



SPECIAL SERIES CALL FOR PAPERS

Shifting Practices in History Education in Africa: Critical Perspectives and New Directions

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Expressions of interest due: 1 June 2025

Due date for paper submission: 2 September 2025

Calls for improving the teaching of African history across the continent have been made by academics, activists, UNESCO, the popular press, and teachers and students themselves. These calls have identified issues such as the dominance of European history and the history of 'great men'; the exclusion of marginalised groups; the lack of critical narratives; and the prevalence of rote-learning and teaching-to-test pedagogies. This special theme presents an opportunity to take stock of history education practices across African contexts, to identify shifts and resistance in addressing such issues. It also seeks to explore the role of different actors such as policy-makers, textbook authors, teachers and students in creating affordances and constraints in the history education space.

Typically, curricula and textbooks focus on telling political histories of the nation-state via the triumphs and challenges of elite men in leadership positions. This focus on political, military and constitutional history results in the exclusion or marginalisation of, amongst others, social history and the erasure of women (Mboyonga, 2021), LGBTQ+ people (Maluleka & Godsell, 2024), minoritized communities (Awinsong, 2024) and any narratives that may trouble nationalist projects (Rushohora, 2020). Nationalism can also sit side-by-side with Eurocentrism (Ndille, 2022). This special series seeks to hear from scholars either illuminating these erasures, pointing to instances of inclusive history education, decolonial history education or imagining history education otherwise.

The special theme also aspires to emphasise the voices of history teachers and students at all levels of education. Whilst curricula and policy play an important role in structuring history education, too often it is assumed rather than investigated how these are experienced by teachers and students. This special series seeks to ask how histories are navigated, internalised, ignored or resisted by teachers and students. This also includes teachers-in-training, as initial teacher education is a vital but under-emphasised arena which shapes later classroom interactions. Voices from these spaces can shed light on changing pedagogical interactions beyond the assumptions of official documents.

We invite authors to address the following themes:

- The place of history education in African states both individually and in comparison
- Curricular reforms in history education in Africa
- Textbook analysis
- Marginalised voices in history education in Africa
- Student and teacher perspectives
- Innovative practices in history education in Africa

References

Awinsong, M.D. (2024). Do Minoritized Cultures Matter? Ethnicity, Identity, and the Politics of Inclusion in Ghana's History and Social Studies Curricula. In: Boadu, G., Oppong, C.A. (eds) *History Education in Africa*. Palgrave Macmillan.

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Mboyonga, E. (2021). Silenced and Invisible Historical Figures in Zambia: An Analysis of the Visual Portrayal of Women in Senior Secondary School History Textbooks. *Yesterday and Today*, (26), 117-138. <https://doi.org/10.17159/2223-0386/2021/n26a6>

Maluleka, P. & Godsell, S. (2024). The Continued Absence of the LGBTIQ Community in School History Textbooks in Post-Apartheid South Africa. (2024). *Yesterday & Today*, 31, 37-61. <https://doi.org/10.17159/2223-0386/2024/n31a3>

Ndille, R. (2022). Shaping Remembrance through History Education How is German colonialism depicted in Cameroonian textbooks, and to what end? Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung. <https://www.rosalux.de/en/news/id/45997/shaping-remembrance-through-history-education>

Rushohora, N. (2020). The Challenges of Teaching the Majimaji War in Contemporary Tanzania. In *Teaching African History in Schools*. Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004445710_006

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: Abigail Branford (abigail.branford@africa.ox.ac.uk), Denise Bentrovato (denise.bentrovato@up.ac.za), Johan Wasserman (johan.wassermann@up.ac.za) and Joanna Wojdon (joanna.wojdon@uwr.edu.pl)

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The *History Education Research Journal* (HERJ) is an international, fully open- access, peer-reviewed journal that focuses on the global significance and impact of history education. It covers all aspects of history education theory, practice, scholarship, and pure and applied research. Publications in the journal address contemporary issues, concerns, policies and practice, drawing upon the full range of research methodologies relating to history education research.

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