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## Andreas Körber

### **Intercultural Learning in History Education (2001)\*** - transl. state 10/03/17

“Interculturalism” is booming. In recent years, almost all areas of social and human sciences have discovered that the current changes in our societies are challenging their practices. Especially in the field of economics, “Intercultural Competence” is regarded as a key qualification for managers not only of “global players” – and correspondingly varied are the offers for intercultural training.

But not only those who want to continue to trade successfully in the globalized world have to react to the aforementioned societal changes. Even those who just want to get along in today's (and even more tomorrow's) world, must be able to handle (to a much greater extent than before) “alterity” of types which we encounter not only voluntarily and as an exception to everyday life (e.g. in international co-operation, travel or in the museum), but which rather becomes (or already is) part of their (our) everyday lives – in our own villages and cities, at work, at school, in the family, but also in the media, and not least in the Internet's WorldWideWeb. Intercultural Competence is a key qualification for all of us.<sup>1</sup>

Education's and schools' discovery of the intercultural dimension in the recent decades is, therefore, more than just a fad but rather a well-reasoned unfolding of a new dimension of researching and reflecting on how young people and adults can be prepared and qualified for living in a culturally differentiated and globalised society.

The fact that there is still little agreement to be found on the categories and concepts which can be applied to reflect on this challenge and to construct and evaluate educa-

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\* This is the abridged translation of my introductory article to a collection of papers presented at a conference on “intercultural history education” in November 2000 in Hamburg; KÖRBER, ANDREAS (2001): “Interkulturelles Lernen im Geschichtsunterricht - eine Einleitung.” In: KÖRBER, ANDREAS (Ed.) (2001): *Interkulturelles Geschichtslernen.: Geschichtsunterricht unter den Bedingungen von Einwanderung und Globalisierung; konzeptionelle Überlegungen und praktische Ansätze* Münster: Waxmann: (Novemberakademie, 2), pp. 5–26. The publication of the English translation has been kindly conceded by the publisher, Dr. Ursula Heckel by mail on October 17th, 2016. Some additional remarks from the perspective of 2016 have been included as endnotes.

1 FLECHSIG, KARL-HEINZ (1998): *Methoden interkulturellen Trainings* <http://www.user.gwdg/~kflechs/iikdiaps1-98.htm>.

tional reactions to it and that even the *raison d'être* of "intercultural pedagogy" is still disputed,<sup>2</sup> may, however, not be used as an argument for further waiting. Only by addressing this dimension of interculturalism in diverse and even controversial manners, a necessary discussion can be advanced and terms and concepts can be clarified.

The purpose of this article is to present (from a German point of view) some aspects which need to be addressed in reflections and research on History Education in a culturally heterogeneous society.

To find one's way in the emerging society which is characterised by immigration and globalization is a challenge for both groups involved, immigrants and those born here. Two groups (actually rather: many), who need to organize coexistence of more than mere proximity, but which recognizes and secures the rights and opportunities for all. Therefore, Intercultural education refers to more than just programs for immigrants and their children, aiming at either empowering them to maintain their identity within a society whose mainstream character is not considerably altered ("multicultural education") or (at the other end of a spectrum) to promote their assimilation to this mainstream. Rather educational efforts need to focus on "both", minorities and the "majority society" ("transcultural education").<sup>3</sup>

It is, however, also about more than just living together. In the future, our interactions with people who live and remain in different parts of the earth will increase, because of (inter alia) an increasing number of problems no longer solvable on a nation by nation basis, but requiring decisions on a supranational level and/or trans-national co-operation. Moreover, this does not only refer to the future but also to the past. Nobody actively involved in the sketched processes or (passively) affected by them can deny that a new world began. Everyone will have to integrate the current processes and events into a coherent concept which encompasses the past, present and the future and which this will help people with their plans and expectations, hopes and fears. Increasingly, questions will be asked like how these processes began, who is responsible and how they should be evaluated. Barely two responses to these questions will be identical. Even

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2 AUERNHEIMER, GEORG (1997): "Interkulturelle Pädagogik -ein überflüssiges akademisches Steckenpferd?", In: *Pädagogik und Schulalltag*, 3.

3 FLECHSIG, KARL-HEINZ (2000): *Transkulturelles Lernen* <http://wwwuser.gwdg.de/~kflechs/iikdiaps2-00.htm>, quoting SCHÖFTHALER, TRAU GOTT (1984): "Multikulturelle und transkulturelle Erziehung: Zwei Wege zu kosmopolitischen kulturellen Identitäten.", In: *International Review of Education*, 30, 1, pp. 11-24.

within the two (or more) groups differences will be significant, e. g. between those in Germany, who regard the immigration of strangers as a threat and those who hope for a salvation of the German social security systems by increase of the number of the labour force, between those who have experienced migration and integration themselves (e. g. after 1945) and those who have been spared or denied such experiences, between various (groups of) immigrants – among other reasons possibly depending on whether they left their homes voluntarily hoping for a better future or whether they were forced to leave in order to save their lives, leaving home and hopes behind.

And each of their various constructions of sense-making regarding their personal experiences will not only strongly influence their political opinions and decisions, but will also recourse to experiences from before their personal lifetimes, to traditions, role models, insights from the history told to them in the realm of cultural and communicative memory, to culturally mediated concepts and values.

Then how can such a heterogeneous society be prepared to process the experiences made separately in the past and those to be shared from now on into meaningful stories and compatible common orientations? How can a common approach be created which deprives no one of their cultural and historical identity (not even in favour of a common “world heritage”)<sup>4</sup> but – in recognizing all “cultural differences” – fosters the chances of a peaceful community?

These are questions which academic historiography and history didactics must address – empirically, in order to explore the knowledge and conceptions of history of members of these societal groups and to learn what categories and terms they can be characterised and analysed with; in a normative perspective in order to clarify what knowledge of historical concepts and terms is necessary for securing the coexistence of such diverse members of society and which therefore can form the common basis to be taught to all members of new generations. But at first and foremost theoretical and conceptual clarification is necessary as to which general form of historical knowledge and historical competence is appropriate for such a heterogeneous society and how these can be promoted.

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<sup>4</sup> In this respect, too, intercultural education is not identical with “multicultural education” according to Schöffthaler. For the normative implications see. FLECHSIG, KARL-HEINZ 2000 (wie Anm. 4), 2f.

West German history didactics focusing less on factual knowledge than on “historical consciousness” and of history teaching promoting such individual historical consciousness certainly is a good starting point. The central objective of history teaching is no longer (as in times of nation building), to be found in national community building by way of endowing historic meaning, but rather to foster the ability to independent historical orientation. However, the question arises, whether this concept is not so specific of Western liberalism that its simple application and its expansion into the intercultural situation would amount to patronizing immigrants and immigrant children, who dispose of an entirely different concept of history. And what is more: Is it possible that the heterogeneous character of today's societies does not explicitly require an endowment of commonality by way of history teaching?

[...]

The first steps into this direction of research and discussion has taken place in German history didactics at the beginning of the 1980s, when Rolf Schörken reflected about the “understanding the other” (“Fremdverstehen”) as a central demand of history teaching in a shrinking world.<sup>5</sup> But it had also been history teaching which had provided the powerful concept of intercultural education of “multiperspectivity”,<sup>6</sup> an explicit discussion of intercultural history teaching has, however, developed after 1998 only, when Bettina Alavi, in her doctoral dissertation, provided the first voluminous work on this subject.<sup>7</sup> Based on a conference in November 2000, a first collection of both general reflection, elaborations and principles and concrete thematic suggestions – each co-authored by an academic historian and a teacher or educationalist – were been published in 2001.<sup>8</sup>

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5 SCHÖRKEN, ROLF (1980): "Geschichtsunterricht in der kleiner werdenden Welt. Prolegomena zu einer Didaktik des Fremdverstehens." In: SÜSSMUTH, HANS (Ed.) (1980): *Geschichtsdidaktische Positionen.: Bestandsaufnahme und Neuorientierung* Paderborn: Schöningh: (UTB-Taschenbücher, 954), pp. 315–336.

6 AUERNHEIMER, GEORG (2001): *Interkulturelle Bildung als politische Bildung* [http://www.uni-koeln.de/ew-fak/Allg\\_paeda/int/pub/pol\\_bildung.html](http://www.uni-koeln.de/ew-fak/Allg_paeda/int/pub/pol_bildung.html). gelesen 20 May. 2001.

7 ALAVI, BETTINA (1998): *Geschichtsunterricht in der multiethnischen Gesellschaft. Eine fachdidaktische Studie zur Modifikation des Geschichtsunterrichts aufgrund migrationsbedingter Veränderungen: Eine fachdidaktische Studie zur Modifikation des Geschichtsunterrichts aufgrund migrationsbedingter Veränderungen*. Zugl.: Berlin, Techn. Univ., Diss., 1998. Frankfurt/M.: IKO - Verl. für Interkulturelle Kommunikation (Interdisziplinäre Studien zum Verhältnis von Migrationen, Ethnizität und gesellschaftlicher Multikulturalität, 9).

## **On the concept of culture in intercultural history teaching and learning**

It has already been indicated above, that the objectives of intercultural education did not remain unchallenged. In this context, the discussion is only relevant as far as its reflection contributes to the clarification of underlying intention, concepts and terms.<sup>9</sup>

One of the reservations made against an education which stresses cultural differences between students refers to the principle that students should be treated equally and they need to be addressed and their learning evaluated without reference to their personal conditions. However, this overlooks that education committed to legal equality has to take into account unequal conditions and their effects. Students have to be treated as equals in their rights, but have to be taken seriously in their diversity, as well – especially if these differences bear meaning for them.<sup>10</sup> In addition, the differences which are of interest in intercultural education cannot just deduced from the affiliation of a person with a cultural or other group. To develop specific study programs or different approaches for people with different affiliations would be the wrong way. It would, in fact, be discriminating.<sup>11</sup>

Karl-Heinz Flechsig writes:

“We have to realize that 'culture' can no longer be understood in as referring to 'national culture', 'intercultural' no longer as 'international'. The idea that citizens of a state, the inhabitants of a territory, are characterized by a complex of common features which distinguish them from the citizens of other states or inhabitants of other territories, more than they are distinguished among themselves, must be dismissed as a myth. On the contrary, our present is characterized by the possibility that people can form cultural communities across borders of states, and that within the

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8 KÖRBER, ANDREAS (HG.) (2001): *Interkulturelles Geschichtslernen*. Geschichtsunterricht unter den Bedingungen von Einwanderung und Globalisierung; konzeptionelle Überlegungen und praktische Ansätze: *Geschichtsunterricht unter den Bedingungen von Einwanderung und Globalisierung; konzeptionelle Überlegungen und praktische Ansätze*. Münster: Waxmann: (Novemberakademie; 2)). This article is a translation of the introduction to that collection.

9 AUERNHEIMER, GEORG 1997 (wie Anm. 3), p. 2-2.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.



states cultural differences can exist and even increase between people, forming a variety of cultural communities.”<sup>12</sup>

However, to acknowledge this is only one half of the preconditions and prerequisites of intercultural pedagogy. The other one consists of refraining from declaring cultural differences as (relatively) void of relevance in the light of the sketched diversity and even variability of cultural affiliations. Such affiliations and memberships may not be as uniform and simple as before, they may contain more fissures (and even contradictions) when compared to the 'national cultures'; but all humans have acquired certain cultural standards which they use in their thinking and acting and they differ within them.<sup>13</sup>

Therefore, Intercultural pedagogy may no longer understand 'culture' as something which is given within relatively clear defined social groups, but must conceptualize them with a variable socialisation-background of “explicit and implicit patterns of behaviour”, of “ideas and values connected to them”, which learners have acquired and which means both: acting towards it and influencing it.<sup>14</sup> Cultural differences may not be *attributed or ascribed*, but have to be perceived and recognized where (in the function of “cultural standards” or “scripts”)<sup>15</sup> they influence the experiencing and thinking of students. And not only their everyday behaviour, but also the way in which they orientate themselves in their environment/in the world, including within the historical dimension. People with different cultural background experiences own (and change) different “patterns of interpretation” which they apply when they formulate historical questions. They differ about the relevance or irrelevance of historical contexts, how to manage and judge information on the past which in turn influence which motives of actors they accept as plausible or reject as implausible and what relevance a historical

12 FLECHSIG, KARL-HEINZ 1998 (wie Anm. 2), p. 2-2 (transl. AK).

13 FLECHSIG, KARL-HEINZ 2000 (wie Anm. 4), 2f.

14 Quotes are from the definition of culture by KROEBER, A. L.; KLUCKHOHN, CLYDE (1952): *Culture. A critical review of concepts and definitions: A critical review of concepts and definitions*. Cambridge Mass.: The Museum (Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, v. 47, no. 1); quoted after THOMAS, ALEXANDER (HG.) (1993): *Kulturvergleichende Psychologie. Eine Einführung: Eine Einführung*. Göttingen: Hogrefe Verl. für Psychologie. On variability cf. AUERNHEIMER, GEORG 1997 (wie Anm. 3), p. 6-6, who rejects the term “cultural minting” (of behaviour and world-view) which “at least supposes” a determining function.

15 Cf. FLECHSIG, KARL-HEINZ (1998): *Kulturelle Schemata und interkulturelles Lernen*

<http://www.gwdg.de/~kflechs/iikdiaps3-98.htm>; AUERNHEIMER, GEORG 1997 (wie Anm. 3), p. 5-5.

context has for them. If history didactics takes the theoretical insight seriously that historical learning is an active process of orientating within the temporal dimension and consists of sense-making which everybody has to perform within communicative contexts, then there is no overestimating the relevance of such patterns of interpretation which people bring into mental processes and which they constantly change within them. To foster students' awareness of the individual meaning of their culturally defined variety is a central aim of intercultural learning in the domain of history.

However, there is no easy and simple way to avoid what Bettina Alavi has termed the "trap of culturalising",<sup>16</sup> which means to simply assume and ascribe cultural affiliations and patterns,[...]. With regard to each concept of intercultural pedagogy, the concept of culture underpinning the selection of material, the phrasing of teaching aims and of tasks must be carefully observed. It is even more difficult to avoid the outlined trap above, since it may not only underpin the objective, subject-related of e.g. a lesson-plan, but also in the teacher's perception of the learning-group and even in the self- and partner-perceptions of the students themselves. [...]

Another central element of intercultural pedagogics emerges from reflecting the possible aims which intercultural history teaching can have. In the light of the changes within modern societies and most of all the increasing cultural contacts and intermingling, intercultural pedagogy may not define its aims open to a degree which rendered itself indifferent to the needs and processes of identification of its clientele. Teaching may not be aiming at enabling students to any identification. A minimum requirement would be that the identities to be developed by the learners themselves must fit modern, plural societies. Teaching and teachers need endow the students with orientation without leading to a general and essential confrontation with others. Ditto, it can not be the purpose of intercultural education to just reproduce given cultural orientations unchanged – this would also amount to a variety of the "trap of culturalisation" – even where it did not

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16 ALAVI, BETTINA (2001): "Von der Theorie zur Praxis interkulturellen Lernens. Problembereiche bei der Planung und Durchführung von Unterricht." In: KÖRBER, ANDREAS (Ed.) (2001): *Interkulturelles Geschichtslernen.: Geschichtsunterricht unter den Bedingungen von Einwanderung und Globalisierung; konzeptionelle Überlegungen und praktische Ansätze* Münster: Waxmann: (Novemberakademie, 2), pp. 97–106; for the problem of culturalising and the danger of reinforcing it by concepts of intercultural pedagogy cf. AUERNHEIMER, GEORG (2001): *Interkulturelle Kompetenz -ein neues Element pädagogischer Professionalität?* [http://www.uni-koeln.de/ew-fak/Allg\\_paeda/int/pub/ik\\_kompetenz.html](http://www.uni-koeln.de/ew-fak/Allg_paeda/int/pub/ik_kompetenz.html). gelesen 20 May. 2001.



refer to external ascriptions of identity. The changes in our society demand that students be endowed with abilities to re-construct and change their orientations now and again. And finally, modern intercultural societies require that learners not only learn to construct and re-construct their own identities but that they get informed about others with their identities and – what is central – not only to tolerate but to accept them. What is needed is a culture of positive recognition of differences.<sup>17</sup>

For both, enabling to construct and re-construct an own identity and to relate to and communicate with others in a productive, accepting and non-confronting way, the process of identification itself must be clarified and made aware – it only then will be at the command or disposition of the individual. That also refers to one's own cultural 'minting'. Therefore, one of the demands to intercultural history learning is to make discernible the specificities and the contingency of the premises of one's own historical thinking.

## Elements of Intercultural Competence

Intercultural history learning is not only an addition of intercultural and historical learning. Rather both forms of learning specific skills are need to be interrelated and integrated.

If elaborated historical competence is defined as the ability to build meaning in a reflective way through applying methodical analysis and interpretation of material (sources and representations) selected according to historical questions, then historical learning includes fostering the competence to handle information on the past independently and to re-construct an understanding of the past. Therefore, Historical learning has to reflect and address (not exclusively but necessarily) the constructive process of historical thinking and its peculiarities – and this includes to reflect on perspectivity. The aim of such

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17On the politics of recognition following Charles Taylor cf. BENHABIB, SEYLA (1999): *Kulturelle Vielfalt und demokratische Gleichheit*. Politische Partizipation im Zeitalter der Globalisierung: *Politische Partizipation im Zeitalter der Globalisierung*. Frankfurt a. M: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag; cf. also AUERNHEIMER, GEORG 2001 (wie Anm. 7), p. 5–5. With regard to history see also RÜSEN, JÖRN (1998): "Einleitung: Für eine interkulturelle Kommunikation in der Geschichte. Die Herausforderungen des Ethnozentrismus in der Moderne und die Antwort der Kulturwissenschaften." In: RÜSEN, JÖRN; GOTTLOB, MICHAEL; MITTAG, ACHIM (Eds.) (1998): *Die Vielfalt der Kulturen*. 1. Aufl Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp: (Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft; Erinnerung, Geschichte, Identität, 1405), pp. 12–36.

learning may not consist in abstract knowledge about the inevitable character of perspectivity, it rather has to/should enable young students to actually and actively deal with the fact that other people bring up different questions about the past, due to their different experiences and interests. These questions which differ from one's own, are not only different in their phrasing but have also consequences for everyday life.

The intercultural situation adds another dimension to the challenge of taking into consideration perspectivity, already to be recognized within any society (e. g. referring to different generations and social groups, but also between individuals). Culture, the man-made part of the environment,<sup>18</sup> simultaneously presenting a condition and the aim of human activity,<sup>19</sup> is a comprehensive system of orientation<sup>20</sup> which is not biologically given but coined by society. Cultures are (collective) constructs which influence – in the form of schemes – perception and behaviour, thinking and evaluating of humans.<sup>21</sup>

It is of special importance that within a cultural group, their specific but contingent forms of perceiving, thinking, valueing and performing general aspects of living, tend to be no longer consciously perceived as contingent options, but are often rather taken for granted in their specific form.<sup>22</sup> If we concede that such “cultural standards” shape the way people think and act, it will also affect historical thinking and interpreting as a part of general orientation. The historical consciousness of others is always, as one's own, a construction dependent on a perspective which combines various needs for orientation, patterns of interpretation,<sup>23</sup> cultural standards, methods for dealing with empirical

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18 This definition is by Harry Triandis; cf. THOMAS, ALEXANDER (1993): "Psychologie interkulturellen Lernens und Handelns." In: THOMAS, ALEXANDER (Ed.) (1993): *Kulturovergleichende Psychologie.: Eine Einführung* Göttingen: Hogrefe Verl. für Psychologie: pp. 377–424.

19 Cf. HOFSTEDE, GEERT H; HOFSTEDE, GERT J; MINKOV, MICHAEL (2010): *Cultures and organizations. Software of the mind; intercultural cooperation and its importance for survival: Software of the mind; intercultural cooperation and its importance for survival*. Rev. and expanded 3. ed. New York: McGraw-Hill. Cf. also the definition of culture as “software of the mind” in the title of (cf. Ibid.). F. also ZEUNER, ULRICH: *Kursbuch E-Mail-Projekt. 1. Kultur: 1. Kultur* <http://rcswww.urz.tu-dresden.de/~uzeuner/mailproj/kursbu11.htm>.

20 Cf. FLECHSIG, KARL-HEINZ (2000): *Kulturelle Orientierungen* <http://www.gwdg.de/~kflechs/iikdiaps1-00.htm>.

21 Ibid., p. 3–3.

22 THOMAS, ALEXANDER 1993 (wie Anm. 19).

23 RÜSEN, JÖRN (1983): *Historische Vernunft. Grundzüge einer Historik I: Die Grundlagen der Geschichtswissenschaft: Grundzüge einer Historik I: Die Grundlagen der Geschichtswissenschaft*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht (Kleine Vandenhoeck-Reihe, 1489).

data<sup>24</sup> etc. – all culturally shaped. Not only knowledge differs between cultures, but also normative criteria for which persons, events, structures etc. are relevant and worthy to remember, and which actions, opinions are held as plausible and understandable and which as alien. Thus the knowledge which members of different “cultures” hold does not differ in superficial way only, but also with regard to its deeper cognitive structures – even the concepts of what “history” is in the first place and how “historical knowledge” is constructed can differ.<sup>25</sup> Comparisons and negotiations aiming at compromise in the dimension of “content” may therefore lead to a certain disarmament of some culturally based controversy, but not to its dissolution (or better: “sublation”) in the sense of promoting intercultural historical competence.<sup>26</sup>

In contrast to some (no all!) parts of public discourse, where “Intercultural Competence” refers to the ability to promoting or not hindering commerce by avoiding awkward situations, in the field of education, the term denotes a set of dispositions and general abilities, among which (without claim of completeness) the following may be counted:<sup>27</sup>

1. Cognitive elements

- A. Knowledge of cultural differences and individual cultures,
- B. Basic knowledge of the history of relations between peoples and cultures, especially with regard to historical inequalities, reservations, asymmetries of power,
- C. awareness of cultural differences and similarities,
- D. perception of their own cultural awareness minted in values, interpretive patterns, cultural standards,<sup>28</sup>

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24 The theoretical level of the cultural imprint of historical thought and possibilities and principles of intercultural communication in history has been the focus of a research group headed by Jörn Rüsen, titled “Historical Construction of Meaning – Interdisciplinary Studies on the Structure, Logic and Function of Historical Consciousness in Intercultural comparison”.

25 For an example of extremely different concepts of history cf. e.g. GOTTLÖB, MICHAEL (1996): “Geschichte und Eigensinn in Indien.”, In: *ZIF-Mitteilungen*, 2.

26 In addition, cultural differences may exist not only in terms of content and interpretations, but also with regard to different expectations as to the communicative situation and the aspects of self-disclosure and appeal also inherent in disputes over history. Cf. AUERNHEIMER, GEORG 2001 (wie Anm. 17), 2f.

27 KIEL, EWALD (1996): *Die Entwicklung interkultureller Kompetenz als zentrales Ziel globalen Lehrens und Lernens* <http://www.user.gwdg.de/~kflechs/iikdiaps3-96.htm>; ULICH, MICHAELA (2000): “Interkulturelle Kompetenz – Erziehungsziele und pädagogischen Alltag [sic!].”, In: *Archiv frühe Kindheit*, 1.

28 FLECHSIG, KARL-HEINZ 1998 (wie Anm. 16), p. 4–4: “These are perceived as self-evident as long as people are not faced with alternatives. If this happens, however, this alternative interpretation patterns and behaviors are first perceived as alien. At the same time the consciousness is developed for the fact that the self-evident is [only] the own version [within a variety].” The concept of cognitive schemes seems to

- E. perception of foreign foreign “cultural standards” as alternatives (not necessarily equivalent);
  - F. perception of the limits of one's own understanding: ability to “understanding proximity” as well as to “respectful distance” (Ulich 2000);
  - G. ability to adopt other perspectives.
2. Emotional / Affective elements:
- A. a cultural openness and curiosity (Ulich 2000),
  - B. a lack (or at least a civilizing) of fears of threats, of will to superiority and stereotyping,
  - C. an appreciation of cultural peculiarities, tolerance, solidarity.
3. More complex skills:
- A. the ability to coordinate culturally divergent action schemes,
  - B. the ability to integrate foreign standards of acting into one's own, and to act successfully within the different culture,
  - C. a “sensitivity to various forms of ethnocentrism and discrimination”, to impacts of past and present experiences with member of other cultures (Auernheimer 2001),
4. Finally (as the highest level) a “general ability of cultural learning and cultural understanding”, of quick orientation in foreign cultures (Thomas 1993).

With regard to intercultural history teaching, this implies that one objective is to promote the perception of one's own culturally embedded historical thinking and which is at least partial contingent, because a simple confrontation with foreign (also partially contingent) standards and patterns of action, can lead to either a devaluation of them (if they are perceived as a deviation from the self-evident) or to the recognition of the relativity of one's own culturally influenced way of historical thinking. Both would be undesirable results.

The insight that ideas and knowledge of history, as well as conclusions, interpretations and orientations drawn from its basis are fundamentally dependent on perspectives and can therefore differ strongly between cultures and not one of them can be simply the correct version, does form only one part of Intercultural Historical Competence. From another (practical) perspective, it includes the ability to deal with different interests, norms, values and patterns of interpretation, which means to arrange intercultural contacts about history in a way which leads to a real “broadening of perspectives”. The latter term refers – in Jörn Rüsen's *Historik* – to an enhanced form of normative plausibility<sup>i</sup>

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be particularly well suited for the theoretical justification of intercultural learning processes. An application on history teaching issues is still lacking. On an abstract this could refer to culturally diverging schemes of history, time, action, and for historical learning and self-orienting, on a concrete level to questions about culture-related schemes in dealing with historical information (source evaluation, reasoning, etc.).

within a historical account or sense-making.<sup>29</sup> The goal of intercultural communication (and intercultural learning) in history may neither be relativistic “anything goes” nor absolutising of one's own position – to create an artificial common perspective and interpretation which then counts as the solely correct one “in the middle” would be equally wrong. The perspective someone held prior to such an intercultural communication (exchange?) can be neither simply upheld after getting to know and recognizing other perspectives, nor can it be given up entirely in favour of another (even a new) perspective, which is not one's own. Even after an intercultural communication, the cultural specific perspectives onto a given, common subject as well as the equally culture-specific attributions of relevance and interpretations will differ,<sup>30</sup> but they will differ with additionally *knowing of* and *having insight into* the different perspectives of the others, due to experiencing of others and engaging with them with the result of changing one's own perspective. It is then possible to negotiate and reflect about aspects of present agency concerning both cultures and about questions on the (shared and divided) history orientating it. Therefore, the goal of intercultural<sup>31</sup> communication is not artificial identity of narratives, but rather structural *compatibility* of orientations and their underlying narratives, which (on the basis of mutual recognition) renders discussions on equal footing.

The concept of “intercultural historical competence” therefore can encompass (among others) the following elements:

1. Basic knowledge about differences of human cultures in their historical development,
2. Basic knowledge about historical culture contacts (Bitterli 1993) and their course;

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29 RÜSEN, JÖRN 1983 (wie Anm. 24), 76ff; 90ff. Cf. also KÖRBER, ANDREAS (1999): *Gustav Stresemann als Europäer, Patriot, Wegbereiter und potentieller Verhinderer Hitlers*. Historisch-politische Sinnbildungen in der öffentlichen Erinnerung: *Historisch-politische Sinnbildungen in der öffentlichen Erinnerung*. Univ., FB Geschichtswiss., Diss. U.d.T.: Körber, Andreas: *Europäer, Patriot, Wegbereiter und potentieller Verhinderer Hitlers*--Hamburg, 1999. Hamburg: Krämer (Beiträge zur deutschen und europäischen Geschichte, 25).

30 Compare the list of inappropriate and appropriate concepts for intercultural problem solving in 1993 (wie Anm. 15), 407f. According to it, concepts which aim at some kind of homogeneity (e. g. “melting pot”), refer to a concept of basic identity or similarity or postulate one superior style of living and acting are to be counted among the former, whereas acceptance of heterogeneity and contingency count among the latter.

31 The term is used in generic form here. It needs to be further differentiated for characterizing the spectrum of different approaches and concepts. Some aspects of such a differentiation are discussed below.

3. the ability to render irritations and alienations emerging from present intercultural situations addressable and communicable by posing (among others) about their historical background;
4. the ability, to explain differences in information, conclusions and judgements from primary sources and retrospective accounts and to match them (where appropriate) with cultural differences;
5. the ability and readiness as well as preparedness to face and deal with conclusions and judgements on historical events and processes which differ from one's own opinion
6. the ability to perceive cultural similarities as well as differences,
7. the general willingness and preparedness to phrase questions in a way which allows not for only one singular truth as an answer, but recognizes different perspectives,<sup>32</sup>
8. a sensibility for the social relevance of differences and ascriptions as well as differentiations which social groups perform on each other;
9. the basic insight that “history” is not a singular all-encompassing context which is objectively given, but a re-construction which is bound to specific viewpoints, perspectives, interests and questions;
10. the ability to perceive, recognize and endure the ambiguousness of history and historical judgements without referring to a concept of total relativity which declares any discussion useless.

Before this chapter ends, a possible misunderstanding should be addressed: Intercultural teaching and learning of history does not require any concentration on cultural history. To restrict the subjects addressed and discussed to such belonging to “culture” would be wrong. On the contrary, in principle all subjects from all areas of historiography can be taught interculturally, from political history via juridical and economic history to social, but also technical history. It is even possible that the greatest degree of mutual stimulation can be observed: To explore different cultural influences on the development of and judgement about such subjects may on the one hand effectively question one-sided concepts and purported things and on the other hand can contribute to mark cultural aspects as not being subordinate, but rather as entities fundamentally influencing economic and legal chances of people. Then Cultural history becomes not only a raised subject, but turns into a part of social critical history, too.

### **Several Implementations of intercultural historical learning**

Intercultural approaches can be found – as far as I can see – mainly in three variants which shall be shortly sketched in the following paragraph (Körber 2001):

#### **Topic-oriented intercultural focusing**

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<sup>32</sup>Cf. RÜSEN, JÖRN 1998 (wie Anm. 18).



One well-known approach to intercultural history learning is to make former contacts and conflicts between cultures the subject of history teaching, due to address and discuss the past realities and the ways of thinking and acting of peoples in those times which formed these realities. In the light of such a concept of indirect teaching of intercultural experiences, a reference to the present is discernible in the form of hope that a mainly cognitive process of bringing to mind the cultural influences of mutual perceptions, of mutual actions of the protagonists and of analysing the consequences of their actions, which were not yet discernible to them, students can be made aware of possible consequences of their own attitudes towards and actions in connection with other cultures and immigrants. This concept is one of addressing transferable 'good' and 'bad' examples of singular cultural groups to each other and of drawing diachronic consequences from these examples. Among approaches of this type are e.g. classical lessons about pictures of "the other" in antiquity, e.g. Tacitus account on the Germans, anti-judaist text from the middle ages and anti-semitism in the modern age, about explorations and invasions. Such teaching concepts can provide learners with highly relevant categories and insights.

However, if the intercultural dimension in historical teaching and learning is only provided via lesson subjects and themes, it will be superficial in the way that it only allows (for real and meaningful) comparisons between the time under scrutiny and the present, but that it does not differentiate between such examples and aspects of alterity which are rooted in chronology and such based on cultural differences. And similarly, as Klaus Bergmann has argued, an increase in coverage of extra-European history subjects will lead to a "globalization trap" of historical learning, because the reference to the learners' own life will stay abstract.<sup>33</sup>

### **Material-oriented intercultural focusing**

#### *a) Intercultural multiperspectivity of primary source material*

A considerable broadening of intercultural historical learning was provided by the theoretical insight into the dependence of historical accounts and judgements from a specific viewpoint. Even within the rather naive framework of aiming at finding out "how it really was like" (as Leopold von Ranke is often misunderstood), completeness of the corpus of primary source material has become the precondition of an interpretation and

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<sup>33</sup> BERGMANN, KLAUS (2000): *Multiperspektivität*. Geschichte selber denken: *Geschichte selber denken*. Schwalbach/Ts: Wochenschau-Verlag (Wochenschau Geschichte).

judgement which are accepted as valid by more than a single person (intersubjectively). In consequence, with regard to subjects of intercultural relations, primary sources from all (various?) cultures are needed.<sup>34ii</sup> The same is true with regard to retrospective (present) narrative historical statements. Here, as well a naive concept of just finding out the historical truth, which (according to the popular saying) often “lies in the middle”, requires a recognition of different opinions.

*b) Intercultural multiperspectivity of retrospective accounts*

To recognize the indispensable necessity of different perspectives onto the same subject, the same event, is the next step. Differences within the primary source material are now acknowledged as a part of the past context itself and perspectivity is recognized as an important structural characteristic of the past reality. This insight changes the interest in orientation and research. The question is no longer “how it really was” but (also) how it was for the people involved. Multiperspectivity on the level of primary source material is the prerequisite for historical research which does not forcibly produces an artificial “objective” view onto the subject matter, but recognizes the fact that all historical insights are bound to viewpoints and perspectives. From here, it is just a small step towards the postulation that on the level of the present interpretations the different perspectives must be acknowledged – again not aiming at one truth “in the middle” which is equally valid for all. It also renders the idea impossible that such a universally valid truth could be identified by detecting “biases” and distortions in the material caused by the different perspectives, so that after their erasure, the “pure truth” emerges as a residuum. On the contrary, it conceives truth to be complex rather than simple and aims at establishing it by recognizing and acknowledging different meanings, relevance, evaluations and interpretations which result from different viewpoints, experiences etc. Therefore, Multiperspectivity on the level of retrospective accounts (often also called “controversialty”)<sup>35</sup> is equally necessary. It has been postulated as principle for history

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34 On the principles of perspectivity and multiperspectivity cf. Ibid.; ALAVI, BETTINA 1998 (wie Anm. 8), p. 108–108 and DOVERMANN, ULRICH (1995): *Vergangenes sehen. Perspektivität im Prozeß historischen Lernens; Theorie und Unterrichtspraxis von der Grundschule bis zur Sekundarstufe II: Perspektivität im Prozeß historischen Lernens; Theorie und Unterrichtspraxis von der Grundschule bis zur Sekundarstufe II.* Bonn: Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung (Arbeitshilfen für die politische Bildung).

35 Within a tripartite differentiation of the generic concept and principle of multiperspectivity introduced by Bergmann BERGMANN, KLAUS 2000 (wie Anm. 35), the term “controversialty” (“Kontroversität”)

teaching also in recent years, and the reasoning for it goes beyond that of enabling better insight into the past: Using and considering both primary sources and retrospective accounts from diverse backgrounds does also aim at highlighting the necessity as well as justification of views and judgements dependent on a specific perspective and their function. This is why History education in school is not just about the one event which is to be researched in the utmost complex way, but it is about the logic of historical thinking itself being dependent on perspectives. Practising to (hypothetically) take over foreign perspectives<sup>36</sup> is suggested for increasing the students' sensitivity for other views onto a given history being (at least partially) justified. But the event and its interpretation is no longer the central aspect, but in addition (and even more) the insights into the social, political, mental and therefore cultural conditions characterizing and shaping the other viewpoints. "Understanding the other" is more than to know in a cognitive way *that* historical events is being interpreted and evaluated differently from other (temporal, social, cultural) perspectives, but also to gain insight into how specific perspectives shape these various interpretations – and *why*. To understand the others' judgement given in a certain historical narrative is undertaken in order to foster understanding and appreciation of the foreign perspective, for the social reality behind it, the norms and concepts.

"Understanding the other" ("Fremdverstehen") has long been one of the principles of history teaching. It mainly is conceptualized as understanding of conduct and mentalities which are underpinned by logics and principles different from our own and that is:

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refers to retrospective narratives about a historical context representing different perspectives. The third element of the typology is "plurality" referring to the differences in today's learners' interpretations and conclusions. The term "controversialty" is well established in German discourse on history teaching. It is, however, misleading in that such different retrospective accounts and statements do not necessarily need to be antagonistic or contradictory, but can also represent complementary, but different perspectives.

36 Cf. e. g. TORNOW, LUTZ; BORRIES, BODO von (2001): "Fremdverstehen durch systematische Einübung in Perspektivenwechsel? Von gelegentlich 'multiperspektivischer' Quellenarbeit zu konsequent 'kontroverser' Behandlung." In: KÖRBER, ANDREAS (Ed.) (2001): *Interkulturelles Geschichtslernen.: Geschichtsunterricht unter den Bedingungen von Einwanderung und Globalisierung; konzeptionelle Überlegungen und praktische Ansätze* Münster: Waxmann: (Novemberakademie, 2), pp. 227–238; see also: KÖRBER, ANDREAS; MCALEAVY, TONY (1998): "Can Pupils fit into the shoes of someone else?" In: VAN DER LEEUW-ROORD, JOKE (Ed.) (1998): *The state of history education in Europe.: Challenges and implications of the "Youth and History"-survey* Hamburg: Ed. Körber-Stiftung; pp. 123–142.

different because of their belonging to past times.<sup>iii</sup> This also contains an intercultural dimension<sup>37</sup> in as far as past times can be understood as past cultures. But in most cases it refers to understanding those people and their logics of conduct which we encounter in primary source material or retrospective accounts. History teaching aiming at “understanding the other” using multiple perspectives must, however, also aim to enable students to acknowledge and recognize different interpretations and judgements of history of people that they themselves encounter in their later everyday life. The aim must be that they can find some common ground with people of different cultural background(s) which does not level the differences of perspectives and judgement between them, but rather sustains them. The aim is not an adjustment or assimilation of perspectives, but a broadening of one's own perspective; not an assimilation of historical consciousness and concepts of history, but their *compatibility*.<sup>38</sup>

*c) Interculturality within the learning process*

Intercultural multiperspectivity realized in the selection and editing of of teaching material is appropriate for conceptualizing (different) foreign cultures not only as an object of acquisition of knowledge in history teaching, but for presenting them with a respective body of information, conclusions and judgements in a way which enables students to involve with them, not just to learn *about* them and their respective relation to their own or the shared history. The different (other) culture is not just presented “second hand” but in a way authentically.

But in such teaching and learning concepts, judgements and perspectives are still not really those which students are likely to encounter in a globalised and migratory future. They represent perspectives, norms, values and concepts of today's members of other cultures' ancestors (in the form of cultural multiperspectivity in the primary source material) or those of a present intellectual elite participating in the historical discussions in their respective cultures (in the case of narratives representing multiple perspectives and/or interpretations). The perspectives of members of foreign cultures which belong to the same age group and social group (class or milieu) of the learners here, can, however, only be presented if the learning groups themselves include learners from different cultures.

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37SCHÖRKEN, ROLF 1980 (wie Anm. 6).

38RÜSEN, JÖRN 1983 (wie Anm. 24).

This precondition may be given in an increasing amount of all classes, but it will be hard to find “authentic” representatives for a relevant “other” culture for each subject to be addressed. This means that in many cases no representatives of those cultures will be present within the class which the (autochthonous European) students should learn to communicate with about history in a rational way. Our students encounter foreign students via media only, but not “first hand”. Within the discussion on foreign language learning, the principle has been formulated that it is not sufficient to appreciate the other as an object only, but that understanding the other requires the answer of the (relevant) other. One's own view “is directed onto the other as if she/he were an object; but the view of the other is not veiled; the spectator will inevitably become aware that the personal counterpart looks back and is all but an object in her/his activity”.<sup>39</sup> A personal exchange requires reciprocity. Primary and secondary material in textbooks (even where selected from different cultures) “are” not this other culture, but represent it in a way needy of interpretation, not at least because their selection in most cases has been done from one's own culture. If our aim is to understand the interpretations and judgements which are relevant in other cultures *today*, it does not suffice to take into account primary and secondary material from multiple perspectives. It is in a common addressing a historical subject only that those norms, views, principles of interpretation and of conducts become apparent which are to be acquired by way of broadening of perspective and integrated into one's own perspective as that of “possible and possibly/partly justified other ones”. If intercultural history education is about enabling a valid engagement with the relevant other, it has to – in addition to intercultural learning using material from multiple perspectives – be constituted by intercultural exchange *within the learning process*.

This third approach to intercultural history learning, is constituted by intercultural encounters within the process of mental engagement with historical material and within the process of construction of historical meaning. It is a method of historical learning which is based on fostering experience not on making interculturality a subject of discussion.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, learners from different cultures must work on historical material together. They must be able to introduce their own questions in order to learn in direct

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39 CHRIST, HERBERT (1996): "Fremdverstehen und interkulturelles Lernen.", In: *Zeitschrift für interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht [Online]*, 13, 3.

40 FLECHSIG, KARL-HEINZ 1998 (wie Anm. 2), p. 3-3.

exchange with learners from other cultures. It is problematic, however, to directly make use of the cultural differences of students present in class. No student may be wanted to be referred to as the “representative” of a specific culture as such. This would constitute culturalising (s. above). It would violate the insights into both, the nature of cultures as the students' individual rights and it would not be convincing if e.g. some students would be declared experts of “their” culture. In the first place, we cannot know how accurate and detailed these students can give information about the cultural standards of “their” culture. They would be addressed in different roles and functions at the same time. Furthermore, it is possible that students in our classes do not affiliate with a “culture” being addressed, e.g. because of being a member of a minority or a dissident group etc., and no student in class should just be addressed as a representative of a “foreign” culture. They also will have several and more likely, mixed cultural identities. Therefore, we have to address the concept of culture in a more critical way when conceptualizing intercultural historical teaching and learning.

## **Conclusion**

This overview just given could suggest that full-fledged intercultural historical learning only happens in direct encounters. This is not the case. The three forms of intercultural learning must be seen as complementing each other. They can be organized next to each other in specific phases, they can be sequenced and they can also be intertwined. The development of didactic principles and methods for each of them is, however, just starting. [...].

The third access – direct encounter – is not only particularly difficult to organise, but also most strongly in need of concrete empirical experiences, which start to be made in the slow process of equipping schools with computers. A continuation of the discussion and an exchange on such experiences is highly desirable. These should be supplemented with experiences from situations in which students from different countries and/or cultures directly encounter each other, e.g. in seminars, historical excursions, etc. Still largely unsolved is the question whether or in how far these proposed approaches to intercultural history learning fit to didactic and methodical conceptions developed in the area of general didactics and of “intercultural trainings”. The “culture assimilator” method with its spectrum of interpretative specifications, one of which is regarded as



being correct and adequate, e.g., does not meet the requirements of historical education, namely independent meaning-making. On the other hand, some of the methods referred to by Flechsig, such as case analysis, simulation, exploration, project-like approach as well as exercises should be applied more systematically to historical content. There is enough demand and opportunity for creating innovative teaching material.

Equally unclear is the interrelationship between general interculturalism and country-specific procedures. In principle, it could be assumed that within the context of general schooling greater stress should be put on the country-unspecific aims and methods, for example on an education towards recognition and acceptance of diversity. The interference of methods and programs focusing specific countries and cultures with these aims is to be further explored. The same applies to the question in how far specificities of historical learning (especially the necessary references to primary material) require such focuses on specific cultures.

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- i In their original version RÜSEN, JÖRN 1983 (wie Anm. 24), 83ff, Rüsen's criteria of plausibility of historical statements and narratives were coined "Triftigkeiten", in the new version of his *Historik*, however, he calls them "plausibilities" RÜSEN, JÖRN (2013): *Historik. Theorie der Geschichtswissenschaft: Theorie der Geschichtswissenschaft*. Köln: Böhlau.
- ii Addendum 2016: Within the framework of intercultural history learning, presented by Kenneth Nordgren and Maria Johannsen in 2015, this postulate would fall into category 2B "history as sources from different cultures" (NORDGREN, KENNETH; JOHANSSON, MARIA (2015): "Intercultural historical learning: A conceptual framework.", In: *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 47, 1, pp. 1-25.
- iii Addendum 2016: Cf. Also *Ibid.*, p. 597-597.