

Presentation – “History is a recollection of experiences”¹

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The choice of the theme “Research Methodology in History Education”, suggested for the dossier, may cause the most experienced readers of History and its teaching a certain uneasiness. However, the reader will also know that there are several ways of thinking about history, and thinking about History teaching and, therefore, historiographic research and the research on the teaching of History. All those who, in some way, passed through the initial training of a historian, recall the reflections of Marc Bloch on the craft of the historian and of how costly the commitment to methodological rigor in historical investigation was to the author. But not only this: beyond the scientific rigor, for Bloch, “the historian is called to render their accounts, and will not venture to do so without a slight inside shudder: what artifice, aging in the craft, who never asked himself or herself, with a tightening of the heart, if he or she made wise use of his or her life” (BLOCH, s/d, p. 11). The same historian, upon presenting to the public young students of Liceu de Amiens, in 1913, said: “As you know I am a History teacher (...)”, thus demonstrating a preoccupation for expanding the nature of this craft (BLOCH, 1998, p. 21).

In the course of the 20th Century and already in the 21st Century, the historian’s craft continued to be challenged in a qualitatively new manner, deserving even to be called the “history profession” by the French historian Antoine Prost (PROST, 2001, p. 45), a profession that was led to assume the responsibility, among others, for the public uses of History, in which are certainly included the teaching of History and History Education. Between the decade of Marc Bloch and the first decades of the 21st Century, the constitution of the disciplinary field of History reinvented in innumerable historiographic movements has

1 Citation from the historian Marc Bloch. See BLOCH, Marc. *History and historians*. Lisboa: Editorial Teorema, 1998, p. 17.

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consolidated the methodical aspect of science, signaling to those dedicated to the craft, the different paths to be taken in the production of historical knowledge. It is worth citing, among others, the classic work of Julio Arostégui (2006) on historical research, which for many was a worthy initiation to the researcher’s ritual. It can be said that a work similar to this introduction to research on the teaching of History has not been found. As explained by Jörn Rüsen (2010), the consolidation of History as a science has led to, in the case of Germany and perhaps also Brazil, a separation between those who produce and those who teach History. It is a context that has been overcome via the formation, in several countries around the globe, of scientific communities of historians dedicated to research on the teaching of History. Among these communities, there are the historians dedicated to the field of History Education.

The Portuguese historian Isabel Barca, in an article published in 2005, presents to the Brazilian public a new area of investigation denominated: History Education, from the Anglo-Saxon tradition, within which research studies on the learning and teaching of History would be located. In this case, the foci are the principles, sources, typologies and strategies of History learning, with a view toward systematic knowledge of ideas and of development of historical thought of students and teachers. The theoretical framework of these investigations is the nature of historical knowledge whereas its objective is the development of historical thought. In the conception of Barca (2005), the investigations into History Education are on a hinge, anchored in different fields, such as the Epistemology of History and the Methodology of Investigation into the Social Sciences.

As the author has affirmed, the fact that research studies on history learning are a “hinge” or a tangle of dialogues with other areas of knowledge, particularly the education sciences, hampers but does not prevent the definition of objects and the construction of theoretical and methodological frameworks of investigations. The difficulty produces, as a result, a greater demand for time on analyses, particularly when interweaving between perspectives related to the teaching method, to historiography and to practices of teachers is explained more explicitly. This interweaving becomes more visible, evidencing an organic articulation between philosophy, the theory of History and historiography, conceptions and methods of History and their relationship with History teaching and learning. Thus, in the indicated sense, the specificity of these investigations includes History in a sort of species of “hinge” with its own scientific foundation being constructed gradually and systematically:

Under the focus of this research, above all of a qualitative nature, *substantive ideas* such as democracy or revolution, ideas on the nature

of History as explication, narration, evidence, significance, historical consciousness have been investigated...In the pioneering study “*Understanding and research*”, by Dickinson & Lee (1978), students from 12 to 18 years of age were interrogated by investigators about a theoretical framework that should govern research on historical thought, questioning the non-historic logic that served as a basis for previous research studies, as well as the Piagetian notion of invariance of developmental stages, at least when applied to the process of historical comprehension (BARCA, 2005, p. 16).

Thus, a certain tradition of research on historical thought, historical consciousness and learning can be noticed, which one presents a directional paradigm shift toward reference frames of the science of History to the detriment of reference frames of psychology and pedagogy. In the context of works developed by investigators of History Education, a multi-perspective set of themes for investigations is grouped, principally in situations and spaces of schooling. Nevertheless, adopting as a reference the theory of historical consciousness for investigations in schooling spaces presupposes an emphasis on qualitative methodology of educational investigation, in anthropological and/or sociological approaches, without discarding the need for historical approaches to understand historicity, for example, of the very idea of learning.

The adoption of an investigative perspective on History Education includes, therefore, new problems and new approaches of research studies referring mainly to the analysis of processes, of products and of the nature of teaching and learning History in different subjects, as well as the meanings and senses given to these processes. Furthermore, they indicate, fundamentally, that investigation into History Education must take into account a serious reflection on the nature of historical knowledge and its role as a tool for analyzing society and as a resource for the construction of historical consciousness and, therefore, as training for citizenship.

A set of articles published in the dossier reveals the growth of academic production in the area of History Education in our country and in other countries including Spain. The field of investigation into History Education has been defined with its own specificity in different countries including Brazil. This specificity has been noted by authors such as Rösen (2012), Barca (2005) and Schmidt (2009), and derives mainly from its foundations upon teaching and learning, based on an epistemology of History, especially in the theory of historical consciousness, as well as on research studies already conducted on this theme. On the one hand, the analysis realized by Caimi indicates that the field

“denominated History Education dialogues more strictly with the references of the epistemology of History” (CAIMI, 2009, p. 70). On the other hand, it can be affirmed that empirical research studies of History Education include many different aspects in multiple contexts whereas the researchers in this area have sought to find pathways that can incorporate the complexity of these theoretical and empirical elements. As an example, we can cite the International Symposium “Triangulation in Research Studies on History Education”, organized by the researchers Christoph Kühberger, Roland Bernhard and Christoph Bramann, conducted in May of 2017 at the University of Education at Salzburg, Switzerland. The objective of the symposium was to contribute to the development of theoretical and methodological parameters that may support international research in the field of History Education.

Guided by the contributions already produced in the field of History Education, which refer to their specific methodological and theoretical inputs, such as the subjects, objects and themes of the investigation, this present dossier was organized – Research Methodology in History Education: Contemporaneous Debates.

The first article – “History, Historiography and Research in History Education” – from the historian and specialist in the theory and philosophy of History, Prof. Dr. Estevão Chaves de Rezende Martins, of the University of Brasília, systematizes important foundations pertinent to the relationships between historical culture and the teaching of History, starting from the recovery of historicity of these relationships. Oriented by the dialogue and interdependence between historical narrative in general and the historiographic narrative in particular, the author shows the relevance of this interlocution for research in History Education.

Drawing on her trajectory as an investigator in the area of History Education, the historian and professor Dr. Maria Auxiliadora Schmidt, from the Federal University of Paraná, in the article “The Historian and Research in History Education”, analyzes a paradigm shift in the field of research in History teaching from interlocutions with the theory and philosophy of History that became references for research studies in History Education. This paradigm shift is exemplified by the author from the starting point of the analysis of 13 thesis produced in the scope of the Postgraduate Program in Education at the Federal University of Paraná, which are considered indicators of having the dialogue between the theory of learning referenced in the philosophy of History and theories of educational research.

To understand the sense attributed by teachers to the History taught in schools, the researcher Marlene Cainelli, jointly with other Brazilian researchers, developed a research study with History professors from four Brazilian states, in which they employed questionnaires investigating the forms and meanings

that the teachers attribute to substantive contents of History and to second-order contents. In this manner, it was possible to ascertain how the teachers make their choices and how they work methodologically in the classroom. In the article presented for the dossier, which is entitled “Didactics of History and the competence of attributing meaning: a study based on the methodology of History Education”, it is possible to understand the needs that guide the choices of teachers as to contents and methodological forms for teaching History, constituting from these choices a path of theoretical and methodological choices that identify the concepts of past, History and the maintenance of a certain methodology for teaching History. The study analyzed 81 narratives from the History teachers that answered to the questionnaire applied by the investigators in the states of Bahia, São Paulo, Paraná, and Goiás.

One of the contemporaneous challenges of teaching History, especially contemporaneous History Education, is comprehending the processes of forming historical thought and historical consciousness by employing the focus of learning from contemporaneous languages. This challenge was embraced by the historian and professor Dr. Marcelo Fronza from the Federal University of Mato Grosso. In the article “Comic books and the Brazilian military dictatorship: methodological triangulation as an investigative criterion of the historical ideas of Brazilian young students”, Fronza investigates how the stories in comic books that address the Brazilian military dictatorship from 1964 to 1985 enabled mobilizing the esthetic, political, and cognitive dimensions of historical culture of young public-school students. Furthermore, the author inserts innovative elements in order to analyze the learning of themes considered “difficult” or “controversial” from the history of Brazil, starting from the theoretical and methodological triangulation founded on the comprehension of historical processes linked to a relationship between interculturality and the new humanism and to the principle of “*burdening history*” proposed by Bodo von Borries (2016), which suggests that the burden of History can be overcome by a multi-perspective interpretation, initiating controversy by self-criticism in the theory of History.

In Brazil, following the tradition of investigating narratives (auto)biographies that have been developing in his research studies, the historian and professor Dr. Jorge Luiz da Cunha from the Federal University of Santa Maria, in his article “History Education and (auto)biographical narratives”, seeks to analyze the methodologies of research and *práxis* in the field of History teaching associated with the use of (auto)biographical narratives. For this, he used empirically based autobiographical and biographical surveys of History teachers at elementary school level, so as to interpret the uses of History Education in the results achieved in the classroom, in the trajectory of the students involved and in the own identity of the teachers.

Research in history education aims to understand the subjects’ historical thinking at meta-historical and substantive levels. Its main focus is the ideas of the agents involved in learning within formal educational contexts. In a methodological perspective, both systematic and action-research studies in this field have mainly followed essentially qualitative approaches with additional quantitative data analysis. The Portuguese research Isabel Barca from University of Porto, in her article “History Education Research in Portugal: methodological options” – discusses procedures and results of some studies carried out in Portugal in the light of methodological options and concepts entangled in the nature of history.

As evidence of the consolidation of research methodologies in the field of History Education, there are two articles written by Spanish authors. The first one, by the professors and historians Dr. Pedro Miralles and Dr. José Monteagudo Fernández, both from the University of Murcia, has the provocative title: “Methods, instruments and procedures to know how historical competences are evaluated”. With pertinence and clarity, the authors walk through complex paths of evaluation in History Education. In their article, they seek to explain the evaluation characteristics in History, adopting a research methodology of mixed design, based on both quantitative and qualitative foci. The quantitative analysis was based on analysis of elements such as frequencies, means, contingency tables, and analysis of dependence between the variables. In the qualitative study, they analyzed how the narrative history was constructed in exams and didactic manuals, by means of frequency and repetition of facts, concepts, dates, and personas. The processing and linkage among the data was accomplished by the software Access.

The other article, entitled “History education and educational competences” results from a research project initiated by investigators from three distinct Spanish universities – Ramón López Facal from the University of Santiago de Compostela; Cosme J. Gómez Carrasco from the University of Murcia; and Belén Castro-Fernández from the University of Santiago de Compostela. According to the authors themselves, the work addresses the theoretical and methodological foundations of an investigation on the production of narratives by teachers in training through a mixed and holistic approach of a quantitative and qualitative nature, which allowed the collection of information and evidence in a systematic, rigorous, reliable, and valid manner.

It is believed that the dossier now presented, in addition to signaling the maturation of the field in investigations into History Education, offers innovative indicators for the construction of objects for investigation in the area; for example, starting from questions and hypotheses that permit: visualization of actions of different subjects; demarcation of theoretical frameworks originated

from the authors, emphasis and ontological and epistemological principles, besides theoretical intuitions and concepts that permit the problematizing of different objects of investigation; the definition of methodological strategies for obtaining evidence and theoretical references, as well as the triangulation necessary for the analysis of data, documents, and materials, having the primary objective the systematization of the results obtained. And, finally, reflections about the product of investigation that, in addition to collaborating with the qualitative improvement of History Education in practical life, signal new possibilities and projects of investigation. Thus, it is expected that the dossier achieves its mission of contributing to the construction of knowledge in the field of History Education.

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