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## **Harmonizing Two of History Teaching’s Main Social Functions: Franco-Québécois History Teachers and Their Predispositions to Catering to Narrative Diversity**

**Paul Zanzanian<sup>1,\*</sup> and Sabrina Moisan<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Department of Integrated Studies in Education, McGill University, 3700 McTavish Street, Montreal, Quebec, H3A 1Y2, Canada

<sup>2</sup> Department of Pedagogy, Université de Sherbrooke, 2500, boul. de l’Université, Sherbrooke, Québec, J1K 2R1, Canada; E-Mail: [sabrina.moisan@usherbrooke.ca](mailto:sabrina.moisan@usherbrooke.ca)

\* Author to whom correspondence should be addressed; E-Mail: [paul.zanzanian@mcgill.ca](mailto:paul.zanzanian@mcgill.ca); Tel.: +1-514-398-3077; Fax: +1-514-398-4529.

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**Abstract:** This article presents the Quebec ministry of education’s (MELS) strategy for diversifying the national historical narrative that is transmitted in the province’s History and Citizenship Education program as well as the manner in which Francophone national history teachers put this strategy into practice. In bringing research on their social representations and historical consciousness together, this paper looks at some of the main challenges that these teachers face when specifically harmonizing two of history teaching’s central social functions for catering to narrative diversity. When seeking to adequately balance the transmission of a national identity reference framework with the development of autonomous critical thinking skills, it becomes clear that these teachers’ general quest for positivist-type, true and objective visions of the past as well as their overall attachment to the main markers of their group’s collective memory for knowing and acting Québécois impede them from fully embracing the diversification of the province’s historical narrative. The article ends by raising some important questions regarding the relevance of assisting teachers to authentically develop their own voice and vision for harmonizing the two aforementioned functions of history teaching and for being answerable to the decisions they make when articulating and acting upon such beliefs in class.

**Keywords:** history education; historical consciousness; history teachers; narrative diversity; national history; social representations

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## 1. Introduction

In Western, democratic nation-states, one mode for thinking about the teaching of national history is that it holds two important social functions that ultimately lend to preserving and to prolonging the established order. The first involves transmitting a national or a civic identity reference framework that helps locate individuals' moral and socio-political agency within the ongoing story of the nation. Offering the main contours of a national identity that usually reflects the historical experiences of the state's dominant group, such a historical narrative seeks to confront potential apathy to national mores and institutions. Through transferring knowledge of the main dimensions of the historical method, the second function consists of fostering autonomous critical thinking skills, which in terms of future civic participation, assist in developing independent and informed decisions about policy or other social issues [1–5]. Given their inherent political, ethical, and practical implications, adequately harmonizing these two functions is not that straightforward, especially when catering to social and cultural diversity. In seeking to establish acceptable social norms for improving the quality of common future life, such a balancing act can instigate large public debates regarding the ends and means of teaching national history. At stake is the attainment of an adequate balance between the two functions of history teaching that allow for embracing the experiences and national contributions of the state's various minority groups, while also circumventing potential indifference to the state's general coherency that an over-abundance of critical and autonomous thinking may instigate.

While such a balancing act and its resulting public debates may affect the manner in which everyday citizens make sense of the common past and participate in social reality, it is rather the impact on history teachers' thinking patterns, values, and ideals that hold greater concern for the integration of social diversity. Responsible for socializing students into the manners and norms of the state, teachers may find harmonizing the two aforementioned functions of history teaching hard to do, especially when developing personal understandings and practices for transmitting the national history program to a multicultural classroom. Questions may arise concerning whether and how they actually do develop their own voice and vision regarding these two functions in such circumstances as well as negotiate their personal stance on what they believe is right or wrong for implementing the history program in light of larger public discourses and of their own conceptions for making a positive difference in the lives of their students.

Answers to such questions may potentially arise by looking at Quebec's particular experience in introducing its recent *History and Citizenship Education* program that has sought to harmonize the two aforementioned functions of history teaching in a democratic manner, respectful of the province's narrative diversity [6–8]. Espousing a concrete socio-constructivist mindset and a competency-based approach to connecting historical methodology to the development of civic mindfulness, this new program caters to social diversity through offering learners the means for constructing personal understandings of the national past in an autonomous and critical manner, while also being

appreciative of the past's complexity and its concomitant diversity of perspectives. Although the program is rather unique in pedagogical terms, it unintentionally instigated public indignation and debate right before it came out. With an initial draft leaked to the media in the spring of 2006, the program provoked a large outcry among certain politically motivated interest groups and grassroots movements as well as among some historians and certain specialists of history education. Touching upon sensitivities surrounding the vitality of French in the province and the regeneration of French Canadian nationhood and identity, Quebec's "History Wars" reflected a great divide in public discourse regarding the integration of the province's increasing social and cultural diversity. Dissatisfaction lay with the program's alleged weakening of the dominant national historical narrative that traditionally configured the collective memory of the French Canadian majority and that was seen as central to promoting national sentiments toward Quebec. By fundamentally focusing on the development of socio-constructivist competencies instead of on transmitting factual, historical knowledge, it was feared that the Franco-Québécois historical experience would become threateningly unimportant, while Quebec's ethno-cultural diversity would be led astray by not properly being integrated into the mores of the majority group [9,10].

Given the overwhelming public attention that it received, Quebec history teachers, like all Québécois citizens, were not necessarily immune to the main positions that emerged from the history debate. Holding greater importance in the French-speaking media, Francophone teachers, especially those of French Canadian descent—members of an increasingly dominant but yet fragile majority group in the province [11]—would, however, have been particularly affected, more so than English-speaking ones or those of diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds. As recent research on their historical consciousness and social representations suggests, these Franco-Québécois teachers' attitudes toward integrating social diversity and the program's socio-constructivist, competency-based approach—both as expressions of their attempts at harmonizing two of history teachings' main functions—are not that straightforward and simple, pointing instead to their difficulty in fully embracing narrative diversity as the national history program would have liked them to [12–16].

In tallying the main findings of these studies—the works of the two contributing authors—this paper will look at some of the main challenges of history teaching in Quebec regarding the diversification of its historical narrative. It will look at how national history teachers of French Canadian descent, who teach in French language schools, manage the diversity of perspectives regarding the province's past and concretely deal with them in the history classroom. In doing so, it will particularly look at the manner in which these teachers respond to and negotiate their stance vis-à-vis narrative diversity, understood here as those discourses that configure the social realities and historical experiences of *Québécois* of non French Canadian descent. As an illustration of this negotiation, attention will also be given to the means by which they make sense of the past for knowing and acting toward the *Other*, with a particular focus on how they structure group boundaries with Quebec's Anglophone minority. Consequently, the manner in which these teachers harmonize history teaching's two social functions will become clear, as will their views regarding where they fit in the larger scheme of things.

## 2. Towards Three Main Conceptions of History and Citizenship in the Teaching of History

Seeking to reinforce sentiments of national coherency, belonging, and pride in citizens, two main approaches to the teaching of history in Western schools can be noted; approaches that are closely linked to the manner in which both history as discipline and conceptions of citizenship were conceived of and practiced over the last hundred and fifty years. It was thus with the nineteenth century that a first representation of history and citizenship emerged. Embodying a positivist view in an era that highly valued erudition, that produced political and event-based histories presented through lyrical narrative forms, and that held historical truth to be objective and free of subjectivity, history was conceived of as an accurate portrayal of the past that was to be transferred, while its encyclopedic content, full of facts, dates, and important historical figures, was to be memorized by students. It was believed that such an approach to history in schools would ease the development of a national identity and a common historical memory that would bind citizens together [17,18]. Seeking to garner emotional attachment and support for the nation, the past was to be dutifully remembered and employed as an integral component of a large collective narrative that spoke to the common “We” [19].

The horrors of both world wars in the last century helped solidify a new representation of history and citizenship in Western states [20]. Viewed as a main contribution to the immensity of bloodshed, the transmission of a rigid, grand historical narrative that fostered outright chauvinism in students was eventually to make room for critical thought and the emergence of what has been called a critical society [21,22]. The event-based and lyrical narrative style of positivist history was questioned and the ideal of citizenship evolved from a national, civic, and patriotic conception to a democratic, participatory, critical, and reflective one [23]. Inspired largely by the Annales School in France, which adopted a social science methodology for producing social and economic history, a “problem-history” approach to the teaching of history was called for. History was now considered as constituting a particular mode of thought [17,24–30]. Students were to use the past critically to distance themselves from pre-established identities and prejudices. They were to be freed from the weight, the moral obligations, as well as the overarching grand narrative of the nation’s past. They were to think historically, whereby they would use history as a tool to reflect on the contemporary world, to criticize evidence and other sources of information, and to construct personal narratives of yesteryears. As a form of enlightened citizenship, it was through developing such autonomous critical thinking skills that students would finally be eased into participating in democratic and civic life, especially since they would now be better equipped to grasp the overall workings of the democratic system.

Despite the reach of these two main approaches, postmodernist influences have also made some recent fundamental inroads into the teaching of history, but there still seems to be some generalized resistance to overtly introducing this perspective’s basic principles into classroom practice [31]. Attune to its sensitivities, the development of some history programs, such as Quebec’s *History and Citizenship Education* one, does nonetheless incorporate various postmodern contributions. This can be seen in such underlying ambitions as leading students to criticize and debunk grand master narratives of the state as well as preparing them to become critical, independent, and detached subject-citizens who understand how different narratives are constructed and co-exist and who construct personal representations of society in which their ethnic, cultural, political, and or other

specificities can be freely expressed and exercised [31]. (While such a postmodernist incorporation may theoretically be the case for Quebec's 2004 program, in practical terms it may not necessarily be the resulting outcome. Although there is no explicit mention of a founding narrative of national identity, the basic contours of one may inadvertently be transmitted, especially if teachers do not succeed in fostering the required competencies that would lead students to develop their own personal narratives of the past [32].)

### 3. Quebec's Unique Trajectory in History Teaching: From Narrative Survival to Narrative Diversity

Up until the 1960s, the common historical narrative transmitted to French-speaking students in Quebec greatly resembled their larger community's collective memory. As a means of comfort and empowerment in light of the wrongs endured at the hands of the British, who had taken over Canada since the Conquest of 1759, these students were taught *la survivance* or the preservation of their French heritage and Catholic religion, along with its accompanying morals and values [33–35]. Deeply infused with an ultramontane ideology, this narrative framework was largely influenced by the dominant themes that emerged from the group's historiography at the time. The general aim was to regenerate the vibrancy of the French Canadian community. In line with popular positivist visions of history teaching and civic indoctrination, this historical narrative was largely a political history that praised the bravery of national heroes who defended the people. In upholding the historical and objective truth, the narrative offered its adherents what Nora (1992) has called a "genealogy of the nation [19]." Portrayed as an exact reconstitution of the past, students had to learn the narrative by heart, the main objective of which was to foster the construction of a national identity and a common historical memory. The narrative sought students' emotional attachment to the French Canadian nation.

It would, however, not be until the era of the Quiet Revolution that a more problem-history approach to history teaching and civic mindfulness would eventually be taught to French Canadian students in Quebec and by extension, to all of the province's diverse communities. The Quiet Revolution was a defining era of great change that witnessed Quebec's entry into "modernity," whereby national religious thinking was slowly replaced by a more secular mindset [36,37]. Taking place in the 1960s, the Quiet Revolution marked a relatively peaceful period of gradual socio-political change for the province's Francophones. French Canadian neo-nationalism urged modernizing the Francophone community in order to meet the demands of the age. Its new secular-minded and intellectual elite set upon creating a modern democratic welfare state and in the process asserted control over the province's institutions by gaining political and eventually economic power from their own outdated leaders and the dominant English Canadian minority [36,38–40].

As a result, the province's socio-political landscape changed, and consequently necessitated reform in how history was taught in schools. As French Canadians in Quebec started to gradually identify themselves as *les Québécois*, circumscribed by the province's geographical and henceforth "national" boundaries, they became responsible for socializing all Quebec citizens and not just members of their own group. Such a responsibility even included socializing members of Quebec's historic English-speaking minority who, given the complex reality of intergroup relations and shared mutual challenges with Francophones in defining a common civic project, till this day seek their community's

own maintenance and development as an autonomous and distinct entity [11,38,41,42]. Soon enough, decades-old imperatives of preserving and regenerating the French Canadian heritage were confronted by the exigency of incorporating Quebec's linguistic, religious and ethnic diversity into the official historical narrative transmitted in schools. In terms of historiography, Quebec historians now faced the difficult task of responding to a new incontestable social reality: the heterogeneous character and plurality of Quebec society. Quebec could no longer be conceived of as a monolithic or even a two-way entity, with English-speaking Protestants and French-speaking Catholics on each end. The time had come for historians to develop a more inclusive narrative discourse; one that would account for the diverse social realities and historical experiences of the province's various cultural and historic communities [36,37].

In terms of education, the response to this need came with the development of a province-wide history program that sought to bridge differences among Quebec's various narrative diversities, but especially between the two "patriotic" histories that were transmitted in both French and English language schools. (For a clear description of the evolution of Quebec's parallel school system, existing initially along religious lines, *i.e.*, Protestant and Catholic and then along linguistic ones as of 1998, *i.e.*, English-French, please refer to the works of Marie McAndrew, 2001; 2003; 2010 [11,42,43].) Following the problem-history approach to the teaching of history, the program incorporated the historical method, by which students would learn to do history for themselves and to consequently think critically and autonomously. They would be taught to use primary and secondary sources in order to both achieve plausible understandings of the past and appreciate its multiple interpretations, thereby hopefully overcoming group differences [34,44,45]. Of importance, these changes to the curriculum seem to have instigated an ongoing tension between proponents interested in mainly promoting the transmission of an adequate collective narrative framework that best captures Quebec's past (*i.e.*, the Franco-Québécois collective identity) and those mainly preoccupied with producing critically engaged citizens that are fundamentally open to minority viewpoints [32,34,44–46]. The socio-political ramifications of this tension can still be felt in Quebec today. The tension was experienced to varying degrees when succeeding history programs were introduced into the curriculum in both 1970 and 1982 up until the introduction of the recent *History and Citizenship Education* program.

By the 1990s, the failures of both constitutional negotiations and a referendum on Quebec sovereignty triggered calls for a new history program by the two opposing camps, one that advocated a common historical vision and identity with the rest of Canada, and the other demanding more of a Quebec-centred nationalist curriculum [34]. The ensuing Lacoursière Report, commissioned by the MEQ in 1995 to study the state of history teaching in Quebec and to suggest strategies to improve it, recommended making school history more open to the province's minorities (First Nations, Anglophones, ethno-cultural groups) and other traditionally excluded groups (women, the working class). It further advocated adjoining a citizenship education aspect to the curriculum as a means of providing students with adequate reading, interpreting and analytical skills needed not only to empathize with ethnic and cultural diversity, but also to be prepared for democratic participation as actively-engaged citizens [6].

Based on the Report's recommendations, the resulting *History and Citizenship Education* program greatly attempts to render its collective identity narrative reference framework more accessible to

social diversity within a socio-constructivist mindset. By offering the many dimensions of historical thinking a more prominent role in questioning and interpreting social realities, it aims to encourage the acquisition of responsible civic consciousness [8]. More specifically, it aspires to permit students of various backgrounds to deliberate, debate, construct and appreciate various perspectives of the past without contradicting their and others' own agency in the story of the nation [32,34,44,45,47].

Clearly fitting into current trends of social constructivism in learning theory, the underlying logic of the new program holds that students construct their knowledge both at an individual level and through their interactions with their social environment (teachers, peers, school textbooks or other documents, parents, *etc.*) [48–50]. The program's largely competency-based approach places students at the center of the learning experience and holds that they construct knowledge through their teachers' guidance. Students are not required to memorize pre-established narratives, but rather to research and criticize information from formulated questions—developed with their teachers—in order to build narratives on their own [8]. This perspective is based on the hypothesis that students develop and build knowledge as they advance in researching new information [50]. When confronted with the unknown and the complex, students have to navigate between what they know and what they don't know, thereby looking for effective strategies that allow them to produce new knowledge. Room exists for error and even confusion, both of which are considered essential for elaborating new knowledge as well as students' intellectual frame of mind. In this process, historical certainties and univocal narratives become less important.

To this day, despite the government's laudable attempts at respecting and catering to the province's cultural diversity, integrating the realities and experiences of Quebec's diverse ethno-cultural communities, especially those of Anglophones, into the national historical narrative of Quebec school history programs proves to be highly controversial. The aforementioned "History Wars" of 2006 point to the contentiousness of such an undertaking. Fundamental fear of undermining the historical significance of Quebec's Francophone character ultimately led certain interest groups and grassroots movements to counter government attempts at diversifying Quebec's national memory, and at particularly incorporating Anglophone and other viewpoints of the common past in the program's general storyline. Deploring the social constructability of the "French-English conflict" and thus the potential dilution of its relevance in remembering difficult times, program detractors instead urged preserving a collective narrative that mostly configured the dominant storyline of their community's shared historical memories. Consequently, the main identity markers of the Franco-Québécois majority that usually cast "Anglophones" as the antagonist to Quebec's national aspirations and fulfillment were successfully reemphasized in a later, revised version of the new program [11,32,51,52]. Some central points of concern for detractors of the new *History and Citizenship Education* program were the perceived dilution of the "French-English conflict," the lack of referral to the Québécois nation, and the increased inclusion of Quebec minority perspectives in the program's collective identity framework. By bringing history and citizenship education together, it was argued that the virtuous qualities of each would be confounded while the transmission of historical content would erroneously be downplayed to the benefit of historical skills. Consequently, it was feared that the Franco-Québécois historical experience would become threateningly unimportant, while Quebec's ethno-cultural diversity would not be properly integrated into the mores of the majority group [10].

At the opposing end of the debate were historians, educationalists, and practitioners who supported the new program's attempts at developing critically engaged citizens who are fundamentally open to minority viewpoints and to thus embracing Quebec's increasing social diversity [32,34]. These supporters have described their opponents' criticisms as expressions of nationalism and have depicted their ire as resulting from ignorance and a misunderstanding of the program's socio-constructivist and competency-based approach. This latter mindset, they state, requires a specific presentation of the material, insisting less on precise elements of content and more on the combination of skills, attitudes, and knowledge. The new program explicitly aims to develop students' historical thinking, rather than an exhaustive list of content to cover and learn [53].

#### **4. Two Qualitative Studies on Francophone History Teachers in Quebec**

In what follows, two relevant studies of the contributing authors will be overviewed in order to clearly illustrate how Franco-Québécois national history teachers of French Canadian descent actually harmonize two of history teachings' main social functions within Quebec's socio-historical, political, and pedagogical context described above. (The studies touched upon in this paper emerge from the two authors' doctoral dissertations. Both authors have already published their findings in different journals and books. For a detailed presentation of both studies along with an elaboration of their respective analyses and findings, please refer to the following texts: Moisan (2010; 2011) [12,13] and Zanazanian (2011a; 2011b; 2012) [14–16].) The aim here is to thus reflect and comment on how these teachers mediate between the need of transmitting a national historical identity narrative and the development of autonomous critical thinking skills in students through transferring notions of historical methodology. To do this, we will present those main findings from the two studies that directly speak to teachers' attitudes toward integrating social (*i.e.*, narrative) diversity and the socio-constructivist workings of the recent *History and Citizenship Education* program for Quebec secondary schools. The end result will be to identify some of the main challenges that these teachers—as members of an increasingly dominant French-speaking majority in the province—face regarding the diversification of the province's national historical narrative. It is important to keep in mind that the present article purports to primarily compare and contrast the main findings of the two aforementioned qualitative studies on the social representations and historical consciousness of Franco-Québécois national history teachers. While not constituting its main focus, both studies' theoretical underpinnings, methodology and significant findings will nonetheless be touched upon to offer readers a general portrait of their respective ins-and outs.

#### **5. Francophone History Teachers' Social Representations of History and Their Epistemological Beliefs**

Sabrina Moisan's exploratory study examines Francophone history teachers' social representations and epistemological beliefs regarding History. The study particularly seeks to describe the implications of these phenomena on the teaching of history and the forming of citizens. Social representations and discipline-specific epistemological foundations constitute the daily theories to which teachers resort to for negotiating their pedagogical practices. The study of these "theories" permits to better understand the workings of teachers' reasoning for pursuing their teaching objectives. To describe the social

representations and the epistemological beliefs of secondary school history teachers, Moisan elaborated an innovatory method, inspired by the key works in the field [54–56]. Moisan interviewed eighteen secondary school history teachers working in Montreal, Quebec City or in a First Nations community. During these individual interviews, participants were asked to respond to evocative and open-ended questions. They moreover had to construct conceptual schemes synthesizing their thought processes, which permitted to confront the core elements of each respondent's representations. Although not representative of the teaching population, the study attained data saturation, with each of the eighteen interviews being very informative. The findings presented in this text focus on the main points of convergence in respondents' discourses. These features comprise some potential central markers for guiding further research on teachers' social representations of history and citizenship education.

Moisan's findings are significant on two fronts; they provide insight into teachers' proffered practices when catering to narrative diversity and when considering implement socio-constructivist learning in the history classroom.

In terms of catering to narrative diversity, Moisan's study suggests that when teachers reflect on the interpretive work involved in history, the importance of presenting students with multiple perspectives on the past is very central. Although teachers do so by usually offering the viewpoints of dominant historical actors—those of Francophones and Anglophones, but also those of cultural minorities if warranted by their student clientele—it is not that straightforward in practice. When presenting such perspectives, they tend to particularly simplify different actors' and groups' positions and portray them, along with their experiences, in a monolithic manner. Even if this recourse to multiple perspectives permits teachers to complicate students' visions regarding Quebec's national historical narrative, they nevertheless simplify reality when doing so. Teachers in the study thus generally seek to portray history in a more neutral way, by always presenting “both sides” of an issue or topic. In doing so, the possibility of simplifying and painting black and white pictures of the past increases, thereby inadvertently promotes its understandings in caricature-like terms. Consequently, in terms of catering to narrative diversity, it sometimes seems like all Francophones, Anglophones, or immigrants had the same exact experience of the past.

“[I] try to [offer] both sides of story and in this case, English culture versus French culture. That's it, yes [...] I play double eyes with kids. If it's against the English, then I show the positive things they did. If it is against the French, I show the positive things. You have to stay neutral as a teacher.” (Patrick)

“While remaining neutral, I always try to present both sides of the medal.” (Ginette)

While presenting different viewpoints may offer teachers self-assurance in their capacity for recognizing and catering to the complexity of the past as well as for being as neutral or objective as possible in their teachings, Moisan's work further points to these teachers' discomfort and incertitude when facing several perspectives on one same event or phenomenon of the past.

“If you present students with too many uncertainties, it is another problem. They need to be reassured; they need a lot of guidance. They need certainties.” (Guy)

Multiple perspectives become disconcerting because in such instances historical “truth” becomes less obvious and unstructured to them. It thus is not clear to what extent these teachers employ multiple perspectives to question the dominant memorial discourses that circulate in the public domain, and whether they readily use them to foster learning of the historical method or historical thinking. They seem to instead transmit a unitary, linear, and partial vision of the national past that is largely built on a stereotypical representation of their own and other groups’ past experiences. Regarding teachers’ attitudes toward incorporating socio-constructivist learning in their practices, it becomes clear that they do not initiate such an approach despite its privileged potential for informing students of the processes involved in the production of historical knowledge. Contrarily, teachers acknowledge spending more than eighty percent of their classroom time giving lectures, without engaging students in activity-based learning. Even in admitting that history essentially consists of interpretations, teachers resist the idea of having students construct their own historical perspectives on the past. Despite finding the approach laudable, these teachers are nonetheless convinced that it cannot be applied to their classrooms. The main emerging reasons refer to students’ incapacity to construct personal narratives due to a lack of both the necessary basic knowledge and experience that is needed to do so and the required intellectual operations that are beyond the level of students’ psychological development.

“When we introduce more philosophical concepts, [students] have difficulty, but I think that mentally, physically, an adolescent’s psychological development has not possibly reached that stage yet. When it’s complicated, I try to bring it down to its most possible basic level.” (Christophe)

“I find it hard to see such programs as history and geography offered that early in the process of children’s psychological and intellectual development. They are not ready for the complex concepts that we give them. It becomes complicated for us. This is a problem.” (Juliette)

Teachers also believe that espousing a socio-constructivist approach in their teaching is time consuming and produces little knowledge.

“I do a lot of lecturing because children want it. They lack so much information that, I believe, they really need it.” (Ghislain)

“The historical method, well, it’s all fine and dandy, but you cannot use it if you have not understood the base of your subject, so, it is for this reason that I don’t use it, plus, it takes a lot of time.” (Raphaëlle)

Overall, in terms of catering to narrative diversity, it would not be wrong to wonder whether these teachers’ students feel uncomfortable in constructing their own narratives of the past, especially since the former do not easily explore the nature of historical knowledge regarding the national past, nor do they always critically distance themselves from the construction of such knowledge.

## 6. Francophone History Teachers' Historical Consciousness and the Structuring of Group Boundaries

Paul Zanazanian's [14–16] work seeks to better understand the role of historical consciousness in the structuring of group boundaries between Francophones and Anglophones in Quebec. (In Zanazanian's research, Francophone and Franco-Québécois refer to Québécois of French-Canadian descent, whereas Anglophone and Anglo-Québécois denote those of British heritage or others assimilated by the latter. While these understandings do not adequately cover both communities' rich cultural diversity, they nonetheless denote what is generally understood as "Francophone" and "Anglophone" by the study's participants.) Within the province's ongoing scenario of identity politics and its context of group parallelism, where both Francophones and Anglophones variously compete for their own maintenance and development as autonomous and distinct entities [11,42], Zanazanian has closely examined the historical consciousness of the Franco-Québécois, looking at the extent to which memories of past intergroup antagonism—between a previously French-speaking subordinate majority and a former dominant English-speaking minority [42,57]—impact the manner in which they interact with the past for knowing and acting toward today's Anglophones in the province. To this end, he has particularly conducted an in-depth qualitative study, closely looking at the workings of the historical consciousness of seventeen Francophone national history teachers, intent on gauging both the extent of their openness to viewing the Anglo-Québécois as forming part of a common collective identity and their consequent willingness to transmit the latter's realities and experiences in their classrooms.

At a theoretical level, keen on examining its centrality in social actors' structuring of group boundaries, Zanazanian adopted a particular view of historical consciousness for grasping potential human choices for acting in space and time. Inspired by Jörn Rüsen's conceptualization of the notion and in adopting a constructivist perspective of ethnicity [58–60], participants in the study were perceived as moral and historical actors who, for purposes of giving meaning to intergroup realities, possess the fundamental capacity to mobilize notions of the past for making the necessary moral decisions to orient themselves in social relationships with the ethno-cultural "Other." In (implicitly) evaluating their ethical motives for enabling them to bind their personal identity to that of their group and to orient their actions toward the Anglo-Québécois, it was held that respondents would ultimately historicize the many ways in which various group trendsetters present different (essentialized) aspects of the common past for knowing and acting *Québécois*, leading them to accept, reject, or adapt the moral weight of these articulations according to their needs and capacities when negotiating their ethnicity.

In viewing expressions of historical consciousness as concrete narrative articulations, with their underlying thought processes and justifications as the central focus of analysis [61–63], the in-depth, qualitative study employed three main strategies of data collection: A problem resolution exercise of a historical nature, an open-ended narration of the history of Anglo Quebec, and a follow-up of different sets of complementary, semi-structured interview questions, inquiring into the virtues of History and its uses for resolving historical problems, the evolution of intergroup power relations between Francophones and Anglophones, and the relevance of prevalent "pessimistic" and "victimized" narrative configurations of the Franco-Québécois collective memory. Four different thematic contexts were examined for grasping the workings of respondents' historical consciousness: Respondents'

attributed relevance to History for making sense of and using the past and the concrete ways in which they actually interacted with the past regarding their awareness of the “ethno-cultural” Self, the significant Other, and the evolution of power relations between the two. Of importance, given the past’s abundance of options for influencing human thought and action, a reading key was devised for analyzing the impact of respondents’ historical consciousness on their structuring of group boundaries. This “open-ended interpretation key”—which emerged from a *repertory of parallel and equal ideal-type tendencies of historical consciousness* inspired by Rüsen’s own fourfold typology—helped capture and qualify the ways in which participants’ theoretical and practical interactions with the past guided their intentions for making sense of reality and for acting toward the Anglo-Québécois.

As a result, Zanazanian’s research has been quite revealing of how the historical memories of the “French-English Conflict” weigh heavily on the manner in which Francophone national history teachers give meaning to the common past to then make sense of Quebec Anglophones. The main outcome of his work suggests that, despite sometimes being curious to better understand the Other, a vast majority of these respondents use the past as a means of differentiating and distancing themselves from the latter. They do not necessarily know the history of the Anglo-Québécois from the “Anglo” point of view and in large part do not seemingly display openness to their realities and experiences. Instead, by generally basing understandings of the past on their own community’s collective memory, many of these teachers tend to largely remember a power structure of often-unequal intergroup relations in which Anglophones play the role of the antagonist. Consequently, group boundaries between the two communities are preserved, as are stereotypical images that do not necessarily portray the “English” in a positive light. In this process, Anglophones seem to be confined to a category of *otherness*, in an exclusive, largely atemporal and sometimes rigid manner:

“I’m quite aware that, even today in 2008, [Anglophones] have won and we have lost the war. Nothing can change this. They are the winners, we are the losers. We are the dominated, they are the dominators.” (René)

“I often tell my students that the Act of Union is when the victor will always keep what he wants. The victor is the English. The victor is not there to share. I tell them that when there will be gold medals this summer at the Olympic Games, the guy who has the gold medal does not have to give it to the guy with the silver medal [and] say ‘we’ll share it six months each.’ It is the victor who wins.” (Robert)

English-speakers are thereby seen as usually forming a monolithic entity, rather than understood as a diverse community with different realities, experiences and perspectives on the past. Consequently, Anglophones seem to be inadvertently excluded from forming an integral component of a common and sentimental “sameness” or a *Nous collectif*.

Of importance, these teachers seemingly use the memories of the “French-English Conflict” in two different ways. On the one hand, most of them rely on these memories as a guide for orienting their actions toward the Other, which they do so by completely adhering to their messages and lessons, and by without really questioning their simplicity and essentialized content matter. These respondents base themselves largely on their collective memory for either repeating or justifying what their group knows of the common past, to then orient their ethno-cultural agency accordingly:

“It’s always a situation where they have the bad role. We know about the Battle of the Plains of Abraham because they were there and they beat us. Then, the Royal Proclamation, the Test Oath, everything that’s in it is very negative, very bad for us. Then, even if the Quebec Act was only positive for us, I was made to perceive it as something they had no choice but to give us, if not they greatly risked facing another rebellion in the St. Lawrence valley. So, we give them the candy they want, and they stay quiet.” (Victor)

“There is still this domination of the English, who finally make all the decisions. [...] Then we get to the formation of Canada again with this domination, when I say domination, I’m speaking of Anglophone policies. [They] were the dominant [ones] in Canada in 1867, and we come to today and the evolution of Anglophones, it’s also this perception that they have control, [they make] the final decisions that favor Anglophones to the detriment of French-Canadians.” (Jeanne)

On the other hand, a smaller number of teachers seem to instead interact with elements of pre-established narratives of their group’s past as a means of negotiating their own personal stance toward the implications of the meanings of these memories for the construction of intergroup realities:

“The main lines are the main political ones, but what I understand is more nuanced. You have to place yourself in the Other’s position. Yes, there was a Conquest and of course it was to the advantage of the victor, but there are nuances that we do not often make. That is, French Canadians had the right to take part in government; some were businessmen... there were French Canadian capitalists; there were some who were rich; there were French Canadian banks that were founded in the nineteenth century. So these nuances need to be considered in the debate between the conqueror, seeking to dominate and assimilate all the time, and the Other who doesn’t let it happen. This history is a bit nationalistic, but I understand it in a more nuanced way.” (Richard)

In turn, these personal negotiations either lead them to simply resist these memories in terms of their authenticity for guiding action or to possibly adapt them, to varying degrees, to their own understandings of current social reality. These teachers seem to be aspiring to attain rather plausible-like understandings of the common past for making sense of the Anglo-Québécois:

“In terms of the conflict of the Patriotes in 1837–1838, it’s not the English against the French, it’s rather the Canadians against the British. Because there also was a struggle in Upper Canada, in Ontario, and this is rarely mentioned in Quebec history books. They discuss Louis-Joseph Papineau, they discuss the battles of St. Eustache or others, but they do not often mention that the English of Western Canada, of Upper Canada also fought against the British for the same reasons, to have control over their laws, to have control over their budgets, their parliament.” (Mathieu)

“The demands of the *Canadien* elite were basically more political, but in order to get supplementary support, they deviated towards an ethnic component, which in reality it wasn’t. Inside the *Patriote* movement [...] you also find Anglophones. There were some Irish, and even certain Scottish. One should not see the *Patriotes* Rebellion as only ethnic.

It was basically a political movement and it is a political movement that fits into a global movement at the time.” (Sébastien)

Consequently, some of them are generally open to learning about Quebec’s English-speaking communities and on transmitting such information to their students, but, unfortunately, do not have access to relevant information and resources:

“Let’s say the contribution of the Anglican Church in the Anglophone community, what is it? Let’s say Anglophone painters of Quebec, the sculptures, all the Anglophone artists of Quebec...We have little information on them. ...At a social, cultural level...we tell [students] that during Industrialization, the Anglophones were the bosses, they had big houses in TMR...were there any who nonetheless lived in small apartments? We have little information on [such issues].” (Robert)

“Anyhow, we know how to look in books, we can do research at a library. Now, do I have the time to do this? Do I feel like doing this? Do I have the time to go to the library to do research, to prepare a class? No. Unless, they give me time...We have guidebooks, we have textbooks, it’s not for nothing....We can enrich our knowledge, but [do we?]” (Ludovic)

## **7. Intersecting Francophone National History Teachers’ Social Representations and Historical Consciousness**

In comparing the findings of these two studies, Francophone national history teachers’ attempts at harmonizing two of history teachings’ main social functions—that of adequately balancing the transmission of a national identity reference framework with the development of autonomous critical thinking skills—can be better understood and can shed light on some main challenges regarding the diversification of the history program’s national identity narrative. Four main points arise in this regard, reflecting the emerging obstacles that the Franco-Québécois teachers in our studies seemingly face for embracing narrative diversity, even if most of them know that it is the *right* thing to do.

Firstly, it would seem that these Francophone teachers do not fully comprehend the epistemological workings of history, both in terms of its methodology and thinking. They do not completely understand how historical knowledge is produced and are not at ease with employing its concomitant skills for making sense of contradictory documents or of differing points of views and interpretations. Subsequently, they face difficulty in intricately presenting the past with its multiple perspectives and many subtleties. Possibly due to a lack of sufficient prior training, they do not seem to grasp the purposes and relevance of these historical skills and tools, which they nevertheless bring to their teaching without necessarily understanding their workings and the implications of their actions.

Secondly, these teachers tend to resist the new history program’s socio-constructivist mindset and consequently still seem to prefer a traditional approach for making sense of and teaching the past. They thus present the latter in a linear and univocal manner, as if it holds some ultimate truth that can be discerned and transmitted objectively. They moreover seemingly believe that historical knowledge develops in a cumulative manner, starting with acquiring basic information regarding important facts, periods, actors and social attributes that characterize the historical experiences of the

Franco-Québécois majority. This further gives the impression that they would embrace narrative diversity only once this core knowledge has been fully interiorized, to which new information on the realities and experiences of Quebec's diversity would then be added. Time constraints and the lack of proper resources however seemingly impede teachers from covering such information in class.

Thirdly, despite sincere intentions of providing multiple perspectives to students, many Francophone teachers lack knowledge of Quebec's diverse historical experiences from the respective viewpoints of social and cultural diversity. For this reason, it would seem that teachers transmit their own group's historical memory of others' experiences, rather than present differing historical narratives in the classroom with all their intricacies and nuances. Such a reliance on a traditional understanding holds the potential of limiting their students' initiation to the complexities and the different realities of the national past as readily needed for catering to social diversity.

Fourthly, Francophone teachers seem to rely heavily on the "French-English conflict" aspect of their collective memory when making sense of the national past. Accordingly, in interacting with such *shared memories of often-unequal intergroup power relations with the Anglo Other*, they seem to structure group boundaries in more of a rigid than soft manner, thereby possessing a strong and exclusive (and sometimes sentimental) sense of a common "We" or *Nous collectif*.

In bringing all these four points together, it would seem that a majority of these Franco-Québécois teachers are set in rather conventional ways of knowing and doing history. It appears that they face some difficulty in taking critical distance from the traditional national historical narrative that they transmit to students and that has been transferred to them through various processes of group socialization. It moreover seems challenging for them to disassociate themselves from this traditional ethno-centric perspective both in terms of their socio-psychological understandings of the workings of history and the meanings they give to the past for developing a sense of group identity and agency. Consequently, group boundaries between the core Franco-Québécois majority of French Canadian descent and Quebec's cultural diversity appear to be preserved and thus seem to possibly lend to obstructing the current national history program's socio-constructivist capacity to cater to narrative diversity.

## 8. Conclusion

By bringing the two studies together, it becomes clear that our Franco-Québécois participants face some difficulty when trying to harmonize two of history teaching's aforementioned social functions in a way that is conducive to catering to narrative diversity. The manner in which they do balance the two functions seems to be rather conventional and they possibly do so quite unconsciously. Such hesitance in fully embracing cultural diversity thus seems to emerge for two main reasons. Firstly, these teachers greatly resort to the legitimacy of their group's collective memory for knowing and acting *Québécois*. They rely on a specific and exclusionary historical narrative identity framework for making sense of reality and for thereby developing a sense of attachment to the province among their diverse student bodies. This reliance moreover reflects the general workings of the historical consciousness of the larger Franco-Québécois public, including youth, the negotiations of which have been at the center of recent public debates regarding the integration of social diversity [64–67]. Secondly, these teachers are not well acquainted with the epistemological workings and wonders of history, which leads to question

both the impact of their prior pre-service training on their pedagogical practices in the classroom and the types of strategies they actually do employ for fostering autonomous critical thinking skills among their students. These teachers' seeming reservations and unease regarding the workings of history and its methodology seem to point to their potential reliance on *what they already know* for teaching about narrative diversity in the classroom. At most, it appears that when and if they do offer multiple perspectives in this regard, they do so in rather simplistic, basic terms, instead of complicating these visions for all the intricacies and nuances that they are worth.

Two main implications thus become clear. The first speaks directly to the discrepancy between teachers' mistrust and miscomprehension regarding the new program's socio-constructivist and competency-based approach and the currency of such thinking among educationalists and program developers. This discrepancy leads to really question and reflect on the processes and time factors needed for better assisting and guiding history educators to fully integrate ideas that circulate among academics, intellectuals, and government documents, and to critically question the pros and cons of embracing them [68,69]. Given that history teachers' values, beliefs, and goals seem to greatly shape their pedagogical practices, perhaps more than what they learn in pre-service training [70], one could thus ask what workable strategies would be relevant and useful for helping them to not just better understand, but to also incorporate those aspects of socio-constructivist learning into their classrooms that they may find useful and necessary for their future practices?

The second implication touches upon teachers' self-confidence and self-reliance in fully benefiting from the possibilities of change that history offers. Since teachers may sometimes feel uneasy in diverting from what they know or what they believe they are expected to know and transmit (as members of a dominant, majority group), this calls for thinking about the various opportunities that they have for helping students interpret the past differently if they so need to for purposes of social integration. This involves reflecting on ways to better introduce and engage teachers to espouse relevant approaches or techniques for not only fully benefitting from the use of multiple perspectives in their practices, but also for helping students appreciate the wonders of history for imagining new ways of seeing oneself as part of, contributing to, and enriching understandings of the nation. What habits of mind would teachers thus need to develop to help their students attain such objectives? What concrete strategies would enable national history teachers to help develop an understanding among students of the different potential workings of historical consciousness, including benefits and drawbacks, on their sense of identity and agency as members of a common, democratic collective?

In light of these questions, two fundamental ones emerge that are of particular concern for history education specialists. How can one truly assist teachers in developing their own voice and vision when harmonizing the two social functions of history teaching that were discussed in this article—one that is well grounded in historical epistemology? And, as an extension, how can these same teachers articulate such conceptions with much-needed distance from public discourses or debates in a critical and conscientious manner? While Quebec's national history program is very ambitious regarding the integration of narrative diversity, it is in answering these two questions that history educationalists would be fully able to support the program's underlying (socio-constructivist, competency-based) logic, and that teachers would eventually be able to more successfully cater to narrative diversity.

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