

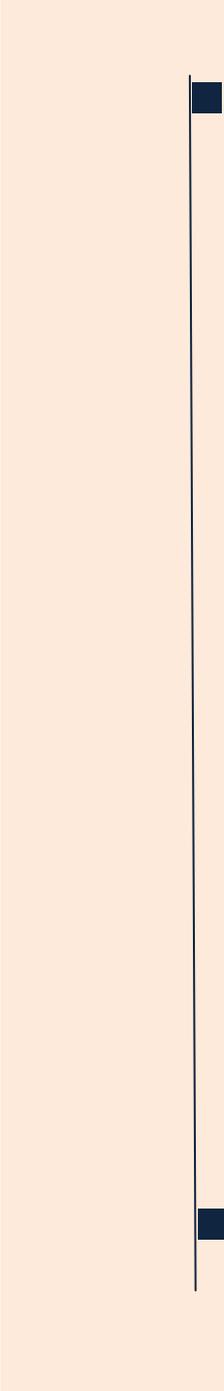
## Processing a Difficult Past – Didactics of History in German Context

**BoCAD**

**Remembering for The Future:  
The Role of Youth and Adult Education in Working with the Past  
and Reconciliation Processes**

**Bonn, 12.12.2011**

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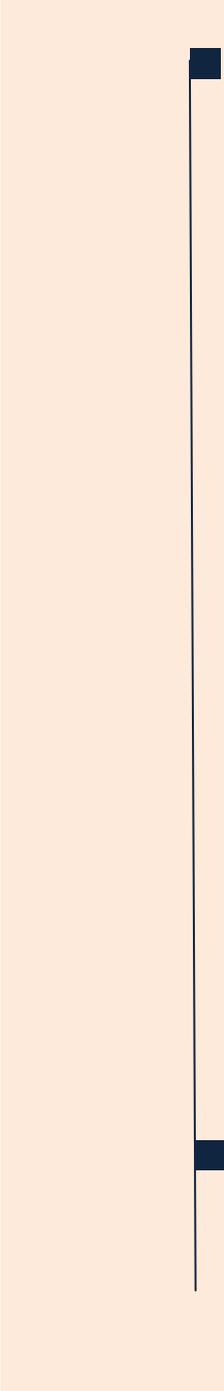
## Introduction

### **History teaching and its origins in “nation building” –**

- concentration on the history of the nation state; political history
- history of “great men”
- educational goals: national thinking, loyalty and obedience
- history as “memorizing subject”: dates, names, facts

## Changes in the historical culture and history education in Western Germany

- Civil rights movement and demands for democratization (“1968”)
- “Neue Ostpolitik” of the Chancellor Willy Brandt
  - democratic approaches to history: history of the society
  - awareness of prejudices in history textbooks and history culture
  - foundation of the Georg-Eckert-Institut for international textbook research → bilateral textbook commissions
- New developments in the German historiography: “social history turn”
- Public history movement and the new History competition for pupils
- History teaching: from “memorizing subject” to “think an work subject”



## Basic ideas of modern history didactics

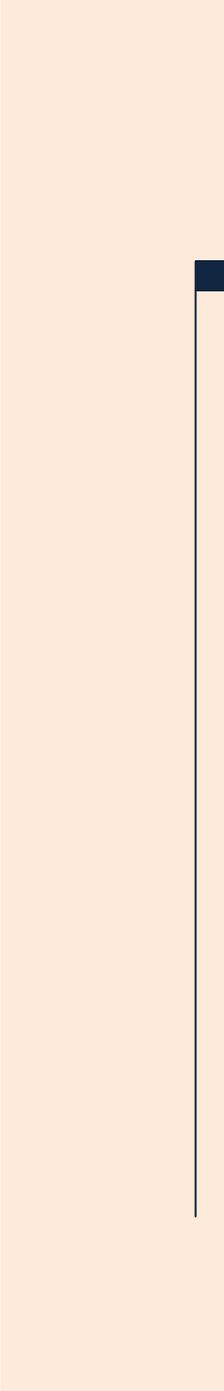
### **Historical consciousness** as central category of history teaching

- instead of merely memorizing → reflecting one's own place in past and present
- insight into
  - the difference between past and history; history as interpretation of the past
  - the dependence of historical interpretation on the knowledge and viewpoints of the interpreter
  - the plurality of interpretations of the past
  - the dependence of historical knowledge on primary sources
  - the necessity of critical analysis and evaluation of primary and secondary sources

## Basic ideas of modern history didactics (2)

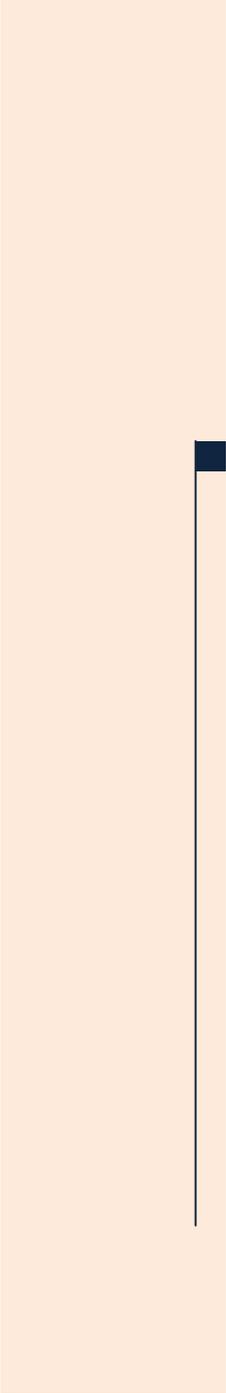
### Historical culture – manifestations of historical consciousness

- awareness of the manifestations of historical in culture in the everyday world around the pupils (museums, archives, monuments, days of remembrance, history in movies, novels ...)
- understanding of the influence of historical culture on political and historical attitudes
- critical awareness of prejudices and negative stereotypes in the historical culture
- responsibility for the quality of historical culture



## Some basic principles of history teaching and history projects with regard to a historical culture promoting mutual understanding and peace

- Working with and asking for historical source material
  - awareness for the assymetrie of source materials
- Multiperspectivity and controversy
  - multiperspectivity: on the level of primary sources
  - controversy: debates about the interpretation of the past
- Action orientation in the history classroom
- Differentiated historical thinking
  - differentiation of groups
  - balanced comparisons
  - change of perspectives: “bird’s eye” and “worm’s eye”
- Looking at national history through a transnational lense

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**Thank you for your kind attention.**

