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## **The emotional dimension of history education: Examining policy, content and interaction through the example of 1860s Sweden**

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*Abstract: Emotions play a significant role in history education, yet their impact remains a subject of debate. This theoretical article investigates how integrating perspectives on emotions from the humanities, particularly the history of emotions, can enrich research in history didactics and educational history. It proposes a three-step analytical model to examine the evolving role of emotions by focusing on (1) policy, (2) content and (3) interactions. This model facilitates research on emotions in history teaching in both contemporary and historical contexts, with a focus on the representation of emotions through language. The analytical framework is tested through a case study of history education in the 1860s Swedish grammar school. The author argues for recognising emotions as a crucial component of history education and incorporating concepts from the history of emotions into both didactics and educational history. This approach offers new insights into the emotional dimensions of history education, highlighting opportunities, challenges and areas of conflict.*

**KEYWORDS:** EMOTIONS, EMOTIONAL COMMUNITY, HISTORY DIDACTICS, INTERACTION, CONTENT, INTERACTION, EDUCATIONAL HISTORY

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## Introduction

Coping with emotions has been identified as an important challenge in history education that teachers must address in one way or another (Goldberg and Schwarz, 2016). Researchers have provided insights into not only the difficulties but also the learning potential in teaching sensitive issues, including contemporary warfare, genocide and other historically impactful events that influence students' identities (Nates, 2010; Virta and Kouki, 2014; Brett and Guyver, 2021). The emotional side of learning has also been regarded with scepticism, as it may conflict with analytical approaches to past and rational disciplinary thinking (Berry, Schmied and Schrock, 2008, p. 438; Goldberg and Schwarz, 2016). The significant influence of Anglo-American research on history education has led to a primary emphasis on analytical skills in historical thinking. Thorp and Persson (2020, p. 898) have therefore argued that the 'intersubjective, unsettled, and existential dimension of historical thinking' should be considered to a larger extent in history education research, which might involve the emotional aspects of learning. Meanwhile, perspectives on emotions play a more prominent role in research on the communication of history beyond the classroom, encompassing museums, heritage sites, popular culture and historical cultures (Savenije and de Bruijn, 2017; Bormann, 2018; Leone and Sarrica, 2020; Trenter, Ludvigsson and Stolare, 2021).

This study does not propose any methods or strategies for emphasising the emotional aspects of learning and teaching history. Instead, it outlines ways to understand the different roles that emotions play in history education, positioning the article primarily as a theoretical contribution. The purpose is to demonstrate how current research in history didactics or educational history can benefit from integrating theoretical perspectives on emotions from the humanities, particularly the history of emotions. By doing so, it can offer a deeper understanding of the role of emotions in education and lay the groundwork for developing strategies and didactic tools to engage with emotions within a discipline that emphasises critical thinking and source evaluation. This framework is applied in a case study of history education in the 1860 Swedish grammar school, providing preliminary insights into the emotional dimensions of history education during this period.

The study will draw on Barbara Rosenwein's (2006, 2010, 2021) theoretical approach to emotions and the concept of the emotional community. Rosenwein's framework, which is not developed specifically for education, offers valuable insights into the opportunities, challenges and potential conflicts within history education. The focus is not on students', teachers' or educational leaders' actual emotions but rather on how emotions are represented through language, metaphors or indirect characterisations. Like other historians of emotions, Rosenwein elevates the significance of emotions in a way that is useful for transcending the dichotomy between emotions and cognition in historical thinking (Rüsen, 2012). This approach enables analyses of the role emotions in history education, both today and historically. As an analytical tool, emotional communities can be applied to any shared space that reveals the characteristics of a particular group. One strength of this approach is its ability to

shed light on the changing role of emotions in history education over time. By incorporating historical perspectives, subject didactics can enhance the understanding of past educational practices and enrich contemporary discussions on schooling. However, the analytical concept of emotional community is relatively open, and operationalizing it within teaching and education requires an analytical approach that considers the specific context of education. In other words, this study will provide insights from history didactics and educational science, as well as educational history, to make Rosenwein's framework applicable for understanding the emotional dimension of history education. A key argument is that the school setting, particularly the history classroom, serves as an instructive framework for investigating emotions as a social integrative force, much like the families, monasteries, congregations and guilds that Rosenwein, as a mediaeval historian, extensively studied. Building on Rosenwein's research, this article proposes a three-step analytical approach to deepen our comprehension of the various roles that emotions play in history teaching.

To illustrate the proposed analytical framework, the article focuses on history teaching in Sweden during the 1860s, a period marked by a growing interest in history education, driven by the professionalisation of the discipline and interest in teaching methods (Andolf, 1972, pp. 8–9; Hamerow, 1986). This was the period when education underwent gradual consolidation through the 1849 reform, which merged various types of schools into a more unified grammar school system (*läroverk*). From a previously fragmented educational structure, state influence increased, bringing a higher degree of coordination, guidance and oversight. This shift also contributed to the shaping of a new cultural identity for the young men moulded by this school system (Florin and Johansson, 2000, p. 56). Even though it only involved a small percentage of Sweden's population, this type of school, which was preparatory for university, came to channel many of the pedagogical ideas of that time and is an important part of the development of the national education system (Larsson, 2003). Through a new school statute introduced in 1859, this form of schooling became more clearly defined, with two distinct educational tracks based on whether students chose to deepen their studies in classical languages (Larsson and Prytz, 2019, p. 156). The content of history education varied slightly depending on the educational path (Andolf, 1972, pp. 73–74), although the overall framework remained similar. Students who did not focus on classical languages (*reallinje*) placed greater emphasis on contemporary subjects than those who pursued classical language studies (*latinlinje*). The 1859 school statute offered limited guidelines on the conduct of history teaching. Nevertheless, history education played a central role in grammar schools, especially in fostering a sense of national identity among youth. Swedish history was prioritised over what was referred to as general history. In addition, the teaching placed considerable emphasis on political history, focusing on the development of the state and reflecting the broader European educational practices of the time (Holmén, 2019, pp. 346–347). These developments make it particularly relevant to examine the emotional dimension of history teaching during the 1860s, especially because of the increasing interest in the pedagogical aspects of the subject during that time (Andolf, 1972, p. 7).

However, the primary aim of this article is not to provide a detailed historical account of this period but to present an analytical perspective for understanding the role of emotions in education. The main argument is that research on emotions within the humanities offers valuable insights into both past and present educational contexts, which the analytical approach outlined below seeks to enhance. This article also suggests appropriate sources for investigating the emotional dimension of history teaching through the proposed analytical approach. The following section will discuss emotions within the framework of research on history education, pointing to the need to explore emotions from an analytical approach that considers structural guidelines, the content of history teaching, and the relational dynamics inherent in history education.

## History education and emotions

In recent decades, the so-called cognitive change in studies on history education has gained significant traction, presenting diverse emphases depending on theoretical perspectives and origins (Gómez-Carrasco et al., 2022). This trend reflects a growing interest in analytical concepts and critical thinking skills within history education. Scholars of history didactics and educational science who have discussed the advantages and disadvantages of emotional strategies within history teaching in schools often started their discussions with the concept of historical empathy. While it is widely understood as the ability to comprehend the past on its own terms, the concept has been associated with both cognitive and emotional aspects in history teaching (Endacott, 2010). For instance, Foster (1999, p. 19) explained that historical empathy should be linked to a close examination of available evidence and cautioned that an ‘emotional involvement with historical characters detracts from the fundamental purpose of history’. Similarly, from a Canadian perspective, Bryant and Clark suggested that historical empathy should focus on cognitive rather than affective aspects, as engaging narratives could lead to problems for students by encouraging them to rely on personal experiences rather than on cognitive tools for making judgments (Bryant and Clark, 2006, p. 1048). These scholars prioritised the critical and analytical dimensions of historical empathy in history education over its emotional aspects.

However, the concept of historical empathy originates from German historicism, where the emotional dimension (*‘Einfühlung’*) was central to thinkers such as the philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (Mah, 2002). Among others, the history philosopher Jörn Rüsen (2012) highlighted the close link between emotions and identity in historical thinking, which underscores the relevance of examining the role of emotions in history education. There are also researchers in history didactics who take a more positive stance on emotions in history education by using the concept of historical empathy. For example, Barton and Levstik (2004, Chapter 12) emphasised the importance of empathy for understanding history and argued that we cannot engage students in history education if we disregard caring about and being concerned for people in the past or dismiss the emotional relevance of a topic.

Research has also examined how the affective side of historical empathy, which involves a more emotional engagement with sources and literature, might enhance the learning process. This emotional dimension of history education may also foster ‘identification with historical persons’ (Lazarakou, 2008, p. 36). In the context of Finnish schools, Virta and Kouki (2014) included this emotional dimension (or ‘affective connection’) in their examination of how students in upper secondary school reflected on controversial issues related to Finnish children sent to Sweden during the Second World War. They concluded that students need more tools to deal with emotional historical topics (see also Brooks, 2011). While emotional engagement can deepen a student's commitment to learning history, it can also give rise to conflict. Scholars have become increasingly interested in history as a form of ‘difficult knowledge’, which involves understanding the social traumas of the past that continue to affect students today. The specific challenges and obstacles that students face often vary according to their backgrounds and identities, which can both enrich and complicate the learning process (Nates, 2010; Levy and Sheppard, 2018; Stoddard, 2022; Larsson, 2024). These studies have demonstrated the important role of emotional involvement, whether regarded as positive or negative, in history education.

However, the division between the cognitive and emotional aspects of historical empathy creates conceptual confusion, as researchers in the field of the history of emotions are often influenced by cognitive approaches to emotions (Nussbaum, 2001; Reddy, 2001; Rosenwein, 2021). For example, the philosopher Martha Nussbaum (2001) argued that emotions have a complex cognitive structure and are essential elements of human intelligence connected to our ‘reasoning capacity’ (p. 3). Nussbaum's perspective on emotions links them to an intellectual process, making it challenging to maintain a strict separation between the cognitive and emotional aspects of learning. In this way, emotions can play a significant role in students' meaning-making processes and values formation (Manni, Sporre and Ottander, 2017), which is crucial to consider in history education. In a different vein, Rösen argued that emotions and cognition in historical thinking ‘are intertwined to a degree that we are not normally aware of’ (Rösen, 2012, p. 41). However, instead of regarding emotions as a fundamental part of historical thinking and, by extension, history education, we tend to perceive them as something additional, non-essential, akin to background music without a real function in our work (p. 43).

Rosenwein also moves beyond the dichotomy between cognition and emotions in her approach, drawing on social constructivist theories of emotion, which highlight how emotions are shaped by cultural, historical and social contexts. She emphasises how emotions are experienced, expressed and interpreted within the societies in which they are embedded and how they evolve over time. Rosenwein (2010, p. 8) even asserted that emotions are ‘essential to understanding the human condition’. She examined emotional expressions as textual representations within the framework of what she terms an emotional community (Rosenwein, 2006, 2010, 2021). This community can be associated with organisations, associations, families, congregations or different social and political contexts. In fact, emotional communities are the same as social communities, except that they focus primarily on the emotional aspects of social

interactions. An emotional community shares norms and values that underlie emotional expressions, as they maintain personal contacts of different kinds. Instead of focusing on the psychological or biological expressions of emotions, it focuses on emotions as textual representations with intentionality, as they are directed towards an object. This discursive approach resonates with Foucault, as emotional communities can be understood as ‘shared vocabularies and ways of thinking that have a controlling function, disciplining function’ (Rosenwein, 2006, p. 25). An emotional community is held together and defined by systems of feeling, and Rosenwein focuses on the styles of expression and various forms of sociability in relation to the emotions that characterise and shape each community. Rosenwein's concept of emotional community offers a valuable framework for exploring how emotions are embedded in social and cultural systems, examined through a range of sources such as letters, legal documents, sermons and literature, which reveal the diverse functions and dynamic nature of emotions within a community.

Within an educational context, the idea of emotional communities can help us understand the role of emotions in relation to students and the emotional boundaries associated with specific subjects (Blennow, 2019). Rosenwein also emphasises the dynamic nature of emotional communities, noting that individuals can belong to multiple overlapping emotional communities simultaneously. The school environment itself can be viewed as an emotional community with its own set of norms and emotional systems. Moreover, individual subjects within the educational context have their own distinct emotional norms and systems, as Blennow (2019, p. 61) argued in her study of upper secondary social science. Different levels of education may also embody specific emotional communities. For instance, Karlsohn (2016) examined the academic seminar within modern German academic culture as an emotional community by analysing a key text by Friedrich Schleiermacher from the early 19th century. On the other hand, Landahl (2015) demonstrated the relationship between emotions and power with early mass schooling at the elementary level by drawing on the concepts of emotional labour and emotional community. These studies show that the boundaries of emotional communities may be more distinct in theory than in practice but provide a fruitful framework to analyse emotions within various types of education. This framework enables us to comprehend the evolving role of emotions and how systems of emotions contribute to the cohesion of individuals within a specific educational context. In this article, emphasis is placed on exploring the norms and emotions specific to history education. The analytical framework proposed herein is a practical application of this perspective, facilitating the integration of emotional considerations into history teaching.

Although this article does not provide a comprehensive contextual framework for schooling in the 1860s, it highlights three key aspects of history education that significantly shaped the norms influencing the emotional community: ethnicity, class, and gender. These aspects are relevant not only to the identity-shaping role and integrative function of grammar schools (Florin and Johansson, 2000, p. 57) but also to the modern and contemporary school systems in general (Leighton and Nielsen, 2020), as they often underpin the norms of social groups.

First, it is important to recognise higher education as a key element of nation building and the construction of a Swedish cultural identity. Around this time, significant efforts were made to consolidate various forms of schooling into a unified grammar school next to the primary school (*folkskolan*). This reform provided new opportunities to shape a nationally educated class. On an analytical level, Rosenwein (2010) argued that a nation can be understood as an emotional community shaped by shared emotions and cultural practices. Since the early 19th century, two major national currents have influenced identity and education in Sweden: civic nationalism and cultural ethnic nationalism (Edgren, 2005). These two currents could be intertwined, although civic nationalism has its roots in the late 18th century, influenced by the French and American revolutions, while cultural ethnic nationalism gained more prominence in Europe during the latter half of the 19th century. Both currents share a foundational emphasis on love for the nation and offer a sense of belonging. However, ethnic nationalism is more likely to rely on a more pronounced us-versus-them dichotomy, often fostering feelings of hostility towards ‘the others’ (Eiranen, 2022). It is equally important to recognise the role of other identities in teaching, including regional identities, which played a prominent role in 19th-century Swedish education at lower levels (Westberg, 2022). Today, multicultural classrooms encompass a diverse range of identities, often including students from countries with a history of conflict or minority groups and diaspora communities. This dynamic creates both emotional opportunities and challenges for teaching history (Virta and Kouki, 2014; Goldberg and Schwarz, 2016).

Second, the school played a significant role in shaping an emerging bourgeois class that advanced its position during the second half of the 19th century. This is an important context because the grammar school remained accessible to only a small segment of the population, primarily drawn from this emerging middle class. The students also came from the upper class, although this was a numerically small group, or from children of more modest backgrounds who were being assimilated into the middle class. Grammar schools provide a natural pathway to universities during a time of social transformation in Sweden. As early as the second half of the 19th century, debates arose over whether this new form of education reinforced the existing class structure or, conversely, promoted social mobility (Richardson, 2010). Florin and Johansson (2000, p. 38) argued that the school was characterised by a core of bourgeois virtues, which included a methodical and rational way of life, individualism, self-discipline, impulse control and respect for education. This approach broadly aligned with Lutheran ideals, as the education incorporated a religious framework that included morning prayers and hymn singing. Furthermore, as will be demonstrated in the succeeding paragraphs, the bourgeois ideals of rationality and impulse control in history education did not exclude an emotional dimension. Even today, it is relevant to consider the role that class issues play in education—for example, the segregation that exists between different schools and educational pathways based on students’ social backgrounds (Leighton and Nielsen, 2020)—and to what extent this impacts the emotional dimension of history education.

Third, history teaching in schools was a male socialisation that was closely interlinked with the class perspective. Women were not yet admitted to grammar



schools in the 1860s, and no teachers were women at this time. Female students gained access to higher education in the next decade through special girls' schools (Prytz, 2019), but the guidelines, books and teaching contexts studied were mainly aimed at boys. It is symptomatic that at this time, special history textbooks were written for girls, with a greater focus on female rulers and areas considered more interesting for girls (Mellin, 1852). In other words, history education in Sweden was, to a certain extent, inherently gender coded, and such features tend to intersect with emotional norms and practices (Constantinou, 2019). While this study does not investigate how such coding influenced the emotional dimension, it provides an important context for understanding history teaching. The grammar school was a key component in shaping Sweden's male elite and was rooted in knowledge traditions developed within a predominantly male sphere. The masculinity culture that developed within the bourgeoisie that dominated these schools was characterised by professional work, education and competence. Florin and Johansson (2000, p. 282) contrasted this culture of masculinity with traits such as feminine passivity, emotionality and dependency fostered at girls' schools. It is thus important to consider that history education was created within this social context of bourgeois masculinity, although the article will show a more complex picture of attitudes towards emotions within history education. While gender-segregated schools have become less common in the Western world today, it is evident that both gender and sexuality continue to play significant roles in history education at various levels (Crocco, 2018). Furthermore, the gender balance in the classroom can potentially influence students' emotional well-being and performance (Belfi et al., 2011).

Understanding the diverse contexts in which history education and emotions intersect—whether in 19th-century or contemporary settings—requires an analytical framework that incorporates diverse voices and examines how various spheres of the education sector shape the emotional dimensions of history teaching.

### **Analytical approach to the emotional dimension of history education**

Emotions are present in various aspects of history education, and the forthcoming analysis proposes a three-dimensional framework to address the evolving role of emotions within these contexts. The educational sphere has unique characteristics and conditions for social interaction that distinguish it from other emotional communities (Landahl, 2015; Karlsohn, 2016; Blennow, 2019), providing the rationale for this analytical approach. The framework could potentially be applied to other subjects to account for the changing contextual nature of emotions. The idea behind this approach is to contribute to a broader perspective on history education that would enable the observation of how the role of emotions in the subject has changed over time. The model highlights the intricate relationships between structural guidelines, the emotional charge of instructional materials and the relational aspects of educational practice in advancing a holistic approach to the role of emotions in history education. Building on Rosenwein's approach, this model furthermore seeks to investigate emotional communities through

a diverse range of sources, each fulfilling a unique role within the framework of history education. The analytical framework focuses on three distinct levels of history education: (1) policy, (2) content and (3) interactions. These levels do not encompass all types of emotional encounters within history education. For instance, research on emotions in education has often focused on achievement emotions (Pekrun et al., 2007) such as anxiety, hope and shame related to academic failures or successes, which this model does not cover. The model also does not address incidental emotions related to stress or personal problems (Pekrun and Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2014).

Nevertheless, the three levels underscore the significant role of emotions in history education, enabling us to address ideas, norms and educational practices rather than to view emotions as irrational and opposed to cognitive skills. The three levels reveal the varied functions that emotions can fulfil in teaching and the diverse social, political and cultural influences of the surrounding society. The policies and content of history education are shaped by both governmental directives and the expertise of practitioners who directly or indirectly define the role of emotions in teaching. At the same time, different forms of interaction are essential for understanding the emotional community in practice. Emotions have a distinct relational function, marking the boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Blennow, 2021), a dynamic observable across all three levels of analysis. In the classroom, these boundaries can create zones of conflict and opportunities for growth within the knowledge process.

By examining these three levels together, we can achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the varied functions of emotions in the knowledge process of history education. This understanding can, in turn, help teachers engage with emotions in a more reflective and intentional manner. While the levels are interconnected, the extent of this interrelation depends on the specific social, political and cultural contexts of history teaching, which the model will help clarify. In this study, the model will be specifically applied to history education in Sweden in 1860.

## **Policy**

Educational policy research is a broad field that encompasses all aspects of education (Sykes *et al.*, 2009). At a fundamental level, it focuses on the development, management and improvement of education through the establishment of rules, regulations and guidelines. These frameworks are crucial for understanding the emotional boundaries of subjects in schools. Emotions can play an instrumental role in achieving educational goals, such as when teaching methods inspire excitement for a particular topic (Pekrun and Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2014). However, policymakers may also argue against emotional involvement; for example, within history education, experts have often claimed that emotion might conflict with ‘rational and disciplinary oriented learning’ (Goldberg and Schwarz, 2016, p. 9). Moreover, curricula and equivalent documents have been linked to the cultural and political integrations of national identities (Karseth and Sivesind, 2010), making them valuable sources for understanding the values, politics and ideologies associated with history teaching. Throughout Europe, history education, like the development and institutionalisation of the historical discipline, has

undergone significant changes since the French Revolution, reflecting values such as patriotism, universalism, tradition and belief in progress (Berger, 2017), all of which have been underpinned by various emotions, including love of the fatherland. Analysing emotions from a policy perspective could potentially reveal such changes over time by considering available and comparable sources of rules, regulations, opinions and guidelines regarding history education. These sources can be considered to hold a normative position in relation to history education, which helps them define the boundaries of the emotional community within an educational context. It is also important to note the absence of emotional content or references to how education should address emotions in this genre of sources (Rosenwein 2010, p. 17).

In Sweden, interest in history teaching surged in the 1860s, and a significant impetus for this trend was an official investigation into history textbooks that were conducted by the so-called textbook commission (Andolf, 1972, p. 16; Holmén, 2019, p. 288). The commission responsible for this endeavour included influential academic historians and grammar school teachers, who not only reviewed several existing textbooks but also provided comprehensive guidelines for history teaching in general. These new recommendations for history teaching, along with the normative approach to writing history textbooks, constitute a relevant policy document for analysing the emotional dimension of history education. To better contextualise this document as a relevant source for understanding emotions within history education, it would have been valuable to compile a dossier of writings by the individuals involved in the Commission (Rosenwein and Cristiani, 2018). Such a collection could shed light on the emotional community of those responsible for the report. However, the report itself reflects important attitudes towards emotions and provides explicit guidelines on how teachers should address emotions in the classroom. Overall, the Commission argued that history education should cultivate students' moral consciousness (rooted in Christianity) and serve national political aims (patriotism and national identification). In addition, the Commission described history education as a scientific endeavour and emphasised the importance of objectivity (Kommissionen, 1868).

The coexistence of moral-political values and the pursuit of objectivity highlight a central characteristic of history education guidelines: the Commission emphasised the development of emotional learning skills alongside rational thinking within the discipline. This dual approach is particularly relevant for understanding the role of emotions in the study of history. The genuine patriotic spirit should be conveyed in history textbooks through a 'love for the great memories of the fatherland' and a storytelling style that exudes 'warmth' (Kommissionen, 1868, p. 19). Engaging storytelling, both in lectures and literature, was considered a central pedagogical tool to elicit positive emotions that focused on the great memories of the fatherland rather than on the feelings of indignation or sadness associated with territorial losses and conflicts. However, the emotional dimension of history teaching was not solely regarded as a means of cultivating patriotic sentiment. It was also recognised as essential for the overall learning process and for activating students' memory, reasoning and imagination (Kommissionen, 1868, pp. 7–8). The pedagogical role of emotions in teaching becomes particularly significant in the Commission's discussion of educational perspectives. The

Commission noted that biographical approaches to history can be particularly effective for younger students in enhancing the impact of teaching. However, this approach should not impede the focus on the development of societies and nations (Kommissionen, 1868, p. 14). The teacher's role was to emotionally engage students to reinforce their knowledge while simultaneously providing accurate information about the past without any biases: 'The patriotic warmth should not be associated with injustice against other peoples' (Kommissionen, 1868, p. 8). This recommendation promotes a nationalism that aims to avoid fostering hostility towards other peoples, a tendency often associated with ethnic nationalism (Eiranen, 2022). Instead, the focus was on cultivating a sense of connection between the students and the history they studied. This dedication, which is intended to leave a profound impact on students' souls, was linked to captivating oral lectures, or the so-called storytelling method, rather than to the so-called interrogation method, in which students explained what was written in the book (Andolf, 1972, p. 96).

The importance of the emotional dimension was also emphasised by the prominent history lecturer and author Georg Starbäck (1859), who argued against rote memorisation of facts. Instead, he advocated for narrative presentations that engaged students' attention and appealed to their hearts and understanding. Starbäck further suggested that teaching content should focus on individual human destinies rather than on the state: 'History would have much greater value if it dealt more with individual lives, their joys and sorrows, their sufferings and sacrifices' (Starbäck, 1859, p. 12). Starbäck envisioned a progression that began with stories from Norse mythology, followed by biographical accounts of significant men to stimulate memory and imagination and ultimately provide more details and establish connections between the different eras. The Commission's guideline on this matter aimed for a compromise: Aspects of history based on tradition and fairy tales should not be excluded entirely but should be presented explicitly as such (Kommissionen, 1868, p. 19). Moreover, they could be incorporated into supplementary reading materials designed to provide younger students with texts that aim to 'appeal to the feelings and imagination of the youth' (Kommissionen, 1868, p. 23). Presenting Norse mythology as fairy tales was not a straightforward decision at that time. Many textbooks still uncritically included stories from Old Norse literature, which was also the case in German history education at that time (Wilschut, 2010). This heritage offered both opportunities for identification and compelling narratives that could stimulate interest in history. As a result, the Commission advocated for its retention, albeit with some reservations, highlighting the importance attributed to emotions in the learning process. It was only with the advent of source criticism at the beginning of the next century that these narratives were gradually eliminated from teaching. In the 1860s, however, emotions naturally influenced the study of history, being tied not only to the subject's political dimensions but also to contemporary pedagogical ideas that highlighted the importance of imagination in sparking interest and aiding memory in young people. This example highlights how the policy level establishes the overarching framework for the role of emotions in education through directives to educators.

## Content

The next step in the analysis involves moving beyond the policy level to delve deeper into the content of history teaching. Historians of emotions often examine ego documents such as letters and memoirs, which offer rich opportunities to explore subjective experiences (Barclay and Stearns, 2022). However, in this case, the source material consists of textbooks, lectures and other related teaching materials, which, if available, represent a different genre of documents for expressing emotions. It is crucial to examine not only how teaching materials address emotions from the past but also the specific feelings and emotional expressions conveyed in their portrayal of the past. This latter aspect is particularly relevant when considering the role of emotions in the history learning process. The focus here is not on personal experiences but should be on what Rosenwein (2010) refers to as emotional epithets and characterisations. In the context of history education, this includes descriptions of classes, estates, ethnic groups, gender groups, historical personalities, periods and historical events and processes. The analysis should pay careful attention to the expression of specific emotions and the role these emotions play in the historical narrative. One general challenge with textbooks as a source for studying the content of history education is that we cannot be certain of how teachers and students use them. Nonetheless, textbooks serve as an accessible source for historians of history education and represent a ‘normative order that structures history teaching’ (Grindel, 2017, p. 265). This is also true for history curricula. However, textbooks have a direct connection to the content of history teaching, as they provide texts and images for the classroom setting.

Following Rosenwein's (2010) approach, it is useful to examine a wide range of sources—in this case, several textbooks and the accompanying teaching materials produced within the emotional community. In the context of the 1860s Swedish history education, various textbooks were available, but this limited case analysis focus specifically on the work of historian Clas Theodor Odhner (1869), who authored a textbook on the history of Sweden, Norway and Denmark for the upper grades of grammar school students. This textbook gained widespread use among generations of Swedish students, reflecting its enduring influence. Odhner, a member of the textbook commission, actively worked to implement its guiding principles. Notably, the Commission's members authored textbooks that swiftly surpassed existing ones in popularity and quality (Andolf, 1972, p. 288). It is well established that nineteenth-century history textbooks played a significant role in constructing national narratives closely intertwined with the process of nation building (Barton and Levstik, 2004, Chapter 3; Carretero, 2011; Van der Vlies, 2017). Odhner's (1869) textbook exemplifies this trend, and this analysis examined the emotions embedded in the narrative, providing insights into how nationalism was framed within history education during this period.

First, the emotion of honour played a significant role in characterising ordinary individuals in the past who sought sovereignty and independence while enduring the oppression of nobility, weak regents and foreign enemies. According to Stearns (2022), honour is closely associated with shame in modern societies. The emergence of nationalism since the French Revolution placed great importance on national pride,

loyalty and the preservation and restoration of national honour. This became a crucial concern for political leaders and evoked strong emotional responses among the people. Odhner (1869) emphasised the development of the state and its laws in his narration of Swedish history. An important focus of the narrative was Gustav II Adolf (1594–1632), whose heroic actions and sacrifices instilled courage, hope and love for the fatherland within the entire Swedish population. This celebration of charismatic figures reflects an emotional community where national identity requires positive role models who sacrifice for the common good. Both individuals and the church were assigned a positive role in spreading enlightenment, protecting the vulnerable and fostering more humane legislation. Honourable deeds and exemplary figures reinforced patriotism and imbued it with a positive essence. This reflects ideals considered important for the upbringing of young men, who were largely expected to be recruited as officials in various parts of the state. Unlike the education provided in girls' schools, which primarily aimed to cultivate competence suited to the domestic sphere, this bourgeois education was designed to prepare young men for life in the public sphere (Florin and Johansson, 2000, p. 282).

National honour could also be reversed and transformed into shame for those who had dishonoured the nation (Stearns, 2022). The formation of an emotional community within the educational sphere, as well as on a national level, necessitates the identification of figures who brought dishonour to society in the past. This inclination towards shame is evident in Odhner's (1869) book, where it is associated with the immorality, weakness, vanity and despotic behaviour of certain individuals, groups and customs. Catholicism, particularly in the period following the Reformation, is portrayed as immoral, which explains the negative characterisation of those with Catholic sympathies. For instance, individuals associated with Queen Christina (1626–1689), who abdicated the throne and converted to Catholicism, are accused of fostering disdain for Sweden and of being motivated by a desire for a more pleasurable life in southern Catholic countries. Similarly, regents with weak characters are linked to political decline and societal division. The shaming tendency is also directed at the nobility when they exploit their privileges at the expense of the common people. This emotional shaming of the nobility can be seen as a reflection of emerging democratic ideals of equality in the nineteenth century. The aggressive ethnic nationalism that became more common in Europe toward the end of the 19th century does not emerge in the textbook. Rosenwein (2010, pp. 21–24) emphasises the need to trace changes within emotional communities, and a more comprehensive analysis of shaming tendencies within history textbooks may reveal significant emotional turning points that coincide with political developments.

Third, elements of nostalgia are integrated into the historical narrative to underscore the unique nature of Swedish culture and history. At first glance, nostalgia may seem contradictory to the prevailing tendency to present 19th-century parliamentarism as the positive culmination of political development in modern society. While the term *nostalgia* was originally referred to as a feeling of homesickness, it has evolved to encompass a temporal dimension, reflecting a longing for an idealised past (Kondor and Littler, 2020). Therefore, elements of nostalgia align well with the national spirit of the

textbook (Eiranen, 2022). In Odhner's narrative, the communal spirit of the people in ancient times is idealised, and even the era of Sweden as a great power (1611–1721) is depicted with a touch of nostalgia, particularly in reference to the 'brilliant line of regents' (Odhner, 1869, p. 240). Simultaneously, this period is also portrayed as having a negative influence on people's way of life, contributing to a sense of cultural loss: 'The simplicity, seriousness, and piety of the ancients were weakened; a stream of foreigners and foreign customs entered the country' (p. 193). Although nostalgia does not dominate the textbook, it evokes a yearning for lost historical moments that are considered valuable for the future. As Sweden reached its political peak with the establishment of the new parliament in 1865, Odhner (p. 235) concluded that no law can achieve its purpose without seriousness, unity, piety, integrity and patriotism. These positive virtues, which are constantly threatened during periods of transition, become important vehicles for nostalgic elements. Alongside honour and shame, nostalgia illustrates how emotional expressions are closely linked to norms and values (Rosenwein, 2021, pp. 107–108). While other emotional expressions are present, these three play a significant role in underpinning the identification and patriotic tendencies emphasised in the textbook, which are considered important for preparing young men for further studies or various career paths in the context of Sweden's industrialisation and expanding bureaucracy.

### **Interactions**

Although emotions are often regarded as personal experiences, they also function as tools for sociability and social interaction (Rosenwein, 2010). This social dimension is particularly important to consider in education, as the learning process is directly linked to various forms of interaction. In an educational context, the concept of an emotional community is continuously negotiated beyond policy and the different content used in the classroom. Special attention should be given to these interactions, particularly when education enters 'emotionally tense situations' (Blennow, 2019, p. 219). By viewing emotions as relational phenomena, we encompass interactions not only between individuals but also between individuals and the subject matter within an educational context. Each student and teacher has a unique relationship with the subject, which influences the learning environment and interactions within the classroom. Quinlan (2016) examined the role of emotions in teaching and learning in higher education, highlighting four key educational relationships: students with the subject matter, students with teachers, students with other students and students with their own personal development. While these relationships require slightly different approaches, they share a common interest in understanding how students and teachers interact with one another and with the subject matter. To capture direct social interactions in the classroom, observation is the preferred method to avoid relying solely on self-reported behaviour (Cotton, Stokes and Cotton, 2010).

In the past, studying interactions in education posed challenges because it must rely on sources that document social interactions. As she is a historian of emotions, Rosenwein's conceptualisation of the field offers valuable possibilities in this regard.

While the analytical task of historians of emotions is to examine representations of emotions—or their absence—the focus can be directed to how emotions were manifested through words or images in historical documents (Rosenwein and Cristiani, 2018).

Testimonies can be valuable sources for understanding classroom interactions in the past. A collection of published student testimonies in Sweden that spanned from the 1860s to the following decades provides examples of how history teaching was conducted during this time (Lindblad, 1934). These firsthand accounts offer insights into the emotional dimensions of history teaching, although it is important to consider the representativeness of such sources and the potential biases introduced by the retrospective nature of the accounts. Another source is documentation from teacher associations, which offers a glimpse into classroom interactions and teachers' relationships with the subject matter. In Sweden, national-level teacher meetings, known as 'teachers' meetings', were established from the 1860s onwards (Larsson, 2022). During these gatherings, the teachers shared their experiences and engaged in discussions on both general and subject-specific topics. For example, in the 1866 meeting held in Stockholm, 257 participants, mostly grammar school teachers from across Sweden, convened for three days. History and geography were allocated dedicated sessions during these meetings. While the discussions were not directly focused on classroom activities, the teachers exchanged experiences from their teaching practice and discussed their connections to the subject. The protocols of these meetings were subsequently published the following year (Olbers, 1867; Sundén, 1870).

Classroom interactions are particularly interesting because they reveal, in a different way from that of policy or content, how the emotional dimension of history education is associated with opportunities, challenges and areas of conflict. For example, it is well established that politically charged topics in history education can provoke conflict but can also create the potential for deeper learning (Nates, 2010). During the Stockholm meetings in 1866 and 1869, history teachers placed significant emphasis on the advantages and challenges of the so-called storytelling method. This raised the issue of emotions in education, as this approach aimed to make history teaching more engaging by using narratives that appealed to both students' intellect and the emotions (Olbers, 1867, pp. 65–67). Storytelling breathed life into history lessons, adding 'flesh and blood' to 'dry historical facts' (Sundén, 1870, p. 210), which was considered especially important for younger students. However, despite its merits, the method also faced criticism; it became apparent that implementing this approach was challenging, even for its proponents. The teachers expressed concerns about the lack of time to fully develop and utilise this method (Olbers, 1867, p. 62; Sundén, 1870, p. 210). Such concerns highlight the importance of looking beyond policy to gain insights into actual classroom dynamics. The published meeting protocols revealed that the emotional interactions in the classroom varied depending on whether the teachers employed storytelling and focused on biographies or relied on factual interrogations from textbooks, which allowed less room for imagination and emotional engagement. Opinions were divided into these approaches. Just as individuals can belong to multiple emotional communities (Rosenwein, 2006, p. 24), teachers are influenced by both



national and local tendencies on how to teach. Each classroom can be seen as a unique emotional community where emotions converge and sometimes clash with norms and values in the national community. A closer examination of classroom interactions reveals these conflicting tendencies.

## Conclusion

The role of emotions in history education is multifaceted. On the one hand, emotions have often been linked to the manipulation and cultivation of nationalistic sentiments, which suggests that they can hinder the development of critical thinking skills. On the other hand, researchers have emphasised the significance of emotional engagement in the learning process. Regardless of whether emotional involvement is considered positive or negative, this article emphasises the importance of transcending the dichotomy between cognition and emotions in history education. This aligns with Rösen's (2012) argument that emotions should be recognised as an essential aspect of historical thinking, which should have implications for history education. In addition, Goldberg and Schwartz (2016, p. 16) proposed that educators should not shy away from emotions in their teaching; instead, they should harness them to enhance historical reasoning.

To gain a deeper understanding of the changing role of emotions in history education, this article demonstrates how research in history didactics and educational history can benefit from incorporating theoretical perspectives on emotions from the humanities. To this end, the article presents a three-step analytical model that addresses three distinct levels of education: (1) policy, (2) content and (3) interactions. The model is grounded in Rosenwein's (2006, 2010; Rosenwein and Cristiani, 2018) theoretical framework and concept of emotional community, which studies emotions as parts of a specific social group or context. While emotional community is a relatively open concept, this study provides insights from history didactics and educational science to make Rosenwein's framework applicable for understanding the emotional dimension of history education. Aligned with Rosenwein's approach, this model aims to examine emotional communities by utilising various sources, each with distinct functions within the context of history education. Each level of analysis targets a different facet of education and contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the role of emotions in history teaching. By addressing ideas, norms and educational practices, this approach reframes emotions not as irrational or oppositional to cognitive skills but as essential components of historical education. This perspective has the advantage of facilitating comparisons over time and offering historical insights into contemporary subject didactics. The interconnection between policy, content and interaction in history education also underscores the need for a multifaceted approach to understanding the emotional dimensions of the subject. While policy establishes the structural and ideological frameworks within which emotions are regulated and encouraged, content serves as the medium through which emotional narratives are embedded, shaping historical understanding through emotional epithets, characterisations and narrative

techniques in textbooks or other related teaching material. Interaction, the third level, is the dynamic space in which policy and content converge in the classroom, mediated through teaching practices.

The article illustrates each level of this approach through an analysis of the development of history education in grammar schools in Sweden in the 1860s. The first level focuses on policy by closely examining the textbook commission for grammar school history teaching in 1868. The Commission viewed emotional engagement in history teaching as both a means to instil patriotic sentiments and a strategy to enhance the learning experience in grammar school that was otherwise marked by a culture of masculinity of discipline, rationality, impulse control and physical toughness (Florin and Johansson, p. 282). The guidelines emphasised students' emotional involvement while maintaining factual accuracy. However, this study places distinct emphasis on the pedagogical aspects of incorporating emotions into the learning process. The next level of analysis examines the content of history education, specifically the representation of emotions in a widely used textbook, highlighting how emotions such as honour, shame and nostalgia were woven into historical narratives. The emotions of honour, shame and nostalgia align closely with 19th-century national currents (Eiranen, 2022). However, the analysed textbook, along with the guidelines for the history subject established during the 1860s, did not conform to a more aggressive form of ethnic nationalism that perceived 'the others' as enemies. Moreover, records from teachers' conferences during this period revealed a gap between the recommended guidelines and the actual practices employed in the classroom, as examined at the third level of analysis: interactions. While some teachers embraced storytelling as a teaching method, others relied on traditional interrogation techniques to convey historical facts, allowing less room for historical imagination and emotional engagement. The emotions negotiated through teacher–student engagements and pedagogical methods such as storytelling illustrate how emotional elements are used to enhance historical understanding.

These empirical findings should be viewed as preliminary hypotheses for further research that incorporates a broader range of sources. Overall, the article highlights that the fields of history didactics and educational history can greatly benefit from integrating concepts and perspectives from the history of emotions to address both challenges and opportunities in history education. The proposed three-step analytical model offers a valuable framework for illuminating different facets of how emotions shape and are shaped by history education.

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