

Education for the future?

Reproduction of gender and gender roles in pupils' perception of history as a school subject

Introduction

This text evolves around social suitability. Sustainability, sustainable development and social sustainability are three different areas. They have their origins in different paradigms, theories and academic fields. This text will focus on social sustainability and education for social sustainability. Education for sustainable development has social sustainability as one of three branches, the other two being economic and ecological sustainability (McKenzie, 2004). There are research done in the field of education for sustainable development (Sund & Pashby, 2019). In this text education for sustainable society is joined with theories of historical consciousness and gender theories in order to widen all three fields. This is grounded in two of McKenzie's (2004) definitions of social sustainability:

-a system for transmitting awareness of social sustainability from one generation to the next

- a sense of community responsibility for maintaining that system of transmission

The transmitting of culture and a sense of belonging to a community based on a shared past, present and future are parts of groups' and individuals' historical consciousness and historical culture. An education for a sustainable society therefore needs to take in consideration how history culture is transmitted and reproduced in the classrooms in different ways.

The past, or rather the perceiving on the past, forms how the present and the future is understood and gives anticipations on the present and the future. The history pupils meet in history as a school subject is one aspect of forming a future society. History culture is a part of building the current and the future society. Education is one way society in an organized form transfuse history culture to the up growing generation (Rüsen, 2004). A history education aiming for social sustainability needs to investigate how the pupils regards, among other things, gender roles in the past, in their history culture. For an education that is, as the quote in this book's introduction states, inclusive, equal and gives a foundation for a lifelong will to learn, knowledge of how gender roles are reproduced in the history teaching are of great interest. In history didactics gender and forming of history culture is seldom discussed. Based on earlier studies females seem to be absent from teaching in history (Ohlander, 2010; Lociz, 2010; Ludvigsson, 2011; Thorp, 2015). In this text I will discuss pupils' reproduction and forming of gender, gender roles in their historical culture based on their perception of history as a school subject.

History, history as a school subject and a sustainable society

The perception present day society has of history is a result of which questions are asked to the past. These questions are correlated to different present day perspectives (Lévesque, 2008). History is what present day societies, groups and individuals interpret they believe they know about the past (Parks, 2011). The word history is used according to this definition in this text. History as a school subject studies history in that definition of the word.

One of the aims of history as a school subject in the Swedish curricula, as well in other countries, is to pass on a cultural norm to the pupils. A mutual reference frame and shared norms and values, based on the cultural heritage, should contribute to build a future society and give a sense of what is "us" and give a sense of loyalty to the shared society and the imagined "we" (Stolare, 2014; Ahonen, 2017).

Another aim in the Swedish curricula for history as a school subject is the development of pupils' historical consciousness (Skolverket, 2018). The development of historical consciousness is regarded as closely linked to the individual forming of an identity (Potapenko, 2010). We enter a world that already exists and the development of a sense of self is developed within the already existing world (Arendt, 1998). How the past is understood is therefore a part of the identity of the individual. In school, all pupils meet history and the history cultures that are reproduced in history as a school subject. The history cultures that are made visible in the classrooms are expressions of the shared historical consciousness that is brought into the classroom by the pupils, the teacher, the teaching material, the curriculum and the surrounding society (Rüsen, 2004). The pupils' historical consciousness can therefore be assumed to be formed, even though not exclusively, in history as a school subject. Outside school the pupils also meet the majority history culture, but encounter as well other history cultures, for example history cultures in their families, religions, ethnicity groups etc. (Rosenzweig & Thelen, 1998). The representation of gender pupils meet in history as a school subject can therefore be assumed to be a part of the pupils' forming of identity, gender and gender norms and of their historical consciousness and, therefore, the present and future societies' history culture and the gender norms within those cultures.

The issue of social sustainability has not been addressed to any wider extent in history didactics. Historical consciousness and history culture do influence anticipation of the future, an argument for a history education with a focus, among other, on the reproduction of gender and gender norms. Historical consciousness is also a part of the process of finding oneself, hence question on identity is at the heart of history as a school subject and therefore a part of history didactic. Equality is one of the United Nations goals for a sustainable society (UN, 2015). It is stated that:

4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

In this text focus will be on gender equality, focus of another on the goals for sustainable development, goal five of gender equality. History culture is a part of society's norms and values wherefore equality in education is an aim for a history culture and a history education. History culture in school history education are a vital part of building a sustainable society. History provides a link between the past, the present and the future, and give perspective on, among other things, equality. History culture regarding equality is a part of the education in and the building of a sustainable society.

Questions on representation of women in history as a school subject and how that influence pupils conception of gender has been raised before, mostly on the representation of women in textbooks (Ohlander, 2010), but the pupils' perspective has not been investigate to any lager extent. There have also been a discussion around how pupils' perception of actors in the past and also pupils' sense of ability to see that they also are a part of, and makers of, history. If history is regarded as something shaped and done by powerful men in the past, how can pupils, regardless of gender, see themselves as actors in history and that their actions can be a part of historical changes (Sexias & Peck, 2004)? To identify oneself as an actor in history is a part of regarding oneself as an actor in present day society. The capability to see oneself as an actor in history and the society is therefore part of the fostering of the pupils to active members of the community (Barton & Levstik, 2004). To be able to be an active citizen is a part of building a social sustainable society and is therefore a part of an education for the

future. How pupils perceive history then becomes a part of an education for a social sustainable society. In order to be an active member of society one also need to feel a belonging to and an identification with society. The pupils need to feel that they can be a part of the culture in society and find representation. Representation and opportunity to find identification in education is a question of equality in education and also a question for the history subject as shown above in this text.

In research on pupils' forming of an identity based on being taught a national narrative it have become visible in research on national identity and minority cultures that the main history culture effect pupils historical consciousness and the identification, or the lack of identification, with the main history culture is a part of forming an identity (Rosenzweig & Thelen, 1998; Barton, & Levstik, 1998; Létourneau, & Moisan, 2004; Barton & McCully, 2012). This text investigates if the same phenomena can be visible in pupils' perception of gender and gender norms in what the pupils regards as "the past".

Earlier research

This section will focus mostly on previous research in the field of history didactics since it is the area where gender and identification with the past mostly been studied. History textbooks have, as mention above, been in focus in earlier research. The question of female representation in school history books has been raised several times in different contexts, notably even in newspapers (se for example Delin, 2015). Ann-Sofie Ohlander (2010) conducted a study by appointment of the Swedish government of textbooks in history used at secondary and upper secondary schools with a focus on gender and the representation of women. The conclusion of her review was that women had a marginalized role in the textbooks. When women were mentioned, they were described as supporting characters to the men. The text sections about women were crammed in the text and presented as an exception to "real" history. Correspondingly, how men and women were described differed. She defines it as women were in the role of victims and men were aggressive warriors. Ohlander also studied the teacher's guide too one of the books. In the guide, advice were included on how teachers could awaken boys' interest in history, but the interests of girls were not mentioned at all. Ohlander concludes her review of the textbooks with a question of how the obscure gender distribution, and also the gender stereotype descriptions of men and women, do with the self-image and gender norms of boys and girls reading the textbooks (2010). To their defense, authors of some of the textbooks argue that the textbooks contain considerably more women today than they did twenty years ago. They believe the number of women in textbooks have been ten folded in new editions of the teaching materials authored by them (Lozic, 2010). Women's representations in the textbooks in the Lozic study are what Hirdman (2001) defines as "and"- history or "supplement"- history. Women are treated as a collective, and often victimized. The women how comes forward as individuals mostly has their uniqueness as women pointed out. Women's history is treated as something beside the "real" political history where white men dominate, rightfully or not. Women who had power in the past haft often been neglected in the history writing (Lozic, 2010; Ohlander, 2010). The discussion on women's representations in textbooks and how they are portrayed there are important since teachers do seem to follow the textbook narrative in their teaching (Olsson, 2014; Thorp, 2015). The textbook can therefore be assumed to form the pupils' notion of the past, their historical consciousness and their perception of gender and of themselves as actors.

Women's history as supplement history is also visible in studies. One study formed a history teaching focusing on women. When the pupils studied women's history in history as a school subject, they

expressed a concern for reversed sexism, expressing concerns that men would be excluded, but identified women's history as significant and appreciated different perspectives in history teaching and expressed that "normal" history focused on men. Women were by the pupils defined as a group, men as individuals (Levstik & Groth, 2002).

Further research on boys' and girls' interest in history as a school subject shows an interest in the parts of history that involves dictators and wars, but girls also express curiosity in the ordinary lives of people in the past and also their own family history (Angvik & von Borries, 1997; Långström, 2001; Hansson, 2010; Haydn & Harris, 2010; Sandberg, 2014). These differences have been explained with the traditional role of women as carrier of cultural heritage and family history (Rosenzweig & Thelen, 1998; Långström, 2001; Hansson, 2010). The teaching in history as school subject has in earlier studies been described as focused on the boys' interest of history and with a focus on boys learning (Hansson, 2010; Ludvigsson, 2011). Boys have in earlier research also been seen as carrier of a more traditional historical culture, (Agnevik & von Borris, 1997; Rosenzweig & Thelen, 1998; Långström, 2001; Sandberg, 2014; Andersson Hult, 2016).

The picture from previous research stress history as a male domain, women's history is seldom studied, and when it is, it is not seen as "real" history. The history culture pupils meet is a male culture where women are marginalized bystanders or victims. Women are then not seen as actors in the past, pupils' historical consciousness and history culture are formed based on a history teaching consisting of men.

Theory

This text combine theories within history didactics and theories on gender and the formation of gender as parts of an education for social sustainability. Since the formation of gender and gender roles are closely linked to the formation on identity theories on how pupils use history to form their identities are used. As shown above, are history a part of the forming an identity in terms of ethnicity but the if history is a part of forming gender has not been studied before, even if the question has been raised if this is the case (Ohlander, 2010). Earlier research has shown an effect by history as a school subject on the pupils' perceptions of the past concerning their ethnical belonging (Létourneau, & Moisan, 2004; Lociz, 2010) and how they consider actors in the past and the anticipation of themselves as actors in the future (Barton & Levstik, 2004). However no studies, to my knowledge, investigates if the same process of building an identity in terms of gender and gender norms. Pupils anticipations on the future in terms of gender have not either been studied. In order to look more closely on these issues, theories from history didactics as well from the field of the gender studies are used in this text.

From the field of history didactics are historical culture and historical consciousness used. Historical consciousness is the notion that humans are beings aware of that everything, including the individual, have a past, a present and a future, a notion that creates an understanding of a "multi- chronology" of themselves, the world and the society they live in. It also means an awareness that they, and the society they live in, are results of processes in the past, and that societies and norms are changeable (Jensen, 1997; Rösen, 2004; Ammert, 2008). This theory is closely linked to building of an identity, and also what the future society and the future self can and will do which also include gender and gender norms.

Historical culture is expressions of historical consciousness and could be displayed either by the individual or by groups, societies and are formed by the historical consciousness the individuals

included in the group or the society possess. Historical culture is negotiated and formed within different groups (Rüsen, 2004; Thorp, 2015). In this text, pupils' historical culture is studied as an expression of their historical consciousness. The historical culture is the joint notions of the past, the present and the future and gender then, now and in the future. Through study pupils' historical culture is it possible to get a glimpse of a possible future norms regarding gender and gender norms since how the past is interpreted is a part of the anticipations of the future (Jensen, 1997).

Gender is especially interesting in the question of how interpretation of the past carries anticipations for the future. Gender is made in the situation, created and bound to different contexts and changeable (Hirdman, 2001). Gender is something constantly contested and created. Hirdman emphasizes the making of counterparts in the constructing of gender, what is male and what is female are identified as opposites (Hirdman, 2001). Gender norms are something the pupils have to relate to, they do not have to follow them but they have to take them into account (Davies, 2003). Gender and gender norms are a part of the historical culture the pupils comprises. However, gender have been somehow disregarded in earlier research. As argued above, gender is a part of forming an identity, a process of in which historical consciousness and historical culture is a vital part. How the pupils understands gender in the past becomes a part of their forming of an identity and also how they understands the past, the present and what they believe the future will be like. An education for suitability has to take pupils historical culture in to consideration since it shapes the identity of the pupils as well as of society as a whole.

Method

Culture is made in interaction between people and I choose to study how pupils reasoned around history and history as a school subject through semi-structured interviews in small groups. Interviews, as they are built on interactions, both among the pupils in the groups and also between the pupils and myself, were considered to best capture the pupils' historical culture since historical culture is made in the interactions of several peoples' historical consciousness. Interviews make historical culture visible (Kvale & Brinkman, 2014; Rüsen, 2017). In these interviews, the pupils' questions were to a large extent allowed to influence follow-up questions and focuses in the interviews, which I believe contributed to the empirical material as regards breadth and depth. It also made it possible for several aspects of the pupils' historical culture to be made visible. The pupils' influence on the interviews made them differ slightly but the basic structure was retained in all interviews (Alvesson, 2011; Kvale & Brinkman, 2014). Interviews has in several earlier studies been used to investigate pupils' historical consciousness (see for example Nordgren, 2006; Lozic, 2010; Stymne, 2018), in this study the pupils historical culture is investigated since they verbalize their historical consciousness into to their historical culture.

In the interviews participated close to 70 pupils in grade five, around eleven years old. The pupils were interviewed in groups of three or in pairs, some groups were as big as five, and two pupils were interviewed alone. The interviews did not differ in any notable way, with exception that the pupils in the bigger groups sometimes repeated themselves in order to be heard. The teachers or the pupils formed the groups themselves, except in a few cases when I formed groups randomly based on lists of pupils I was provided with. Almost all groups the teachers or the pupils formed themselves, were exclusively one sexed. In the study, slightly more girls than boys were interviewed.

In order to participate in the study both the pupils and their guardians had to hand in a written consent. Before the interviews, an information letter where handed out to both the pupils and their guardians. In the letter the intended questions where included with the intention that an informed consent should be possible, even so, none of the pupils had read the questions before the interviews.

After the interviews, a categorization of the material was made. I conducted the categorization by listening and reading the interviews several times and then I identified the pupils' views on gender and history. After reading and listing, theories of historical consciousness, historical culture and identity (Jensen, 2003, Rösen, 2004; Potapenko, 2010) and gender based on Hirdman's (2001) definition of the concept and gender norms based on Davies (2003) were related to the pupils' answers and will be presented under "Discussion" below. What I listened after in the transcriptions of the interviews in order to detect the pupils historical culture were how they used names and actors in the past, how they described them. I was also interested in how they talked about events in past in general and also how they described the every-day-life in the past.

Results

Both boys and girls have an image of the past as dominated by male actors and males as symbols for events and time periods in the past. The past in the pupils' historical culture dominated by males and their ideas and actions. They also identify themselves, regardless of gender, with males in the past.

Males as symbols of the past

Male names were used by the pupils as representatives of an era or used as time markers. When using names as time markers, the students turned to fictional characters who they considered to be symbols for a specific time period. For example, Asterix and Obelix were used as time markers for the Roman Empire. Male defined groups also were used as markers of time, such as: "it was in the time of pirates". Descriptions of people or groups in the past were also coded as male, such as Vikings, soldiers, kings and as mentioned, pirates. Two women were mentioned in the interviews, Anne Frank and Sophie Scholl. A few pupils had read, on their own initiative, Anne Frank's diary and one class had viewed the film Sophie Scholl at a history lesson. The film were used by the pupils as an example of how they studied the Second World War and Anne Frank's diary was mentioned as an example of a book about history. However, the females themselves were not talked about.

The non-fictional men mentioned by the pupils often had a prominent place in the societies of the past, such as Gustav Vasa and Adolf Hitler, who were most frequently referred to. They were mentioned either as examples of important people in the past, as representations of what the pupils see as important events in the past or as an example of thrilling and interesting events in the past. Gustav Vasa were pointed out as a founding father for Sweden as a country. The events in the past were mentioned by both the boys and the girls as the most interesting parts of history as a school subject and the thrilling aspect of the past is empathized.

Women as a collective, males as individuals

When the pupils spoke of now living persons, women were talked about as mothers, grandmothers, teachers or classmates. Politicians or other public figures mentioned were only males. Men mentioned in a contemporary context were usually mentioned when the pupils made assumptions about the future in different ways, why the future also appears to be male dominated. The men mentioned in

the interviews were also fathers and grand-fathers, but most of the now-living men talked about in the interviews were public figures in some way.

Males were regarded as actors in history in the sense that they by their inventions and ideas have driven history forward, and in all examples the pupils gave, to the better. Abraham Lincoln were put forward as the individual that by his actions and ideas abolished slavery and made sure that people of all colors were treated equally. Even moral and norms were by the pupils seen as a process that is driven by males in the past. Men's' mistakes in the past were also mentioned as something to learn from, one example were that Alfred Nobel's brother died in an accident with dynamite so therefore people today knows that dynamite is dangerous. History in the pupils' answers were seen as a process from bad to better and the process was driven by men in the past, their ideas, actions and decisions. To learn from the past were regarded by the pupils as the reason for them to study history as a school subject. To learn from the past is to learn from men and men's actions in the past. Both boys and girls in the interviews preferred to study exciting parts of the past. Events in the past were regarded as history, everyday life were not seen as history:

(2.1.3) Yes, well, we do not have history as something that has happened, so kind of, what is his name? J, like John F. Kennedy or something. But, more ages, Stone Age and such.

(me) So more about how they lived?

(2.1.3) Mm. Yes.

(2.1.2) Times. And a little what happened during those times.

(me) Is it interesting?

[...]

(2.1.2) Yes, or sometimes.

(2.1.1) When you get to know something new, that is exciting.

(2.1.3) Yes not just how they lived what they bought and what they ate, something that happened, something big.

(2.1.1) Some highpoint or something.

(2.1.3) Yes, like the Middle Ages, Stockholm's bloodbath, when the Middle Ages just ended.

(School two, interview one, three boys)

The big events mentioned in the interviews were dominantly the Second World War and the Stockholm Bloodbath. Besides these events the pupils just talk about "big events" and did not specified these event. This view were further underpinned with an emphasis on that the textbooks only consist of "important facts" and not what people in the past ate or how they were dressed. The textbooks were by the pupils regarded as something that forms history as a school subject. They also trusted the textbooks, only true facts are, the pupils claimed, included in the textbooks. In the interviews, the pupils seldom talked about the ordinary lives of people of the past, but when they did, the people of the past were only talked about as "he". Male activities, such as hunting, were mentioned. Women and activities linked to women's chores were not mentioned at all, except that several pupils' talked about that every-day lives in the past were uninteresting to read about. The textbook were described as good since it do not include such aspects:

(4:1:2) But everything that happened before is not in the textbooks. It's not "they went up and ate breakfast and went out and took care of the cows" it is not written in the books.

(4:1:1) They writes what is exciting.

(4:1:3) [...] and what's interesting. (School four, interview one, three boys)

Both we and them are male

All pupils formed a “we” when they talked about events in the past. The “we” included themselves and people who had lived in what in present day is Sweden, regardless if the pupils talk about the Stone Age or the year 1521. The “we” were used regardless of the sex of the pupils. Girls were in the interviews identifying with the victims of the Stockholm bloodbath, even though only males were executed in the bloodbath. Most of the females involved in the event died in captivity. The “we” the pupils formed to identify themselves with people in the past were male.

The pupils also formed a “them” referring to people of the past, in order to make a contrast between their own present and the past. The past were then treated as one unit. The “them” the pupils construct in the past were also male. When they talked about clothes in the past it were mentioned that “they” had chain armory, and when not in war, trousers and capes. Even girls used male clothes as example on how “they” dressed in the past. In this quote, an emphasis on the exciting parts of history are also visible:

(3.3.2) Yes, but it feels like it went on more violently in the past than it do now, so that way it gets a little more exciting.

(Me) Ok. But just read about how people lived, isn't it as interesting?

(3.3.2) Well it is fun to know how they lived and so but it is more fun to read about the events, yes, so it is not as interesting with how they dressed and how they eat as with [gets interrupted]

(3.3.1) It is interesting because we can think that the during the Vasa era they looked really silly with such puffy clothes, we think that looks really crazy. Because in the present we do not go with big, soft, puff trouser. (School three, interview three, two girls)

Girls expressed an interest in studying more about the common lives of people in the past in history as a school subject. None of the boys wanted to change anything in the history teaching, but both boys and girls wanted to read more about the Second World War. The thrilling aspects of the past were put forward by all pupils as something positive with history as a school subject. Girls also emphasized that one positive aspect of the history as a school subject is the possible to always learn more, the learning part of the subject were mentioned as positive. In the interviews, girls expressed an interest in history that they exerted in their spare time. They pursued their interest by reading books, going to museums or watch documentaries.

Discussion

For a social sustainable society matters of making gender and identity are important on several levels. Since historical consciousness is linked to the making of an identity and of giving a sense of “self” it might be questioned how pupils historical consciousness are formed based on a male dominated history culture. However, that question is even more severe since it points to a society that are male dominated and where male actions are the only ones that counts. A social sustainable education in history should give an opportunity for the pupils to form a historical consciousness and a common historical culture based on a past filled with people of different sex, race and gender. As the results shows, the pupils do not express a history culture that are equal between the genders and the gender

norms they express are also not fulfilling the aims of the United Nations goals for a sustainable society. The history culture they transmit in the interviews are not equal between the genders.

Hirdmans' theory (2001) on the making of gender as the making of two counterparts is difficult to apply on the material in the sense that women were almost totally absent. However, the theory is applicably on the material since history is regarded by the pupils as male. It is also made visible that male are seen as actors. Expressed with Hirdmans' definitions of males and females as counterparts the pupils' historical culture can be described as follows:

The making of male and female counterparts in the pupils' historical culture:

Males	Females
Active	Passive
Drives history forward	Spectators/victims
Subjects of identification	Invisible
Interesting	Uninteresting
Public figures	Anonyms
Powerful	Powerless

Women are not mentioned when the pupils' talked about past times. Neither is females mentioned when the pupils spoke about the present and the future other as relatives, classmates or teachers. One explanation to this might be that what the pupils regarded as "history", the big events in the past, is the public history, and in those events they only met men as actors, and history has only remembered males as actors in those events. What is male then, in the pupils making of gender, is the important events in history, the making of norms and moral standards. Male is to be active, important and males shape the society. It is a bloody, violent history the pupils describe. The male gender norms (Davies, 2011) the pupils identify in history as a school subject are active and violent. Boys has in earlier studies also expressed a more traditional forms of historical consciousness, something that is visible also in this study (Andersson Hult, 2016).

The big events in the past that the pupils perceive as interesting are also the events the pupils view as events in the past they can learn from. Female experiences and female actions are not presented as something that they could learn from. The common reference frame and the common norms and values the pupils identify in history as a school subject are male (Stolare, 2014; Ahonen, 2017). The boys and the girls identify with males in the past. The undefined "they" and "we" the pupils use when they talked about peoples in the past are male. Since women are more or less totally absent in the history culture the pupils seem to be left with no other choice then to identify with males in the past.

One can only speculate if the pupils' view of the past, and their identification with the past would change if they met women of history, both the ordinary and also for example queen Philippa who ruled over the Kalmar union when king Magnus Eriksson where away on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, or Kristina Gyllenstierna who indeed was a powerful actor in the events leading up to, and during, the Stockholm Bloodbath. If more females where present in history teaching would pupils have easier to form an identity where women also are actors? Would they likewise regard masculinity as something more than the active and, in many cases, violent masculinity that they describe? An education for a social sustainable society needs to give room for the women in the past, the present and the future. History

as a school subject have role in forming a mutual reference frame and give pupils a sense of belonging to society (Skolverket, 2011). An education for a social sustainable future need to take in consideration which historical culture the society should build upon.

The historical consciousness the pupils form based on the view of history presented here would be that the past, the present and the future are dominated by men and that men are the actors and those whose actions define the past, the present and the future. The historical culture that becomes visible in the interviews are a reinforcing gender norms with men as active and women as passive. It leads to the rhetorical question if that is an education for the future? The hopes for an education for a social sustainable society would be that gender norms are regarded as something belonging in the past.

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