The inclusion of ethics in the proposed curriculum has been controversial. In their response to the draft curriculum, an Expert Advisory Panel objected to "ethical judgments concerning right and wrong" being the ultimate stage in the interpretation of historical events (Royal Society Te Apārangi, 2021, p. 14). Rather than directing students to judge the past and leading them "down a sequence where there is only one conclusion and/or where the outcome is predetermined," the panel argued that students should be encouraged "to ask questions, explore, and find out what that past was" (p. 14).

It remains to be seen whether ethics will occupy a more overt place within New Zealand's new social sciences curriculum and what "ethical judgment" would be taken to mean. In its draft form, the *Aotearoa New Zealand's Histories* curriculum takes a more explicit ethical stance with regards to colonisation and injustice than its predecessor (New Zealand Ministry of Education,

2007). The draft now recognises Māori history as the foundational and continuous history of Aotearoa New Zealand, the ongoing legacy of colonisation as a "complex, contested process, experienced and negotiated differently in different parts of Aotearoa New Zealand over time", (p. 2) and the exercise and effects of power, including resistance that is central to expressions of Māori self-determination, rights, and identity. The document also reinforces previous guidance for teaching Māori history and the need for a strong articulation between Indigenous and Western knowledges (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2013). The positioning of *Aotearoa New Zealand's Histories* within the wider social sciences curriculum is likely to permit a more expansive focus on citizenship education and, with that, perhaps, greater opportunities for learners to explore ethical decisions and commitments in the present.

The articulation of ethical judgment as a key aspect of Aotearoa New Zealand history education is, in our view, a welcome opportunity to enhance learners' nuanced understandings of the past and commitment to societal change. Taking this seriously would, for example, include understanding that, for Māori, significant ethical knowledge is grounded in place and flows from being Māori (Penetito, 2008). It would involve understanding that ethical decisions in contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand society are grounded in the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and expressions of the rights of Māori to self-determination (Watene & Yap, 2015). Meeting the principles of New Zealand's curriculum in history education, including Te Tiriti o Waitangi, inclusion, and cultural diversity (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2007) would mean honouring Māori perspectives of ethical concepts such as justice (Watene, 2016) and ways of enacting cultural forms of reason (Harrison et al., 2020). This would challenge the notion that there is a universal process and criteria for ethical judgment and create room for considering what counts as a more ethical encounter with the past through Māori knowledges and worldviews. This would require students to reject universalised notions of ethical "judgers" and instead to notice different and silenced ethical voices, question motivations, privilege and power, and attend to their own positioning in relation to colonial logic (Sabzalian, 2019). Developing a nuanced appreciation of ethical judgments in relation to colonialism, race, and injustices would also necessarily require an emotional commitment to engage with painful conditions and consequences of ethical judgments (e.g. Bell & Russell, 2021; MacDonald & Kidman, 2021)

Of the four conceptions of history education discussed above, the approach to ethical judgment in the *Aotearoa New Zealand's Histories draft* curriculum appears to be largely framed by an historical thinking approach. The three inquiry practices named in the document (identifying and using sequence; identifying and critiquing sources and perspectives; interpreting past decisions and actions) closely resemble second-order concepts conceptualized in well-known historical thinking frameworks. One open question is how the notion of ethical judgment will be interpreted and implemented by teachers, who have their own ethical stances and approaches to ethical reasoning and judgement? If the curriculum *is* going to incorporate ethical judgements more explicitly, then a crucial next step will be to engage teachers in reflective practice about how and why they are going to take up (or not) this curricular mandate, and in what fashion. For this reason, we remain concerned that, without further explication, the promise and potential of ethics' presence within New Zealand's social sciences curriculum could be undermined. The expectation that learners are to "make ethical judgments concerning right and wrong" overemphasizes the end results of ethical judgments and risks taking an overly cognitive or procedural approach to the complex process of making ethical judgments. This narrowing of ethical judgments would discourage a more expansive understanding of ethics in the wider social sciences curriculum. Furthermore, such a 'thin' reading of ethical judgments could, for example, diminish opportunities for embodied and emotional engagement with ethical issues, shrink the range of ethical questions that might be considered, fail to contextualize ethics and its relationship to people and place, restrict students' understanding of the interplay between power and privilege, and ignore the outcomes of ethical judgments and who such judgments serve. It also risks overlooking what can and should be done with ethical judgments about the past, including how the process of making ethical judgments can inform ethical life and commitments in the present and future.

We recognize that, in the absence of a finalized curriculum and further curricular guidance, such considerations are speculative but not exhaustive. The example does, however, highlight how curriculum formation is in itself an exercise of ethical judgment and illustrates the communicative and interpretive challenges of curriculum design. Furthermore, as a vital part of the inquiry processes invite students to explore history for themselves, a "thick" conception of ethical judgment—that entwines felt difficulties, power relationships, and differing worldviews—is crucial for children and young people to engage with the complexities of assessing past actions in light of constantly evolving present day concerns (A. Clark, 2018; Rudolph & Hogarth, 2020; Tinkham, 2018; Tupper, 2012). What we are suggesting, therefore, is the need for further consideration about the declarative and procedural knowledge that students might need to make ethical judgements and whether these are sufficient to make sense of past and present ethical concerns.

## Conclusion

In this paper, we have highlighted the ways that ethical judgment is inescapably present in four orientations to teaching history. Ethical judgment is worthy of greater attention in history curricula not simply because it is an important dimension of understanding past societies or because it already occupies an albeit ghost-like and beleaguered place in history education. Its potential as an organising concept warrants consideration for at least two related reasons. Firstly, together with contextualisation, the ethical dimension enriches historical understanding in each of the four orientations we have outlined because it enables children and young people to appreciate the complex lived realities and subjective experiences that constitute history, and the diverse ethical perspectives that contributed to the sometimes-difficult decisions that were made. A more-than-cognitive interpretation of ethical judgment recognises the multiple, fluid, and contradictory nature of ethical life and that judgment does not solely proceed in a rational and orderly manner. Missed opportunities for embodied and emotional engagement has the potential to limit students' understanding of why other people reach different, yet equally plausible ethical judgments, their empathy and care for other people's humanity, and the ongoing impact the past has had and continues to have on others. In this sense, the ethical dimension humanizes history.

Secondly, ethics is vitally constitutive of a usable past, that is, to *do* anything with history as a form of knowledge necessarily involves ethical judgment. When children and young people notice ethical judgments in past and present controversies, engage with alternative worldviews and ethical concepts, orient themselves in history, or question assumptions and silences, they do so not simply in the expectation of gaining deeper and more robust knowledge of the past, but also in expectation of navigating their present and future lives. Such navigation necessarily involves contemplating decisions and actions that contribute to a worthwhile life for themselves and others, that is, making ethical judgments.

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