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**Representation and interpretation:
Textbooks, teachers, and historical culture**

Robert Thorp

Dalarna University, Sweden

Umeå University, Sweden

Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, Germany

Abstract

This article presents a study of how contemporary Swedish lower secondary school textbooks present the emergence of the Cold War and how 10 active lower secondary school history teachers interpreted a quotation that was ambiguous in relation to the general narrative in the studied Swedish textbooks, seeking to analyse textbooks both from the perspectives of content and reception. Applying a theoretical framework of uses of history, the study finds that the narratives presented in the studied textbooks are what could be called traditional in the sense that they do not acknowledge perspective and representation in history. While the interviewed teachers generally acknowledged that textbook narratives are representations of history and contingent on perspective, few teachers extended this to include how their own views affect their interpretations, suggesting an intermediary appreciation of the contextual contingency of historical narratives.

Keywords: textbooks; narrative; history didactics; interpretation; reception; uses of history.

Introduction

This article aims to analyse and discuss how lower secondary school history teachers relate to aspects of the dominating historical culture in society. By asking ten history teachers to examine a quotation from a history textbook that did not take a definite stand concerning who is to blame for the emergence of the Cold War, I wanted to study how teachers situated in a specific historical culture interpret a narrative that is ambiguous in relation to the dominant historical culture as expressed in history textbooks concerning the same topic. Furthermore, to contrast the interviewed teachers' interpretations with dominant historical culture as manifested in history textbooks, a study of how contemporary Swedish lower secondary school textbooks present the emergence of the Cold War conflict was also carried out. Hence, this study has two subordinate aims: it seeks to study how contemporary Swedish lower secondary school history textbooks express the Swedish historical culture concerning the emergence of the Cold War conflict, and it seeks to study how teachers situated in a Swedish historical cultural context interpret a textbook narrative that takes an ambivalent stance regarding the same historical event. Thus, the present study employs a broad approach to textbooks, studying both what content they have and how textbook content is interpreted by active teachers.

Adhering to what has been termed the practical turn in textbook studies (Christophe 2010, p.4), the present study assumes that the use and mediation of textbooks are essential elements in how they are interpreted (cf. Popow 2014, p.16). Furthermore, it also assumes that the preconceptions and cognitive attitudes of users affect their interpretation of textbook narratives (cf. Bråten et al. 2011; Porat 2004). Another important dimension of textbooks is that they are not impervious to societal influence, but should rather be regarded as tools of dissemination, and possibly control, exerted by society, i.e. the content of history textbooks should not be considered neutral or distanced from contemporary issues regarding history and our perception thereof (cf. Low-Beer 2001; Otto 2013; Ritzer 2012). In this sense history textbooks could be regarded as artefacts of a historical culture: they contain what is perceived to be historically meaningful in a history educational context, and thus also bear evidence of what is perceived as historically insignificant (cf. Åström Elmersjö 2013, pp.148-151). History textbook narratives as artefacts of an historical culture are used in various contexts and for various reasons, and consequently it is also relevant to study what *uses of history* are constituted by the studied textbooks and interviewed teachers. The present study focuses on two dimensions of uses of history (cf. Thorp 2014a), which I call *teleological* and *narratological* uses of history.

Previous research

Generally speaking, history textbook research has mostly been devoted to the content of textbooks and how that content has been selected (Foster 2011). Scant attention has been directed to how textbooks (or other educational media) are interpreted by teachers in an educational context (Lässig 2009, pp.14-15). This article seeks to add new dimensions to textbook research: while the contents of history textbooks indeed are the focus of this study, the substantive and cognitive dimensions of that content are highlighted, and I attempt to shed light on how teachers as professionals relate to and interpret the narratives presented in textbooks, thus attempting to bridge the gap between textbook narratives and their use.

Different perspectives in research on textbooks bring different problems and possibilities (cf. Otto 2013, pp.14–17), and I want to argue that a history didactical approach to textbooks need not only focus on content and dissemination, but also on reception. There has been some research carried out on reception of historical texts (e.g. Danielsson Malmros 2012; Porat 2004; Wineburg 2001), but research focusing on one of the key disseminators of history in any given society, i.e. history teachers and their perception of textbooks, is still scarce (cf. Fuchs & Otto 2013). Consequently, this study is an attempt to enter an understudied area in textbook research.

Previous research carried out on Swedish history textbooks has specifically dealt with how the Cold War era is presented in history textbooks: Janne Holmén (2006) carried out a longitudinal and comparative study of how history textbooks in Sweden, Norway, and Finland presented the USA and the USSR between the 1930s and 2004. Holmén found that Swedish textbooks in general presented the USSR in a negative manner during the whole time period (with a short period of exception during the late 1940s), and increasingly so since the 1980s. The image of the USA in the studied textbooks is more complex. While the narratives have a marked Western or American perspective regarding foreign policies, they tend to focus on social problems (e.g. racial discrimination, poverty, et cetera) in domestic American history, particularly from the 1970s onwards (Holmén 2006, p.314ff.). Interestingly, these trend shifts seem to correlate with Sweden's stance towards the USA and USSR during the Cold War era (cf. Dalsjö 2014). While some of Holmén's results are corroborated in the present study, the latter has both a narrower and wider scope. It is narrower since it includes textbooks from only one country and it merely focuses on how the emergence of the Cold War is presented in the studied history textbooks, but wider since the narratives are

studied both regarding what content they have and *how* that content is presented, and it also studies how a narrative on the emergence of the Cold War is interpreted by active lower secondary school teachers, i.e. a receptive dimension is added.

Theoretical approach

Approaching the study of textbooks from a hermeneutic position, it is assumed that all postulations (in textbooks and elsewhere) are contextually contingent, i.e. an analysis of textbooks needs to pay close attention to contexts, those of the textbook narrative, but also of the interpreter of these narratives (cf. Nicholls 2005). While contextual constraints affect what is perceived as meaningful or truthful, this is not to be perceived as a relapse into relativism, but rather as a call for the need to situate narratives and interpretations within a context in order to derive intersubjectively acceptable knowledge from them (cf. Sievers 1999).

The history didactical notions 'historical culture', 'uses of history', and 'historical consciousness' allow us to approach narratives and interpretations from a perspective akin to that described above. In a sense, expressions of historical culture and perceptions thereof are the main focus of this study. History textbooks contain narratives that display what is perceived as historically significant and meaningful, and these same narratives constitute various uses of history that can be analysed according to the aims that may lie behind them and the historiographical (or meta-historical) approach they display. How we use history can then be regarded as contingent on how we view and understand history, i.e. as indicators of our historical consciousness. Below I will specify in greater detail how these notions may relate to each other and this study.

In the context of this study, historical culture should be perceived as a notion that deals with the relationships to history that exist in a certain society or environment (cf. Karlsson 2009, p.34). Hence, historical culture should be understood as a collective notion that offers the individual a variety of approaches to history. An historical culture can thus be perceived as both enabling the individual an approach to history, and at the same time restricting that approach since what is being offered is limited with regard to all possible approaches to history and its events. In this sense an historical culture is a dynamic entity that is produced and reproduced by the individuals that belong to it in one way or another. The same kind of reasoning can be applied to history textbooks as well: certain narratives end up in these textbooks because they seem significant and make sense in

history education – history textbooks thus display what is perceived as common sense within a specific historical culture (cf. Haue 2013).

Furthermore, it could be argued that an historical culture offers us a variety of uses of history. In this sense an historical culture both enables us a range of possible approaches to and uses of history, and at the same time we uphold a certain historical culture through our uses of history; we are both products of history and producers of history. There are two dimensions of the notion of uses of history that I find especially interesting. In the first dimension, which I have named the *teleological* dimension, a use of history can be categorised according to what purpose or aim it has: existential, politico-pedagogical, ideological, scientific, or moral, according to a popular typology created by Swedish historian Klas-Göran Karlsson (2014, p.72). It should be stressed that aims and agendas can be analysed on many different levels (e.g. explicit, implicit, public, personal, et cetera), and that this dimension of uses of history usually demands some kind of agency, i.e. we act using the historical example with some kind of aim in mind. When analysing textbooks, attention is focused on the tone or narrative style of the narrative: references to historical wrongdoings indicate a moral use of history, and references to lessons to be learnt from history indicate a politico-pedagogical use, et cetera. When analysing teachers' responses, it could be argued that I have already provided the interviewed teachers with the reason to act, and while this is certainly the case, I have not provided them with what *examples* to use when acting. Thus, the teachers are free to apply any of the teleological uses of history presented above in their replies.

It is not only rewarding to analyse what use of history individuals make on a substantive level, but also how that historical content is presented narratologically. This is the other dimension to uses of history that is interesting for our present purposes. Thus, when we make a scientific use of history, the *narratological* dimension examines *how* we present that history. I have adopted and slightly modified a typology of historical narratives developed by German theorist of history, Jörn Rüsen (2012, pp.52-54), to illustrate the narratological uses of history. If we use the historical example to narrate a monoperspectival universalistic account of history, it could be called a traditional use of history. If we use the historical example to criticise or destabilise historical narratives, it could be called a critical use of history. Finally, if we use the historical example to portray the contingency of matters historical in the sense that all history is contingent on interpretation and perspective and thus dynamic, it could be called a genetic use of history.

When analysing historical narratives (be they textbook narratives or transcripts of teachers' historical interpretations), I paid close attention to whether the narratives contained what I call *extraneous* and/or *intraneous* perspectives. Applying an extraneous perspective means that the narrative acknowledges contingencies of agency in history, i.e. it asserts that there are various perspectives that affect how we present history (e.g. a Soviet perspective or an American perspective). This acknowledgement can in turn be used to critically assess perspectivity in historical narratives, and I treat it as indicative of a critical use of history: narratives are treated as contingent on perspectives of agency, but the perspective of the interpreter is not included in the analysis. Adding an intraneous perspective, however, extends the acknowledgement of perspectivity in history to include the interpreter as well, i.e. who you are and the perspective from which you approach history influences how you interpret and narrate history. I perceive this as indicative of a genetic use of history since contextual contingency is treated as key to historical knowledge. If the narrative, however, contains neither extraneous nor intraneous perspectives I interpret it as if the narrative is presented as though it were transparent, i.e. it uses history to construct a *de facto* narrative of history: the representation of historical facts is conflated with historical facts themselves, thus making historiographical analyses difficult, if not impossible (cf. Ankersmit 2013, pp.190–191). I treat this as indicative of a traditional use of history. Consequently, narratological uses of history relate to how teleological uses of history are presented narratologically, i.e. they direct attention to representational and cognitive aspects of uses of history. Thus, all uses of history could be analysed using both the teleological and narratological categories of uses of history at the same time.

Although analysing historical accounts or narratives using the concepts above may prove interesting, it is still theoretically difficult to say anything about why we use history traditionally or genetically. A notion that can shed light on that is historical consciousness. Historical consciousness should be understood as a concept that deals with how individuals understand history as influenced by multi-chronology (i.e. past, present, and future perspectives). Since it is an abstract notion, I argue that it can only be studied through uses of history. Consequently, uses of history are perceived as indicators of a historical consciousness. To understand history as influenced by multi-chronology means that you perceive history as contingent on both prospective and retrospective perspectives. A prospective perspective on history means that you start at a certain moment in time and stop at another and then explain what happened in between the two. This could be said to be the classical approach to history. A retrospective

perspective is the opposite: you start at the contemporary situation and approach history from that perspective. It should be stressed that differentiating between these two perspectives in history is probably only possible in theory: you cannot do one without the other. The point is rather to what extent we display an awareness that history and historical inquiries are characterised by both prospective *and* retrospective perspectives (cf. Thorp 2014c).

If we return to the narratological uses of history above, there is a possibility of theoretically connecting uses of history to historical consciousness. When we make a traditional use of history we present history as if it were only a matter of facts: when we study history we get to know what *really* happened. When such assertions are made it could be argued that a person has a cognitive view of history as something fixed, static, and, in effect, a-historical. You approach history as if the retrospective perspective was irrelevant: who you are and why you approach history is not perceived as important, when in fact it could be argued to be highly relevant. A key characteristic of academic history, for instance, is that historians strive to make evident how they have approached the historical study in question in order to gain intersubjective acceptability of their results. This, I believe, is to make one's retrospective perspective evident, and it is cognitively a rather different approach to history. A genetic use of history does exactly that: it acknowledges the contextual contingency of historical facts and accounts: it is only by making evident and arguing for a certain perspective on history that the account can gain acceptance. Without this it does not matter much how interesting or original a historical study may be, since the scientific writing practices in the historical research community require intersubjective verifiability (cf. Hyland 2002, pp.1092-1093).

Furthermore, claims and arguments are contextually contingent in the sense that they are relative to the context in which they were made, and universalistic and context-free claims are liable to attract criticism (cf. Scriven 2002). Once again, prospective *and* retrospective perspectives affect how knowledge claims are valued. The point here is that a reflexive (i.e. explicitly multi-chronological) approach to history is more in tune with a disciplinary approach that acknowledges that historical inquiries are characterised by both prospective and retrospective considerations. A non-reflexive approach would not acknowledge these considerations, but insist on the prospective perspective rendering the historical account inadmissible from a disciplinary point of view. Hence, a traditional use of history could be regarded as an indicator of a non-reflexive historical consciousness, and a genetic use of history could be regarded as an indicator of a highly reflexive historical consciousness. How we perceive history

cognitively affects how we present it and how we interpret historical accounts. It also affects how we relate to historical cultures: a non-reflexive historical consciousness would, according to this model, result in difficulties in navigating between various historical cultures, perhaps resulting in a difficulty of accepting historical cultures that differ from the ones we are used to. A reflexive historical consciousness would, however, appreciate the contextual contingency of history and would treat different historical cultures as different perspectives on history, contingent on temporal, spatial, ideological, cultural, religious, and social factors, to name a few (cf. Thorp 2014b).

If we apply what is written above to the context of this study, history textbooks should be perceived as artefacts of a historical culture containing a variety of uses of history. Thus, through a study of how history textbooks portray a certain historical event (such as the emergence of the Cold War), we can gain knowledge of what is perceived to be the dominant historical interpretation in an educational context regarding the historical event in question, both regarding the substantive content of the textbook narrative and how that content is presented: are we getting a mono-perspectival *grand narrative* of what happened in history, or are we presented with narratives that stress the contextual contingency of historical representations? With regard to the receptive dimension of this study, how do the interviewed teachers interpret the ambiguous textbook quotation chosen for analysis: do they accept the narrative at face value, do they engage with its substantive content, or do they try to destabilise it through discussing its narratological properties according to the model outlined above?

Methodology and material

This study has two foci (i.e. to study how lower secondary school textbooks portray the emergence of the Cold War conflict and to study how teachers interpret a textbook account portraying the same content), and consequently makes use of two complementary methods of data collection and types of material.

Textbooks

In order to gain knowledge of what the contemporary historical culture says about the emergence of the Cold War as it appears in textbooks, I studied Swedish lower secondary school history textbooks published from 1999 and onwards. To find relevant textbooks I searched the Swedish library database (www.libris.kb.se) for “textbook history” (in Swedish “*lärobok historia*”). This

search returned about 1,000 results, 12 of which were lower secondary school history textbooks that had been published during the relevant time period. Some of these textbooks had the same authors and two of them even had the exact same narratives about the emergence of the Cold War conflict in them. Concerning the books that had the exact same narrative, I chose to include the most recently published textbook. This left me with 11 history textbooks to include in the study. All but one of the teachers interviewed for this study was using at least one of these textbooks when teaching history during the school year they were interviewed. The books were:

- *Historieboken* (B. Almgren 1999)
- *SO Direkt Historia Ämnesboken* (B. Almgren et al. 1999)
- *Historia kompakt* (H. Almgren et al. 1999)
- *Historien pågår* (Hedin & Sandberg 1999)
- *Historia: liv i förändring* (Sjöbeck & Melén 2002)
- *Levande historia* (Hildingson & Hildingson 2003)
- *Historia 3* (B. Almgren 2005)
- *Impuls historia 1-3* (Körner & Lagheim 2009)
- *Historia 9* (Tordai 2012)
- *Prio Historia 9* (B. Almgren et al. 2013)
- *Historia utkik* (Nilsson et al. 2013)

When studying these textbooks I focused on the section in each that presents the emergence of the Cold War conflict. I paid attention to: (i) the content on the emergence of the Cold War that was included in the narratives, (ii) the perspective from which the narratives were written (i.e. Eastern, Western or multiple perspectives), (iii) the content and perspective highlighted by the illustrations, and (iv) the teleological and narratological uses of history that were constituted by the textbook narrative. These uses of history were coded according to what could be perceived to be the most dominant uses of history in the studied narrative. When studying teleological uses of history in the textbooks, I chose to code references to academic history as 'scientific,' references to wrong-doings in the past as 'moral,' references to whether knowledge about the emergence of the conflict was pertinent for understanding later developments in history as 'politico-pedagogical', references to how history could be relevant to our present identities or perception of selves as 'existential', and references to how history may be relevant for our understanding of matters past and present as 'ideological'. When coding narratological uses of history, I paid close attention to how the historical narrative was presented. If the reader was presented with a narrative that sought to enforce a view of the historical narrative as transparent in the sense that it merely presents the true version of what happened, I coded it as 'traditional'. If

the narrative used the historical example to criticise certain aspects of contemporary or past historical culture as portrayed in the historical narrative, I coded it as 'critical'. Finally, if the historical narrative engaged in attempts to display the contingent and interpretational aspects of history, I coded it as 'genetic'. It should be noted, however, that there is always a risk of subjective interference when making qualitative analyses of the kind above. In order to reduce this risk, I have tried to specify the theoretical perspectives that I approach the study from and to provide as many quotations from and references to the studied material as possible.

Teachers

The second focus of my study was to analyse how teachers relate to textbook narratives about the emergence of the Cold War. Adopting a methodology employed by Sam Wineburg (1998), I asked the teachers to think aloud as they read the text they were presented with. I asked them questions about how they interpreted each of the sentences in the narrative, and also questions about how they felt that the narrative related to a larger Swedish historical culture, and what their personal opinion of the content of the narrative was. I chose to interview active lower secondary school teachers who were teaching or had taught the Cold War in Swedish lower secondary school and were born no later than 1970, since I wanted to make sure that they had had experiences of teaching the Cold War and had memories of growing up or living during the era as well. All teachers were informed of the aims and purposes of the study, that they could retract their participation at any time without any specific reason, and all gave their written consent to participate (cf. Vetenskapsrådet 2002). I interviewed the teachers at their workplaces and I specifically stated that I was interviewing them in their capacities of history teachers, thus trying to encourage more professional responses from them. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. All of the teachers have been anonymised for this study and I have chosen fictive names for them. Although I have chosen not to give any significance to it in this study, there was an equal number of male and female teachers, three of them were born in the 1950s, six in the 1960s, and one teacher was born in 1970.

Since I wanted to discuss and analyse how teachers situated in a dominant historical culture (as portrayed in history textbooks) relate to aspects of that same historical culture, I sought to present them with a narrative that contrasted with the narratives generally present in contemporary Swedish lower secondary school textbooks in the sense that it gave an ambiguous presentation of how the Cold War emerged. One such quotation was found in a history textbook from the

state of Saxony-Anhalt in Germany. The quotation was translated from German to English and then to Swedish. Its English translation reads:

The Beginning of the Cold War

At the Potsdam Conference of 1945, the US, the USSR, and Britain agreed on the specific approach to be taken towards Germany. Thereafter, political differences determined the actual procedures embarked upon. The US opted for democracy and economic liberalism in its sphere of influence, while the USSR sought to meet its need for security by creating a socialist sphere of influence that extended as far as central Europe. The Soviet army was stationed in Eastern and South-Eastern European countries, where governments supported politically and economically by the Soviet Union came to power. As in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania, a “people’s democracy” emerged in what was to become the GDR. The Western powers regarded these developments as an expansion of the Soviet sphere of influence (Eberling & Birkenfeld 2011, pp.190–191).

The textbook quotation displays ambivalence regarding what caused the Cold War in a number of ways:

1. At first the parties agreed, but then political differences made them go separate ways, i.e. both sides of the conflict are ascribed political motives for their acts;
2. The US installs democracy and economic liberalism in its sphere, and the USSR (wanting security after the war) creates a socialist sphere of influence. Once again each party acts to install a certain political agenda in its sphere;
3. While the narrative states that the Soviet army was stationed in Eastern Europe, it goes on to say that political and economic support was given to the countries’ governments, i.e. no military threats or coercion are present;
4. “People’s democracies” “emerge” in these countries, instead of “enforced” “communist dictatorships”;
5. The wording in the final sentence that “the Western powers regarded these developments as an expansion of the Soviet sphere of influence” can either be interpreted as an affirmation of the fact that it was a Soviet expansion, or as an affirmation that the West had one view of the matter, while there could be other views as well.

When interviewing the teachers I had a question grid that focused on three aspects of the quotation: What does it say? What do people in general think of what the quotation says? What is your personal opinion on the matter? Regarding the close reading of the quotation I had prepared questions that were meant to direct the teachers towards the ambivalences highlighted above. When analysing the teachers' interpretations of what the quotation says, I paid close attention to the following: (i) Who do they see is to blame for the conflict?; (ii) How do they treat what I perceived as ambivalences in the text? (iii) Do they apply *extraneous* and *intraneous* perspectives in their interpretations?

Results

The study's results will be presented below. I will begin by outlining what is presented in Swedish lower secondary school history textbooks regarding the emergence of the Cold War from the aspects outlined above: (i) The content on the emergence of the Cold War that was included in the narratives, (ii) The perspective from which the narratives were written (i.e. Eastern, Western or multiple perspectives), (iii) The content and perspective highlighted by the illustrations, and (iv) The teleological and narratological uses of history that were constituted in the textbook narrative. This will be followed by a presentation of the analysis of the teacher interviews according to the aspects specified above: (i) Who do they see as being to blame for the conflict? (ii) How do they treat what I perceived as ambivalences in the text? (iii) Do they apply *extraneous* and *intraneous* perspectives in their reading? This section's results will then be discussed concerning how the teachers' interpretations of the ambivalent quotation can be understood in relation to the dominant historical interpretation of the emergence of the Cold War found in contemporary lower secondary school history textbooks.

Textbooks

The content in the studied textbooks centres on the USSR and the establishment of communist rule in Eastern Europe. The archetypal narrative begins by stating that Germany was divided between the UK, USA, France, and USSR and that the countries soon afterward started to mistrust each other, usually presented as due to the USSR's insistence on claiming war reparations from Germany. The USSR's aim of establishing communist rule in Eastern Europe is portrayed as the catalyst of the emergence of the Cold War: the forming of NATO should be seen as a response to this and the Berlin Blockade of 1948. The USA then launches the Marshall Plan to curb communism from spreading in Europe and the USSR

initiates the Warsaw Pact. Eastern Europe is characterised by communism and Soviet oppression whereas Western Europe is characterised by market economy and affluence.

In total 55 images were used to illustrate the narratives in the studied textbooks. Thirteen of these were maps showing the Iron Curtain across Europe, ten were images showing Soviet or communist oppression (e.g. the crushing of uprisings in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, the building of the Berlin Wall, barbed wire fences, et cetera), six images showed Western aeroplanes landing in Berlin during the Blockade of 1948, and five images were posters advertising the Marshall Plan. Hence, there was a focus on the mis-doings of the USSR in the images used to illustrate the studied sections.

Regarding the perspective the narratives applied, the blame of the emergence of the Cold War conflict was placed on the USSR: nine narratives held the USSR responsible for the conflict and two narratives stated that both the USSR and the USA had a responsibility. No narrative put the blame on the USA solely. Nine of the narratives studied were mono-perspectival in the sense that they placed the USSR as the instigator and cause of the escalation of the conflict. Some examples to illustrate:

Some think that [the Cold War] started after the end of World War II when the Soviet Union refused to leave the occupied Eastern Europe and call for free elections there. Others believe that it was when Czechoslovakia, which had been a democracy before the war, was forced in behind the 'Iron Curtain' in 1948. [...]. It is evident, however, that the blockade of Berlin that Stalin initiated in the summer of 1948 and lasted for nine months, ended what little confidence the Western powers had had, in spite of everything, in the Soviet Union (B. Almgren et al. 1999, p.419).

In Eastern Europe there were a number of states, for instance Hungary and Romania, that had supported Germany in different ways during the war. What was going to happen to them? The Western countries wanted to have free elections but Stalin wanted to be certain that these countries would be 'friendly'. Soviet troops were already in place in these countries and soon made sure that they became communist. (Nilsson et al. 2013, p.255)

The Soviet Union, especially, had suffered enormously during the war and wanted more war reparations than the other countries allowed. They [the Western countries], on the other hand, did not want to empty Germany from

resources out of fear of starvation and social insecurity. Thus, the atmosphere was tense between East and West. It worsened when the communists seized power in Czechoslovakia in 1948, with support from the Soviet Union. This meant that the Soviet Union controlled all of Eastern Europe up to the dividing point that came to be called the Iron Curtain (H. Almgren et al. 2013, p.63).

The Cold War started after the Soviet Union had implemented communism in Eastern Europe (Körner & Lagheim 2009, p.351).

At the end of World War II the UK, the USA and the Soviet Union liberated Europe from Nazism. In Western Europe the countries that had been liberated by England [sic!] and the USA could elect their governments freely. But Eastern Europe came to be governed by communist dictatorships that were backed by the Soviet Union. During the rest of the Cold War, the USA strove to prevent communism from spreading to more countries. (Tordai 2012, p.93)

What these quotations have in common is that they portray the USSR as the instigator of the conflict. They claimed inhumane war reparations and wanted to spread communism (i.e. non-democracy) throughout Europe. Furthermore, they are mono-perspectival in the sense that all focus is placed on the USSR as an agent in the conflict. Whenever the Western powers are mentioned it is in the context of either reacting towards the USSR or in the context of free elections and democracy. Furthermore, the USSR is not given any motives for its actions except spreading communism, which creates a sense of othering: they are presented as being ideologically driven, whereas the Western powers are not.

The two narratives that I have coded as multi-perspectival present the emergence of the conflict like this:

In the USA there was a growing worry that communism would spread westward. The American president Harry S. Truman declared in 1947 that the USA must “help free nations” that were threatened by communism. The Soviet leaders were on the other hand frightened of an attack from the West and wanted total control of its neighbours. In 1968 the so-called Brezhnev Doctrine was issued, which meant that all communist states had the right to intervene if communism was threatened in any other communist country.

The USA and the Soviet Union used different methods for fighting each other. They refused to trade with each other and made their allies take part

in trading boycotts, they closed borders, showed their military strength, et cetera. (Sjöbeck & Melén 2002, p.110)

and:

The East blamed the USA for the emergence of the Cold War. The USA did not, or did not want to, understand that the Soviet Union needed friendly neighbouring countries in Eastern Europe. During both World Wars, Russia/The Soviet Union had been attacked from the West. How could Stalin and the USSR ever trust the Western powers? The USSR had suffered greatly in the war against the common enemy, Germany, and now the Western world was building nuclear missile armed military bases around the USSR. The Soviet leaders thought that the Western leaders, led by the USA, wanted to destroy communism and the Soviet Union. The Truman Doctrine, they felt, was directed towards the Soviet Union and the Marshall Plan was meant to help American corporations gain influence in Europe.

The West, on the other hand, blamed the USSR for starting the Cold War. Everywhere in the countries liberated by the Red Army, the communists had come to power through election rigging and coups. Once the communists had seized power, they soon made sure that all the other parties were out-manoeuvred and that the communist party became the ruling party. There was great danger, according to the West, that the communists would take control in Western Europe as well and in other parts of the world. According to the West, an example of this was the coup d'état in Prague in 1948, when the communists in Czechoslovakia overthrew the democratic government and seized power. (H. Almgren et al. 1999, p.209)

In these narratives both the USA and the USSR are agents engaging in a conflict: they both have reasons for fearing the other, they both issue doctrines, and they both take action against each other. They are on an equal footing, so to speak. You could choose to sympathise with either side. The only off-putting aspect of the USSR is its characterisation as communist, a term that has strong negative connotations in public Swedish debate, i.e. contemporary Swedish historical culture (compare with the interview quotation's use of the term "socialist" instead).

Regarding the uses of history that are portrayed in the studied textbook narratives, the most prominent teleological uses of history are politico-

pedagogical: what we are presented with are narratives that seek to teach us about what has happened in history. The quoted narratives have a passive voice and the course of history is presented as mere information. Another prominent teleological use of history in the studied narratives is the ideological one, considering the strong tendency to focus on the USSR as a communist agent inclined towards spreading communism throughout Europe. There are also some examples of moral uses of history: *SO Direkt Historia 3* gives us a vivid and detailed account of the fate of Lavrentij Berija after the death of Stalin. Here we are presented with an evil man who is executed for his heinous acts during Stalin's rule of the USSR (Almgren 2005, p.98). Another example of a moral use of history can be found in *Impuls Historia*, where we are presented with a story of how the atomic bombs tested on Bikini Island in 1946 set off the bikini swim suit trend, however "[p]eople who gave some serious thought to it understood that nuclear weapons caused more problems than they solved. They realised that humankind would destroy itself if the atomic bomb was spread and used in a future war" (Körner & Lagheim 2009, p.348).

The majority of the narratological uses of history are what could be termed traditional. We are presented with narratives devoid of historical perspective, resulting in narratives that become transparent in the sense that they conflate historical representations of facts with historical facts. We only get the prospective aspect of historical representation. Two textbooks display what could be coded as critical uses of history, as portrayed by the quotations from *Historia: liv i förändring* and *Historia kompakt* above. What we still have here, however, is a lack of an acknowledgement of the retrospective perspective in history, resulting in prospective renderings of history (albeit from two different perspectives) that conflate representations of history with history. No narratives were coded as genetic.

To summarise, the studied textbook narratives give a rather homogeneous view of Swedish historical culture regarding the emergence of the Cold War conflict in an educational context. The Western perspective is the common-sense one in the sense that it is normalised and needs no argumentation or justification; the USSR is to blame for the emergence of the conflict and history is used in a politico-pedagogical traditional manner. History is generally presented as void of perspective and something we should learn from. Hence, it can be concluded that there is a dominant expression of historical culture in Swedish lower secondary school history textbooks surrounding what caused the Cold War and whose fault it was. In the following section a discussion of how the interviewed teachers

related to this trend in contemporary Swedish lower secondary school textbooks is presented.

Teachers

While the studied sections in the history textbooks gave what could be characterised as a homogeneous view of Swedish historical culture as expressed in history textbooks, the teachers' interpretations of the textbook quotation featured above were more heterogeneous regarding their replies. The presentation below will begin by outlining how they interpreted the account, then I will present their views of how the interpreted quotation relates to the historical culture expressed by the studied history textbooks and at the end I will present how the teachers positioned themselves in regard to their perception of the emergence of the Cold War conflict, i.e. how they personally related to the aspects of historical culture that are expressed.

Regarding how the quotation was interpreted, eight out of ten teachers perceived the quotation as laying blame on the Soviet Union. However, these teachers treated the ambivalences in the quotation in rather different ways. Marianne stated that the blame lay with the USSR, because the democracy and liberalism ascribed to the USA in the quotation sounded "nice" compared to the "territorial expansion" of the USSR. Hedvig expressed the same opinion: "The Soviet Union that expands their territory, perhaps". Others were a bit perplexed by what they perceived as leniency towards the USSR in the quotation. For instance, Gunno stated, "Well, it's the Soviet Union that is to blame for [the Cold War]. But reading the quotation it doesn't seem that obvious". He reacted to the phrase "people's democracy": "East Germany, was that really a people's democracy?"

Bertil did, however, offer a different analysis:

Well, in my world, it doesn't really say [who's to blame]. [...]. If you want to make the Soviet Union into the culprit in this quotation, you'd have to be [...]. an old fashioned conservative who thinks that everything that's socialist is dangerous. [...] It's interesting that they chose the term "socialist" when it should be communist.

Elisabeth goes even further in her reading of the quotation, reading it as laying blame on the UK and the USA: while the Soviet Union merely "tries" to expand its territory, the UK and the USA "choose" to implement their policies in the West. In other words, she does not interpret the quotation as differentiating qualitatively

between the policies of the USA or the USSR, thus making the USA seem worse since they actually succeeded in implementing their policies according to the narrative she was presented with.

Concerning the extent to which the teachers apply extraneous and intraneous perspectives to the text, all but one did apply one or both perspectives. Six teachers made extraneous perspectivisations while reading. Torsten says, for instance:

Yes, but according to Western historiography, the West, meaning the USA, is always right. The USA dictates what the rest of Western Europe thinks, at least during this period. Of course they perceived this [the Soviet expansion] as a threat and that's why they started the rearmament to stop the Russian expansion.

Here, Torsten is explaining that depending on the perspective from which you write history, you get different stories, and he perceives what he was presented with as a typical “Western” story. Three teachers make both extraneous and intraneous perspectivisations, meaning that they not only discuss historiographical perspective in the quotation, but also how their own perspective affects their reading. To exemplify, Lena, when asked to compare Soviet expansion and American democracy in Europe, says, “No, [...] I may be too affected by the fact that I know that the countries close to the Soviet Union were forced or wanted to be socialist”. She goes on, “It may be because I have too much baggage to be able to [...] read the sentence impartially”. I interpret this as evidence that she acknowledges that her own view of the Cold War makes it difficult for her to fully appreciate the Soviet perspective, i.e. her retrospective perspective affects her interpretation of the quotation.

When the teachers were asked to state what they thought people in general think about the emergence of the Cold War, seven teachers stated that they think that people in general hold the Soviet Union responsible, one teacher thought that both sides, i.e. the USA and the USSR, are perceived as responsible by Swedes in general, and two teachers stated that it is difficult to say since it is contingent on political views. Karin, for instance, said, “In Sweden I don't think [there is a consensus on who to blame]. [...]. [It] depends on political, ideological persuasion”. When the teachers were asked for their personal opinion on who to blame for the conflict, only three held the USSR responsible, while the remaining seven thought that both the USA and the USSR were equally responsible for the conflict. An interesting example is Per-Olov's reply:

Certainly, both carry some blame. "It takes two for a tango." [...] The USA wanted to attack the Soviet Union right away during World War II. There were pretty far-reaching plans for that, their highest military leaders wanted to, because they knew how weak the Soviets were and they realised that they were on their knees and had given practically everything to defeat the Germans.

He begins by stating that both are to blame, but when he extrapolates he gives a narrative that, taken out of its context, could show the USA to be the aggressor, suggesting that, in reality, they were the ones to blame. However, considering the context of how the emergence of the conflict is framed in an educational context, Per-Olov probably considers that he does not have to explain why the USSR carry blame, since he thinks it is so obvious that they do. To be able to lay blame on the USA, he does however seem to feel that he has to justify himself.

In most cases the replies that the interviewed teachers gave were hard to analyse concerning the teleological dimension of uses of history with any greater accuracy. It could be argued that all of the teachers use history ideologically: they tend to frame the Cold War conflict in highly ideological terms, and discuss what ideological implications a certain use of history may have. For instance, a number of teachers express uneasiness about presenting the USSR in too positive a manner, even though they may have had reasons for their acts. Elisabeth is an example of this. When asked who she thinks is to blame for the conflict, she answers that both are, but then she adds "But I don't agree with the system and the way communism tried to rule the countries [...] and the people, so I don't support that". I interpret this as an attempt to avoid being construed as pro-communist, since she gave support for the reasons the USSR may have had for committing its acts. She does not express the same uneasiness about expressing support for the USA, i.e. how she used history here has ideological purposes. However, I did not ask the teachers specifically about why they chose to use history the way they did, and consequently it is hard to differentiate whether the teachers made moral, existential, or ideological uses of history, since their motives are only expressed implicitly.

To analyse the teachers' narratological use of history is less complicated, however. Of importance here is to what extent they acknowledge extraneous and intraneous perspectives in their analyses of the quotation. The teachers that engaged in extraneous perspectivalisation, which was the great majority, use their discussion of perspective in the narrative as a way of engaging with the narrative critically, i.e. they use history critically. The quotation is criticised for taking a

Western perspective, or being too lax about the USSR, for instance. The teachers that make both extraneous and intraneous perspectivisation have been coded as using history genetically. What we have in these cases is an engagement, not only with contingencies within the narrative, but also with the positionality of the one doing the interpretation. By acknowledging that their own pre-conceptions play a part in how they interpret the quotation, these teachers engage with the prospective and retrospective aspects of historical interpretation and representation, and thus can be interpreted as portraying a highly reflexive historical consciousness. Below I have tried to illustrate how the teachers can be categorised according to their interpretations.

To comment on the categorisation above, it could be said that the teachers gave a more complex view of the emergence of the Cold War than the studied history textbooks did. While most of the teachers interpreted the quotation as laying blame on the USSR and regard the general historical culture in Sweden as blaming the USSR, only three seemed to share that opinion themselves. Furthermore, practically all of them discussed how the quotation and general perceptions of what caused the Cold War is contingent on who is saying what: i.e. historiographical perspective affects how we portray history. Hence, they expressed awareness that history textbooks do portray one perspective among many, and that it generally is a Western perspective that we meet in history textbooks. Three teachers extended this awareness to include themselves, displaying a genetic use of history and an indication of a highly reflexive historical consciousness, stressing that there is not only a prospective perspective that affects what ends up in textbooks, but there is the perspective of the individual interpreting what the textbooks say. In other words, the teachers regarded themselves as bearers and upholders of a certain historical culture and that their own preconceptions of history are relevant to how they interpret historical narratives.

Table 1: *Categorisation of teachers' responses*

<i>Teacher</i>	<i>The quotation blames...</i>	<i>People in general blame...</i>	<i>I blame ...</i>	<i>Extraneous perspective</i>	<i>Intraneous perspective</i>	<i>Narratological use of history</i>
Bertil	Inconclusive	USSR	Both	Yes	Yes	Genetic
Elisabeth	USA & UK	Contingent	Both	Yes	No	Critical

Gunno	USSR	Both	USSR	Yes	No	Critical
Hedvig	USSR	USSR	USSR	No	No	Traditional
Jakob	USSR	USSR	Both	Yes	No	Critical
Karin	USSR	Contingent	Both	Yes	No	Critical
Lena	USSR	USSR	Both	Yes	Yes	Genetic
Marianne	USSR	USSR	Both	Yes	No	Critical
Per-Olov	USSR	USSR	Both	Yes	Yes	Genetic
Torsten	USSR	USSR	USSR	Yes	No	Critical

Discussion

A first finding of the study is that while Swedish lower secondary school history textbooks express a dominant Western perspective concerning what caused the Cold War, the interviewed teachers do not express that perspective to the same extent when asked who they personally feel is to blame for the Cold War. They do, however, interpret the quotation they were presented with as taking a Western stand and blaming the USSR for causing the Cold War, even though the quotation could be regarded as highly ambivalent in this regard. This tendency could mean that the historical cultural context they are situated in affects their interpretation of the quotation. As quoted above, Gunno read the quotation as blaming the USSR but remarked on what he perceived as its soft stance on the USSR. When Marianne read the quotation, her first remark was, "Well, it feels like this is exactly what we write in our history textbooks", suggesting that this was just another regular Cold War narrative blaming the USSR. I think this relates to the teachers' preconceptions of what a history textbook narrative about the emergence of the Cold War should look like: Gunno still blames the USSR, but he thinks the narrative is strange since it does not have the customary tone towards the Soviet Union, and Marianne seems to miss the ambivalences in the quotation at first glance, possibly because the narrative has the regular ingredients of a typical textbook Cold War narrative. Bertil is the only teacher who engages with the ambivalence of the quotation right away; he does not manage to say which

country the quotation holds responsible for the conflict. Bertil is also one of three teachers that uses history genetically.

This is interesting for a number of reasons. On the one hand, the interviewed teachers do seem to be of the opinion that history textbooks are not to be treated as the final word in history since they are historical representations contingent on perspective, but this does not necessarily extend to include the person doing the interpretation. The conflation between historical representations of facts with historical facts, that could be argued to be a prerequisite for a meta-historical approach, appears not in the text itself, but in the interpretation of it. The perspective of the interpreter is beyond analysis, and thus invisible in the interpretation. This is important from the perspective of historical culture: it is one thing to acknowledge that others' perspectives are contingent due to perspective, and another thing to acknowledge that one's own perspective is also contingent. I want to argue that this acknowledgement of contextual contingency, not only on the part of others, but also on part of oneself is crucial for a highly reflexive attitude towards historical narratives, and, consequently, historical culture. Drawing on the work of Australian historian Robert Parkes, it could be argued that such a notion is exactly what characterises a disciplinary approach towards history. The gaze of the historian incorporates everything, not only the context of the historical narrative, but also of the person doing the interpretation of that narrative, i.e. the historian (Parkes 2011).

I also think another aspect of historical culture is relevant to address. In the same way the teachers' preconceptions may have affected how they interpreted the quotation they were presented with, i.e. it placed constraints on the teachers' interpretative horizons, it also places constraints on what is perceived as historically meaningful. I chose to present the teachers with a foreign narrative that differed from what could be said to be a typical Swedish narrative on the topic to try to destabilise their interpretations, to make sure that they would not be too familiar with what they were presented with. However, there is also a risk in using this approach. The narrative cannot be too odd and diverge too much from what is perceived to be a historically meaningful and relevant narrative of the emergence of the Cold War conflict, or it may end up being discarded as biased and not relevant enough to be taken seriously. Some of the teachers did express a concern with what they perceived to be an overly positive portrayal of Soviet territorial expansion in Eastern Europe in the late 1940s, no matter its motive. In this respect, it could be further argued that an ability to detect both extraneous and intraneous perspectives is important when analysing historical narratives: what do I as an interpreter bring to the table and what relevance does that have?

This does not mean that a reflexive attitude towards historical narratives has to accept all narratives as equally relevant or true, but rather that such an attitude enables more complex analyses concerning the contextual contingency of historical representations.

Conclusion

This study sheds light on how Swedish lower secondary school textbooks present the emergence of the Cold War conflict, and how 10 active lower secondary school history teachers interpreted a narrative that presented the emergence of the same conflict in an ambiguous way. It showed that Swedish lower secondary school history textbooks gave a rather uniform picture of the emergence of the Cold War and it has tried to argue that teachers' ability to discuss the relevance of extraneous and intraneous perspectives when interpreting the quotations was relevant to how they perceived both the status of the textbook narrative in relation to historical culture, and their own capacities as bearers and upholders of a certain historical culture. One of the more vital perspectives that is lacking in the presentation above is, however, the question of implementation of textbook narratives. Do differing cognitive approaches to history, as portrayed by narratological uses of history, render differing ways of implementing a historical narrative in a teaching situation? The most important finding in this article was perhaps that historical culture as portrayed in history textbook narratives seemed to play a significant role for the interviewed teachers, no matter what narratological uses of history they made. And, perhaps even more relevant than the historical culture portrayed in the textbooks, pupils are also situated in various historical cultures and consequently have preconceptions of what is historically meaningful and relevant in history, thus furthering the complexity of the dissemination and reception of textbook narratives.

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Jakob, 2014-09-16

Karin, 2014-09-30

Lena, 2014-09-23

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Biographical note

Robert Thorp is a PhD candidate at Dalarna University and Umeå University. He is a fellow researcher at the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in Braunschweig, Germany, where he participates in the international research project *Teaching the Cold War: Memory practices in the classroom*. Robert Thorp is also a principal researcher in the international *Comparing our pasts* project headed by the HERMES research network, which is concentrated at the University of Newcastle, Australia. He has previously published *Historical consciousness, historical media, and history education*.

He can be contacted at : rth@du.se