

History in Moral Encounters Presentations

Part of the research project *History in Moral Encounters*, by Niklas Ammert (PI), Silvia Edling, Heather Sharp, and Jan Löffström
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Exploring the link between historical consciousness and moral consciousness: motivations, epistemological assumptions and moral purposes.

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This paper examines the relationship between historical consciousness and moral consciousness by revisiting arguments for introducing historical consciousness as a concept, the epistemological implications for moral and historical consciousness and the purposes and directions for moral consciousness generated within this epistemological perspective. Traditional approaches to history in research and education indicate that it was *harmful*, *abstract* and an *illusion* of reality, thus rendering a shift from narrow to broad, dualistic to dialectical and atomistic to relational epistemological starting points. In general, moral consciousness in relation to historical consciousness draws attention to: a) people's life conditions, b) that moral reasoning and practice are influenced by feelings and reason, c) that reflections on past events can help to interpret our ways of being towards others in the present and future, d) that a plurality of people, thoughts and history are important to acknowledge and e) that every person is part of creating history and responsible for weaving the past/present/future web in way that acknowledges others. The literature on historical consciousness often states that the purpose of moral consciousness is to enhance *democracy*, *emancipation* and *identity*. The paper provides a conceptual overview of the motivations, epistemological building blocks and purposes for strengthening moral consciousness within the framework of historical consciousness.

Mapping the development of the concept of historical and moral consciousness in higher degree research theses.

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Historical and moral consciousness is a relatively new term in the field of History education and, at least in the Australian context, is one that is still under-utilized in research. Framed within a German history *didaktik* tradition, understanding of historical and moral consciousness, this presentation reports on the development of this concept from 1980, when arguably it entered the History education domain (Marcus, 1980). Research higher degree theses (Australian and Swedish) from 1980 to 2018 that contained the term historical and moral consciousness, historical consciousness, and/or moral consciousness were identified for analysis to determine the way in which these terms were applied to the research in question. The aim of the broader four-year project that this presentation draws from, and funded by the Swedish Research Council, is to increase knowledge about intersections of historical consciousness and moral consciousness in order to develop new theoretical tools for history teaching that can support education for democratic citizenship. Modern history teaching is expected to contribute to developing students' critical thinking and commitment to democratic values and human rights; yet there is little research on how historical interconnections are interpreted by students and linked to their moral consciousness.

In search for intersections of historical empathy and moral sensitivity: Swedish and Finnish lower secondary school students on an historical moral dilemma.

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One major aim in history teaching is to develop students' historical empathy, their ability to place themselves in the position of historical actors and understand how the social and cultural situation of these actors have affected their thoughts and actions. Historical empathy, like social perspective taking generally, entails ability to consider another person's moral framework and plausible moral judgments in a given situation. But there is more to it. People generally mobilise empathy skills for interpreting moral dimensions of a situation before they proceed to moral reasoning. One of the four components of moral behavior in James Rest's (1986) model of moral behavior is moral sensitivity, ability to perceive, or recognise, the moral dimension of a situation, understand how it will affect a person, what choices of action a person has and what consequences these choices of action have to this person and other people. Moral sensitivity involves both empathy and perspective-taking skills; it has both a cognitive and an affective component. This background in mind, it is worthwhile to ask how historical empathy and moral sensitivity support each other and how their levels coincide, level here being understood in terms of increasing complexity of perspectives.

Theoretical links between historical empathy and moral sensitivity are discussed in this presentation and a matrix is presented that has been designed for a tentative analysis of students' responses to a set of questions that relate to a historical situation with grave moral dilemmas. Students' responses are interpreted as expressions of their historical empathy and moral sensitivity. The analytic frame builds on constructs of historical empathy (Lee & Ashby 2001) and moral sensitivity (Jagger 2011). The material discussed in the presentation is from a study of Finnish and Swedish lower secondary school students. Students were asked to put themselves in the place of historical actors and answer questions that involved dealing with moral dilemmas. The answers have been analysed for features that can be interpreted as expressions of different levels of historical empathy and moral sensitivity. Patterns emerging from the analysis, and implications of the findings for history teaching in school are discussed.

Identifying aspects of temporal orientation in students' moral reflections.

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The concept of historical consciousness has been the epicentre of history didactics in continental and northern Europe since the 1980s. However the concept is contested and, by some, regarded as vague or meta-physical. A main objection has been that it is not obvious how a historical consciousness can be definitively identified, analysed or categorized.

In this paper historical consciousness is the theoretical frame when we present a matrix for analysing students' expressions of temporal orientation by studying their reasoning on inter-relations between interpretations of the past, understandings of the present and perspectives on a possible future. The matrix has been constructed by inter-linking two prominent theoretical models to analyse forms of historical consciousness, including Rüsen's types of narratives and Chinnery's strands of historical consciousness.

Through the matrix, we analyse a selection of Finnish and Swedish lower secondary school students' answers to a questionnaire about historical and moral reflections after reading an excerpt from Christopher Browning's book *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (orig. 1992). The students have answered and discussed open-ended questions regarding if and how the narrative in the excerpt has a relevant message for themselves and for people today and also if a similar situation could appear in Europe today or in the future. The matrix provides tools for categorizing the students' answers. The theoretical basis of the matrix and preliminary results are discussed in the paper.