*Daniel Tröhler, University of Luxembourg*

Proposal for the ISCHE 2014-panel:

Fabricating National Unity in Torn Contexts: World War I and the Education of Future Citizens in Multilingual Nation-States

Behind the still not definitely clear causes of World War I (Fromkin, 2004; Heart, 2013) nationalism and its brother in arm imperialism in their crudest forms were the major motives in the dramatic clash between the European nation-states in 1914. This nationalism had been cultivated all along the nineteenth century, and European intellectuals did not restrain themselves either in praising their fatherland and in humiliating their neighbouring states (see for instance Durkheim, 1915; Sombart, 1915; see also Hanna; 1996; Wallace, 1988).

A central element of European nationalism was the unity of language. Ever since the turn to the nineteenth century the unity of language was – first in France (Rivarol, 1784) and then in Germany (Fichte, 1809) – understood to be the ties that bind the inhabitants of a (constitutionally legitimated) and (internationally accepted) territory. Italy followed, some decades later when it became united as constitutional monarchy with Rome as its capital between 1861 and 1870, by standardizing one particular language and downgrading others to “dialects” (Tosi, 2004, pp. 259).

However, some of the European nation-states faced the challenge that most of present-day countries are facing; they were (in some way or another) multilingual and therefore the ideology of one language-one nation was not at stake. In the course of the nineteenth century, when the public behaviour of the eminent European nation-states became dominant, slogans were invented to describe their respective idiosyncrasy: in Luxembourg it was the “mixed culture” (*Mischkultur*) and in Switzerland the idea of a nation united by choice (*Willensnation*). Each of them served around 1900 to materialize this vision of idiosyncrasy in their respective curricula in order to integrate the future citizens to the nation-state.

World War I proved to be a real test case for this *Mischkultur* and *Willensnation*, for in both multilingual countries, Luxembourg and Switzerland, some social and political groups sympathized with the French, and some with the Germans. This panel examines the effects these tensions had with regard to the construction of curriculum, curriculum understood as major tool in educating the future citizens of the respective nation states. In particular it examines in one paper by Ragnhild Barbu, Barbara Rothmüller, and Catherina Schreiber (University of Luxembourg) the effects on the conceptions of civic education in the Luxembourgish school system during and after WW I, and in another paper by Ingrid Brühwiler (University of Lausanne) the tensions between the two big teacher’s organization in French and German Switzerland. A third paper presented by Matias Gardin (University of Luxembourg) examines the (re-)actions of the Luxembourgish teachers with regard to the question of language and identity.

Introduction:

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Papers:

* Matias Gardin, University of Luxembourg:  
  Teachers at war: reflections on education, citizenship and national identity in Luxembourg from 1914 to 1918
* Ingrid Brühwiler, University of Lausanne:  
  Swiss Teachers and the First World War
* Ragnhild Barbu, Barbara Rothmüller, Catherina Schreiber, University of Luxembourg:  
  Conceptions of civic education in the Luxembourgish school system during World War I and the subsequent years

Discussant:

Eckhardt Fuchs, Georg-Eckert-Institut für internationale Schulbuchforschung, Braunschweig

References:

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Hanna, M. (1996). *The mobilization of intellect. French scholars and writers during the Great War.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

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