The Fear of Harm: The Challenges Preservice Urban Teachers Have with Historical Perspective Recognition When Discussing Difficult Histories

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Introduction

Calls for inquiry-based education have consistently emerged from progressive scholars across historical debates over social studies/history curriculum. In 1910, John Dewey released *How We Think*, which challenged the positivist-dominated discourses (Kliebard, 2004) through its promotion of inquiry-based curriculum. Over 100 years later, advocacy for inquiry-based practices still exist in social studies/history education (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Grant, 2013; Salinas et al., 2012; Seixas & Peck, 2004; Wineburg, 2001). Scholars in the present argue that Inquiry-based curricula allow for teachers and students to extend beyond the basic facts and figures that dominate textbooks and reinforce hegemonic principles in state-mandated standards (Busey & Walker, 2017; Loewen, 2009; Shear et al., 2015; Vasquez-Heilig et al., 2012; Vogler & Virtue, 2007). Further, inquiry-based curricula present opportunities to hear muted voices, read silenced stories, and see opaque narratives in a clearer light.

Extending this line, critical social studies scholars have called for and developed critical historical inquiry (CHI) (Martel, 2013; Santiago, 2019). Blevins et al. (2020) define CHI as:

> A 'critical' conceptualization of historical inquiry includes an explicitly conscious examination of the dominant, yet often, erroneous metanarratives found within school curriculum as well as an interrogation of the ways in which structures of power continue to reproduce oppressive, nation-building narratives in the school curriculum (p. 37).

Moving from a critical multicultural citizenship frame (Castro, 2013), CHI seeks to advance students' understanding of the raced, classed, and gendered constructions of history and extends historical inquiry to focus on relations of power linked inequities. Research on CHI has shown the importance of recognizing the pervasive nature of dominant historical narratives, the ways in which they are used to justify and perpetuate inequities, and how to disrupt dominant historical narratives in order to recognize and honor cultures and communities different from the dominant whitestream (Blevins et al., 2020; Fránquiz & Salinas., 2011; Salinas et al., 2012).

However, literature also points to barriers and challenges constraining potential enactments of CHI in classrooms. In addition to institutional constraints which steer social studies decision-making toward covering standards and preparing students for high-stakes tests (Blevins et al., 2015; Segall, 2003), research highlights particular characteristics associated with teacher capacity (Grant & Agosto, 2008) which are identified as necessary for enacting CHI. Identifying the significance of teacher capacity (e.g., positionality, disposition, knowledge, and skills) to potential CHI enactments,

researchers specifically highlight teacher political and ideological clarity (Blevins et al., 2020; Magill & Salinas, 2019), subject area consciousness and content knowledge (Blevins et al., 2020; Salinas & Blevins, 2013), and source selection (Salinas et al., 2011). In recognizing external barriers and teacher capacity, the literature encourages critical social studies teacher educators to focus preparation efforts on developing instructional approaches which support preservice social studies teachers (PSSTs) learning CHI. For instance, Salinas & Blevins' (2014) study of PSSTs focused on the kinds of historical narratives produced when tasked with developing historical counter-narratives challenging dominant historical narratives. While this study provides valuable insight into the possibilities and challenges of teaching CHI, more work must be done further specifying specific challenges preventing PSSTs from learning and eventually enacting CHI in classrooms.

Following this line, we move to extend this research by focusing on PSSTs' engagement with specific conceptual components informing CHI in order to better position PSSTs to learn and subsequently enact CHI. As teacher educators and researchers working in an urban teacher program which promotes CHI, we also draw on our personal experiences working with PSSTs learning this method as a warrant for this study. These experiences offered opportunities to observe particular challenges associated with learning CHI. Therefore, we move to examine specific instances of engagement with concepts we believe to be potential sources of difficulty preventing PSSTs from learning and enacting CHI in social studies classrooms. We identified two potential sources of struggle in PSSTs encounters with difficult histories and historical perspective recognition (HPR). Following literature which recognizes preservice teacher resistance and discomfort with difficult histories (Boler & Zembylas, 2003; Castro, 2010) and the challenges of teaching historical thinking skills (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Maggioni et al., 2009; Wineburg, 2001), our experiences observing PSSTs' encounters with both concepts also led us to this research focus.

In this study we examined PSSTs' engagement with CHI which included methods course discussions and performance tasks where participants attempted to demonstrate understanding and application of CHI. We attended to specific challenges expressed or articulated by participants as they encountered difficult histories and attempted to practice historical thinking skills like HPR. In doing so, we attempted to address the following research question: What are the challenges preservice social studies teachers perceive with difficult history and HPR as they learn critical historical inquiry?

Conceptual Framework

Drawing on a critical sociocultural theoretical framework (Epstein & Peck, 2017), this study relies on critical historical inquiry (CHI) as a conceptual lens (Blevins & Salinas 2012; Salinas & Blevins, 2014). Grounded in critical pedagogy (McLaren, 2003), CHI is a method concerned with justice-oriented citizenship education emphasizing the political nature of history/social studies curriculum (Salinas & Blevins, 2014). Moving from a critical multicultural citizenship education frame (e.g., Castro, 2013), CHI positions students to understand, disrupt, and challenge official curriculum (Apple, 2000), and explore new and diverse perspectives that recognize and honor the unique experiences of linguistically and culturally diverse communities (Fránquiz & Salinas, 2011). CHI brings together critical pedagogy and historical inquiry/thinking skills to generate explicit examinations of dominant historical narratives promoted in official curriculum and interrogations of the power structures which reproduce said narratives in schools and society at large (Blevins et al., 2020). Participating in critical examinations and interrogations involves two additional concepts framing this study: Difficult Histories and Historical Perspective Recognition (HPR).

Difficult Histories

Broadly, the concept of difficult history applies to historical events which, when encountered by learners, may trigger negative emotional responses and/or psychological discomfort (Goldberg, 2020; Zembylas & Loukaidis, 2021). According to Goldberg (2020),

> Difficult histories expose learners to historical suffering and victimization that constitute a collective trauma. The difficulty stems from the strong emotional reactions or ethical responses learners may evince, undermining their trust in security and morality in the world (p. 130)

While this seems commonsensical, it becomes less so when asking, "difficult for who?" and "what makes it difficult?" Perspectivity and positionality structure the concept, making questions like "difficult for who?" and "what makes [difficult history] difficult?" crucial to analysis (Goldberg, 2020). For instance, one person's difficult history may just be factual data to another (Gross & Terra, 2018). The emotional reactions linked to collective trauma and/or ethical responses distinguish what might appear factual to one learner while difficult to another. Historical positionalities linked to race, class, gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity, and social location all intersect and may generate potential difficulties when interpreting and understanding complex histories (Zembylas & Loukaidis, 2021). The differing standpoints these positionalities create lend different emotional and ethical responses to the histories being learned about.

An example of a difficult history in the United States' context would be racial slavery. In many settler colonial contexts, including the United States, histories connected to the institution of racialized slavery evoke emotional and psychological responses associated with difficult history. It is a history of brutality and subjugation perpetrated primarily by white Europeans against Indigenous peoples marked outside the boundaries of personhood (i.e., whiteness) with little restitution in the aftermath. Debates over historical representations of slavery and racism in social studies curriculum provide just one of many examples emphasizing the ongoing struggle in US society over the historical institution of racial slavery and how it influences culture, society, and institutions today (Horton & Horton, 2006; Kelley, 2014; Tyack, 1974). Recent efforts by politically and culturally conservative state legislatures to pass policies limiting or banning classroom discussions concerning this history and its influences in the present attest to one significant aspect of this ongoing struggle (Kim, 2021).

Together, politicized debates and policies move to classify racial slavery as a particularly controversial difficult history which effectively leads some teachers to avoid it altogether (Zou & Kao, 2021) or continue sidestepping, sanitizing, or over-simplifying the topic in classrooms (Swalwell et al., 2015). Although slavery is often taught in reductive ways to avoid expounding on the mistreatment of enslaved peoples and its influence upon present social relations, social studies teachers do a disservice to students in obscuring the linkages to the current structural inequalities fashioned by the institution of slavery. We agree with King and Woodson (2017) who assert that teachers can still educate their students about slavery "in ways that honor the humanity of the enslaved, that respect our students' emotional needs, and that support our students' ability to use the lessons of slavery to make sense of contemporary race relations and human rights debates" (p. 3).

The teaching of difficult histories has major potential in social studies education (Epstein & Peck, 2017). If we accept the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) assertion that social studies education be used to promote competent citizenship, then difficult histories must be a core part of

the curriculum (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Goldberg, 2020; Zembylas, 2017). Students who have worked with difficult histories in scaffolded, appropriate fashions tend to better empathize with marginalized peoples (Miles, 2019), better understand who is included and excluded from historical narratives (Blevins & Salinas, 2012; Camicia, 2016), and critically discuss past and ongoing structures of oppression (Hess, 2004). Empathy, critical structural analysis, and deliberation are critical skills that the competent citizen needs to operate in a multicultural democratic society (Castro, 2013; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

Historical Perspective Recognition

Historical perspective recognition (HPR) is a concept advanced by Barton & Levstik (2004) to help students develop the requisite skills for participatory democracy. HPR draws on notions of empathy to make sense of different viewpoints on the past in order to recognize the potential logic and coherence of a particular historical perspective (Barton & Levstik, 2004). Sticking with our previous example of racial slavery, HPR would task students to empathize with the plight of enslaved peoples to better understand the decisions they made in a particular historical context. Slavery is often taught from a detached, "objective" viewpoint to sidestep controversy but this comes at the cost of complete, humanizing narratives (Brown & Brown, 2010). This "objective" approach to history masks its political nature and ultimately serves to buttress the dominant narrative (Loewen, 2018; Wineburg, 2001). HPR would have students take the perspective of the enslaved and build the narrative from there. This challenges the dominant narrative (slavery as a necessary but unfortunate economic reality) and humanizes it (Bartolomé, 1994) so the standpoint of the enslaved people is centered.

Continuing with NCSS' notion of social studies for citizenship, HPR helps develop the exposure, empathy, and critical reasoning necessary for competent citizenship. HPR exposes students to different worldviews and opinions outside of the dominant whitestream. Exposure is an important facet of citizenship as it opens up minds and demystifies "others" which can empower deliberation across differences (Parker, 2008). Empathy closes the gap between people as it offers the opportunity to see things from another's perspective (Seixas & Peck, 2004). Critical reasoning is crucial for a competent citizen as it enables them to look at the options, consider their potentialities, deliberate with others, and take informed action (Knowles & Clark, 2013). HPR has the potential to develop students' capacity for tolerance and recognition, two key aspects for a justice-oriented citizenry (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

We believe that difficult history and HPR are good components for social studies education and, by extension, developing the dispositions for critical multicultural citizenship. There has been some great work on in-service teachers handling of difficult history (Garrett, 2011; Zembylas, 2017; Zembylas & Loukaidis, 2021) and also research on the preservice teacher affective responses to difficult history (Sheppard & Levy, 2019; White, 2009; Zembylas & Baker, 2002). Moving from this and other related lines of literature, we move to better understand the challenges social studies preservice teachers perceived with difficult histories and historical perspective recognition. Our hope is that this will better illuminate obstacles or resistances to difficult history and HPR in the process of teaching PSSTs CHI.

Method

Setting & Procedure

We chose teacher education programs because they are influential to the dispositions, pedagogy, and beliefs of future teachers (Fairbanks et al., 2010; Karagiorgi & Symeou, 2005). Using a qualitative

case study methodology (Denzin, 2015), we worked with five preservice social studies teachers in a master's plus teaching certification program in a large university in the southwest United States. An emphasis of the program is multicultural teaching centered around social justice. The convenient sample (Miles et al., 2020) was taken from a methods course in which a cohort of five participants was required to take. The classes took place over Zoom as the university (prudently) opted for remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Observations, semi-structured interviews, and artifact analyses served as our data sets. We used three different sources to triangulate the data to minimize the influence from a single input, find connections between each set, and support our findings (Maxwell, 2005). All contact was made virtually through emails and Zoom meetings due to the pandemic. Over 45 hours of observations were made of the virtual classroom setting and the researchers were reactive observers (Streib, 2011). All fifteen classes were observed in their entirety and recorded through Zoom. We actively took notes during these class sessions and re-watched the Zoom recordings to supplement our observation notes.

We also conducted artifact analyses with three lesson plan units created by study participants which focused on Spanish colonization of the Americas. These lesson plans gave us an insight into how PSSTs were applying the concepts of difficult history and HPR to their practice. Lastly, we interviewed the five participants. The interviews were semi-structured and revolved around the themes of difficult history and HPR (Merriam et al., 2001; Miles et al., 2020). In the interviews, we included questions about the unit projects, discussions, and readings we had in class. Afterwards, we transcribed the interviews for later coding and analysis.

Once we collected a piece of data (e.g., a lesson plan from their unit), we read through it once to identify broad themes. Individually, we developed a coding strategy based on the broad themes we found from our initial reading. Coming together, we compared our codes, consolidated them, and re-worked our codebook in order to have a more consistent lens to our analysis. We coded together manually to establish consistency and find patterns in the data. Using our collaborative codebook for our second reading, our refined analysis led to the emergence of two themes which will explicated in the results section below.

Participants

We had five participants total. Three of them identified as male and two identified as female. One of the males and two of the females were White and the other two males were of Chinese descent. Both of the Chinese-American participants immigrated to the United States as young children. Below is a short table of the participant demographics to help establish their positionalities.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Name	Racial Identification	Gender Identity	Socioeconomic Status	Place where they grew up
Albert	Asian	Male	Middle	China & Southeast US

Hannah	White	Female	Upper-Middle	Northeast US
Jean	Asian	Male	Middle	China & Western US
Simone	White	Female	Upper-Middle	Northeast US
Soren	White	Male	Upper-Middle	Northeast US

Note. All names have been changed to protect the identity of the participants.

Positionality

Establishing where we stand in relation to the "other" (Merriam et al., 2001) is an important part of our qualitative study. All three of the researchers identify as cis gendered, heterosexual males. Two of the researchers are white and the other is Arab-American and white. All three were former social studies teachers in urban settings among a diverse population of students.

We fall into a couple of different quadrants in Banks' Typology of Cross Cultural Researchers (1998). In some regards, we are indigenous-insiders in that we have been teachers, part of teacher preparation programs, and, depending on the researcher and participant, have some overlap in race, gender, and class. In other regards, we are external-outsiders along racial, gender, and class lines depending on the combination of participant and researcher. Throughout this research project we acknowledged our positionalities and how they give us different perspectives on teaching, difficult history, and HPR than our participants.

Results

Two themes emerged from our analysis underscoring important conceptual (mis)understandings among PSTs as they learned CHI. We organized themes under this umbrella phrase to highlight how both misunderstandings and understandings among participants generated specific limits to potential CHI enactments. First, participants' misunderstanding with the concept of difficult history, along with misunderstanding of epistemological underpinnings of CHI and HPR, limited and in some instances prevented CHI enactments. And second, participants' concern for potentially doing harm to students from historically marginalized groups with CHI represented another limiting conceptual misunderstanding.

Misunderstanding Critical Historical Thinking and Difficult History

Through the process of learning CHI in their second social studies teaching methods course, participants encountered recurring course themes and texts purposefully selected to build upon work started in their first methods course. There they were exposed to concepts of difficult history, historical thinking, and critical pedagogy which positioned them for pre-planned engagements with CHI in the second methods course. Of the five participants, two demonstrated adequate conceptual understandings while the other three demonstrated conceptual misunderstandings. Characterizing the latter group as the "objective history camp" and the former as the "multiple histories camp," each camp's respective conceptual (mis)understandings influenced their perceptions concerning possibilities for including difficult history and potentially enacting CHI.

The objective history camp consisted of three male participants, Soren, Jean, and Albert. As indicated in this group's moniker, participants articulated epistemological stances framing historical knowledge as an demonstrable series of events, and although they acknowledged different interpretations of historical events exist, they believed that what ultimately happened in the past is immutable. For example, Albert, when discussing the Spanish conquest and colonization of the Americas, explained:

> You have the Spanish explorers who didn't necessarily set out to conquer people, they set out to find new land. I think the first thing we need to really analyze critically is why the Spanish set out in the first place. And we have to ask the question, did they expect to find people there, or did they not [as was the case with] Christopher Columbus. And this is a dominant narrative for sure, right? And it's probably very well true because there [are] documents, right? I don't think there should be a counternarrative to this. [They were] trying to find India...and if it is the truth, then, OK, fine. Nobody else is harmed by saying [they] were just trying to find India. (Albert, Interview 1, 4/12/2021)

Running counter to epistemic stances grounding sociocultural (Barton & Levstik, 2004) and critical approaches to historical thinking (Epstein & Peck, 2017; Salinas & Blevins, 2014), this camp hesitated and/or resisted historical thinking perspectives that, in their view, violated disciplinary-based historical thinking methods (e.g., Wineburg, 2001). For example, the three male participants believed including notions of care and emotion (e.g., Barton & Levstik, 2004) in historical thinking would taint or produce misleading conclusions about historical events. Though they understood that interpreting historical events usually evoked emotional responses, they were concerned with avoiding negative consequences stemming from emotionally compromised reasoning and judgment. Expressing this view in interviews and as group members collaborating on their CHI unit plans, they argued that if people get angry at the Spanish for their violent colonization of America, then anger guides thought, leading people in the present to magnify relatively unimportant phenomena while simultaneously minimizing crucial ones. For instance, when sharing his hesitation surrounding colonialism counternarratives, Soren stated:

> Maybe we focus too much on these topics, rather than the present, getting hung up on them and internalizing them... I can see how [overemphasizing victimization] could be a problem, especially when you bring in more, again, I'll go to slavery, that's a hard history. Especially people affected by slavery, Black people, not seeing themselves in that position. Not seeing themselves as victims of this history. (Soren, Interview 1, 4/16/2021)

Additionally, this camp struggled to articulate adequate conceptual understandings of difficult history and HPR. Responses to interviewer and methods course instructor questions pertaining specifically to definitional and general understandings of difficult histories and HPR further indicated conceptual misunderstandings. During interviews, each participant requested clarifying definitions and attempted to extrapolate based on the information provided by the interviewer. For example, when Jean was asked to explain HPR he responded,

> I can't pull [the definition] off the reading, but I do remember it from our class and maybe [my professor's] class about historical empathy, I think it was historic empathy... So I think, for example, say we're teaching history about Nazis. We all recognize that it is wrong...but back then, people thought differently. So I think historical perspective recognition is understanding the perspectives of those who lived back then and think like them, and not using

our modern perspective or use our modern moral standards to judge the actions of those in the past. (Jean, Interview 1, 4/14/2021)

In drawing historical connections and demonstrating a basic understanding of presentism, Jean articulated a broad conceptual understanding of HPR. However, this articulation lacked critical depth and nuance which may explain limited and inadequate demonstrations of conceptual understanding in performance tasks and unit plans. Jean's response conveyed an objective historical view in his example about the Nazis that, among other things, failed to include multiple perspectives and narratives of resistance. In other words, he mistook HPR as replacing one singular view with another rather than troubling the singular view and adding nuance through multiple viewpoints on a historical event or phenomenon. Along with Jean, Soren and Albert's conceptual misunderstandings reflect what scholars conceptualize as taking an additive approach to history education (Banks, 1994; Dilworth, 2012). Here, attempts to explore how historical events may be constructed differently by the subaltern are eschewed, while dominant historical narratives remain uncontested and merely appended with a marginal viewpoint. In preferring an additive approach, they expressed beliefs that straying too far from that narrative would be fabricating facts. Across all three participants, there was a firm assertion that it would be a disservice to students to dilute the "facts" or distract from "what actually happened." This, of course, assumed the accuracy of the dominant narrative while further marginalizing the narratives of subjugated peoples.

Significantly, members from the multiple histories camp, along with their counterparts, also mistakenly believed they were enacting HPR when in fact their curricular decision was additive. For example, early in the unit planning process, both groups struggled to develop historical inquiries supporting the construction of historical counternarratives centering indigenous perspectives on Spanish colonization. Participant struggles appeared to stem from efforts to evaluate and assess relationships between dominant and subjugated historical narratives. However, by the end of the assignment, only the objective history camp stuck with the dominant narrative of Spanish colonization as a seemingly natural and logical product of historical development. Indigenous perspectives were included but, as perhaps expected, as an addition to the dominant narrative, not as a different, unique construction of the historical events.

(Mis)understanding CHI, Doing Harm, & Emotion

The study's two female participants, Hannah and Simone, provided data leading us to place them in the multiple histories camp. Both believed that there is not a hard and true objective history but a history whose narrative is molded by those constructing it. They argued that historical narratives were in fact social constructions dependent upon particular standpoints of those constructing histories. Hannah also shared how it is important to "shift perspectives" in order to better understand the plight of people outside of the dominant group via historical counternarratives. Emphasizing this point, Hannah explained:

> I think it's about exercising that empathy and kind of really putting yourself there and being able to shift perspectives and out of your own bubble, like, I think when we learn about the past, it's so easy to just rattle off facts and dates. And I think that it's really important to... to imagine what it would have been like for those people in those times, but not just one group really across the board. (Hannah, Interview 1, 4/13/2021)

However, despite articulating epistemic stances conducive to potential enactments of CHI, Hannah and Simone, along with the other three participants all expressed concerns over potentially harming students, particularly students from historically marginalized groups, with CHI and difficult histories. More specifically, participants were concerned about potentially harming students emotionally and damaging classroom relations with ham-fisted or ill-conceived attempts to include difficult history and/or CHI. In interviews, participants expressed concern for students' emotional, psychological, cultural well-being as they emphasized wanting to avoid hurting students with exposures to difficult histories and/or traumatizing students through their own mishandling of CHI.

In the multiple histories camp, participants articulated understandings concerning the relationship between trauma, difficult histories and how empathy can affect the empathizer. Hannah and Simone were cognizant that if they taught the material insensitively, it could cause harm or exacerbate trauma. Teaching the material insensitively tended to be expressed in terms of not knowing enough content knowledge in order to competently address difficult histories. They repeatedly shared their anxiety in this regard and feared their perceived lack of knowledge would result in generating what they hoped to combat—namely, dehumanization. Accordingly, both expressed this fear while sharing their desire to create an inclusive, critical, and humanizing social studies classroom environment. From their perspective, if, as future social studies teachers, they were to somehow perpetuate the traumas many students embody from erasure or marginalization of subjugated histories, then they would be working against purpose driven, ethical visions for teaching. Reflecting this rationale, Simone stated,

> I think that when we can understand history, that it's not just cut and dry facts, but it's made up of stories. A lot of times we are focusing on individual stories perhaps. When we can think about it as these are actual humans, the stories of humans, I think it allows us to have more empathy. (Simone, Interview 1, 4/16/2021)

In comments like this, both participants conceptualized empathy as crucial to sound historical study and humanizing pedagogical approaches that are culturally responsive to student perceptions of history.

In the objective histories camp, participants also articulated concerns regarding the potential harm difficult histories could do to students in social studies classrooms. Expressing his hesitations with difficult history in the classroom, Albert described an encounter he observed in the field as a pre-service teacher intern where he believed difficult history negatively impacted a student of color. Albert explained,

> I was actually helping my [cooperating teacher] teach about the evolution of the abolitionist movement and just last week and with the abolitionist movement, obviously slavery is inherent in that… And then you have this one Black female all the way up front. And you can tell, I mean, you could just straight up tell she was having an incredibly difficult time with this topic. I mean, really, really hard time. I mean, it's... I can't even describe her body language. The look on her face. I mean, it was heartbreaking. (Albert, Interview 1, 4/12/2021)

Albert's resistance to including emotion in historical study permeated this account, which, significantly, was told primarily from a sympathetic stance rather than an empathic stance. Albert's sympathy for this student's "heartbreaking" response to a classroom engagement with difficult history left him stuck in an egocentric interpretive frame of reference. His own emotional response seemingly

positioned him to double-down on emotion-free history education. Articulating this view, Albert explained,

> I think, though, that we're prone to... I think one of the things that we ought to take from history is the negative impact of emotions and feelings. Okay? So I've had a lot of mind sharpening, I've had a lot of critical thinking skills, and then in the Marine Corps, you have to think critically and dispassionately, right? I think you really gain a lot of perspective when you take emotion out of it. And that's very relevant today, where you have two sides not meeting in the middle because they're so emotionally charged. It's incredibly difficult for people to meet in the middle, and that's a very dangerous place for us to be. (Albert, Interview 1, 4/12/2021)

Again, participants in the objective histories camp shared a similar fear of harming students with the multiple histories camp. However, this shared fear diverged according to participant conceptual (mis)understandings. For the multiple histories camp, conceptual understandings reflected in CHI-appropriate epistemic stances led Hannah and Simone to take up ideological stances conducive to CHI (Magill & Salinas, 2019). However, their understanding led them to believe in and want to enact CHI, but ultimately concerned over their lack of knowledge and skill to appropriately carry it out. In contrast, the objective camp articulated their fears primarily in terms of avoiding students becoming overly-emotional in the classroom, inhibiting sound historical study, and preventing consensus-oriented citizenship education. For Jean, "emotions always cloud judgement," and social studies teachers should attempt to be objective and limit the role of emotion. Extending this stance, Albert argued that emotion not only muddies historical analysis, it also makes history polarizing, and sows disunity. Going even further, he also argued that if the teachers fall into this trap, then the disservice to students is two-fold: not only are they modeling poor historical thinking but they are also contributed to a [ideological] divide that is not desirable and may not be bridgeable. Thus, the epistemic and ideological stances communicated by the objective camp not only threw their conceptual misunderstandings into relief, they also positioned Jean, Albert, and Soren to hesitate and/or resist potentially infusing CHI methods into their instructional repertoire.

Discussion

Exploration of themes identified in our examination of PSST engagements with CHI led to the emergence of two findings which corroborate and extend prior research. First, participant misunderstandings surrounding CHI indicated that PSST ideological clarity and epistemic cognition are specific aspects in the process of teaching CHI that teacher educators must explicitly address during methods course instruction. Second, conceptual (mis)understandings demonstrated the significance of PSST historical positionality, political clarity and subject area consciousness to the process of learning and teaching CHI.

Cultivating Critical Postures: Addressing Ideological Clarity and Epistemic Cognition

Rooted in critical pedagogy (McLaren, 2003), CHI requires teachers to take up a critical stance with regards to ideology and epistemology. Following Magill (2019), this critical stance may also be conceptualized as a critically civic ontological posture which represents a teacher's multirelational understandings and embodiment of ontology, ideology, and praxis (p. 2). Accordingly, "critically civic teachers understand, not only the curriculum but also each of their own actions and pedagogy as oppressive and alienating or liberating and transforming" (p. 4). Participants' conceptual

misunderstandings exposed their inability and/or unwillingness to engage ideological analysis and historical inquiry through a critical lens.

Demonstrating a lack of ideological clarity (Bartolomé, 2004), participants in the objective histories camp tended to eschew ideological analysis and generally felt comfortable perpetuating dominant ideologies through curriculum decision-making. According to Bartolomé (2000):

> ideological clarity requires that teachers' individual explanations be compared and contrasted with those proposed by the dominant society. It is to be hoped that the juxtaposing of ideologies forces teachers to better understand if, when, and how their belief systems uncritically reflect those of the dominant society and support unfair and inequitable conditions. (p. 168)

Collectively, Jean, Soren, and Albert not only expressed discomfort and confusion when asked to engage in ideological analysis, they also resisted opportunities, through avoidance and vocalized opposition, to consider how their beliefs might be linked to unjust social relations. We argue that this finding serves as an important reminder of the significance of attending to preservice teacher ideological postures, even in contexts like the urban teacher program under study here, which presumably hosts preservice teachers who identify with critical ideological stances reflected in CHI. Additionally, we argue that this study also positions teacher educators to further explore possibilities for cultivating critical postures via ideological clarity among resistant PSSTs.

Relatedly, this camp's epistemic stance toward the study of history reflected lower levels of conceptual understanding concerning the relationship between evidence, the past, and history (Lee & Shemilt, 2003). Instantiated in claims like Albert's when he pointed to source documents as evidence purportedly proving that the original motive for Spanish colonization was the search for a water route to India, he demonstrated an epistemic stance which assumes evidence—i.e., primary source documents—to be a direct source to the past (Lee & Shemilt, 2003; Maggioni et al., 2009). Accordingly, source documents are unquestionably assumed to be factual information, leading to a problematic conflation of the past and history. Following Maggioni et al. (2009), this view evinced epistemic cognition demonstrating a belief that history simply reflects the past, "like the calm surface of a beautiful mountain lake would reflect the surrounding peaks" (p. 194). While the objective histories camp occupied stances reflective of disciplinary perspectives on historical thinking (e.g., Seixas & Peck, 2004; Wineburg, 2001), their own limited historical thinking skills inhibited their ability to carry out historical thinking as students and likely prevent possible future engagements with (critical) historical inquiry when they begin teaching in classrooms.

Historical thinking literature consistently underscores the role of education in facilitating students' historical thinking skills (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Van Sledright, 2002; Wineburg, 2001). Accordingly, historical thinking entails interpreting evidence, accounts and causation through a deliberate and patient effort to construct historical knowledge. Research at the intersection of epistemic cognition and historical thinking education supports arguments that the act of doing history is "unnatural" (Wineburg, 2001) and requires facilitating the development of epistemic cognition (VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016). Referring to individualized cognitive processes which provide a particular frame of reference for assessing knowledge in terms of criteria, limits, and certainty, epistemic cognition offers a conceptual lens for analyzing the relationship between history teacher decision-making and their epistemic stance (Maggioni et al., 2009). Drawing on this lens, participants from both camps demonstrated divergent epistemic stances with regard to CHI which supports prior research drawing important connections between historical thinking, epistemic cognition, and teacher decision-

making. Given our study's concern with explicitly critical methods of historical thinking, this finding extends research by linking up with calls to explore connections between historical thinking, epistemic cognition, teacher decision-making and a teachers' ontological approach to human relation (Magill & Salinas, 2019).

Corroborating & Extending CHI Research

Scholars of CHI have previously identified key considerations for the development of teachers capable of enacting CHI. Notions of historical positional, political clarity, and subject area consciousness have all been described in empirical literature detailing efforts of PSSTs and inservice teacher attempting to enact CHI in classrooms (Blevins et al., 2020; Salinas & Blevins, 2013; Salinas & Sullivan, 2007). Our study corroborates previous study findings while also extending the literature by specifying challenges teacher educators may face when teaching CHI, difficult history, and HPR.

Participant historical positionality influenced decision-making and conceptual (mis)understandings surrounding CHI, difficult history, and HPR. Salinas, Blevins, and Magill (2020) assert "Regardless of the potential for critical historical inquiry to create more inclusive and just representations of the past, a teacher's identity, dispositions, historical positionality, and historical stances often inform if and how this pedagogical tool will be used in the classroom" (p. 37). Whether it be participants explicitly referencing their military background as influencing their thought processes or the two female participants drawing on feminist standpoint theory when explaining their understanding of historical thinking, historical positionality influenced their receptivity and approaches when learning CHI, difficult history, and HPR. While the literature recognizes the significance of historical positionality (e.g., Salinas & Blevins, 2013), it has yet to highlight instances of historical positionalities generating specific resistances to CHI. Furthermore, the literature has not empirically explored how teacher educators might address such resistances in order to shift critically civic postures and epistemic stances in the process of preparing PSSTs to create inclusive, justice-oriented social studies classrooms.

Our study positions future research to extend this and related lines of literature concerning historical thinking education and preservice teacher resistance and discomfort. Notions of political clarity (Bartolomé, 2004) were also observed to be crucial to PSST conceptual (mis)understandings. Bartolomé defines political clarity as "the ongoing process by which individuals achieve ever-deepening consciousness of the sociopolitical and economic realities that shape their lives and their capacity to transform such material and symbolic conditions" (p. 98). Participants in the multiple histories camp demonstrated political clarity when articulating the significance of empathy to historical thinking, describing their fear of harming marginalized students, and through their unit plans which demonstrated conceptual understandings surrounding counter-narratives. Conversely, the objective histories camp did not demonstrate political clarity as their frames of reference remained within whitestream hegemonic notions of truth and history (Urrieta, 2004).

In both cases, participant camps offer important insights positioning future studies to focus on political clarity development oriented toward cultivating preservice teacher ideological postures conducive to critical/humanizing pedagogy (Bartolomé, 2004; Magill, 2019). Also noted in prior CHI research, participants in this study also expressed anxiety around their own perceived lack of content knowledge they believed necessary to responsibly and competently enact CHI. Scholars of CHI have previously discussed the relationship between the notion of subject-area consciousness and pedagogical content knowledge, and enactments of CHI (Blevins et al., 2020; Magill & Salinas, 2019).

According to Blevins et al. (2020),

> To effectively nuance an oppressive historical narrative requires teachers to know where to obtain materials and resources, understand how to read difficult texts, recognize how to analyze mysterious artifacts and resources, and most importantly, be proficient in their translation of these skills to students. (p. 39)

Our study adds to this discussion by underscoring how conceptual (mis)understandings surrounding CHI inhibit PSSTs attempts to locate appropriate sources and organize curriculum in ways supporting the construction of historical counter-narratives.

Conclusion

Enacting CHI methods that include difficult histories make possible humanizing social studies pedagogy which centers dialogic teacher-student relations where marginalized student experiences are valued, official curriculum is critically engaged, and subjugated forms of knowledge are included (Blevins et al., 2015). CHI offers a method for enacting critical and multicultural citizenship education which supports, "the quest for critical inquiry and awareness with actions necessary to increase access to democratic ways of life in a diverse society" (Castro, 2013, p. 222). However, this study underscores important considerations for critical social studies teacher educators seeking to prepare PSSTs to enact CHI. Conceptual (mis)understandings like the ones explored in this study must be addressed through pedagogical decision-making which attends to notions of preservice teacher epistemic cognition and historical positionality, while also devising related methods cultivating both political clarity and subject-areas consciousness.

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