



## SPECIAL SERIES CALL FOR PAPERS

# Democratic resilience and regression in history education since 1945

Edited by [Jan Löfström](#) and [Heather Sharp](#)

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**Expressions of interest due:** 16 September 2024

**Due date for paper submission:** 17 January 2025

Current conflicts and increasing tensions in international politics as well as within countries are often intimately intertwined with historical experiences that carry a heavy moral charge. Today, history teaching in democratic nations is often expected to develop students' critical and multi-perspectival thinking, and their commitment to democratic values and human rights. On the other hand, history teaching can and has also served as an instrument of anti-democratic thinking and chauvinist ideas (Rüsen, 2004). While developing democratic citizenship and associated values can be an aim in history teaching, the subject in itself is not a guarantee that democracy will be taught or learnt. There is a need to explore, in depth, the dynamics between historical and democratic consciousness in history curricula and syllabi in international contexts. There is a need to ask, for example, how the teaching of historical consciousness – oriented to intertwine the past, the present and the future – can impact how democracy and democratic processes are perceived.

The complexity of historical consciousness can be approached in a narrow or a broad manner (Körper, 2015). It sits within different disciplines and reference systems (Grever & Adriaansen, 2019), it is approached differently in differing social and geopolitical contexts (Sharp & al., 2020), and it can be difficult to put to work in empirical research studies (Nordgren, 2019). Like the much less widely used concept of democratic consciousness, historical consciousness is value-laden, in its understanding of the human condition, and multifaceted. Democratic consciousness is here understood, tentatively, as expressing ideas about democracy that form a complex set of historically charged values, ideas, and practices, and as expressed through language (Edling et. al. 2022). Theoretical and empirical questions of this field are currently the focus of the research of the *INoHiDe* network (*International Network of Historical Consciousness and Democratic Consciousness*), the group coordinating this special theme in *HERJ*.

This series will provide an overview, as well as a deeper historical understanding, of intersections of historical and democratic consciousness by exploring the background of

how understanding of democracy as an aim and as content in history education has developed, circa 1945 to the present. We invite authors to address the following questions:

1. How have the intersections of historical consciousness and democratic consciousness changed in the curricula and syllabi of the history subject in a chosen country within this period?
2. What consequences and implications for history education have the descriptions in the curricula and syllabi had?
3. How can the developments in the descriptions of historical consciousness and democratic consciousness be understood and explained by the cultural and social developments in the chosen country?
4. In comparative papers: what similarities and differences between countries can be found in the above mentioned questions?

The focus of the papers can be on formal written curriculum as well as on educational media such as history textbooks and their developments, for example.

This special series aims to explore, in-depth, mode of relating to temporality (historical consciousness), and commitments to democracy as a complex set of historically-charged values, ideas, and practices (democratic consciousness), providing a nuanced road-map of democratic ideas in history education, as well as directions for educational practice across a range of countries and national contexts.

## References

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- Nordgren, K. (2019). Boundaries of historical consciousness: A Western cultural achievement or an anthropological universal? *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 51(6), 779–797.
- Rüsen, J. (2004). Historical consciousness: Narrative structure, moral function and ontogenic development. In P. Seixas (ed.) *Theorizing historical consciousness* (pp. 63–85). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Sharp, H., Edling, S., Ammert, N. & Löfström, J. (2020) A review of doctoral theses since 2000: Historical consciousness in the Australian context. *International Journal of Research on History Didactics, History Education and History Culture*, 41, 123–140.

## **Submitting to this special series**

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Expressions of interest in the form of an abstract of 300-500 words, up to six references, and a 50-word biographical statement for each author should be sent by email to the handling editors: Heather Sharp [thea@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:thea@newcastle.edu.au) and Jan Lofström [jan.lofstrom@utu.fi](mailto:jan.lofstrom@utu.fi)

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