

Johan Sandahl

Preparing for Citizenship: The Value of Second Order Thinking Concepts in Social Science Education

Social Science as a school subject aims at making students knowledgeable in societal issues as well as preparing them for citizenship. Despite the strong position of Social Science in the Swedish school curricula, little research has been done in the field. Previous research has mainly concentrated on factual knowledge and conceptual learning, or the role of deliberation in class activities. Less research has focused on the role of disciplinary thinking and how that might promote learning to think like a social scientist while at the same time preparing students for citizenship. By using a conceptual framework from history didactics, Social Science education is in the following text explored in search of second order thinking concepts. Also, the relationship between these concepts and democratic socialisation is discussed. By focusing on one substantial case, this study tries to reach beyond the various topics commonly covered in Social Science education. The research was conducted by observing teaching in Social Science and interviewing six experienced teachers. Using this conceptual framework, ideas on how to organise, analyse, interpret and critically review discourses in society were constructed as six proposed second order thinking concepts of Social Science: social science causality, social science evidence and inference, social science abstraction, social science comparison and contrast, social science perspective taking and the evaluative dimension. The argument is that when students work scientifically they develop a way of thinking about society and they challenge their set opinions about different topics. Therefore, second order thinking concepts are important for learning Social Science and at the same time preparing students for a life as citizens.

Keywords:

social science, social studies, civics, didactics, second order concepts, second order thinking concepts, citizenship education, civic literacy

1 Introduction

Two truths approach each other. One comes from inside, the other from outside, and where they meet we have a chance to catch sight of ourselves.

(‘Preludes’ by Tomas Tranströmer, 2001:38)

All education aims at making students knowledgeable in subject matter while at the same time preparing them for life outside school. One of the most emphasised preparations is that of citizenship. This is often referred to as citizenship education where students are informed about, prepared for and gain knowledge through citizenship (Olson, 2008). Citizenship education, in this definition, includes knowledge, abilities, attitudes and experiences that students need in order to be informed and active citizens (Campbell, 2012). Citizenship education raises questions concerning what kind of knowledge and abilities teaching should focus on in order to advance students’ possibilities to become informed

and active citizens. One way to explore a possible answer to this question is to study the subject assigned for political socialisation. In a Nordic context, the main subject designated for addressing political education and contemporary issues is Social Science education (“Samhällskunskap” in Swedish, cf. Børhaug 2011, p. 25, Christensen, 2011 & 2013). Social Science is an interdisciplinary subject consisting of several academic disciplines such as political science, sociology and economics. The dual role of Social Science as both a subject to be *learned* and a subject to be *used* raises questions on what kind of disciplinary knowledge and abilities Social Science education contributes within the process of students’ citizenship education.

Since the 1960s Social Science has had a strong position in the Swedish curricula; it is a compulsory subject throughout the school system (ages 7-19), and becomes a separately taught subject in upper secondary school (it is often taught within “social studies” at the lower stages). It is, however, poorly explored in research. Among Social Science didacticians much attention has been on factual knowledge and conceptual learning, specifically focusing on concepts within the political and economical domains (such as “democracy” and “price”, respectively, see Bronäs, 2000 and Lundholm & Davies, 2013). Pedagogical researchers have criticised this focus concerning the transformation of the academic content in school subjects and argued for the values of discussion and debate where the students’ own ideas on societal issues can be discussed. In this tradition, citizenship education has been promoted as a cross-curricular phenomenon best realised through deliberative teaching (Englund, 2006).

Johan Sandahl is PhD-candidate at the Centre for Teaching and Learning in the *Humanities (CeHum)* at Stockholm University, SE-106 91, Stockholm, Sweden.

E-mail: johan.sandahl@cehum.su.se



In Sweden, Social Science is the primary school subject where the students' own ideas on societal matters engage the perspectives they encounter in the social sciences. By analysing data collected from interviews with six upper secondary Social Science teachers, and observations of their classes, this article will examine to what extent teachers work with scientific disciplinary knowledge in class and under what conditions such knowledge is being taught. Also, the relationship between disciplinary knowledge and citizenship education is discussed. By using a conceptual framework from history didactics, referred to as first and second order concepts, the question of disciplinary knowledge and citizenship education is examined; first order concepts are the terms and concepts that constitute the substantial knowledge of the discipline and second order thinking concepts are the procedural ways that social scientist "think" when they organise, analyse and critically review societal issues. In this framework, knowledge and abilities are considered as intertwined: no analysis or critical thinking can be accomplished without deep factual knowledge (Lee, 2005).

The aim of this article is to explore and describe possible second order thinking concepts in Social Science education by studying upper secondary teachers' intentions and actual teaching in Social Science classrooms. The suggested concepts can be seen as a consistent tool kit that can be used to help students advance their ability to analyse and critically review societal issues. Furthermore, the aim is to discuss how these concepts can play a part in citizenship education. The following research questions are addressed: What second order thinking concepts can be identified in the teachers' reflections upon their teaching, and how might these concepts be used in students' democratic life during and after their formal schooling? This article is a further development of a licentiate thesis published in 2011 (Sandahl, 2011).

2 Social science education

In order to understand the subject of the study, Social Science, it is necessary to know its background and what aims are concentrated on in school. Social Science (referred to in Swedish as 'Samhällskunskap') was introduced in Sweden after the Second World War in an effort to educate students on societal issues and to foster them into good democratic citizens. Before 1945, history was the main subject for socialization into society, but the nationalistic tendencies in history education came under scrutiny. Social Science became a new and politically formulated subject that was meant to vaccinate young people against totalitarian ideologies by focusing on civic literacy and democratic ideals. However, just as in the case of the general school curriculum, there has been a shift in emphasis on knowledge and fostering (Englund, 1986; Olson, 2008; Bronäs 2003). Since the 1960s, Social Science has been the assigned subject with responsibility for political education in Sweden (Ekman & Pilo, 2012, p. 58).

Social Science has been described as a "kaleidoscope of loosely connected parts" (Bronäs & Selander, 2002, p. 75) with a strong emphasis on conveying facts, especially within politics and economics (Bernmark-Ottosson, 2009; Lindmark, 2013). The "kaleidoscope" is also visible in the current curricula for upper secondary school. The content matter is a mix of different subfields mainly within political science, economics and sociology. Also emphasised in the curricula are the abilities to gather and critically review information and analyse societal issues. The aim is for students to "develop a scientific approach to social issues and an understanding of scientific work on social issues" (The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2012, p. 2). The curricula does not systematically explain what a scientific approach in Social Science might consist of other than that it should involve "concepts, theories, models and methods from the social sciences" (The Swedish National Agency for Education 2012:2) and clues are scattered under different headlines such as "Aim of the Subject", "Core Content" and "Knowledge Requirements" (The Swedish National Agency for Education 2012, cf. Sandahl, 2014). Still, advancing students' knowledge and abilities through a scientific approach "should contribute to creating conditions for active participation in the life of society" (The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2012, p. 2).

Even though Social Science is a mandatory subject throughout the entire Swedish school system, there has been little didactic research. One important factor related to this is that there is no equivalent discipline at the university level. In fact, social science is composed of four university disciplines: political science, sociology, economics and human geography (Bernmark-Ottosson 2009). Among these, political scientists have shown some interest in didactic research, but mainly in studying political socialisation among the youth or young people's attitudes towards democracy. In these studies, Social Science education is used as an object of study (e.g. Broman, 2009; Ekman, 2007). Pedagogical researchers have mainly concentrated their attention on deliberation in Social Science education, focusing on discussion and debate as a way to allow students to learn factual knowledge as well as develop democratic skills. In other words, the focus has been aimed at discourse climate and learning to understand how other people think about societal issues, thus enhancing students' knowledge and skills as citizens. Furthermore, deliberation refers to a generic skill, which means that it might be equally important in other school subjects such as history or religious education (Englund, 2006). Within this tradition there has been strong scepticism towards teaching disciplinary knowledge in school (Englund, 1994).

Within Social Science didactics there has been a discussion on core content and abilities (often referred to as "skills") within the subject. However, most attention has been focused on important concepts from various social sciences (Verneresson, 1999; Severin, 2002; cf. Lundholm & Davies 2013). Several researchers have



pointed out that conceptual learning is an important part of Social Science education, but also that it is just one part of teaching (Severin 2002, Odenstad 2010). Others discuss abilities in general terms such as “critical thinking” or “analyse”, but rarely consider the meaning of such concepts within the specific domain of Social Science Education (Kinchloe, 2001; Newmann 1987 & 1990; Case, 2005; cf. Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010). Torben Spanget Christensen (2011 & 2013) has highlighted the importance of disciplinary knowledge where knowledge, methods and theories from the social science disciplines can be used for advancing students’ ability to analyse and critically review societal issues. Furthermore, Spanget Christensen argues for the use of disciplinary knowledge to advance students’ political self-reflection.

In conclusion, neither research tradition has offered a systematic way of describing what scientific disciplinary knowledge might be in a school context besides “the facts”. Consequently, considerable energy has been invested in arguing for or against learning the facts of the subject. Furthermore, very little has been done to examine how disciplinary knowledge can contribute to citizenship education. In the following section, attention will be focused on another field closely linked with Social Science education: history education. In history education there has been a long tradition of trying to define what a disciplinary approach might be in a school context and how it can contribute to citizenship education.

3 Defining the disciplinary approach: applying a theoretical framework from history education

In subject matter didactics and pedagogy much theoretical work has been aimed at distinguishing different kinds of knowledge from each other. Benjamin Bloom and his followers attempted to characterise six levels of cognition, from basic information and memorising to judging the value of information (Anderson 1994). These six typologies are sometimes divided into two different categories: factual knowledge and procedural knowledge, or low order thinking and high order thinking (Anderson, Krathwohl, Airasan & Bloom, 2000; Näsström, 2008). Factual knowledge/low order thinking is the understanding of concepts and knowing the facts; procedural knowledge/high order thinking is using metacognitive knowledge to process and analyse problems (cf. Donovan & Bransford, 2005, p. 1-2).

This cognitive approach to knowledge had a huge impact on history didactics in England in the 1970s. Pioneers like Denis Shemilt and Peter Lee started researching what constituted high order thinking in school history. Mainly based on an academic understanding of history, they set out to change history teaching and its focus on the “memorisation of facts” (Schools History 13-16 Project 1976, p. 50; Shemilt, 1980). From the 1990s onward several researchers in the United States and Canada joined the discussion (e.g. Wineburg, 1991; Seixas & Peck, 2004) and a theoretical

framework began to develop. This framework made a distinction between first- and second-order concepts. First-order concepts are all the facts, terms and concepts found in history as an academic discipline. These factual, or substantial, concepts could be divided into two subgroups, where the first group consists of terms that are propositional, for example “king”, and the other group consists of compound concepts such as “the enlightenment”. Compound concepts are not isolated, but are part of a wider context that includes a bundle of events, actions and ideas (Lee, 2005 & 2006). However, first order concepts are not sufficient to capture what history is about and what is to be learnt. In addition to facts and content matter, there are second order concepts: disciplinary and procedural tools that help historians organise, analyse, interpret and critically review history. These concepts are not bound to specific historical topics or epochs (cf. “the enlightenment” above) but are used in all issues relating to historical inquiry. Also, these concepts are intertwined with factual knowledge – you cannot analyse without a deep foundation of factual knowledge. Furthermore, this “historical thinking” is not natural; it needs to be taught (Wineburg, 2001). For researchers in history education, the task has been to conceptualise these tacit procedural concepts that historians produce but often do not reflect upon (cf. Wineburg 1991).

In history education, six second order concepts or “thinking concepts” have been highlighted to frame what kind of knowledge students need in order to advance their historical thinking. These include the ability to establish historical significance, use primary source evidence, analyse cause and consequence, identify continuity and change, take historical perspectives and understand the ethical dimensions of history (Seixas & Morton, 2012). Through these tools, students can advance their thinking and make high-level analysis of historical content and learn to be critical thinkers. This framing of the subject offers a different view on what history is: something beyond content. Furthermore, it allows educators to emphasise on the activity in class and help students advance in interpretation and critical thinking.

Within history didactics there has been a heated discussion about the disciplinary approach and its focus on “thinking like an (academic) historian”. The critique has mainly emphasised that school history is not just about learning to master the discipline as a historian, but to engage in meaning making aspects of history (Barton, 2009; Ahonen, 2005) and using it for orientation, moral judgement and political action, thus connecting it to citizenship education (Rüsen, 2005; Barton & Levstik 2004; Barton 2012). However, some work has been made to explore how historical knowledge can help students to use history in their own meaning making and at the same time root their inference in empirical evidence (Johansson, 2012; cf. Rüsen 2005). One such important example is deconstructing historical narratives and their meaning for different individuals, groups and societies



(Karlsson, 2011). By doing this, historical use in media, politics and everyday life becomes an important part that history education can contribute in terms of citizenship education. In conclusion, second-order thinking concepts are acknowledged as important, and they have contributed to the discussion within history didactics and also led to new trenches. One side argues for an academic understanding of the subject while the other side argues for more meaning making aspects where the students' own experiences are included.

4 Aim of research: are there social science thinking concepts?

In this section I will argue that the theoretical framework presented above has merit for Social Science Education as well. Approaching social science knowledge in terms of abilities, something beyond "the facts", has been done before by several researchers (Kinchloe, 2001; Newmann 1987 & 1990; Case, 2005). However, most of these researchers do their studies in settings that do not have a Social Science subject in school, but a mix of history and various social sciences (e.g. Social Studies). Furthermore, few attempts have been made to deconstruct the meaning of "social science analysis" or "social science critical thinking" and what it might consist of in a school context (Cf Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010). The theoretical framework, that is defining disciplinary knowledge through first and second order concepts, could potentially be very potent in framing what it means to "think like a social scientist" and give teachers the conceptual language to use in their teaching.

This aim of this article is to examine to what extent teachers work with scientific disciplinary knowledge in class and under what conditions such knowledge is being taught. More specifically, the purpose is to explore and describe possible second order concepts, or "thinking concepts", in Social Science education by studying teachers' intentions and actual teaching in Social Science classrooms. By doing this, a tool kit more consistent than the one offered in curricula and textbooks could be suggested to teachers; a tool kit to help teachers in their planning, in their feedback to students and their assessment of students' abilities to analyse and critically review societal issues. The choice to study teachers and teaching is important. To a great extent it is within schools that the subject of Social Science is being constructed. Teachers interpret the curricula and transform the subject into something other than a mere mini version of political science or sociology. Social Science involves the processes of students' own conceptions on what society should be like, that is to say it includes meaning making aspects (Lindmark, 2013; cf. Lundholm & Davies, 2012). However, even though the subject is not just a trickle down version of the academic disciplines, it evolves around scientific approaches. A further aim of this article is to discuss how second order thinking concepts can play a part in citizenship education. Two research questions are addressed: What second order

thinking concepts can be identified in the teachers' reflections upon their teaching, and how might these concepts be used in students' democratic life during and after their formal schooling?

5 Materials and methods

To achieve the aim of the study, interviews were conducted with six experienced teachers about their teaching. The teachers worked at six different upper secondary schools in a major city in Sweden. However, teachers worked in very different contexts ranging from suburban heterogeneous schools to homogenous inner city schools and from publicly run to privately run schools. By contacting headmasters in the county-surroundings, a number of teachers were recommended in various schools and out of these six teachers were selected to take part in the study. One important selection criteria was that it should be possible to follow a number of lessons teaching the same topic. The topic that suited both the researcher's and the teachers' schedules was globalisation. Nevertheless, there was also another benefit. By focusing on globalisation as a substantial case, it was possible to reach beyond the various topics covered in Social Science education; globalisation is an interdisciplinary theme covering all of the subjects in the social sciences. The study was inspired by case study methodology where I used globalisation as a case of Social Science teaching in order to develop concepts and a theoretical framework (Yin, 1994, Grønmo, 2006, p. 96). Teachers and teaching were chosen in order to get close to the reflective practitioner (cf. Shulman, 2004), rather than studying textbooks and curricula.

The particular teachers' teaching on globalisation was used to generate themes in their reflections to create an understanding of how they described knowledge and abilities in Social Science teaching (Hays, 2004, p. 218; Yin, 1994). As in most case studies, I focused on interviews (Hays, 2004, p. 229). The interviews were conducted during a span of two months with experienced teachers in upper secondary schools. The interviews revolved around the educational material that the teacher was asked to bring to each interview (about the use of this method, see Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007, p. 356-361). In addition, talked about the classroom situations were discussed, mainly in terms of students' discussions and subject matter in the teacher's teaching on globalisation. I had observed the teacher's classes prior to the interview. This method of stimulated recall made it easier to talk about real teaching and not only about the ideas of teaching Social Science (Stough, 2001).

Using the conceptual framework from history didactics, presented above and below, themes were generated in an attempt to describe the thinking concepts that teachers used and reflected upon in their teaching. However, most attention was given to generate possible second order thinking concepts rather than to focus on the use of first order concepts. The second order thinking



concepts were defined as disciplinary and procedural ways of generating knowledge, organising knowledge, analysing and critically reviewing societal issues. Furthermore, they were conceptualised by their use in various topics, not just in specific subject matter such as economics or government (cf. Lee, 2006). The teachers' accounts and their reflections about their teaching was organised into typologies that were framed by the conceptual framework, and then tested again on the empirical material, in what can be described as an abductive approach (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). This work was done in order to define what social science second order thinking might consist of.

Table 1: Conceptual framework for first- and second-order concepts

First Order Concepts	Second Order Thinking Concepts
<p>Substantial knowledge such as facts, terms and concepts found in social science as academic disciplines. Often connected to certain topics or themes. These can be:</p> <p>a. Propositional Concepts <i>Propositional facts and terms</i></p> <p>b. Compound Concepts <i>Complex concepts that are part of a wider context</i></p>	<p>Disciplinary and procedural knowledge on how social scientists generate knowledge and how they organise, analyse and critically review societal issues. Conceptualised by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Not being exclusive to one specific topic</i> • <i>Being specifically relevant for the social science disciplines</i>

The aim was not to create a definitive list of thinking concepts that capture what it means to possess the ability to "think like a social scientist", but to explore possible meanings of the concepts (cf. Seixas & Peck, 2008; Barton & Levstik, 2004, p. 119-120).

A substantial part of the interviews revolved around the teachers' aims with their teaching and why they found Social Science education specifically important for students. Returning to Campbell's (2012, p. 1) definition of citizenship education, focus was on exploring the contribution of knowledge and abilities for students' life outside school, particularly as democratic citizens.

6 Results

The observed teaching on globalisation was mainly concerned with international relations and development studies. The substantial first order concepts were connected to these specific topics and they all originate from the field or subfields within political science, economics and geography. Propositional concepts were, for instance, the plenitude of organisations within the international community, such as the UN and WTO, but also terms such as exports and imports. Compound concepts were represented by concepts like neo-liberalism, globalisation and justice. The teachers worked with these concepts in class so that students could use

them when describing and analysing global issues such as free trade, poverty and international conflicts. However, these concepts were not the centre of what students were doing in class.

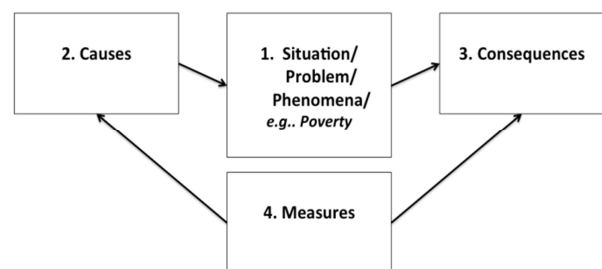
Instead, the activities in class and the teachers' reflections afterwards, revolved around students' abilities to "analyse", "critically review" and "contextualise". It was these abilities that the teachers were asked to conceptualise with concrete examples from their own teaching. In doing this, the teachers described several different components concerning what it means to be able to organise, analyse and critically review societal issues. These components were connected to the specific subject of Social Science and used in all issues and topics during activities in class and when they attempted to describe what they did: when explaining, the teachers gave examples from content matter than other than that of globalisation. Thus, it was possible to construct the components according to the conceptual framework. Derived from teachers' reflections, six distinctive second order concepts were defined, and all were intertwined with "knowing the facts". The concepts defined were social science causality, social science evidence and inference, social science abstraction, social science comparison and contrast, social science perspective taking and the evaluative dimension.

6.1 Analysing cause and consequence

A very common activity in class was to use a model in order to analyse the causes and consequences of a societal issue, such as poverty, as well as discussing possible measures to tackle the situation. The model is presented below:

Figure 1: The model for analysing societal issues

Model for Analysing Societal Issues Using Causes and Consequences



When discussing the use of the model, the teachers explained how they in almost all topics worked with this model of analysis based on causes and consequences, thus emphasising its importance in order to organise and explore contemporary issues in class. One teacher explains why it is so important in social science education:

I mean, that's always the starting point: a problem. There is something that always is wrong; an anomaly or some kind of discrepancy; something that isn't good. That's social sciences for you. Nothing is ever purely



happy, there's always something unhappy about society. You start with a problem.

The teacher moves on, talking about how concepts like cause and consequence can help students to organise and find valid causes behind societal problems. He explains how he wants students to reason (brackets indicates "speaking as a student"):

"In the short run there's a lot of problems, but in the long run I think the current economic globalisation will lead to an increase in economic welfare. Especially for people living in the developing countries. It doesn't mean that we in our country will be poorer etcetera."

For him and the other teachers, this analysis needed to be based in evidence. By using simple templates, they tried to advance students' abilities to investigate different topics and sort causes and consequences in political, economic and social terms as well as consequences for individuals, groups and societies. Also, they worked with important concepts such as agency and structure. Since many of the issues in Social Science are contemporary and includes different political solutions, they also included what could be done, in terms of measures. Seeing that measures could aim at either consequences or causes was also emphasised as an important part of analysing issues.

6.2 Using evidence and making inference

In the activities in class the teachers often asked students to back up their arguments with facts: "how do you know this?" In the interviews after the lesson, where this question was asked during an argument on the benefits of free trade, this teacher emphasised that students need to separate what they know from what they think and believe. The argument was that an important part of having the ability to analyse and critically review concerns students relating their inferences to some kind of evidence. In this sense, evidence and inference are closely linked. Thus, when students work with analysis students should practise making inferences that are based on facts and not beliefs. The teachers explain:

They (the students) need to practise to use examples to verify or falsify the problem they're studying. Am I describing a real problem in the real world? It might be information that comes from researchers or fact-books or newspapers. But also finding the counter-arguments that falsifies your claims: "that there's a lot indicating that globalisation mostly profits the west, but examples like China, Taiwan are indicating... etcetera. One thing is "twisting and turning" different perspectives, but there needs to some claims to what I'm saying.

In short, the students need to present evidence and practise working with different sources. A reoccurring example was the importance of critical thinking and working with bias through source criticism where

political tendencies can be revealed. Together with the ability to take different perspectives, this could be a powerful way of scrutinising political and economic issues. Thus, the conclusion can be drawn that working with evidence and inference gives important clues on how social scientists construct knowledge. By working with empirical data and theories, students can advance their way of understanding what social sciences can say about societies and what the limitations are regarding social scientific claims.

6.3 Using abstractions to understand

The teachers highlighted the importance of using abstractions in order to simplify complex structures and phenomena. This involves working with theoretical models that social scientists use to simplify complexity and create an understanding of societies. In the activities in class, such models were used in different forms. When international relations were in focus, models like Wallerstein's world system theory were used in class, and when students worked with development issues they used different development theories such as dependency theory. One of the teachers explains why it is important to use theory and models:

I want to give them tools so they can use models and theories to explain reality. [...] Like in international relations where the world system theory and the anarchy theory can be used to make sense of what's going on. But also, that it's a simplified reality. To help them understand the world using models and theories and also question them. My task is to advance their skills in using these tools to unfold the world.

When discussing the use of models and theories, the teachers gave examples from other content areas in Social Science, such as models used frequently in economics, but also theories that can help explain class-related issues or variances in the social order of different countries. Putnam's and Bourdieu's theories were mentioned. Another important aspect of Social Science that the teachers discussed was for students to learn how to understand an issue by moving back and forth between the abstract and the concrete, thus trying to understand the limitations of theories and models.

6.4 Comparing and contrasting

In the activities in class the teachers worked with examples, and in the interviews they often emphasised the power that a good example brings to a discussion. They also regularly asked students to compare and contrast their examples; for example, asking them to compare what poverty might mean in a Swedish context compared to a Kenyan setting. In this sense, comparing and contrasting might help students to understand phenomena better. One example is given below when one of the teachers talk about the importance of comparative examples in analysis:



A first step in an analysis is to compare. I used that when they compared the political parties last autumn (election year). They (the students) compared and contrasted the political parties different approaches to various problems that the students could choose themselves. It's always good to compare and contrast – that's when you can see the differences.

Thus, in comparing phenomena like political parties, forms of government or family formations, students can clarify differences. In class, the teachers and students also investigated why there are differences and what consequences there are for individuals, groups and societies. By using comparison the teachers wanted students to be able to generalise and see bigger pictures.

6.5 Taking perspectives

Taking perspectives refers to the ability to take different points of views on contemporary issues, and that there are, in fact, few questions that contain “truths”. The teachers in the study all emphasised that perspective taking is crucial in order to understand how societal issues are interpreted differently. In class, a recurring question from the teachers was for students to consider other perspectives, for example “are there other ways of understanding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict besides the one that solely blames Israel?” One part of perspective taking is to see ideological perspectives in issues: both the perspectives students themselves bring to school and perspectives they encounter in textbooks, articles and in media. One of the teachers explains how he tries to balance societal issues in class when students bring their own ideological preferences to class:

This might sound strange, but the more left or right winged the students are the more I take the opposite stand. I guess it's because I want to balance it. Most students on this school have a very positive attitude towards globalisation [...] so I chose literature that gives perspectives other than for instance right winged think tanks. They (the students) need to see nuances.

Being able to see things from different ideological perspectives is an important tool in scrutinising one's own ideological thinking and revealing ideology in other people's statements. The teachers described this as using different kinds of “glasses” when students studied societal issues. It was also underlined that it is not about accepting other people's worldview, but learning to understand how others might think and how important ideology can be in determining our way of understanding what is going on in society.

The other part of perspective-taking is trying to interpret and understand that people in different parts of the world might see social issues from different perspectives. The teachers talked about their experiences regarding students' worldview and their lack of understanding for other people. One of the teachers used a series of documentaries about asylum seekers

from all over the world and their personal story on how they arrived to Sweden. In the first quote, teacher one explains what she wants, followed by teacher two's example on globalisation:

T1: In doing this (watching the documentary) I hope that students can see how an immigrant in Sweden might think. You get that person's story. [...] I think this gives that human dimension on issues and it opens up for emphatic understanding on why people seek asylum in our country.

T2: I think it's a part of critical thinking. To be able to understand issues from the perspective of the other. It might be what it (globalisation) means for me in Sweden but also understand that it means something different for someone in Mozambique.

Thus, by using these cultural perspectives, students can learn to see and interpret issues beyond their own narrow context; values and attitudes might be different in various settings. If issues are not contextualised it will make it difficult for students to understand how other people think and feel. Otherwise, the others might appear “stupid” or “strange” and all analysis then emanates from a nation-based perspective.

6.6 The Evaluating Dimension

The teachers also talked about a part of teaching that was not directly included in “understanding social science”. One of the teachers describes how he and his students struggle with causal analysis, perspective taking and abstractions all through the school year, but at the end it boils down to politics and taking a stand:

I mean... There's no scientific truth in these questions. There are economic theories that say this and there are economic theories that say that. There isn't just one truth... [...] I want them (the students) to see that it's also about politics and your own way of making a stand. What is the political view you yourself have? I guess this's where students' own opinions come in. Also, that's what's fun about it and makes it interesting for them.

All societal issues that are analysed and critically reviewed invite ideological standpoints, especially when students work with different kinds of solutions to societal challenges. This evaluating dimension is always present. The teachers interviewed did not think it was their job to help students take a stand, but illuminate what kind of values were at stake in different societal issues, such as personal freedom versus collective interest. An issue can highlight different perspectives and consequences regarding these values, but it also invites students' political preferences. The teachers described the balance between analysing and having an opinion as a challenging assignment, but something that needs to be addressed in class.



6.7 The Use of Knowing

The teachers had similar but somewhat different views on the use of Social Science education. They all emphasised the “intrinsic value of knowledge”, where knowing was an important part of becoming an enlightened individual. Knowing things about society and using that knowledge to critically review newspapers and information on the Internet was one way to describe the use of Social Science education.

The second order thinking concepts, such as the tools used to analyse and critically review, can be described as “disciplinary”. Nevertheless, the teachers gave very few responses that explained the importance to prepare students for further studies in the academic disciplines. The use of Social Science education was not primarily a question about turning students into good political scientists or sociologists, but rather good citizens. One of the teachers tries to explain how he sees the importance of Social Science:

It's about the importance of expressing one's views and listening to others. [...] In the best of worlds they listen to each other and take in some other views (than their own) and hopefully they become more confident and are able to take on the world. If they... understand that there are different views on how people see the world. It's not just their dad's opinion that “high taxes are bad”. There are other sides to the problem. If you succeed in this then you're really on to something. Then you can listen and reason with other people... express your own views. It's not about learning to write your CV or apply for jobs, not all those practical things... [...] It's more about sitting around the dinner table at home discussing and understanding how complex and difficult society is. And that you're a part of that very society.

One important component in creating this meaning making of knowing social science is to choose questions that matter to the students. It is important to use contemporary issues that are real to the students and not just strictly follow the different themes in the curricula or the textbooks. By using tools such as perspective taking, evidence and inference, the teachers highlight the possibilities to advance students' abilities and become more engaged, tolerant and seeing themselves as a part of the world they live in. However, they all distance themselves from the prospect of using education for specific political action. Engagement is not primarily an issue of becoming a member of a political youth league, but a member of society. One teacher exemplifies:

It's more about social commitment. A political curiosity of what's going on in media... ... on their own... Trying to decode what's being said. And being willing to say what they think and believe, that kind of engagement.

To conclude, the teachers' understanding of knowledge as “doing” social sciences and “knowing” social science can be seen as a “politische bildung” for which the teachers aim with their teaching. A kind of ideal citizen: prepared for citizenship.

7 Prepared for Citizenship: Conclusion and Discussion

Most previous research on Social Science education has discussed the importance of first order concepts (Severin, 2002; Vernersson, 1999; cf. Lundholm & Davies, 2013). By using a theoretical framework from history didactics (Lee, 2005; Seixas & Peck, 2004), this article explores Social Science education from another perspective. By focusing on second order thinking concepts, or thinking tools, used in order to organise, analyse and critically review societal issues, six second order concepts are suggested, and all are derived from data collected by observing teaching and interviewing teachers about their teaching. The concepts defined were social science causality, social science evidence and inference, social science abstraction, social science comparison and contrast, social science perspective taking and the evaluative dimension—summarised in Table 2 (see next page).

By focusing on these thinking concepts, rather than first order concepts, attention is turned towards what it means to “do social science” rather than “knowing the facts of social science”. Teaching and learning social science is not just about learning the facts stipulated in curricula and textbooks, but about learning how to interpret, analyse and discuss society from a social science perspective. The second-order concepts are also found in the curricula (The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2012), but not described as a consistent toolbox. In fact, the procedural knowledge on how social scientists work with evidence, inference, perspectives, causality and abstractions are scattered in different sections thus making it difficult for teachers to visualise and clarify what analysis and critical thinking might consist of. It is, so to speak, left in the hand of the professional teachers to define what it is. The proposed second order thinking concepts are an attempt to verbalise what it could be.

In fact, in the research process it was clear that the teachers used these thinking concepts in class activities, but that they did not have words to describe what they were doing. However, the second order concepts presented should not be interpreted as a final list of concepts that captures what it means to “think scientifically” in Social Science education. Rather, it should be seen as a first attempt to conceptualise what it could be. When attention is once more turned to the research conducted in history education it will soon be found that the historical second order concepts have developed over time; thinking concepts have been merged; removed or added (Seixas & Peck, 2004 & 2008; Seixas & Morton, 2012, cf. Sandahl, 2011).



Table 2: Suggested first- and second-order concepts for Social science education

First Order Concepts	Second Order Thinking Concepts
<p>Substantial knowledge such as facts, terms and concepts found in social science as academic disciplines. Often connected to certain topics or themes. Examples:</p> <p>Propositional Concepts <i>NGO's, UN, exports/imports, developing countries, industrialised countries, multinational corporations.</i></p> <p>Compound Concepts <i>Neo-liberalism, sustainable development, globalisation, justice, development theory, climate change, international law, free trade, protectionism.</i></p>	<p>Disciplinary and procedural knowledge on how social scientists generate knowledge and how they organise, analyse and critically review societal issues. Suggested second order thinking concepts:</p> <p>Social Science Causality <i>Organising and analysing issues by using cause and consequence. Exploring political, economical, social aspects. Exploring impact on individuals, groups and societies and on local, national and global level. The role of agency and structure in analysis. Discussing measures to deal with challenges.</i></p> <p>Social Science Evidence and Inference <i>Basing inference on evidence from various sources. Using source criticism to find political tendencies. Separating what you know from what you believe and think.</i></p> <p>Social Science Abstraction <i>Using models and theories to simplify and understand. Understanding that models and theories are simplifications. Moving between the abstract and the concrete.</i></p> <p>Social Science Comparison and Contrast <i>Compare and contrast to clarify and understand differences. Exploring causes and consequences behind differences.</i></p> <p>Social Science Perspective Taking <i>Seeing issues through different lenses, both ideological and cultural. Understanding the role of perspectives in analysis.</i></p> <p>The evaluative dimension <i>Understanding that all societal issues include one's own ideological preferences. Illuminating conflicting values in political and societal issues.</i></p>

Second order thinking concepts as a way of approaching teaching and learning have several benefits. It puts emphasis on abilities without creating a trench between abilities and facts. Nothing can be analysed or critically reviewed without deep factual understanding about the issues at hand. In fact, finding evidence to strengthen

inferences is all about “getting the facts straight”. Thus, knowing is intertwined with doing and the second order thinking concepts are overlapping in this process.

As regards educating students in general, or for enlightened understanding, thinking concepts play an important role in acquiring an understanding of how knowledge is obtained in the social sciences. Allowing students to know what teachers mean when they ask them to analyse and be critical is essential to their learning process. One could argue that disciplinary thinking is a small version of the academic subjects. If so, it risks alienating students because it focuses too much on preparing them for academia and therefore lacks meaning for most students not interested in further studies in the social sciences (Englund, 1994; cf. Barton, 2012). However, I will argue below that the role of second order thinking concepts is not primarily to educate students for further studies. Instead, second order thinking concepts can play an important part in preparing students for life as citizens.

When students work scientifically, or disciplinarily, they can develop a specific way of thinking about society, and they have to challenge their set opinions about different topics. An important aspect of this is the use of perspective taking. All issues can be interpreted from different perspectives, especially from ideological and intercultural standpoints. Working with students in class thus includes taking and revealing ideological perspectives on different issues such as foreign aid or free trade agreements. It is also about taking and revealing different standpoints that are based on different identities in nations or groups. From a Swedish point of view, that might be to try to understand the role of morality in political debates in the US (for example abortion), something that without a contextualisation seems strange from a secularised Swedish perspective. Therefore, trying to understand how people perceive the world in other places is crucial for understanding “the other”. Role-play, debates and other techniques enable the students to question and scrutinise their own standpoints and practise understanding peoples from other places.

The six concepts hold important keys in advancing students’ critical thinking on societal issues. Thus, I argue that second order thinking concepts are important for achieving critical thinking among students after their formal schooling also. Furthermore, critical thinking is crucial when students discuss and explore societal and controversial issues in Social Science classrooms. As previous research suggests, the ability to discuss and listen to others are important parts of teaching (Odenstad, 2010; Englund, 2006). Still, students’ arguments have to be rooted in evidence, based on how social scientists make inference and include the ability to see their own political preferences when they discuss societal issues. If “social science thinking” is not stressed, there is really no difference between the classroom discussions and the conversations that students have with their friends at a



café or a bar (cf. Christensen, 2013). Students must be allowed to explore “genuine issues” – questions that matter to them and relate to their life outside school.

There lies a great strength in teaching for citizenship through second order thinking concepts. In fact, knowledge, methods and theories from the social sciences provide important insights to advance students’ reflections on their own and others political life (Christensen, 2011 & 2013; cf. Tväråna 2014). Therefore, the normative sides of Social Science education are not just about democratic values, but also about discussing not what they think and what they know. I would argue that the ultimate aim of Social Science education is to achieve an education that emphasises students that are enlightened, analytically minded and critical thinkers. In order to achieve these preferred citizens, Social Science education need to move beyond “debate” and “factual knowledge”. Second order thinking concepts are crucial in achieving this.

Taking on contemporary societal issues in school is not a pastime or pretend activity where students come to talk freely about their political beliefs, or perhaps a lack of thereof. Humans as a species are continually faced with challenges that threaten our very existence on this planet. Climate change, rising social unrest, changing migration patterns and growing gaps in income are just some of those challenges that new generations have to face. An important step in meeting these challenges is an education taking on such issues and learning to understand them and discussing possible futures. Social Science is not the only school subject to do this, but is certainly an important one.

References

Ahonen, Sirkka. (2005), “Historical consciousness: a viable paradigm for history education?” (Essay Review) in *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 37 (6), 697-707.

Anderson, Lorin. W. (1994), “Research on teaching and teacher education” in Anderson, Lorin W. & Sosniak, Lauren A (red.). *Bloom’s taxonomy: A forty-year Retrospective*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Anderson, Lorin W. - Kratwohl, David R. - Airasian, Peter W & Bloom, Benjamin S. (2000), *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon

Barton, Keith C. (2009), “The denial of desire: How to make history education meaningless” in Symcox, Linda & Wilschut, Arie (Eds.). *National history standards: The problem of the canon and the future of teaching history*. Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing

Barton, Keith C. (2012), “Agency, choice and historical action: How history teaching can help students think about democratic decision making” in *Citizenship Teaching and Learning*, 7 (2), 131-142.

Barton, Keith C. & Levstik, Linda S. (2004), *Teaching history for the common good*. Mahwah, New Jersey: L. Erlbaum Associates.

Bernmark-Ottosson, Ann (2009), “Samhällskunskapslärare” in Schüllerqvist, Bengt & Osbeck, Christina (Eds.). *Ämnesdidaktiska insikter och strategier*. Karlstad: Karlstad University Press.

Broman, Anders (2009). *Att göra en demokrat? Demokratisk socialisation i den svenska gymnasieskolan*. Karlstad: Karlstad University Press.

Bronäs, Agneta (2000). *Demokratins ansikte: en jämförande studie av demokratibilder i tyska och svenska samhällskunskapsböcker för gymnasiet*. Stockholm: Stockholm University.

Bronäs, Agneta (2003). “Demokrati i samhällsundervisningen: kunskap eller fostran?” in Selander, Staffan (Ed.): *Kobran, nallen och majjen: tradition och förnyelse i svensk skola och skolforskning*. Stockholm: Myndigheten för skolutveckling.

Bronäs, Agneta & Selander, Staffan (2002). “Samhällskunskap som skolämne” in Falkevall, Björn & Selander, Staffan (Eds.). *Skolämne i kris?* Stockholm: HLS Förlag.

Børhaug, Kjetil (2011). “Justifying Citizen Political Participation in Norwegian Political Education” in *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society*, 3 (2), 23-41.

Campbell, David E. (2012). “Introduction” i Campbell, David E., Levinson, Meira & Hess, Frederick M. *Making Civics Count: Citizenship Education for a New Generation*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Case, Roland (2005). “Moving Critical Thinking to the Main Stage” in *Education Canada*, 45 (2).

Christensen, Torben Spanget (2011). “Educating Citizens in Late Modern Societies” in Schüllerqvist, Bengt (Ed.). *Patterns of research in civics, history, geography and religious education: key presentations and responses from an international conference at Karlstad University, Sweden*. Karlstad: Karlstad University Press

Christensen, Torben Spanget (2013). “Interdisciplinarity and Self-reflection in Civic Education” in *Nordidactica – Journal of Humanities and Social Science Education*, 1, 201-226.

Cohen, Louis – Manion, Lawrence & Morrison, Keith (2007). *Research methods in education*. London: Routledge

Donovan, Susan M & Bransford, John D. (Eds.) (2005). *How Students Learn. History, Mathematics and Science in the Classroom*. Washington D.C: National Research Council

Dubois, Anna & Gadde, Lars-Erik (2002). “Systematic combining: an abductive approach to case research” in *Journal of Business Research*, 55 (7), 553-560.



- Ekman, Joakim & Pilo, Lina (2012). *Skolan, demokratin och de ungedborgarna*. Malmö: Liber
- Ekman, Tiina (2007). *Demokratisk kompetens - Om gymnasiet som demokratiskola*. Gothenburg: Gothenburg University
- Englund, Tomas (1986). *Curriculum as a political problem: changing educational conceptions, with special reference to citizenship education*. Uppsala: Uppsala University
- Englund, Tomas (1994). *Samhällsorientering och medborgarfostran i svensk skola under 1900-talet*. Uppsala: Uppsala University
- Englund, Tomas (2006). "Deliberative Communications: A Pragmatist Proposal" in *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 38 (5), pp. 503-520.
- Evans, Richard J. (2002). "History, Memory, and the Law: The Historian as Expert Witness" in *History and Theory* 41 (3), 326-345.
- Grønmo, Sigmund (2006). *Metoder i samhällsvetenskap*. Stockholm: Liber.
- Hays, Patricia (2004). "Case Study Research" in deMarris, Kathleen & Lapan, Stephen D. (Eds.). *Foundations for Research - Methods of Inquiry in Education and the Social Sciences*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Johansson, Maria (2012). *Historieundervisning och interkulturell kompetens*. Karlstad: Karlstad University Press.
- Karlsson, Klas-Göran (2011). "Processing Time - On the Manifestations and Activations of Historical Consciousness" in Bjerg, Helle - Lenz, Claudia & Thorstensen, Erik (Eds.). *Historicizing the uses of the past: Scandinavian perspectives on history culture, historical consciousness and didactics of history related to World War II*. Bielefeld: Transcript
- Kincheloe, Joe L. (2001). *Getting Beyond the Facts: Teaching Social Studies/Social Sciences in the Twenty-first Century*. New York: Peter Lang
- Lee, Peter (2005). "Putting Principles into Practice: Understanding History" in Donovan, Susan M. & Bransford, John D. (Eds.) *How Students Learn. History, Mathematics and Science in the Classroom*. Washington D.C: National Research Council
- Lee, Peter (2006). "Understanding History" in Seixas, Peter (Ed.). *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*. Toronto. Toronto University Press
- Lindmark, Torbjörn (2013). *Samhällskunskapslärares ämneskonceptioner*. Umeå: Umeå University
- Lundholm, Cecilia & Davies, Peter (2012). "Students' understanding of socio-economic phenomena: Conceptions about the free provision of goods and services" i *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 33 (1), 79-89.
- Lundholm, Cecilia & Davies, Peter (2013). "Conceptual Change in the Social Sciences" in Vosniadou, Stella (Ed.) *International handbook of research on conceptual change*. London: Routledge.
- McNabb, David E. (2004). *Research methods for political science: quantitative and qualitative methods*. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe.
- Newmann, Fred M. (1987). *Higher Order Thinking in the Teaching of Social Studies: Connections Between Theory and Practice*. Conference Paper for National Center on Effective Secondary Schools, June 1987. Washington D.C: Office of Educational Research and Improvement.
- Newmann, Fred (1990). "Higher order thinking in teaching social studies: a rationale for the assessment of classroom thoughtfulness" in *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 22 (1), 41-56.
- Näsström, Gunilla (2008). *Measurement of alignment between Standards and Assessment*. Umeå: Umeå University
- Odenstad, Christina (2010). *Prov och bedömning i samhällskunskap en analys av gymnasielärares skriftliga prov*. Karlstad: Karlstad University Press.
- Olson, Maria (2008). *Från nationsbyggare till global marknadsnomad: om medborgarskap i svensk utbildningspolitik under 1990-talet*. Linköping: Linköping University.
- Rüsen, Jörn (2005). *History: narration, interpretation, orientation*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Sandahl, Johan (2011). *Att ta sig an världen. Lärare diskuterar innehåll och mål i samhällskunskapsämnet*. Karlstad: Karlstad University Press.
- Sandahl, Johan (2013). "Being Engaged and Knowledgeable: Social Science Thinking Concepts and Students' Civic Engagement in Teaching on Globalisation" in *Nordidactica - Journal of Humanities and Social Science Education* (1), 158-179.
- Sandahl, Johan (2014). "Samhällskunskap och historia i svensk gymnasieskola: ämnenas roll och relation i diskurs och ämnesplaner" in *Nordidactica - Journal of Humanities and Social Science Education* (1), 53-84.
- Schools History 13-16 Project (1976). *A New Look at History*. Edinburgh: Homes McDougall Ltd
<http://www.schoolshistoryproject.org.uk/AboutSHP/downloads/NewLookAtHistory.pdf>
- Schulz, Wolfram, Ainley, John, Fraillon, Julian, Kerr, David, & Losito, Bruno. (2010). *ICCS 2009 International Report: Civic knowledge, attitudes and engagement among lower secondary school students in thirty-eight*



countries. International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA): Amsterdam

Yin, Robert K. (1994). *Case Study Research – Design and methods*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Seixas, Peter (2002). "The Purposes of Teaching Canadian History" i *Canadian Social Studies*, 36 (2).

Seixas, Peter & Morton, Tom (2012). *The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts*. Toronto: Nelson Education

Seixas, Peter & Peck, Carla (2004). "Teaching Historical Thinking" in Sears, Alan & Wright, Ian (Eds.) *Challenges and Prospects for Canadian Social Studies*. Vancouver: Pacific Educational Press

Seixas, Peter & Peck, Carla (2008). "Benchmarks of Historical Thinking: First Steps" in *Canadian Journal of Education*, 31 (4), 1015-1038.

Shemilt, Denis (1980). *Schools council history 13-16 project. History 13-16 evaluation study*. Edinburgh: Holmes McDougall.

Severin, Roland (2002). *Dom vet vad dom talar om. En intervjustudie av elevers uppfattningar av begreppen makt och samhällsförändring*. Gothenburg: Gothenburg University Press.

Shulman, Lee. S. (2004). "The wisdom of practice – managing complexity in medicine and teaching" in Shulman, Lee S. *The wisdom of practice – essays on teaching, learning and learning to teach*. San Fransisco, California: Jossey-Bass.

Stough, Laura M. (2001). *Using Stimulated Recall in Classroom Observation and Professional Development*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), Seattle, Washington, April 2001.

The Swedish National Agency for Education (2012). *Social Studies*. Available on the The Swedish National Agency for Education webpage: http://www.skolverket.se/polopoly_fs/1.178370!/Menu/article/attachment/Social%20studies%20120620.pdf

Tranströmer, Tomas (2001). *The half-finished heaven: the best poems of Tomas Tranströmer*. Saint Paul, Minnesota: Graywolf Press.

Tväråna, Malin (2014). *Rikare resonemang om rättvisa: Vad kan kvalificera deltagande i samhällskunskapspraktiken?* Stockholm: Stockholms universitet.

Vernersson, Folke (1999). *Undervisa om samhället: didaktiska modeller och läraruppfattningar*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Wineburg, Sam S. (1991). "On the reading of historical texts: Notes on the breach between school and academy" in *American Educational Research Journal*, 28 (3), 495-519.

Wineburg, Samuel S. (2001). *Historical thinking and other unnatural acts: charting the future of teaching the past*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press

