

Körper, Andreas

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2015, 56 S.



Quellenangabe/ Reference:

Körper, Andreas: Historical consciousness, historical competencies – and beyond? Some conceptual development within German history didactics. 2015, 56 S. - URN: urn:nbn:de:0111-pedocs-108118 - DOI: 10.25656/01:10811

<https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0111-pedocs-108118>

<https://doi.org/10.25656/01:10811>

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Historical Consciousness, Historical Competencies – and beyond? Some Conceptual Development within German History Didactics

1 Introduction

Within the last 15 years, a shift has taken place in German educational policy and academic thought. Both schooling in general as almost all special subjects have been subjected to it. It is labelled with the term 'orientation on competencies' and has spurred an immense attention as manifested in big research and developmental projects but also in intense and strongly controversial discussions. Even though the label as well as many layers of both the research and the controversies have much in common across the spectrum of subjects and educational fields, the special subject didactics have been challenged by this orientation which took its start not from internal considerations but from a general shift in educational research methodology (viz: the development of probabilistic testing and its promises for the assessment of student achievements) and policy: If the different subjects were not just to be regarded as 'substrata' of general schooling, exchangeable and reacting only to outside developments, but rather as disciplines and educational fields with their own dignities, they had to legitimize or combat the new orientation within their own separate lines of discussion and applying their own concepts – which might (and would) differ from each other quite sharply.

For history teaching and its corresponding academic discipline, 'history didactics', this meant to argue in favour of or against the use of the concept of 'historical competencies' and their promotion in school with regard to what could in itself not be characterized as a clarified conceptual framework, but rather an ongoing discussion and debate, which before had been mostly focused around the concept of 'Historical Consciousness'.

Even though there has been some literature in the field of disciplinary history in Germany in the last years, no outline of this general development and the conceptual and normative relation of the two central concepts of history didactics' discussion and research has been suggested. This paper presents my personal and professional view (rather than any authoritative introduction) of what the subject and the aims of the discipline can and should be like under current conditions. Naturally, it cannot present more than a sketch of the rather complex process leading from one focus to the other. I will not be able to deal with the many sideways of the debate around the concept of 'historical consciousness' and neither will I be capable of providing any secured outlook on the future. The main reason for this, besides limited space (and the lack of in-depth-historiography of the discipline's own history concerning the period

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of time in question)¹ is of course the fact that the sketch will lead us into a time where the specific competence of the historian – to narrate developments in retrospect – overlaps with and must give way to that of the contemporary, who describes an ongoing development in which he is not spectator or analyst but an interested actor himself.

2 The master narrative of German History Didactics' development

2.1 'From "teaching the past" to the interest in historical consciousness'

The 'master narrative' of the history of History Didactics in Germany can be outlined as a development from a discipline 'being confined to the frame of a mere lore of methods of transmitting historical knowledge' to 'historical meta-discipline'² focusing on the 'historical consciousness in society' (Karl-Ernst Jeismann),³ in theory, (empirical) morphology and pragmatic reflections. This 'master narrative' of course omits important sideways (as for example the didactic position of Peter Schulz-Hageleit, which is heavily influenced by psychoanalytical theory and cannot be subsumed under an orientation on 'historical consciousness'),⁴ and it draws a somewhat distorted picture of the earlier conceptions of History Didactics (or rather: Methodology) as being primarily focused on the empirical results of academic researchers, whose optimal transfer into the minds of the pupils was at the heart of its concerns ('Abbild-didaktik'). In reality, in strong currents, pedagogical and political aims of history teaching were more important, for example the forming of a common German consciousness, the education towards a specific acceptance of responsibility by way of presentation of historical role models, propagation of the 'true German state' when in the interwar period most national conservatives didn't accept the Weimar Republic as such, 'völkische' and national socialist indoctrination, or, after the war, alleged 'a-political' education towards humanity, and so on – aims, which German historian (and didact) Ernst Bernheim distantly put off as 'Nebenzwecke' (by-

1 Even though there are some articles on aspects of the development of German History Didactics, there has been no greater synthesis since Herbst and the collections Bergmann und Schneider 1982 and Leidinger 1988. Some new efforts in the field have been made on initiative of Wolfgang Hasberg and Manfred Seidenfuß, and have lead to a new series of collections, which, however, do not cover the recent history in question here. See Hasberg und Seidenfuß 2005b; esp. Hasberg und Seidenfuß 2005a; and Hasberg 2008 with Hasberg und Seidenfuß 2008.

2 Thus in ironic distance recently Sabrow 2005.

3 See Jeismann 1977: "Didaktik der Geschichte' hat es zu tun mit dem Geschichtsbewußtsein in der Gesellschaft sowohl in seiner Zuständlichkeit, den vorhandenen Inhalten und Denkfiguren, wie in seinem Wandel, dem ständigen Um- und Aufbau historischer Vorstellungen, der stets sich erneuernden und verändernden Rekonstruktion des Wissens von der Vergangenheit. Sie interessiert sich für dieses Geschichtsbewußtsein auf allen Ebenen und in allen Gruppen der Gesellschaft sowohl um seiner selbst willen wie unter der Frage, welche Bedeutung dieses Geschichtsbewußtsein für das Selbstverständnis der Gegenwart gewinnt; sie sucht Wege, dieses Geschichtsbewußtsein auf eine Weise zu bilden oder zu beeinflussen, die zugleich dem Anspruch auf adäquate und der Forderung nach Richtigkeit entsprechende Vergangenheitserkenntnis wie auf Vernunft des Selbstverständnisses der Gegenwart entspricht. Dabei ist der Begriff 'Geschichtsbewußtsein' hier in einem sehr allgemeinen Sinne als das Insgesamt der unterschiedlichsten Vorstellungen von und Einstellungen zur Vergangenheit genommen.'

4 On this see recently: Körber 2007b.

goals).⁵

There is, however, some truth in this master narrative as to its stress in the self-image of the discipline as (now) a 'scientific' discipline with its own empirical subject matter, methodology and theoretical approach. Not 'of late' (as in the master narrative version), but 'still' the results of academic research are not at the centre of didactic reflection (although they constitute a limit of plausibility and legitimacy), but now its is not political and pedagogical aims which are to be transmitted via history education, but it is the fostering of the learners' historical consciousness in itself.

It is true, however, and a lot of discussion and partly confusion around the new core-concept of 'historical consciousness' is due to this fact, that the former political and pedagogical interests have not just been imposed onto historical knowledge and teaching, but that in these concepts – historical literacy ('Bildung') and historical consciousness – were rather defined as the possession of specific insights into the 'historicity' of mankind, into specific insights, resp. lessons to be learned from history in itself,⁶ whereas the new concept by Karl-Ernst Jeismann and others --- used 'historical consciousness' rather as an empirical and open concept which could embrace quite different characteristic values. There would be no valid idea of someone having no 'historical consciousness' at all, but different types and values between people, and – in an evaluative and pragmatic sense – less as well as more elaborate versions.

The story of German History Didactics therefore can in a way be told as a development from a discipline aiming at learners which conceptualized as being deficient and in need for knowledge and insights from outside (heteronomous) towards a discipline which conceptualizes its learners as basically competent. This change is for example apparent in the new approach's interest in the sociological basis of historical orientation (History Didactics as Historical Social Science)⁷ and in encouraging and enabling social classes which hitherto had no stronghold in historiography to research their own history from their own point of view.⁸ This strand is strongly connected with programs of 'history from below' and 'dig where you stand' as well as with the method of 'Forschendes Lernen' (learning by researching/ explorative learning)⁹ in Germany and in other countries also. Part of these projects and of similar projects focusing on pupils and students 'doing history' in their vicinity, like the Federal Presidents History Competition, organized by the Körber Foundation, was the distribution of historical research methodology – in what elementary form ever – beyond the domain of university-trained Historians and other specialists. 'Historical Consciousness' became not only a term for what people know and think about history, and what concepts, patterns of explanation and of attribution of relev-

5 Bernheim 1899 – quoted after Buszello 1978, S. 227.

6 This understanding is – with reversed signs – still valid in the didactic approach of Annette Kuhn.

7 See for example Bergmann 1980.

8 See for example Faulenbach 1985. This article is missing in the 5th (and latest) edition (1997).

9 Borries 1992.

ance they use, but also for an *ability* – for the ability to 'think history (your)self'.¹⁰ This met with the theoretical founding of historical thought as an *individual tool* for orientation in the present and the future by Jörn Rüsen in 1983.¹¹

History teaching then was no longer about fostering beliefs, but about enabling people to think historically themselves, and thereby to be able to reflect upon (and clarify) their personal as well as collective historical identity.

This way, 'Historical Consciousness' as the core-concept of History Didactics has been a great innovation. It indicated a noteworthy and necessary shift in the concepts of what history and historical learning is about and is for, which should not be reverted.¹² History teaching and learning was no longer considered as aiming at social and political cohesion, the central focus being the state and its interests, but as a tool for everybody for orientating independent actions as an emancipated member of the society.

This shift was supported by the theoretical insight into the necessity of multiperspectivity, i.e. that a concept of the one and only 'true history' was flawed and that there necessarily were multiple 'true' accounts on each and every historical event, structure etc. – even though there still can be (and are) numerous (maybe even more) 'wrong' (incomplete, erroneous or willfully wrong) accounts, too.

10 See the sub-title of a re-edition of articles by one of the main protagonists of this period of German History Didactics: Bergmann 2000.

11 Rüsen 1983a as well as Rüsen 1994a, new edition: Rüsen 2008.

12 See Vermeulen 2000, S. 35.

Overview over main strands of German History Didactics.			
Central concept	Characteristic of theoretical background	shortcomings and criticisms	main protagonists
'subject matter and epistemologic structure of history'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'eclectically historicist', • academic historic research and theory of literacy ('Bildung'), • Insight into historicity and affiliation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conventionalism, • 'juste milieu', • affirmation of existing conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joachim Rohlfes • Wolfgang Hug • Kurt Fina • Hans-Dieter Schmid
'Emancipation'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'critical-communicative' • Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School • Critique of Ideology • to overcome the system ('Abolishment of unnecessary authority') • pupils' (objective) interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • incapacity to come to consensus • 'indoctrination' • 'using history as a quarry' • romanticism of revolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annette Kuhn • Valentine Rothe • Friedhelm Streiffeler
'historical consciousness'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • moderately constructivist • narrativist theory of history • pluralism • narrative competence • reflection and broadening of identity • elaborate dealing with history and historical culture • competence to judge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cognitivist bias - /onesidedness • excessive demands on the learners • illusionist concept (distance to practice) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karl-Ernst Jeismann • Jörn Rüsen
historico-analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • psychoanalysis – depth-psychology • 'processing'/'working through' • liberation from unconscious projections and repetitions compulsions • taking seriously the individual person, its 'Lebenswelt' and needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjectivism • distance and alienation to academic research • 'therapy instead of teaching' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Schulz-Hageleit • Peter Knoch • Volkhard Knigge

Table 1: Overview over main strands of German History Didactics. After (Borries 2008b, S. 22). Transl. and additions by the author; 2008.

The special part of the insight was that different accounts depending on different perspectives were not only *possible*, but *legitimate* and *necessary*. This was due to the theoretical insight that history can only be conceived of in the form of a narrative account, linking together known particles about the past into a story, dependent the questions asked from the present, impregnated by the present and socially specific frames of mind.

In doing so, the concept of historical consciousness has helped to bind together quite different interests within this complex. Among them are the rather classical empirical questions into what pupils or other groups of society really *know* about history. This thread of research does not only ask for shortcomings and flaws, for under- and misrepresentations of history and past reality in peoples' minds (although often enough, it does).¹³ Another thread of empirical research rather is interested in structural aspects of historical consciousness, for example in the

13 The latest [2008] example is the research into the degree and form of representation of Eastern Germany (DDR-) history in students' minds, which makes use of this concept of mis-representation; see Deutz-Schroeder und Schroeder 2008. Meanwhile [2012] another similar study of this group has been published.

interest in different sectors and times and the patterns which can be found in these interests, in the concepts and explanations used and in the conclusions drawn from historical accounts.¹⁴

2.2 Limits of the classical concept of historical consciousness

Despite of this success, the (German) concept of Historical Consciousness also has proven to be at the same time too static and too imprecise. The older charge that it is merely an 'empty formula', raised (even if in the form of a question) by Joachim Rohlfes,¹⁵ has in large been proven wrong. However, the widespread recognition of the term 'historical consciousness' by many didacts of quite different orientation does not signify at all that of them refer to the same concept. In fact, it has been employed by right-winged and National Socialist historians for expressing their concern about the German youth losing their racial concept of folk identity, derived from a notion of a long and great tradition?' and disclosing fears of the own people losing their 'own character' to influences from other cultures,¹⁶ as it has been by liberal and modern people in the sense of being aware of the problematic aspects and implications of the German past and of the necessary conclusions to be drawn by them – namely: being historically conscious meaning to acknowledge that 'after Auschwitz' it is impossible to just carry on as before – for nobody, but especially so for Germans.

Aside from these two clearly (and opposing) normative ideas of what 'historical consciousness' could mean, the term has sometimes (not only, but also in these two instances) been reduced to its cognitive part, referring to a popular connotation of 'consciousness' as the awareness of one's own knowledge, which in turn is open to objective registration. Just to the opposite – the term in its cognitive use refers to more than the elements in a person's relation to the past of which this person can be aware and which it can name and/or cite.¹⁷

So, 'Historical Consciousness' as a term gives no indication whatsoever to its fillings, to what people should know, which morales and values they should hold etc. It is a catch-all term which can be used quite differently.

Another sceptical view, therefore, voiced at the conference upon which this volume is based, holds that German history didactic as a discipline does not possess one concept of 'historical consciousness', but several of them, and has to date not succeeded in clarifying and disentangling them. This in part is true (see above), but to my opinion, the implied standards that a discipline should use one consolidated concept, does have its shortcomings, too. The following chapter therefore is dedicated to a short review of different definitions and model of 'historical consciousness' in German history didactics. My point in doing so is that there is no given entity of 'historical consciousness' which can be researched using one single concept

14 See for example Angvik und Borries 1997.

15 Rohlfes 1990. Rohlfes (1929-) is professor (em.) in history and its didactics at Bielefeld University.

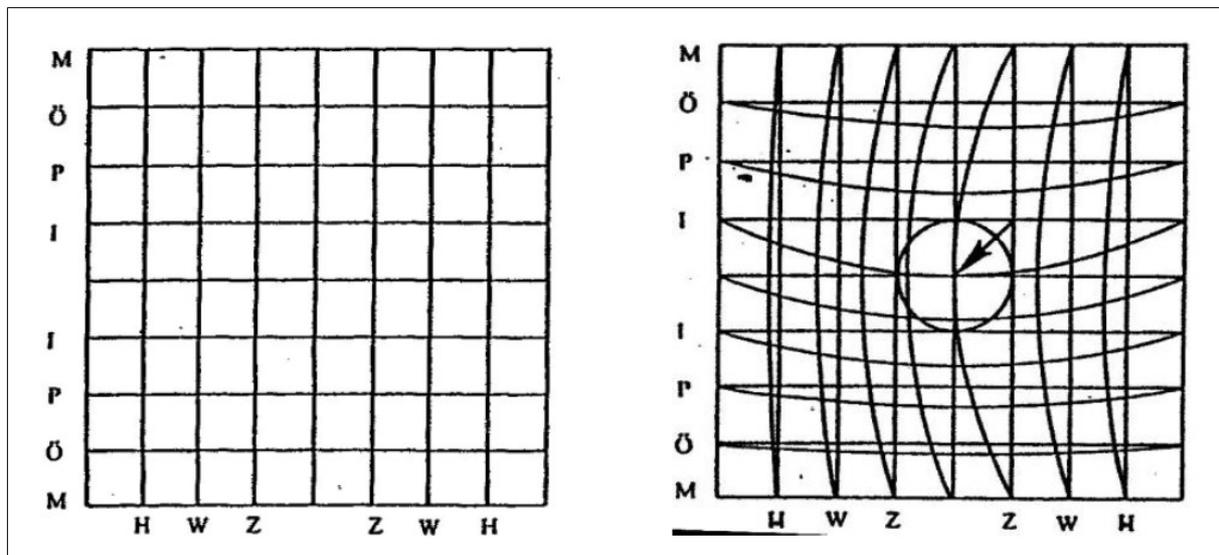
16 See for example the title of a book by former Nazi Historian and History Teacher Trainer from Hamburg, in which he attacked the modern didactics: Anrich 1988.

17 For a discussion of the concept of 'consciousness' in philosophy and psychology see for example Hofstaedter 2008.

and model, however complex, but that the concept of 'historical consciousness' is a psychological and didactical construct, and that therefore all concrete definitions and concepts of it are models whose purpose is not to fully represent such a given entity, but to selectively highlight aspects and to enable research and teaching.

2.3 Structural definitions and models of historical consciousness

A new term is not enough to focus the efforts of an academic discipline – however widespread accepted it is. Of course, definitions and models of 'historical consciousness' were needed and have been provided in quite a number of versions. Only a short selection of them can be discussed here.



Graph 1: Pandel's dimensions of historical consciousness; a) in 'ideal structure'; b) in 'actual individual structure'

An important and widely used (though incomplete and deficient) model of how the concept of historical consciousness can be used in empirical research and pragmatic teaching has been provided by Hans-Jürgen Pandel.¹⁸ He differentiates seven 'dimensions' of historical consciousness, which are not constituted by mental *operations*, but by aspects of consciousness/awareness, which he operationalises by a kind of axes between two polarities each. They also form a 'structural grid' (see Graph 1).

Three of them are specific for the domain of history. They are:

- **Z**: "Zeitbewusstsein": consciousness/awareness of time (back then – today/tomorrow)
- **W**: Wirklichkeitsbewusstsein: consciousness/awareness of reality (fictional – factual)
- **H**: Historizitätsbewusstsein: consciousness/awareness of historicity (static – variable)

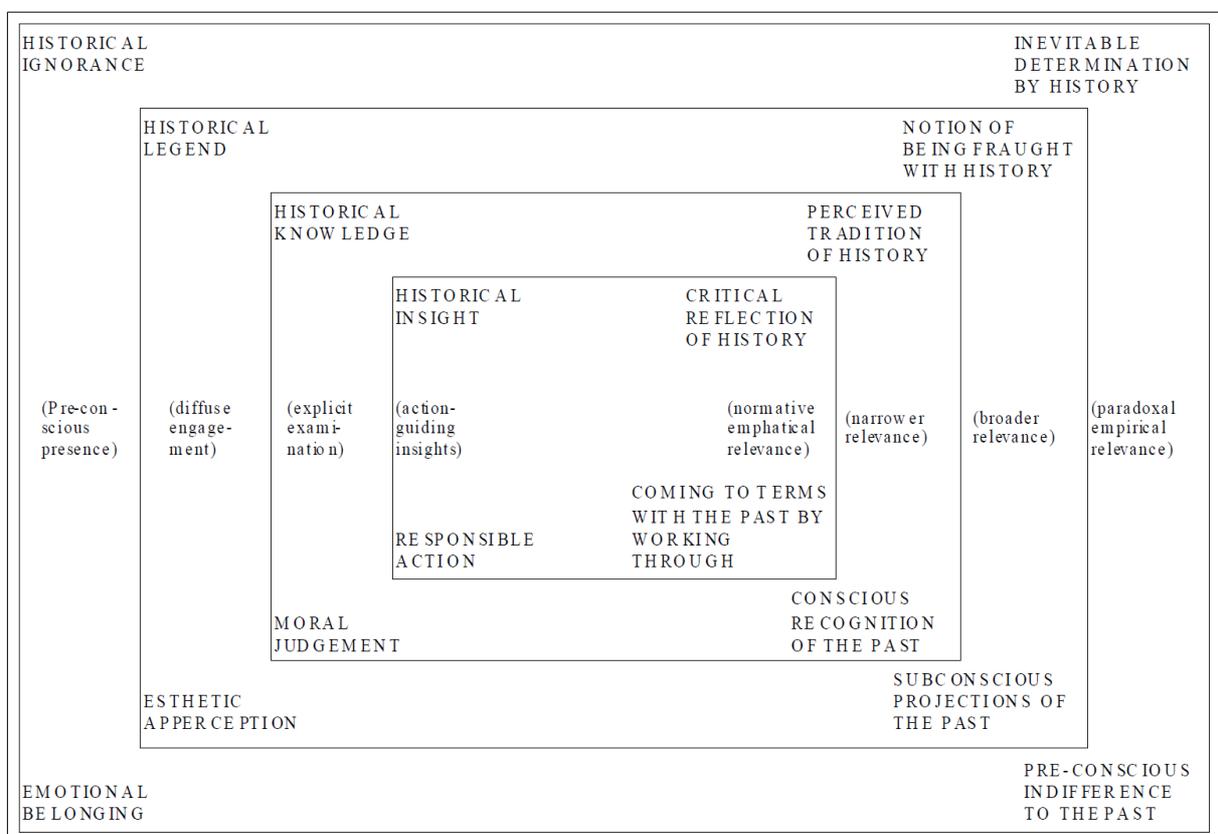
Four others are focused on the complexity of society:

- **I**: Identitätsbewusstsein: consciousness/awareness of identity (we – you/them)

¹⁸ Pandel 1987. Pandel (1940-) was professor in didactics of history in Halle Wittenberg from 1994.

- **P:** Politisches Bewusstsein: political consciousness/awareness (high up – low down)
- **Ö:** Ökonomisches Bewusstsein: socio-economic consciousness/awareness (poor – rich)
- **M:** Moralisches Bewusstsein: moral consciousness/awareness (right – wrong)

Allowing that these polar structures are not meant as scales (differentiating between 'high' vs. 'low' forms of the respective consciousness, but rather are meant to embrace different forms of, for example, conceptualizing time (steadily flowing, irregular etc.), this model is far from being complete. Firstly, the selection of dimensions is somewhat erratic – others are possible and equally important. Secondly, the definition of the poles is in some cases problematic, too (see political consciousness). And thirdly, it does not give any hint to the relevance of different forms of awareness within these dimensions.



Graph 2: Bodo v.Borries' 'pyramid of historical consciousness' (seen from above) (Borries 1988, S. 12). transl. by the author 2008

A third model, provided by Bodo von Borries in 1988, should be shortly presented, because it highlights some other aspects.¹⁹ It differentiates four dimensions and four levels of historical consciousness in the shape of a pyramid (seen vertically from the top in Graph 2). It shows

¹⁹ Borries 1988. Borries (1943-) is professor (em.) in education with special regard to didactics of history at Hamburg University.

very well the characteristic of the concepts to embrace more than knowledge but insights and modes of dealing with the past – but not specific interpretations.

The models briefly presented so far have in common that they model historical consciousness as a status, a given form of a person's relation to the past. They have inspired quite a lot of theoretical reflections as well as empirical research, both qualitative and quantitative.

However, even more widely accepted than these models are sets of definitions and theoretical concepts which model historical consciousness not as a status is a given situation, but as a process and a set of capabilities. The basic versions of this notion have been provided by Karl-Ernst Jeismann and Jörn Rüsen.²⁰

Most widely accepted to my perception is Rüsen's definition that historical consciousness is 'Sinnbildung über Zeiterfahrung', which is best translated into 'formation of meaning over experience of (changes within) time'.²¹ Another, older formula seems to be equally accepted. It is the postulation that historical consciousness is constituted by the connection of interpretation of the past, understanding (or apperception) of the present and expectations of resp. for the future.²² However, these two definitions alone do present little more than *formulae*. Both of them focus on mental *operations*, even though in early versions they were named 'dimensions': Jeismann introduced the differentiation between 'Sach[verhalts]analyse' (= analysis of facts)²³, 'Sachurteil' (best translated to 'conclusion') and 'Wertung'/'Werturteil' (judgement).²⁴ This tripartition has later on been influential both for the differentiation of operations of judgement and for the structure of the FUER model where it led to the differentiation of the three focus of 'past', 'history' and 'present/future' (see below).

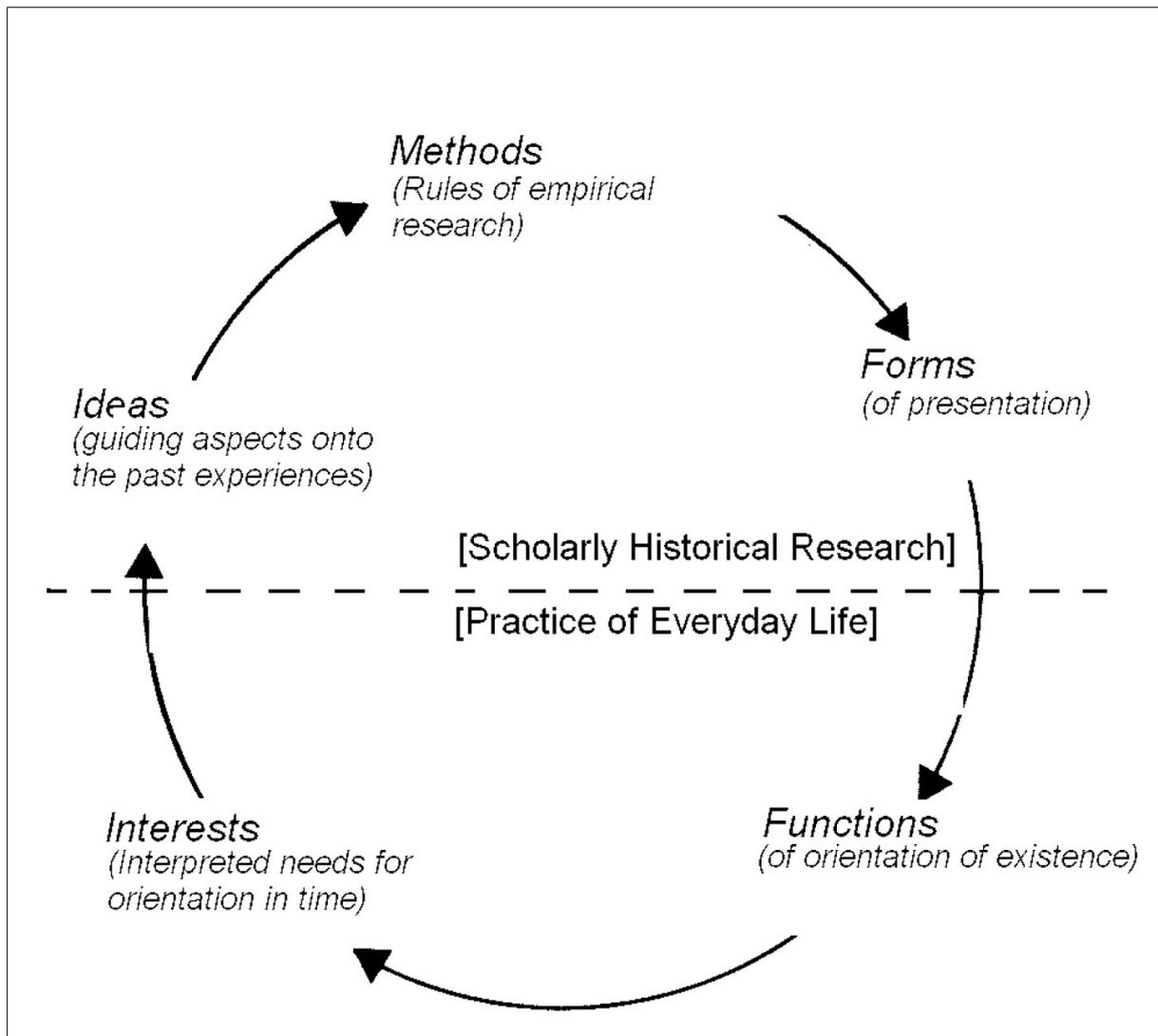
20 Karl-Ernst Jeismann (1925-2012) was professor (em.) in didactics of history at Münster University. Jörn Rüsen (1938-) is one of the most eminent theoreticians of history in Germany, having been professor in theory and didactics of history at Bochum University, in history in Bielefeld and director of the Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut (KWI) in Essen.

21 Rüsen 1989, S. 94.

22 See the subtitle of Jeismann et al. 1985. Slightly slightly different wording can be found in Jeismann 1992, where Jeismann uses 'apperception of the present' and speaks of 'perspectives for the future' and in several publications by Bodo v. Borries, for example Borries 1995.

23 The term 'facts' is problematic here, since 'facts' in history are not just given, but can be only constituted by way of historical thinking. Another translation of the German term 'Sachverhalt' reads 'circumstances of a case', but this too strongly diverts the focus from the centre of the case. see 'The highest would be: to comprehend that all factual is already theory.' Oexle 2000; Oexle also points out that the 'original context of 'fact' ['Tatsache' und 'Faktum'] in German language in the second half of the 18th century is theological: 'Facts' ['Tatsachen'] are matters of doing, of the doing of god. 'Facts' therefore are indications (gained by experience) to the accordance of world history and salvific history.' (92).

24 Jeismann 1978. See also Jeismann 1980.



Graph 3: Process model of historical thought by (Rüsen 1983b, S. 29); transl. AK 2008

In his *Historik* and his books on *historical orientation* and *historical learning*, Rüsen presented a more elaborated model of historical consciousness. Based on a narrative theory of history, namely by Arthur C. Danto,²⁵ Hans Michael Baumgartner²⁶ he conceptualised first the research process of academic historians in a process model (see Graph 3),²⁷ which he later adapted for history teaching, also.²⁸ In this model, historical consciousness is the mental process by which individuals orientate themselves in the dimension of time whenever they experience a difference between expected and/or planned and the realised course of changes along this dimensions. Historical Consciousness here is a mental process and the ability of the individual to perform this process, as Rüsen formulates in the subtitle of his 1994/2008 book on Histor-

25 Danto 1968 (German 1973).

26 Baumgartner 1975.

27 Rüsen 1983a (see FN 11).

28 See below p. 29.

ical Orientation: 'On the work of historical consciousness to orientate itself in time'.²⁹ Starting with a need for orientation, the process described by Rösen follows a path of methodical empirical processing of experiences which have come upon our time from earlier times towards a formulated narrative yielding orientation.

The operations distinguished by Jeismann can be regarded as elements within this process, as can the differentiations of types of (narrative) constructions of meaning by Rösen (traditional, exemplaric, critical and genetic).

This model has been differentiated several times by v. Borries and myself (see Tab. 2 and Graph 4 and 5). According to it, temporal orientation takes place by constructing different narrative 'patterns of continuity', either by referring to

0. a concept of invariability, e.g. to an unchanging human nature, or
1. to some origin in the past, which explains some valid feature or even exerts normative adherence,
2. a concept of rules which are valid in the background of all visible changes and can be detected in and derived from past examples and applied in the present and the future,
3. the notion of some directed development which we can detect in the past and extrapolate into the future (e.g. "the world has become and will become ever more complicated"), or
4. some other pattern.

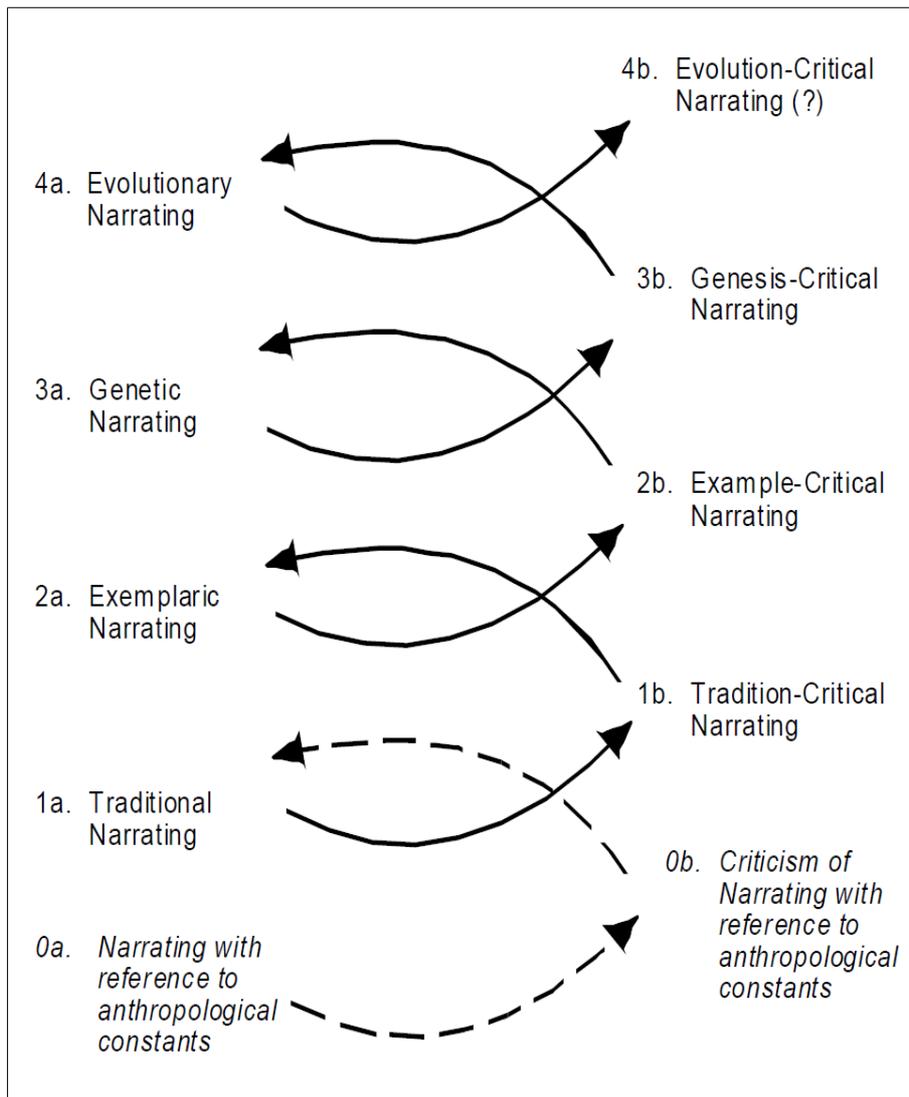
In between these types there are critical types which question the validity of the narrative mode of the previous/lower pattern (0...4b), even though not every criticism of a narrative can be considered a critical sensemaking. There can also be criticism *within* a pattern, e.g. if someone questions the validity of a rule postulated in one narrative, but not the idea of establishing a rule or pattern in itself, e.g. just asking whether the correct rule has been found.

²⁹ Rösen 1994a, new edition: Rösen 2008 (see FN 11).

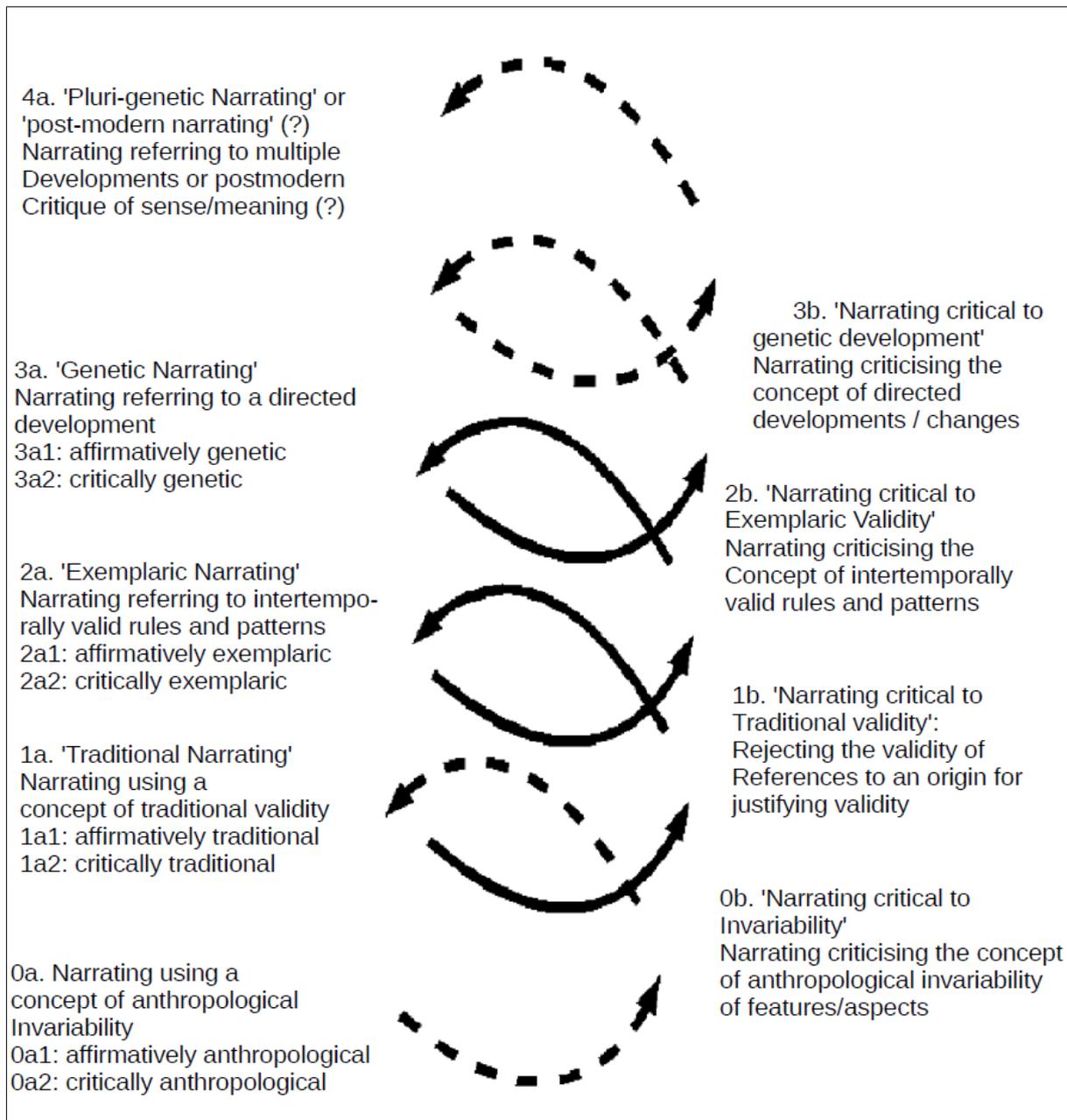
	explanation	Examples	
		1: affirmative	2: Sceptic
		Critical of the pattern	
	Narrating / Bildung Meaning by		
4b ???	(Can there be a “next step” after the idea of directed development has been effectively de-structed?)		
4a: post-mod-ern? Pluri-genetic	... referring to either a plurality of directed develop-ments of to post-modern criticism of developmental ideas	There may be more develop-ments active than just the Western idea of progress and modernization (e.g. Claude Lévi-Strauss 1952)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can we really detect directed develop-ments – provided that we are in the middle of them? • Is it really plausible (and fair) to assign to past people the status of (just) pre-decessors? • Don't we reduce their lives and expect-ations by doing so?
3b critical of genetic devel-opment	... critical as to the idea of directed de-velopment	“Is there really a development leading from the past over the present into the future? Will e.g. economic growth (have to) go on forever?”	
3a genetic	... referring to a concept of a direc-ted development (which can be ex-trapolated into the future)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The amount of Knowledge has developed so strongly up to today. Nobody will be able to overlook any of it it the next ... years. We will be-come even more special-ized” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Is that really the correct develop-ment? Is there not quite another de-velopment discernible? That everyone of us will have more knowledge at her/his fingertips, so we all will master more knowledge than anyone in the past”
2b. Critical of exemplaric validity	... criticising the concept of inter-temporally applic-able rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It is not plausible that Third-World- countries do face the same prob-lems today that European countries have faced earlier. Times have changed!” • 	
2a: Exem-plaric	... referring to the idea of intertem-porally valid rules to be derived from historical examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Revolutions occur when classes/groups have become economically potent but are not having their share of political influence” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Is that really a good explanation of the mechanism of revolutions? We surely need another pattern of it.”
1b: Tradition-critic	... criticising of the concept of tradi-tional validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It just can't be enough to look for an origin. Things change over time. Not everything that was once started lasts over time unchanged” • “Is it really plausible to look for a founder of our state of Germany today – be it Bismarck or List? Doesn't it owe its current state to roots of a totally different kind?” 	
1a: Traditional	... referring to some origin in time, since when some fea-ture/aspect is valid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Since god sent his son to take upon him our sins we can be assured of salvation” • “Since the first formulation of the idea of humanity, this obligated us” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Can it really be that origin? Surely there must be another origin” • “Is really Bismarck the founder of Ger-many? Or rather Friedrich List?”

	explanation	Examples	
		1: affirmative	2: Sceptic
		Critical of the pattern	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Since the discovery of the Americas, 	
Ob: critical as to the idea of invariant 'nature'	... criticising the idea of unchangeable /invariant human nature	“Is it really plausible to explain this by referring to some invariable nature of humankind?”	
Oa: anthropological constant / invariability	... referring to some feature / condition regarded as invariant throughout the time (without even having a beginning)	„men is like that“ „that lies in human nature“	“no, men is not like that, there must be some other nature of humankind explaining this”

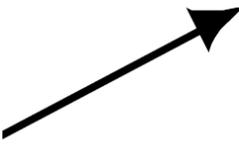
Tab. 2: Types of Sensemaking after Rösen, v.Borries, Körber



Graph 4: Re-formulation of Rösen's narrative types by Bodo v.Borries (Borries 1988:61); additions and transl. by the author.



Graph 5: Further Differentiation of the Typology of Sensebuilding/Narrating. (Körber 2013); Transl. AK 2015.

Types of narrating as patterns of construction of meaning		
1.	Traditional narrating 	In spite of all changes the matter in question stays alike in principle; there is no categorical increase in quality
2.	Genetical narrating 	A matter is presented as a process of development up to the present; the genesis of present conditions is told, which then undergoes no further change
3.	Telical narrating 	The aim of a process of development is not in the present but in the future; it is being told as if aiming at a future aim ("general history in cosmopolitan intention"; "Empire of Freedom")
4.	Cyclical narrating 	The process of development is presented as recurrence; as recovery of an earlier status (as regression or progression)
5.	Organical narrating 	The historic process is a permanent becoming and decay; an up and down

Graph 6: Patterns of Narrating after (Pandel 2002, S. 43).

There is an alternative typology of “types of narrating as patterns of construction of meaning” by Hans-Jürgen Pandel (Graph 6)³⁰, which offers some additions, but lacks other aspects.

³⁰ Pandel 2002.

The general concept of 'types of narrating' or of 'construction of meaning' was very important, since it allowed not only for normative postulation of what 'historical consciousness' could or should be, but also empirical analyses of which of these patterns students had at their command.

2.4 Criteria for assessing and securing the plausibility of narratives (“Triftigkeit”)

As for criteria of plausibility of narratives, Jörn Rüsen provided a tri-partite set of such criteria in his early work already, slightly revised in his recent “Historik” of 2013. The idea behind these criteria for which he coined “Triftigkeit” (and recently “plausibility”)³¹ is that since we can't directly observe the past (since it is effectively gone), we cannot judge the veracity or “objectivity” of any story by any measure of its corresponding with the past reality, which we don't have in any other form than in (other) narratives. Rüsen therefore postulates that the criteria for the quality of narrative must be found in itself, i.e. in its principles of construction, its characteristics.

On the basis that there is not only one possibly valid story about any event, but different (and even countless) ones, depending on their perspective, interest etc., but that nevertheless there are also less plausible, flawed and even outright wrong stories, he postulates that the general quality of a story can be discerned by the degree to which it is opened to criticism and offers anticipated answers to possible criticism and questioning. He distinguishes three (in 2013 four) dimensions of such criteria: Empirical, normative, narrative (and in 2013: theoretical).

1. Empirical plausibility marks the degree by which a narrative (a story) lays open to the recipient (reader/audience) its basis of experiences from the past. Stories can be totally made up, so that any (primary) source can veto them. Until anyone brings forth such a denying source, they may be believed, but they won't stand the test. Other stories may be plausible even without explicitly referring to source material or witnesses, because nobody will be able to bring forth contradictory sources, but in order to be more readily accepted, any narrator should reference the sources on which he grounds his claims of actual experiences being used in his story. Therefore a) to name the sources or witnesses is a method to increase empirical plausibility as is b) to increase the number of sources used and c) to explicitly discuss their relevance and reliability.
2. Normative plausibility refers to the acceptability of the norms and values (including criteria of relevance) used when constructing a narrative in the eyes of the intended audience. If the norms and values used correlate with those of the audience, they will regard the story as plausible. On the first level, when these values and norms are not

31 The German term used in this context, coined by Jörn Rüsen, is 'Triftigkeit', which translates to something like 'cogency', which, however, suggests a bit more than the German term, that a story – if cogent – has found a necessary structure, whereas Rüsen accepts that multiple different stories on the same subject can be equally cogent, e.g. if told from different perspectives. In Rüsen 2013, S. 58–62, he renamed them 'plausibilities', adding a fourth criterion, “theoretical plausibility”. In how far this really can be distinguished from the narrative plausibility, needs to be further discussed.

made explicit, this may be prone to relativism. A story is, however, considered normatively plausible to a higher degree, if it addresses the values not only of a small audience, but of several and greater groups, e.g. addressing the perspectives of several groups relating to that history. The ultimate level of plausibility in this respect would be reached by a story which (ideally) can be told towards mankind as a whole, not excluding any perspective in principle. The method by which to enhance normative plausibility is the widening of incorporated perspectives.

3. Narrative plausibility is the third dimension. It refers to the degree in which the patterns of explanation (and of sensemaking) are made explicit and acceptable to the audience, e.g. referring to their everyday concepts of how people or systems work, or (on a higher level) explicitly referring to theories and empirical results of academic disciplines.

Stories can only be accepted as plausible, if they meet all three criteria to a satisfactory degree. If e.g. some old SS-veteran told a story of his and his comrades killing as many Jews as they could in a German concentration camp, this surely is empirically plausible, especially so, if he provides photos, etc. To his fellow veterans, such a story, ending with some “what a pity we didn't finish this” might be normatively plausible, but that certainly would only apply to that single group, not for a greater group of people, including Jewish and most modern people. If, however, some told the same story about the SS killing Jews, stating that “for some old veterans this may still feel as some unfinished task of theirs, but almost all others surely are glad that it could have been stopped”, such a story would integrate more perspectives and thus be normatively more plausible. As to narrative plausibility, e.g. to refer to psychological theories of patterns of moral disengagement (e.g. referring to authorities, dehumanizing people etc.),³² might increase the plausibility of the story why SS-men were capable and even willing to do so than just to refer to an idea of “that's what they wanted”.

All in all, the concept of historical consciousness in German history didactics thus possesses multiple characteristics: In a way it has a double nature just like the 'wave-particle-dualism' postulates for light in physics, in our case combining a characteristic of a status, a set of characteristics (norms and values, perceptions, concepts etc.) given at any time on the one hand, and of a process on the other hand. Within the theoretical premises given in the narrativist theory of history, this is quite sensible. But it does mean that one model alone, especially a structured set of dimensions, determinants, characteristics, is not sufficient: Historical Consciousness must be conceptualised and explored in its dynamic characteristic, too.

However, the case is even more complicated, since conceptualizing historical consciousness

32 Cf. e.g. Welzer 2005. **Albert Bandura**.

as a process directly leads us to another (and even more valid) understanding, which has already been shortly hinted at: Historical Consciousness can thus not only be explored under the perspective of a process (how does a person make sense from empirical data on earlier times after having experienced temporal alterity?), but can (and must) also be understood as the set of capabilities, dispositions and skills necessary to undertake the required operations: Historical consciousness then is a competence – the competence to think historically. This understanding, which in many aspects parallels concepts developed in the English debate (see below) has also been founded by Rösen and Jeismann. For Rösen, the ability to think historically is based upon the three resp. four abilities to a) experience temporal alterity, to b) interpret and to c) orientate (and motivate) oneself. This line of thought has much been elaborated upon in German history didactics, especially in pragmatic work by and for teachers. Stressing the narrativist basis, it has led to a widely accepted formula of 'narrative competence' being the core competency in the field of historical consciousness.³³

Thus, the concept historical consciousness does not only possess the particle-wave dualism of being status and process (which can partly be overcome by conceptualizing the status as always changing), but also another one of being a set of abilities and their usage (historical thinking). Furthermore, in Rösen's theory, this latter process and the process of historical learning become structurally identical also (see below ch. 3.2).

Moreover, Historical Consciousness, has not been a successful concept in Germany only, but also in Great Britain and other countries. It is not possible to give an extensive overview over the different understandings, here. It is, however necessary to point to the specific notions connected with this concept in anglo-saxon and European research, especially to their focus on abilities of historical thinking, resp. problem-solving. Especially the research-tradition established in the group around Peter Lee, Alaric Dickinson and Rosalyn Ashby³⁴ and the works of Sam Wineburg and James Voss in USA, but also by Peter Seixas and others, belong into this group. Their (esp. Wineburg's and Lee/Ashby/Dickinson's) focus on the development of students' command of 'second order concepts' as mental tools for historical thinking, has to be regarded as an important step towards an understanding of historical consciousness not as a state of mind, but a set of capabilities. The second important aspect to this tradition of research is the underlying notion of progression in historical thinking, which addresses a problem still unsolved and even insufficiently conceptualised in German History didactics.³⁵ Their approach, however, to model this progression by generalizing characteristic forms of concepts empirically found in students of certain ages and thus creating ideal types of stages and their successions, has not only been cautioned in England,³⁶ but is to our view not quite adequate

33 For a discussion on this status of 'narrative competence' cf. Körber 2007a, Körber 2007d. Barricelli 2008a; see also Barricelli 2008b and Barricelli et al. 2012.

34 See for example Lee et al. 1996; Lee 2004; Ashby 2006.

35 See Körber 2004; and Körber 2009.

36 Vermeulen 2000, S. 38: 'Yet it is important to remember that levels and stages of historical thinking are im-

for heteronomous and pluralistic societies, where different cultural and individual coinages of thinking need to be accounted for.³⁷

2.5 A process model of historical thinking

As already noted, in historical and didactical theory, there rather soon has been an agreement, that there is no such thing as someone not having any historical consciousness, and that there is no definable ideal status of it, either. To know nothing about history at all, or to discount all history as 'bunk' as Henry Ford is often supposed to have done,³⁸ would constitute a form of Historical Consciousness – as well being interested only in some aspects of history or even escaping from everyday life into historical imaginations.³⁹

'Historical Consciousness' has therefore been a valuable concepts for focusing research and reflexion upon individuals' attitudes and concepts of history, but it also has been a problem for the pragmatic branch of History Didactics. For what does 'fostering' historical consciousness mean? Is it

- to enhance the amount of case knowledge about past events a person holds? If so, conventional and rightly ridiculed concepts of history teaching ('dates and facts') would suffice (I think we all agree that it does not).
- to influence people by clever arrangements of sources and accounts so that they hold a specific view of history, some categorical insight, some moral conviction, some moral conclusion? If there were only one correct history and only one lesson to be learned from every history for all of us, this might be it – but theory now holds (and I am a believer) that each history holds several lessons for us to learn and whether they are valuable (or – in terms of – constructivist theory: viable) does depend on who and what we are, what we need to know. In this way, the conclusions to be drawn from the many stories of the Holocaust for example, or even from one of them, can be quite different, depending on whether the learner has grown into a family of German national conservative bourgeoisie, or into a classical workers' class household, whether he is Jewish or not etc. Influencing people towards 'right' (or at least supportable) conclusions should be ruled out, but
- to help learners think and discuss about such conclusions, to give them ex-

posed by the researchers to make sense of their findings, and the linear progression they suggest may be a simplification of the situation, a pattern which is broadly discernible but not true for any one child.'. (as FN 12).

37 See Körber 2001 as well as Körber et al. 2008 and Körber 2010.

38 The quotation dismissing history as orientation for the present and the future was cited in the Chicago Tribune in 1916. However, shortly afterward, Ford clarified that it was not all history he dismissed, but a specific record of political history. He even founded a Museum for industrial History in Michigan, which he thought valuable. See for example the posting of 'Sharon' on 'Early Modern Notes' (31.8.2005): <http://www.earlymodernweb.org.uk/emn/index.php/archives/2005/08/is-history-bunk/> (read 29.9.2008).

39 See Borries 1996.

amples and orientation. History teaching and history classes as opportunities to get to know the problems posed by the past and its uses,

- to introduce students to the different interpretations and judgements of historical events, structures and actions – either among historians, and/or in the public?
- to train pupils and students in the techniques historians use when searching for primary sources, analysing them, writing history? Is history learning some kind of cognitive apprenticeship for the task of 'thinking history yourself'? This would mean that the performance in specific mental operations of historical thinking should be the parameter by which to assess standards and proficiency, but that the conclusion which a learner is coming to and his judgements should not be judged.

It is a mixture of some of these aspects which emerged as the non-defined standard of history teaching in learning in Germany from the take-off of modern history didactics in the mid-70s. And all of them were legitimized by 'fostering historical consciousness'. Most often 'classical' interpretations were presented, backed up by primary sources, sometimes challenged by additional source-material not easily fitting, sometimes, students were to create their own historical account, often they were asked to draw conclusions themselves and to judge, to openly debate, quite often aspects of methodology were integrated somewhere on the way.

In 2001, a project of German History Didacts (now known as the 'FUER' group⁴⁰) set out driven by the notion, that this state was not quite satisfactory. The main consent among them was that even after the sketched modernisation of history teaching, the individual learner was still too much a recipient of pre-devised knowledge and proficiency, that this kind of history teaching did not really address the needs of members of the society outside school. The notion that learning history in a plural and heterogeneous society (and world) under non-traditional conditions could no longer follow the logic of the older generation handing down their wisdom and insights, their conceptions of historical problems and their proven and tested techniques towards the new generation, but that it would require to enable the pupils to do their own historical thinking in a pluralistic society with changing and unforeseen questions towards the past.

The consequence was to focus on the aspect of the mental operations people use when orientation in time. Drawing on the narrativist theory of history presented above,⁴¹ the project's aim was to analyse media and processes of history teaching as well as to question people particip-

40 The German acronym 'FUER' stands for 'Research and Development of Reflexive Historical Consciousness'. Among its members are Waltraud Schreiber (1956-; Professor in theory and didactics of history at Eichstätt Catholic University), Wolfgang Hasberg (Köln), Bodo von Borries (Hamburg), Reinhard Krammer (Salzburg), Andreas Körber (Hamburg), Sylvia Mebus (Dresden) and others.

41 See ch. 2.3.

ating in such processes in order to develop new media and lesson plans which directly address the 'meta-level' of historical thinking. 'Meta-level' in this case meant that not only the past in question should be made an explicit subject in lessons, but also the operations and conclusions of those thinking about this past.

One of the points which the members of the project criticized in the then classical history didactics was its main identification of 'thinking history yourself' with the task of re-writing and newly writing history from the primary sources. However valuable this aim was to enabling pupils and citizens to-be to do their own thinking, to orientate themselves – it mainly had been constructed after the synthetic model of historians creating a history from original material. One of the reasons of this (again: valuable) orientation towards a synthetic mode of historical thinking was to my view that Rüsen's influential theory was first developed on the questions what academic historians really did. The famous book 'Historische Vernunft' (Historical Reason) was to be the first part of a theory of how historical thinking worked not outside, but inside academia. Accordingly the graphic version of the model looked as shown in Graph 3. The graph suggests quite convincingly, that all historical thinking starts from a need of orientation in the present and takes the form of empirical research into experiences in the past, which can be explored using given methods of empirical research. When these experiences are presented in a narrative form, they provide for orientation of present-day life (i.e. identity and action). What the model does not cover, however, (neither in the text nor in the graph) is the mental operation in use when historical orientation is not synthetically derived from original sources, but when pre-existing, pre-fabricated historical accounts and their ideas of the connection of some given complex of events, structures and actions has to do with our present-day life. This, however, is a main operation in every historical thinking. No scholar in history derives all the information he gathers in original sources. He will rely quite heavily on the work of others who have written before him, not only looking for bits and pieces of information, but also for ideas about connections, relevance, etc. In the eyes of the FUER-members it is as relevant a mental operation of 'doing history' to read given historical accounts and to analyse them for their contribution of orientation as it is to find and analyse original sources and to synthetically construct a history out of them.

However, when history didactics (and among them Rüsen himself) made use of his theory of historical thinking, stress was mainly put on the synthesising operation of 'thinking history yourself'.

The FUER-project, therefore, first developed a matrix of operations and time-focuses which can be used to identify operations present in all historical thinking – inside academia and outside. This matrix makes use of an earlier definition of 'dimensions' (later called 'operations') of historical thinking by Jeismann, for identifying three 'focuses' along a rough time-line, namely a) the past(s), b) 'history' and c) 'present and future'; being aligned as the columns of the matrix. The idea behind this is that historical thinking and narrating is only complete if all 'fo-

cuses' are addressed, or, more simply: a history is only a history in the full sense, if it touches on all three focuses, i.e. if it combines statements about 'particles of the past' with conceptions about connections between them (syn- and diachronically) and if it derives any relevance for the present.

Historical thinking can and must address these three focuses either in synthetically constructing a new history, or by analysing a given narrative for its statements in all three focuses. These two modes represent the two operations, which have been called 're-construction' for the synthetic approach and 'de-construction' for the analytical approach. The full matrix has 6 fields and therefore is often short-named '6-field-matrix' inside the project. A short version is given in graph 6.

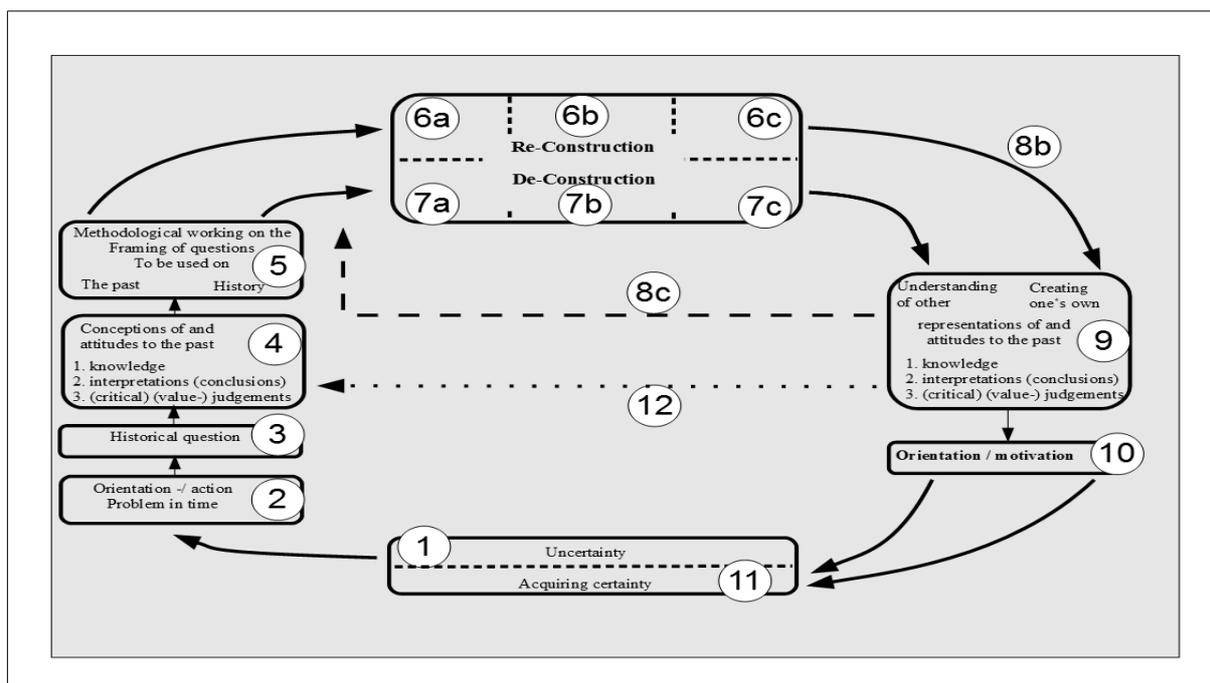
Focus 'past'	focus 'history'	focus 'present/future'
Handling the past 're-construction' analysing 'particles of the past' from original sources	contextualising 'particles of the past'	connecting re-constructed contexts to the own present and future
	a) synchronically (structures) b) diachronically (developments)	
perception	interpretation	orientation
Handling History 'de-construction' analysing 'particles of the past' from historical narratives	a) synchronically (structures) b) diachronically (developments)	analysing historical narratives for their offers of orientation
	analysing contextualisations in historical narratives	

Graph 7: The 'six-field-matrix' of FUER in a simplified and modified version

The relevance of this systematic approach to history didactics in general and to our subject is clear: If the aim of history teaching is not to implant a given interpretation into the heads of learners but to enable them to participate in the historical culture of their society, both operations must be addressed in history teaching. Learning history then is no longer 'learning about the past', but 'learning to think history yourself' in the twofold way: a) to create your own or a new history whenever the need arises, but also b) to be able to analyse your neighbours and co-citizens accounts of history with regard to their potentials to orientate them, you and the society as a whole. 'De-Construction' thus is not equal to what the term means in literary theory, namely in post-structuralist approaches. It does not look into the construction of historical narratives in order to de-value them, but to lay open their potential, their inner logic of orientation in time. De-Construction asks for the 'particles of the past' used by the author, the patterns and logic of explanation as well as connecting these particles and the values and logics by which these events are linked to the present. It asks for the questions the original au-

thor of a historical narrative asked and which he perceived his readers to share, as well as in the appeals he holds for his readers, their identity and their actions. By doing so, it heavily draws on the idea, that multiple histories are possible on any given subject, and that a narrative which is meaningful and orientating for someone else is not necessarily orientating for me also. However, it does not endorse the idea that any history is as good as any other one.

One question to be asked always is about the plausibility of a story in itself,⁴² another one about its potential to orientate the reader, about whether it can contribute to the orientation in his needs, too. Therefore, history teaching must address the criteria for judging the quality of historical narratives also – and for securing the plausibility / cogency of the self-made narratives, too.



Graph 8: The process model of historical thinking by (Hasberg und Körber 2003, S. 187)

Together with Wolfgang Hasberg, Andreas Körber⁴³ has integrated this 6-field-matrix with the underlying process model of historical thinking after Rüsen. The result is given in Graph 7.

As in Rüsen's model (1983) the starting point of any process of historical thinking is conceived of as a situation, in which the given concepts about the past, its structures and its relevance for the present have been shattered in any way – be it that some new original sources or other information have surfaced challenging actual perceptions of history, be it that new experiences in the present force us to orientate anew in time (1). Examples can be the experience

42 For this, one can refer to the criteria of plausibility discussed above. Cf. **XX**.

43 Wolfgang Hasberg (1961-) is professor in history and its didactics at Cologne University, Andreas Körber (1965-) is professor in education with special focus on didactics of history and political studies at Hamburg University.

of global warming within measurable time, which challenge notions of rather stable life-conditions, the invention of genetic engineering, which are capable of questioning our self-image as human beings, and many others. These disturbances may shatter our convictions in many different ways. As soon as our concept of how things change in time is affected, historical orientation is needed (2). At first, it may only be a notion, but for being able to re-orientate in time, we will need to formulate some kind of question as to the past reality or to its relevance (3). This is a step in the process, where concepts and knowledge are activated and which is very crucial as for the possibility to really work on the orientation process. To achieve this, knowledge, conceptions and judgements achieved in earlier instances of historical orientation or elsewhere (in family, school, from the press etc.) are activated. These may be concepts about the nature of history (necessary for conceiving what knowledge can be gained from the past and what structure questions can take), patterns of explanation (directing these questions), insights etc. Using these (pre-)conceptions it is necessary to come to some kind of method regulating the further operations. Among this process of operationalizing is the decision on whether to seek knowledge a) in pre-fabricated historical accounts of other authors, for example the history textbook from school, a historical or other encyclopedia, some specialised 'history of ...' or an oral account from anybody (expert or witness) [→ (7)], or b) whether to look for and analyse original material (sources) of the time in question [→ (6)], or both, and what questions to ask in this process.

Depending on this decision, different procedures are applied, which in the FUER model are grouped as two basic 'modes' of historical thinking:

- (6a-c) is the classical 'synthesising' operation ('re-construction') in which (primary) sources are looked for, critically analysed as for their validity and reliability for the context in question, and then for information about things past ('particles of the past'⁴⁴; 6a), which in turn have to be related to one another syn- and diachronically (6b), and then to the thinking person's present/future and the guiding question (6c) in order to come to some orientation (and motivation).
- (7a-c) is the corresponding process when using historical accounts put together by someone else, i.e. narratives. In order to use them for one's own process of orientation, their narrative construction needs to be analysed and linked to one's own questions. It is therefore necessary to extract the 'particles of the past' used (and relied upon) by the author (7a), the syn- and diachronical connections established by her or him (7b), and the connections derived by her or him to her/his present and

44 In the project 'FUER' this neologism is preferred to the term 'facts', because 'facts' are constructed, too. See above FN 23. They are not 'facts' of anybody in the past (nor by any providence), but by the historically thinking mind. 'Particles of the past' can only be derived by operations of this presently thinking, too. The term is to mark that these is the hindmost information which is taken for granted from the sources when all possible analysing has been done. They are then taken as the raw material of a re-construction.

future (7c). This process is called 'de-construction' in the FUEER model.⁴⁵

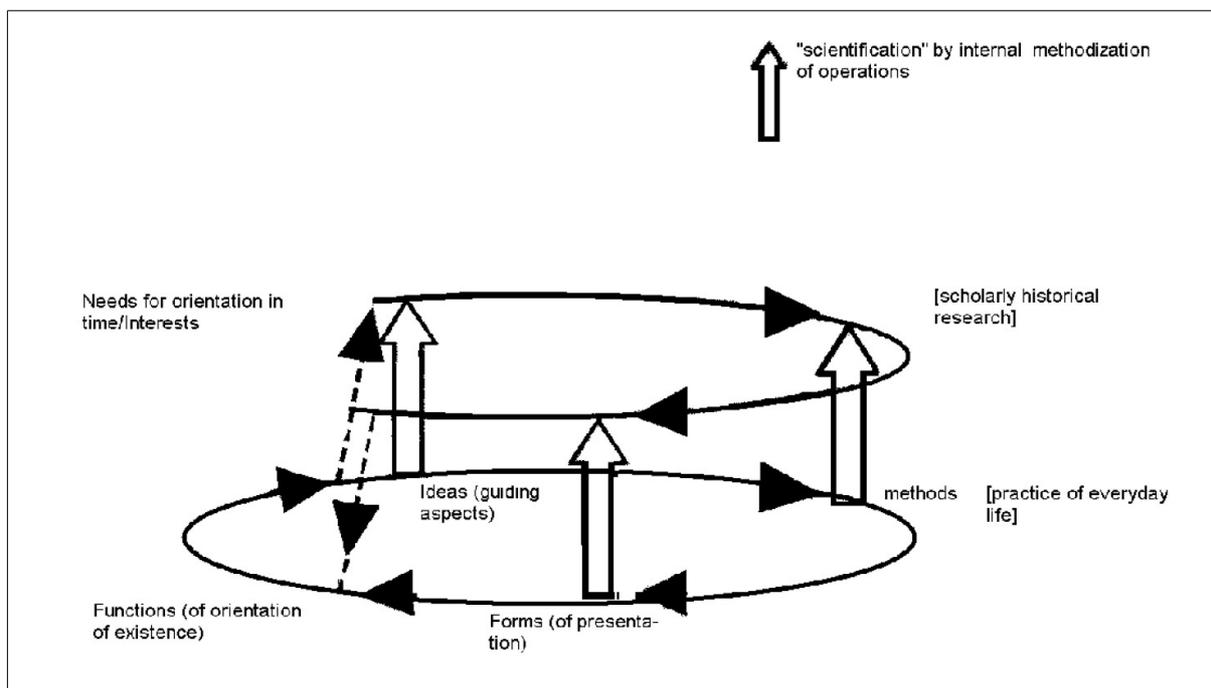
Either from re-constructing a historical context (8b) or from de-constructing a given narrative (8a), new conceptions and conclusions about the past, about history in general and some new judgements can be derived (9). For this, it is necessary to ask whether this present/future of the narrative's author and her/his conclusions as to her/his identity and opportunities as well as her/his readers' are valid for the own present and future and one's own questions, too. If done properly, this process should give us some more orientation and motivation (10) and answer our question, so that our initial uncertainty has turned in some more certainty (11).

Of course this model is an ideal. In reality the process will contain a lot of re-working, of trial and error, of going back to a prior stage, but also to, for example, re-analysing some material in the light of information gathered from another one, of switching between re- and de-construction (8c). All knowledge and insight gathered can afterwards be activated in later instances (12).

Thus, historical thinking is a process of mental orientation in time which needs to be done by everybody. Professionals, especially historians, are basically doing just the same, their questions being derived not only by individual needs for orientation, but by such being voiced in the society, their operations being more strictly controlled by valid methods and methodological reflection, and their conclusions and judgements being valid for greater parts of society (see graph 9).⁴⁶

45 This may be somewhat misleading if paralleled to the post-structuralist concept of 'deconstruction'. Contrary to that term, in the FUEER model, the concept does not imply to corrode to validity of the de-constructed narrative by laying open and criticizing its unspoken pre-conceptions. It rather can be conceived of as an 'exploded assembly drawing' as in 'operating instruction' showing how the complex structure is working.

46 Körber 1999.



Graph 9: Academic and 'Everyday' Historical Thinking. After (Körber 1999); (Hasberg und Körber 2003, S. 182). Transl. by the author 2008.

The relevance of this concept of historical thinking for our subject of history teaching lies in the widening of the focus of history teaching beyond the traditional sources of history teaching (namely the schoolbook) into the multiple and often controversial histories present in the society outside school. Using this concept and terminology, the whole complex of 'Historical Culture', 'public memory' and commemoration etc. can and must be taken into the focus of history teaching and learning. The subject matter of history teaching then can no longer be the past, but historical thinking in all its broadness.

Furthermore, in a society which can not easily rely on the concept of fostering cohesion by institutionalised enculturation, i.e. in 'post-traditional' and plural societies, it will not suffice just to teach the young generation or any learner the 'correct' (or even viable) interpretation of history and how to filter out 'distorted' ones, but people will need to learn how to handle categorical diversity of interpretations and orientations rooted in social, cultural and other diversities. Learning History therefore needs to take the form of learning to think historically oneself. The aim of learning history is not (only) a specific interpretation of the past, a set of insights, beliefs and values, but a set of abilities which enable the learner to do her/his own historical thinking outside school, i.e. in contexts which may differ from school situations quite strongly, be it in other social groups or be it many years afterwards, when the world has changed and new questions arise.

3 Concepts of historical learning and history teaching

Before competency-orientated history teaching in its German version can be presented as a

consequence of the development of didactical thought discussed so far, another look into the didactical past is necessary. This time, the focus is on concepts of historical learning and history teaching. Again, it can be presented as an outline via a few spotlights only.

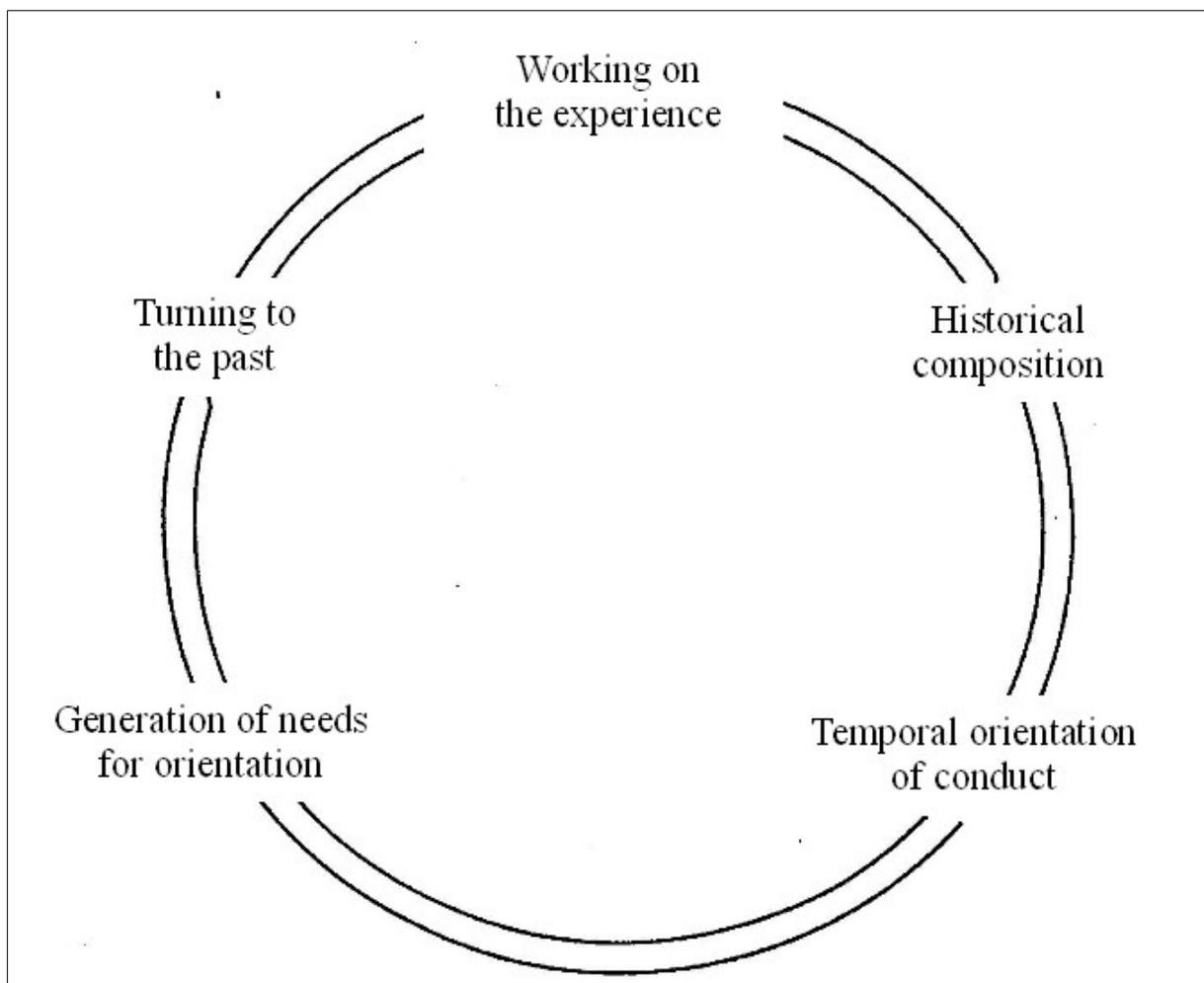
3.1 History teaching presenting images of the past

The master narrative of German history didactics' development⁴⁷ presents the older concepts of history teaching as focusing on presenting the society's actual knowledge about the past, as compiled by academic historiography to learners, and on reducing it as to size and complexity as well as developing materials and teaching strategies for it. History teaching, in short, is presented as having been about telling youths about 'the past' as best known by its academic researchers. The term for such a concept of history teaching is 'Abbilddidaktik', which can be translated to 'image' or 'reproduction' orientated teaching, the image being that of academic knowledge about the past. From here, especially Rösen and Jeismann and many others, for example Rolf Schörken with his elaboration of the necessity and didactics of 'Fremdverstehen' (understanding the other), have set out to re-orientate the guild to develop an own set of questions and field of empirical research in 'historical consciousness'. Since then, history teaching is about researching this latter concept (in morphology and genesis) and about developing it in learners (pragmatics).

3.2 Historical learning and teaching by historical inquiry

This master narrative, however, has some strong shortcomings. Not only does it leave only little room for future-orientated orientation of didactical thought (which is mainly due to its model 'traditional' pattern of sensebuilding, presenting Jeismann and Rösen and their colleagues as the fabricators of a breakthrough still to be cherished today), it moreover cuts short quite a long discussion, especially after Rösen and Jeismann, which cannot be readily integrated into a satisfactory narrative of a development, yet.

47 For a very short sketch of this master narrative see the first paragraph of Sabrow 2005 (as FN 2).



Graph 10: Operation Scheme of Historical Learning; after (Rüsen 1985, S. 254); transl. by the author; 2009

First of, all, the picture of an 'Abbilddidaktik' focused on the results of historical research and aiming at preparing these for the digestion of young, non-academic learners, is quite wrong. As has been argued above, pedagogical considerations (the 'Nebenzwecke' criticized by Bernheim) have been strong, if not dominant, and the counter position focused on the logic, not so much on the results of academic historiography.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, whether deriving its standards from historiographical perspectives, or from pedagogical interests (be them fostering faith in the monarch and his dynasty, making a people believe in its own greatness or presenting an un-political orientation in the eternal nature of humanity), history teaching up to the 1960s mainly consisted in presenting a more or less consolidated narrative to the students. Against this picture, especially Rüsen's consequences from a narrative theory of history has paved the way for a quite different understanding of historical teaching. Rüsen himself adopted his circular model of historical epistemology (first developed to portray the logic of aca-

⁴⁸ See above, p. 3. For a (partisan) sketch of this relationship, contrasting pedagogical and historiographic perspectives on history teaching and strongly favouring the latter, defining history didactics from the latter perspectives, see Pandel 1997.

demic historians' practice) to be a basic model of historical learning. In his 1994 book on this subject, he defined:

'What is historical learning? It is a process of human consciousness, in which specific experiences of time are acquired interpreting them, and in which the competence for such interpretation emerges and evolves.'⁴⁹

Graph 10 illustrates this understanding: Historical learning is in itself a process of historical orientation. Again, two concepts become intermingled in Rüsen's theory: Just as 'history' and 'historical consciousness' to him are inseparable, so are historical thinking and historical learning. Taken consequently, this understanding would mean that historical learning is only possible if people are faced by real, authentic need for orientation, by problems of interpretation, and that means: interpretation in the light of today's interests. Further on, for school teaching, a consequent orientation to project-style teaching or at least problem-orientation⁵⁰ were to follow: History teaching not presenting a given, pre-fabricated (master) narrative, but putting students into the situation to research and interpret history themselves.

The aim of such a learning (and teaching) then must be twofold: On the one hand there is concrete historical orientation to be gained from analyzing a historical 'problem' – either really researching it in a project, or re-thinking it using pre-selected material (primary and secondary sources) –, that is, students are to gain about the past: new knowledge, insights, interpretations and in doing so new insights into who they are (in respect to the past reflected) and about what they can or cannot, should or should not do. Problem-orientated history teaching thus contributes to the historical identity of learners, but not by urging them into a given identity by telling them a given and allegiance-demanding story, but by presenting to them the problem of sense-building itself. On the other hand, there are the competences which are necessary to perform such thinking. Problem-orientated history teaching thus aims at both material and formal learning.⁵¹ While in everyday teaching, often rather simple thinking tasks are presented as 'problems' (and using them indeed fosters students' abilities), Uffelmann and other advocates of this concept propagated some standards for qualified 'problems'. Only questions of some importance as to interpretation, identity and orientation were to be selected. Here the concept converges with the homonymous concept in general didactics, which recommended to organize the subject matter basis of teaching around high profile 'key problems' (Wolfgang

49 Rüsen 1994b, S. 64f 'Was ist historisches Lernen? Es ist ein Vorgang des menschlichen Bewußtseins, in dem bestimmte Zeiterfahrungen deutend angeeignet werden und dabei zugleich die Kompetenz zu dieser Deutung entsteht und sich weiterentwickelt.'

50 'Problem orientation' as a didactical concept is in German history didactics connected mainly with the name of Uwe Uffelmann. He has published widely on the subject. See recently Uffelmann 2004.

51 Demantowsky 2007, identifies problem-orientation with teaching facticity and thus material learning, and 'Handlungsorientierung' (action-orientation) with formal learning, aimed at fostering students' abilities. As to the latter, this is a sympathetic rejection of some tendencies which trivialise 'Handlungsorientierung' to any acting in class; but as to the former, it at least misapplies the concept of 'facticity': Problem orientation is not about telling students (or having them find out) what was 'fact', but at least as much about problems of interpretation, concluding and judging.

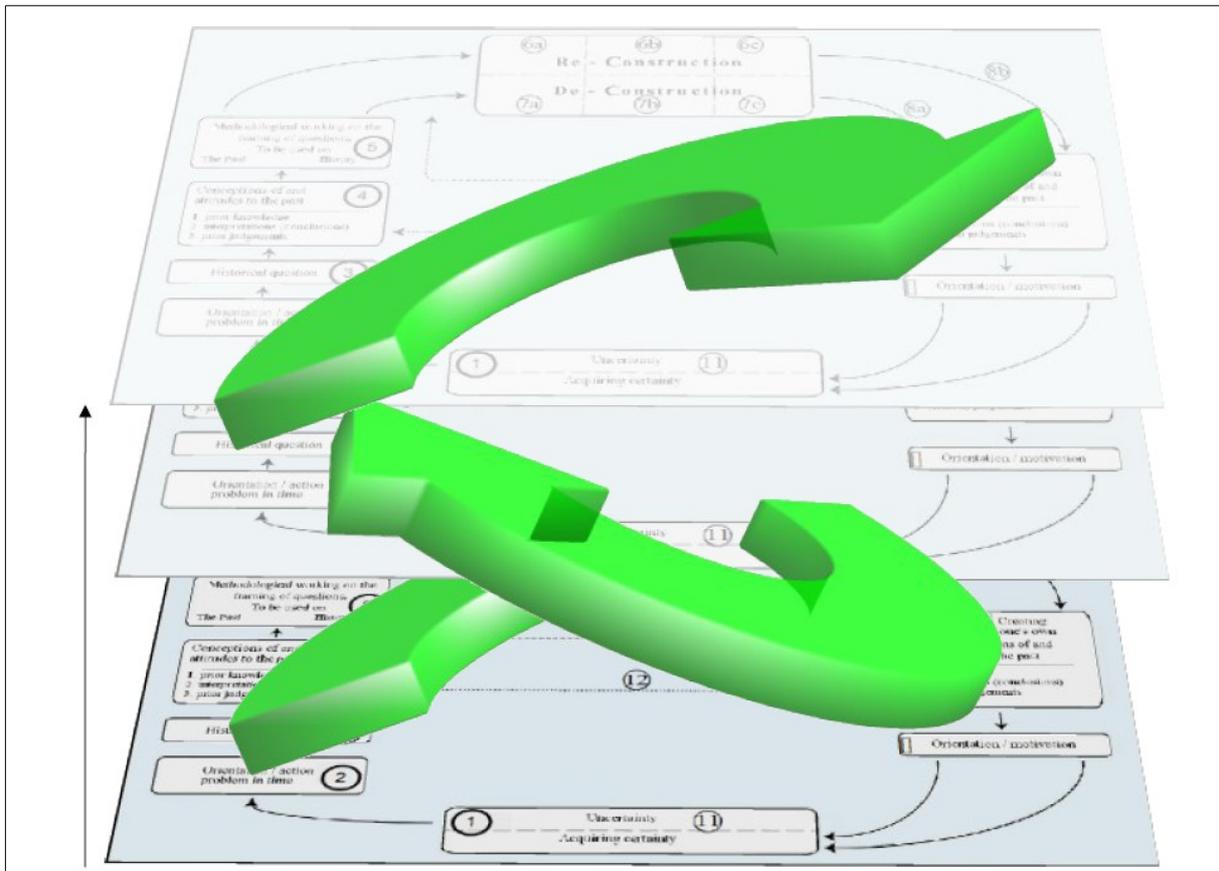
Klafki) of our society, such as saving the environment, keeping (and securing) peace, living in one world etc. History teaching, then, would have to raise and reflect the temporal dimensions of these problems. It is this understanding which makes history learning and teaching in this concept a matter of mainly material nature.

3.3 Conceptual Change

Another understanding of history learning and teaching has been propagated in Germany by Hilke Günther-Arndt. In doing so, she took up a concept which had been (and still is) discussed outside German history didactics (i.e. both in the history debates in other countries and in Germany in other disciplines), but had been neglected in our discipline: Conceptual change. It is not necessary to reproduce and reflect the whole discussion here. What is important, is that the focus is not on performing the process of temporal orientation, aiming at being further orientated, but on acquiring and elaborating the conceptual framework and tools, by which to do it. As in Rösen's theory and concept, it is accepted that historical thinking is something people need not learn from the beginning, but everyone does it by nature. However, everyday standards of concepts, methods and ideas are seen as not sufficient for the standards necessary in a world and society orientated towards rationality and academic research. These everyday mental tools sometimes are seen as erroneous concepts ('Fehlkonzepte') which need to be exchanged by 'correct' scientific concepts, while other positions rather aim at complementing the 'alternative concepts' of everyday layman's concepts with the 'better' scientific/academic ones, and at enabling them to switch and translate between them, using them in accordance with their communicative situation. Thus 'conceptual elaboration' would be a better term for this concept.⁵² Although in this concept, too, concrete historical subjects are studied and learning of propositional knowledge is involved, the main aim is not to provide students with some concrete orientation in specific questions, but to invest them with the necessary mental tools for thinking historically themselves and for communicating about it in their society. This understanding of history teaching thus is much more to the formal learning side.

Thus, two understandings of historical learning resulted from the 'take-off' of German history didactics, which do not contradict each other, but which aren't in line with each other, either. They rather can be conceived of as being orthogonal: In Rösen's concept, historical learning follows the process of historical thought, in Günther-Arndt's conceptual change view, it enhances the niveau of such thinking. Because of this orthogonal structure, the two concepts can be seen as complementing each other rather than contradicting. I have tried to sketch this in graph 11.

52 Günther-Arndt 2006. For the recent international discussion see for example Limón 2002.



Graph 11: Two Dimensions of Historical Learning: Rüsen and Günther-Arndt

These two concepts of historical learning therefore also are the basis of our concept of competency-orientated history teaching, which is to be presented in the next chapter. However, this new concept does not only combine these two unchanged. To each of the two concepts, relevant changes are applied:

- The Rüsen concept of historical learning as following the course of the process of orientation in time is acknowledged insofar the process model of historical thinking developed from it provides for a basis from which the fields of competencies ('Kompetenzbereiche'; see below ch. 4.1) are being derived. What is not stressed here, however, is the necessity to really finish the process. It is possible, maybe even of advant-

age, to finish the teaching/learning process with a new version of the problem, clearer in categories and better formulated, than to have a fixed opinion.

- As for the conceptual change-model, which provides for one (not the whole) basis for our model of differentiating between niveaus of competency (see below ch. 4.2). Apart from the understanding in models of conceptual change, however, in our understanding, the 'scientific' or academic concepts and operations do not constitute the intended final level (neither in an exchange nor in a complementary model). Taken strictly, such an understanding of learning (and teaching) would conceptualise the learners only as receptive addressees. Again (as in the sketched older understandings of history teaching), it would be the adult society just providing the young generation with a closed model of thought. It would be strongly advanced in that the concepts and ideas conveyed were not pictures and judgements on the past, but instruments for individual thinking. But this higher degree of freedom would be limited: Students would be invested with mental tools for doing their own orientating historical thinking, but the reflective abilities fostered would be focused on the material part of history only, not on the mental tools themselves.

3.4 Competency-orientated history teaching

In Germany, the outcomes of the PISA-programme as well as some others before and afterwards (TIMSS, IGLU etc.) have triggered some new advertency as to the 'outcome' of school teaching. 'Educational standards' is the magic term of the (quite long) season. Even though there has been no official programme (on the federation-level) to formulate such standards for History, the concept and its underlying principles have influenced the discussion on historical teaching and learning, too. As in some other subjects (for example geography, religious education of both christian confessions), initiatives either of school administrations of federal states, teachers or academic didacts have worked on 'educational standards'.⁵³

Drawing on the above given concept of historical thinking as a tool for orientation in time, standards in history should – if developed and agreed upon – take the form of 'performance standards', not 'content standards'.⁵⁴ This option taken from the perspective of modern history didactics goes along with the initial concept of educational standards in general underlying the political process as lined out in the quite famous 'Klieme-Expertise', named after Eckard Klieme, who presided a committee lining out general principles of how to formulate 'educational standards'. Following their line of argumentation,⁵⁵ educational standards need to be 'domain specific', i.e. the concept of general 'competencies' to be applied to different subject matters has been rejected in favour of a concept of specialised sets of abilities which are used

53 See for example Baden-Württemberg; Schürmann et al. 2011. Meanwhile a somewhat revised edition is available: Verband der Geschichtslehrer Deutschlands 2011.

54 See Körber 2007d and Barricelli et al. 2012.

55 Klieme et al. 2003.

in different fields of knowledge and cognitive activity ('domains').⁵⁶ 'History' and historical thinking then is such a 'domain', next to for example geography (orientation in space), languages, sciences etc. and deserves a differentiation of the competencies needed to achieve orientation.

This concept of 'performance standards' based on 'competencies' is a useful innovation for history didactics, because it allows for some more structural definitions of what earlier has been coined 'historical consciousness'. Employing the definition of 'competencies' by Franz Imanuel Weinert, which is mainly used in the standards-debate, it seems possible to differentiate procedural and static aspects of historical consciousness as well as cognitive vs. more affective ones.

'Competencies' in this definition are complexes of (cap)abilities, skills (proficiencies) and dispositions which enable a person to solve (new) problems in a specified domain.⁵⁷ Two of the central characteristics of competencies in this comprehension are that

- they contain knowledge, but that knowledge is not sufficient to speak of a 'competence', and
- the form of knowledge being part of a 'competence' cannot refer to some specific past event, structure etc., because a competence is the mental capability to solve different 'problems' (of orientation).

Let me give a rough example for the latter: Following this concept, it is perfectly possible to certify a high level of historical competence to someone lacking any information, say, on the medieval German 'Old Empire', as long as she/he shows the capability to master a process of coming to terms with this complex using historical thinking. A professor of history from, say, Japan, will hold some high level in these competencies, even though she/he will lack case knowledge.

The form of knowledge contained in historical competencies therefore is structural knowledge, i.e. knowledge on categories and concepts, procedures etc., which can (and needs to) be applied to different historical subjects. Examples are systems of periodisation, second order concepts as 'change' and 'evidence' etc.

Again drawing on the above sketched concept of historical thinking as an individual process of orientation in time, triggered by needs for orientation encountered in 'everyday life', we, i.e. the FUER group, are very sceptical as to the possibilities to derive 'educational standards' for this domain which can be operationalised by means of closed items following probabilistic

⁵⁶ The term 'knowledge' is not quite optimal here. 'Domains of orientation' would be better.

⁵⁷ The definition reads in original as competencies being 'die bei Individuen verfügbaren oder durch sie erlernbaren kognitiven Fähigkeiten und Fertigkeiten, um bestimmte Probleme zu lösen, sowie die damit verbundenen motivationalen, volitionalen und sozialen Bereitschaften und Fähigkeiten, um die Problemlösungen in variablen Situationen erfolgreich und verantwortungsvoll nutzen zu können'. (Weinert 2001), cited in Klieme et al. 2003, S. 21.

IRT-models. The core argument against standards operationalised like this is that most IRT-models and especially the unidimensional Rasch-model used in almost all large-scale-assessment-programmes (TIMSS, PISA etc.) requires items (tasks) which can be coded as either 'solved' or 'not solved', at most with partial credit-technique also as 'partly solved',⁵⁸ but that there is no room in this model for differing solutions, which are necessary if historical thinking really is to be problem solving from a certain (one's own) perspective.⁵⁹ Therefore, the FUER-group does not aim at formulating educational standards, but fully appreciates the concept of 'competence models' as a theoretical tool to better formulate the aims of historical learning appropriate for post-traditional, pluralistic societies:

At school learners (pupils and students) must acquire general abilities as well as precise skills, and (structural knowledge), which enables them to take part in the historical and memorial culture of their (pluralist) society. More precisely, they must learn to

- (correctly) apply concepts and categories, procedures (methods and techniques) commonly used in their society in their own historical thinking,

and to

- deliberate about these concepts, categories, procedures and methods, i.e. to gain the intellectual and affective distance necessary and the cognitive power to reflect on their benefits and limits, the assumptions inherent in them, their adequacy for a specific problem etc.

4 A structural competence model of historical thinking

If historical teaching and learning is neither about teaching 'the past' nor about teaching a conventional 'picture' of the past to young members of society, hoping to thus harmoniously integrate them into the given society, but about enabling them to individually and critically take part in the society's handling of history, then some more concrete concepts are needed about what this capability consists of. Therefore, a *model of competence* is needed, which defines

- different areas of historical competence, i.e. dimensions in which the abilities of historical thinking can differ between people, and in which this ability can differ between different stages of a learning-process,
- different levels of these competencies, by which any of these differences (between people or between stages of learning) can be 'measured'.

In Germany, different competence models have been suggested in the last 5 years,⁶⁰ but the model suggested by FUER is the only one

- to be based on a specific theory of historical thinking (see above), and
- to define both, a differentiation of areas of historical competence and a concept for

58 Rost 2004

59 See Körber et al. 2008.

60 For a discussion of several models see Körber 2007d (as in FN 52) as well as recently Barricelli et al. 2012.

distinguishing levels.

4.1 Areas of historical competence

The competence-model of FUER⁶¹ is based on the theory of historical thinking as given above. It distinguishes four basic areas of competence, three of which are *procedural* and one is basic. The three procedural competence-areas are derived from the circular process of historical thinking:

- Anyone in the need of historical orientation needs the capability to transform hers or his perceived uncertainty into some processable form of historical question, and to analyse historical narratives of other people for their historical questions, and to understand them. This first area of historical competence ('Fragekompetenz', 'inquiring competence') spans from the perception of any uncertainty referring to time via the activation of earlier insights, concepts and categories to the start of the methodically controlled process of re- and de-construction. In fact, it also includes the ability to decide whether (or rather, when) to turn to narrative accounts or to original sources.
- The second area of competence ('Methodenkompetenz'; 'methodical competence') combines all knowledge and proficiency pertaining to finding and analysing historical material and to re- and deconstruct historical accounts on their basis. Among them are heuristic skills as well as the ability to sort information along a timeline, to draw comparisons between events and structures within an epoch and between historical times and to integrate all this information into a narrative structure, but also to identify the 'particles of the past' and the narrative structures in pre-given narratives.
- The third procedural area of competencies combines all those often neglected competencies which are needed for using the information gathered by re- and de-construction for personal or collective orientation in the present and the future. Core

61 The short version of 64 pages Schreiber et al. 2006 can be found online <http://www-edit.ku-eichstaett.de/Fakultaeten-/GGF/fachgebiete/Geschichte/DidGesch/publikationen/f_/Sonderdruck_Kompetenzen_2Aufflage.pdf>; a long publication gives extensive discussions Körber et al. 2007.

competencies in this area are

- the ability to revise one's concept of history and the concepts and categories used in historical thinking and one's 'historical consciousness',
- the ability (and disposition) to (re-)shape and revise one's conception about the past and the present world, i.e. one's picture of other people and/or other times;
- the ability to (re-)shape the concept of one's self in relation to this outside world and the past, i.e. to revise one's historical identity, for example by coming to (new) terms with the own persons relationship to the deeds (exploits and sins) of one's ancestors, etc.
- the ability to (re-shape) the own conceptions of what can be done, achieved, hoped for in the present and the future – in the light of the insights and the knowledge derived from analysing material about the past.

These 'procedural competencies' are all linked to a fourth area of competence, which is not only needed when executing the process of historical orientation, but also in all instances of theoretical reflection and of communication about historical thinking, its assumptions, principles or its results. This fourth area of competence has been named 'Sachkompetenz' ('subject matter competence') in German, a naming which has been criticized, because it is often understood as referring to substantial knowledge about past events, structures etc., i.e. substantive knowledge about individual cases and contexts. E.g. The model by (Sauer 2002; Verband der Geschichtslehrer Deutschlands 2006), uses the same term in this sense. In our model, however, the term is used nonetheless, but defined differently since such knowledge (though important) is not transferable and therefore does not constitute a part of "competencies" proper. In our model, the term refers to another kind of knowledge instead, which is applicable if not to all then **at least** to a number of cases, and which constitutes a prerequisite for performing the process of historical thinking **at least** in a way which enables communicative understanding within society or at least a peer group. The "subject matter" which is referred to in the title of this dimension is not *the past*, but *history* as a mental construct and *historical thinking*.

Included in the knowledge referred to in this "subject matter competence" are,⁶² e.g., all concepts and categories used for structuring the "historical universe", e.g. patterns of periodisation, epochs, but also of sectors (political, economic, cultural, "micro-" vs. "macro history" and so on) and methods, but also (first order) concepts which are used in the process of historical orientation, such as "power", "sovereignty", "culture" etc. Moreover, epistemological concepts such as "evidence" or (especially widespread in German tradition) "source", "development" and "progress" are to be counted in here. Most "second order concepts" such as "the big six" historical thinking concepts (Seixas und Morton 2013) belong here. Lastly, this di-

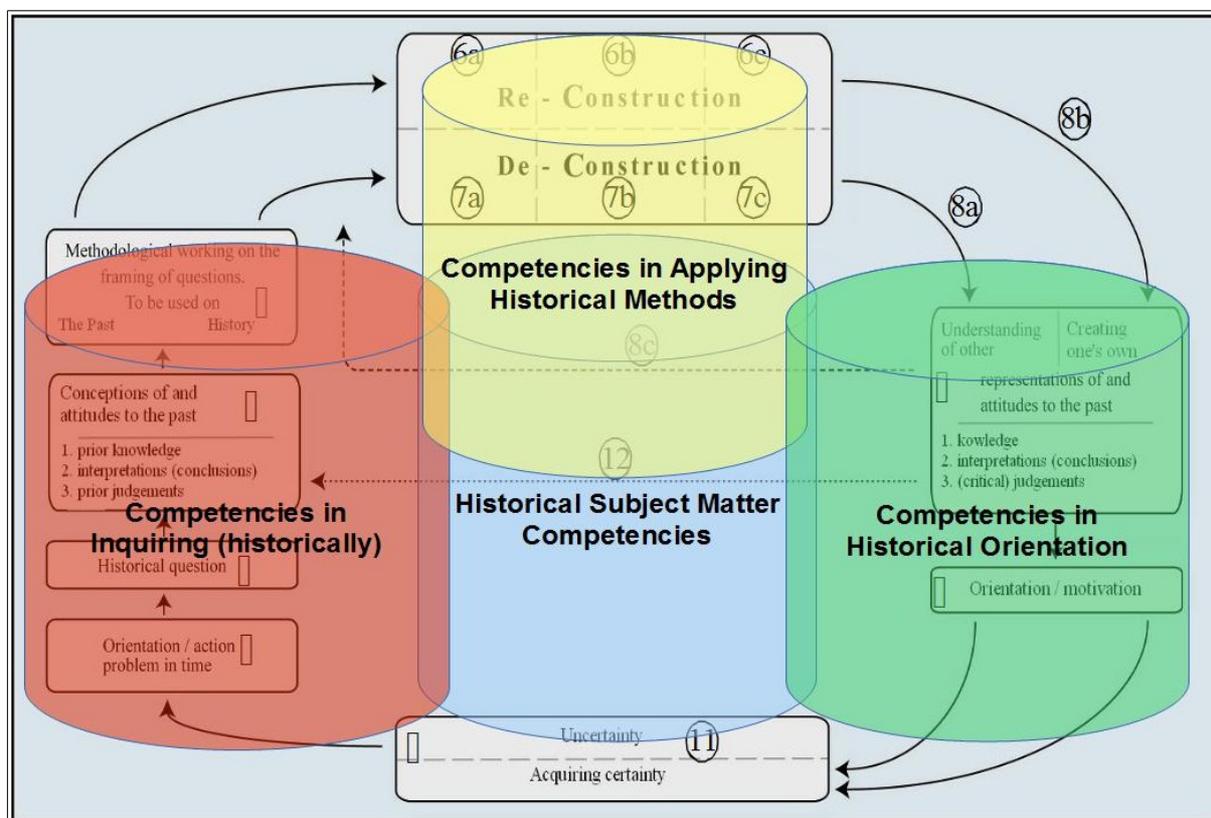
62 The following is mainly taken from Körber und Meyer-Hamme 2015.

mension of competence also includes procedural concepts, such as knowledge (theoretical and/or experience-based) of how to get access to archival sources, how to order information chronologically, how to analyze and interpret a document, etc.

All these concepts and categories have in common that they are not necessarily taken from the past itself, and if they are, they are to be used in a present form. They constitute part of the fabric of the narratives which are constructed or analyzed, but they are not only used in the process of historical thinking proper, but also when thinking and reflecting or communicating *about* history, historical thinking, its specific epistemology and its result. When we discuss the benefits and limits of the concepts “(primary) source” (central in German history school and academic teaching) and “evidence” (more dominant in Anglo-Saxon theoretical discourse⁶³) we do not *perform* procedural historical thinking, but rather activate the competencies defined in this area.

Knowledge to be counted here then needs to be present in different form, legitimizing the term “competency”: It must be declarative in that the holder of this competence can name and define these concepts, it must be discursive in that she/he can reflect and discuss them, and it must be operational in that she/he is able to apply them in the operations which the other three dimensions of competence define.

63 “Source” of course is a metaphor and therefore needs reflection as to its connotations. German academe, however, makes a point of reserving this term to primary (documentary and monumentary) material, rather strongly distinguishing it from “account” (“Darstellung”) -- the term reserved for retrospective narratives. The strictness of this distinction is, of course, problematic. Even though this is known, the metaphorical connotation of the concept “source” reaches deeply into epistemology, when, e.g. Klaus Arnold, in an encyclopedical article, explains: “Sources are the staring points of historical perception [“Erkenntnis”]. As is the case with natural watercourses, their mere existence is not enough. They gain there relevance only by human tracking back to their origins.” (Arnold 2002, S. 251; transl. AK). Horst Walter Blanke commented on Heinrich von Sybel: “The metaphorical term of 'source' already implicated the easiness of its interpretation [Auswertung]: 'Sources' virtually 'pour mere insight [Erkenntnis]. Accordingly leading members of German historiography held the view the “historical method” was nothing more than the application of common sense.” (Blanke 1999, S. 4; transl. AK).



Graph 12: The areas of competence in the competence model 'Historical Thinking' of the FUER-Group. New translation from (Schreiber et al. 2006, S. 56) by the author (2014).

In Graph 12 these areas of competence are shown as based on the above given theoretical process model of historical thinking.

4.2 Levels of historical competencies

As for the differentiation of *levels*,⁶⁴ our model remotely draws on the concept of Lawrence Kohlberg, but with an important difference: Our model does not (yet) define stages within a process, but levels to begin with. This means that it is not part of the model to postulate some unidirectional development from one level to the next higher, but that it also can be used to track and register leaps, 'regressions' etc. The levels constitute the axis of ordinates (y-axis) only.

Even though in reality there will be an infinite number of small differentiations of levels, the FUER model only differentiates three resp. five main levels. The core concept for differentiations of these levels is the mode of command a person has over *conventional forms* of applying the operations subsumed in this area of competence:

- On the 'basic' level a person does apply and execute all operations necessary

⁶⁴ Within the FUER model, the term 'niveau' is used in order to distinguish from connotations of gradually advancing 'stages' or 'steps'. Cf. Körber 2007c and Körber 2012a.

for historical thinking, but without any command over conventional forms, terms, concepts and procedures whatsoever. The person's historical thinking therefore will take on a highly individual and situated form and therefore will not or only hardly be readily understandable to other peoples, just as the person cannot (or only hardly) use other peoples' help for her/his own thinking. A (non historic) example of such a level could be children using LEGO®-bricks but giving them new names, so that without some translation or learning they would not be able to order missing bricks in a LEGO-store. An example from the domain of history would be people not commanding the common concepts of historical periodisation, and therefore always referring to 'back then' instead of some generally recognized time. This basic level was labelled 'a-conventional'. The historical consciousness on this level of competencies is solitary.

- The intermediate level was accordingly labelled 'conventional' because it consists of the (above mentioned) ability to apply standards terms and concepts, procedures etc. in order to execute the own historical thinking, which gives access to all the material and information categorized using these concepts in libraries, archives, enables the person to communicate with experts and witnesses, but also to communicate the findings and results etc. It is necessary to note that this intermediate 'conventional' level does not require the person to hold conventional beliefs, interpretations and values. It also (or even: more so) applied to persons doing their own historical thinking and even disagreeing with their society, as long as they are capable of using the society's (or a relevant group's) concepts and terminology. The historical consciousness on this level of competencies is connective.
- The third level of historical competence then is defined by the ability not only to apply the conventional and standard concepts, terminology, procedures etc., but to reflect upon them, to evaluate them, criticize their shortcomings and (if necessary) to deviate from them, suggesting new concepts, new terms etc. This level is an 'ideal type' in that it cannot be characterized positively, because people will never stop learning. It is like in the 'Richter-scale' of seismology, which is 'open to the upper end', too. The ideal level has been termed 'elaborate' and 'trans-conventional', because it requires command over conventions but also the ability to transgress them. Students for example who have learned that there has been such thing as 'The Middle Ages' in past reality, but that this concept has been coined retrospectively and has some advantages, but also poses some dangers,⁶⁵ and who is therefore able to decide on where to use this

65 See Moos 1999; Moos 2007. See also the essays in the 2008 issue of *Zeitschrift für Geschichtsdidaktik*, especially Borries 2008a.

concepts and model of periodisation, and when to suggest better ones. The historical consciousness on this level of competencies is reflective.

'Historical Competencies' therefore are a structured concept of important parts of the complex formerly termed 'Historical Consciousness'. This model does not re-structure the whole of the Consciousness-Concepts, but yields some new opportunities to formulate educational goals (and also standards). It offers possibilities to operationalise these abilities for empirical research and evaluation, even though only parts of them will be open for quantitative analyses and large-scale analyses as in PISA, and the major part will require qualitative approaches.⁶⁶

5 And beyond? The need for a new concept of historical literacy ('Bildung')?

Even though historical learning and teaching history orientated towards the elaboration of competencies is in no way 'knitting without wool' and therefore always will bring forward concrete aspects of the past, promoting propositional 'knowledge about the past' as well as abilities of interpretation and orientation, it is true that the concept strengthens a formal concept of learning. The concern, expressed by some teachers and didacts that the 'subjects' might disappear, must, however be taken seriously. But still, the solution cannot consist in a model in which the teaching of 'competencies' is balanced or even compensated by another strand of teaching statements about the past, which are presented as unquestionable depictions of the past, as has been suggested by the German History Teachers' Association under the heading of 'educational standards'. In their model, the first 'area of competencies' entirely collects such statements of propositional knowledge and judgements the students only are required to 'name', 'explain', but not 'consider', 'check', 'assess', while the standards listed in the other two areas ('competency to interpret and reflect' and 'media/method competency') are focusing on real abilities, but limited to school use.⁶⁷ Categorically speaking, such a solution represents a fundamentally conservative strategy to the challenges of education, namely the attempt to introduce the young generation to the 'existing world of solutions', binding them to their scope,⁶⁸ instead of enabling them to perform new attempts to find other solutions, better ones, ones more adequate for their times, or even new solutions to new problems. Renate Girmes, professor in general didactics in Magdeburg, has developed a new concept of literacy ('Bildung'), adequate for 'posttraditional' societies, which overcomes the traditional orientation inherent in the classical notion of the term. Based on Hannah Arendt's anthropological elaboration of the activities (from which Girmes derives 'tasks') of human beings existing under certain (given and self-made) conditions. Next to the activities of *labour* and *work*, it is a central characteristic of the third main activity, action, that it needs to reflect the plurality of humankind inhabiting earth. This condition of plurality is not only a quantitative, but also a qualit-

66 See Körber et al. 2008 (as in FN 57).

67 Verband der Geschichtslehrer Deutschlands 2006 (as in FN 51). See also the discussion between Karl-Heinrich Pohl and Martin Stupperich (the spiritus rector of these standards): Pohl 2008 and Stupperich 2008.

68 Girmes 1997, S. 44.

ive characteristic: Men do perceive and judge both their conditions and the resulting (individual as well as common) tasks differently, thus constructing a multitude of different interests and actions. It is one of the necessities resulting from this condition, that men must communicate about their perceptions, beliefs, judgements and actions – especially if the society they form is a heterogeneous and 'post-traditional' one – and to be democratic. To tolerate and accept uncertainty and to (actively!) handle it is one of the main tasks of social communication in this case.⁶⁹

This uncertainty is a kind of contingency, which needs to be distinguished from that in Rösen's theory of historical thinking. History is affected by contingency in at least three ways:⁷⁰

- The first is the contingency which characterizes the temporal experiences of humans, when comparing earlier expectations and plans with the development which materialised. Contingency here means the mental construct which enables us all to conceive the real development as not totally accidental (which would make any effort to construct sense and to orientate futile in the first place) but not totally determined either (which would deprive us of any possibility to decide about the consequences to be derived from historical insight and therefore of any possibility to act). This form of temporal contingency is the movens of processes of historical sense-building. Contingency here is part of the explanandum.
- Another role of contingency in historical thinking is its use as explanans, i.e. the possibility to refer to 'chance' in order to construct historical sense and meaning. Taken strictly, this strategy would prevent the emergence of historical sense in the first place: To refer to chance in historical explanations means to not explain. However, sometimes it may be necessary to integrate limited 'chance' into a historical account in order to construct an orientating narrative at all. In such cases, it means to accept 'blind spots'. Chance and contingency then still are remains, leftovers of explanatory efforts, but to resort to them does not constitute a surrender. Often, contingency is used in this way not as a form of real 'chance', but as a chiffre either masking a thread of inquiry not further pursued by the narrative's author or marking a change of perspective. The latter for example is the case when references are made to events which 'by chance' foil a strand of action, which could neither have been influenced nor foreseen by the actors in the resulting history, while these actions could be clarified by further inquiry on another scale.⁷¹

69 See Girmes 1997, S. 42.

70 For an in-depth analysis of philosophical elaborations and differentiations on chance and contingency and their role in (social) historiography as well as in theory of history see Hoffmann 2005.

71 An example would for example be a narrative portraying the success story of a company destroyed by a terrorist attack 'by chance' taking place at the same place and simultaneously to the signing of an important contract. Both actions, the setting of the place and date of the signing and the terrorist attack are by no means ac-

- The third version of contingency, which is central here, is that on the result side of historical thinking: Men (and women) in their multi-dimensional plurality, having different needs for temporal orientation because of the different times, societies, social groups, cultures etc. they live in, using different concepts, operations and patterns of explanation and of narrating, will construct different narratives. These results of their efforts of sense-building will not be incomparable, but also not simply to be translated into one another. It is historical orientation itself which is contingent – contingent not in temporal, but in cultural and social dimension. And it is necessary for people acting within the plurality of men to (be able to) handle this contingency of narrative orientations.

What is more, each of these contingent orientations is not only a narrative, but also constitutes a world, a perception of (temporal) reality guiding the actions of its bearers. It is more than just an alternative narrative to that of another individual resp. any narrative impregnated by cultural standards of one group is more than just an alternative to another narrative – it is a different 'solution' to the task of temporal orientation.

In this sense, it belongs to the tasks of plural humankind within the realm of action, not only to participate in the construction of historical sense and of a political room in which to communicate, but to gain insight into the perceptions of the task as well as the results of other men's (and women's) thinking.

Here is the basis of what can be a new concept of historical literacy. From this point of view, it is neither to be defined as some high-class knowledge about important events and actions in the past nor as a set of general insights into the 'historicity' of humankind, even though this latter aspect still belongs into the concept, as the Swiss philosopher Peter Bieri recently pointed out in a lecture titled 'What would it be to be literate'. As to the religious dimension, he formulates:

'Only (s)he who knows about and acknowledges the historical contingency of his cultural and moral identity really has grown up.'⁷²

cidents; but their actors and their intentions are unconnected, resp. any connection can only be discerned by focusing another level (for example the terrorists view of the economic system the company acts in and the company's role within this system).

72 'Nur wer die historische Zufälligkeit seiner kulturellen und moralischen Identität kennt und anerkennt, ist richtig erwachsen geworden.' Bieri 2005, S. 4.

In this quotation, the classical notion and concept of German literacy, lingers on in a familiar way. But the sentence is framed by statements which add another important aspect:

'The knowledge of alternatives only seemingly deprives it [here: religion] of its value: the value even can be experienced as being higher, because we do no longer deal with an intangible fate, but with free choice. [...] One has not completely taken over the responsibility of one's own life, as long as one accepts a foreign authority prescribing how to think about love and death, morality and happiness.⁷³

Similarly, Girmes formulates as a quality for being able to deal with uncertainty in the post-traditional society, not to look for certainty, but to (learn to) think in constellations. Education aiming at literacy therefore should neither aim at providing the learners with fixed solutions (here: fixed narratives) nor with the tasks and tools only, but also with the *variety and plurality* of different real and possible solutions as a prerequisite for thinking and living a new way.⁷⁴

The multitude of different narrative orientations therefore is not only to be used as an exchangeable substrate for developing formal competencies (especially that of de-constructing other peoples' orientations and narratives), but gains a value for itself: These narratives (which still need to be de-constructed and analysed as well as critically reflected as to their plausibility/cogency) are the both the repository of concepts, patterns of interpretation and explanation, values etc. for later use, but they are also the variety and plurality of life-guiding orientation of a person's fellow citizens. Historical literacy therefore is constituted in knowing about this multitude and variety, in knowing great parts of these orientations, in accepting their orientational function and strength and in recognizing the necessity of and the value of this variety itself.

6 Consequences for didactics of history as a discipline

It is not easy to formulate consequences from principles and models which are still under debate. The following therefore are more or less suggestions and initiatives for such a debate. For History Didactics as a discipline, the orientation to competencies calls for a more consequent definition of its own theoretical basis and its self-concept. Neither the work of academic historical research nor mere political and/or pedagogical aims can be at the core of its reflections, but original theoretical reflection of what history is and what it is for (to quote Evelyn Vermeulen again). History Didactics in this case is a meta-discipline which embraces the work of academic research as one of the instances and institutions of historical thinking, but its aim is not to steer this work or to externally set standards for it, but rather to reflect its

73 'Die Kenntnis der Alternativen nimmt ihr [hier: der Religion] nur scheinbar ihren Wert; der Wert kann sogar als grösser erlebt werden, weil wir es jetzt nicht mehr mit einem unverfügbaren Schicksal, sondern mit einer freien Wahl zu tun haben. [...] Man hat die Verantwortung für das eigene Leben noch nicht vollständig übernommen, solange man sich von einer fremden Instanz vorschreiben lässt, wie man zu denken hat über Liebe und Tod, Moral und Glück.'. Bieri 2005, S. 4

74 Girmes 1997, S. 44.

position and relevance for society.

As for research, first of all the empirical validity of the competence model needs to be tested (are the distinguished areas discernible in data? Can different levels as postulated be found?) and secondly research is necessary as to developmental processes. It might be that learning historical thinking is a mere increase in the levels in all areas and competencies, but it is also possible, that different speeds, phases and ties between levels within different competencies can occur – or even regressions.

Furthermore, the theoretical basis that historical thinking occurs on all levels and that the intermediate level is marked by command over conventional concepts, whereas the elaborate level is marked by the ability to reflect, criticize and change conventional categories, calls for empirical analyses into the specific conventional concepts, procedures etc. of specific groups of society and for comparisons of their standards of historical orientation. This is especially needed for a history teaching which does not aim at transmitting a specific interpretation into the students' heads, but at enabling students to handle different perspectives, questions and concepts.

Last but not least, models, strategies and instruments are needed for determining the level of historical competence(s) underlying actual forms of historical performance. These are needed for large-scale assessment and evaluation purposes, but even more for individual diagnostics to be done by teachers. A lot of work has to be done in this respect, still; especially since the instruments used for example in PISA can (to my view) not only be applied to the domain of historical thinking.⁷⁵

7 Consequences for history teaching

7.1 Consequences for history teaching in general

The first consequence of the sketched understanding of 'historical competencies' is that history teaching at school must be about promoting students' abilities in these competencies. In this general version it doesn't seem really something new. Teaching only specific knowledge an interpretation of the past seems to be a bygone concept anyway. But a closer look at current suggestions for curricula (some actually in force by now) shows that even under the term 'orientation at competencies', in some federal states and by some actors in the debate, exactly this is promoted: students' abilities narrowed to 'naming' specific aspects, to 'explain' events, structures, deeds in a specific given way, and even to come to specific conclusions, such as presenting the crusades as a 'conflict, but also as a chance for encounter between the Christian and the muslim world.'⁷⁶ Other crucial abilities also included are always restricted to small-scale by-examples, but never to the eurocentric grand narrative presented in the first part.

⁷⁵ See Körber et al. 2008 (as in FN 57).

⁷⁶ The example is taken from the German History Teachers' Association's (suggestion for) 'educational standards'. see Verband der Geschichtslehrer Deutschlands 2006, ch. 5.1. For a critique see for example Körber 2007d and Körber 2012b.

They (analysing material, considering multiple perspectives etc.) amount to techniques, not to methods of independent historical thinking.

So the consequence to focus history teaching on developing these abilities and dispositions needed for independent participation in a society's historical culture and debate is not so self-evident as it seems.

Moreover, our model of historical competencies calls for paying attention not only to techniques and methods as well as concepts, terminology etc. (competence-dimensions 'Methodenkompetenz' and 'Sachkompetenz'), but also for explicitly developing the abilities to ask historical questions ('Fragekompetenz', 'inquiring competence') and to (individually and collectively) reflect upon possible consequences from specific stories (which have been analysed by re- and/or de-constructive methods) for the own present, the future and for further thinking ('Orientierungskompetenz'). Together with the de-constructive part of 'competence in methods' ('Methodenkompetenz') this also calls for explicit usage of narrative accounts on historical contexts not only or even mainly as media of information, but as material to be analysed. Students and pupils must learn to dissect the narrative structure of historical accounts in order to be able to consciously handle them.

Furthermore, the conventional concepts a society uses for grasping and structuring the domain of history and historical knowledge needs not only to be taught as a matter of fact, but has to be addressed explicitly and in a reflective way. For example the common concepts of periodisation (antiquity, middle ages, modernity) need to be taught as contingent models with specific benefits and limits, they need to be compared to others (for example of history of art, of ecclesiastical history and of course to such used in other cultures as Islam, and such used in everyday life).⁷⁷ The same holds true for procedures of analysing material, of story telling etc.

7.2 Consequences for history teaching in pluralist societies with controversial memorial culture

As for the subject of this conference, the competence orientation and competence model holds some further consequences for history teaching. Most of all, competence orientation calls for an integration of the large field of commemoration and memory culture into history teaching at school. The old dichotomy of 'history vs. memory' which has been stressed by Halbwachs and still by the earlier Jan Assmann should not lead to externalise the 'family album' and 'public memorial culture' type of addressing the past and orientating from the curricula, which would lead to a mere overruling of their power and logic (and relevance) by pointing to the academic dignity of academic knowledge. Quite to the contrary, these specific functions and the immanent conditions and logic of communicative, social and cultural memories (Aleida Assmann) need to be explicitly addressed and recognized. However, it would also be wrong to just concede them a sacrosanct status not to be compared with academic knowledge

⁷⁷ See Borries 2008a.

('lexicon'). It is necessary for prospective members of a pluralist and debating society to be able to reflect upon the respective status and benefits, but also limits of these specific forms of construction of meaning.

This means among other things that students must learn to reflect upon the epistemological status of 'classical' original sources as well as upon that of contemporary witnesses, that they must become acquainted with the concepts of 'authenticity', 'originality' and 'truth', as well as with those used in memory debates like 'victim' and 'sacrifice', the differentiation between different types of memorials (hero-, victim- and so on), the political concepts which draw on historical interpretations (like 'hierarchy of victims' vs. 'equalisation of victims') and so on.

History teaching needs to address the plurality and multiplicity of handlings of the past and of orientation drawn from it, it must enable students to recognize specific groups own interest in history, their questions, their political agenda, but it must also enable them to independently come to conclusions and judgements, too. History teaching in this sense is not about 'forming' a society by creating uniformity, but to form social coherence⁷⁸ by enabling people to handle multiplicity and diversity by responsible reasoning.

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⁷⁸ I here draw on a distinction within a new concept of 'interculturality' by Klaus-Peter Hansen. See Rathje 2006.

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