



On genocide and the Holocaust in Swedish History teaching¹

Niklas Ammert

Linnæus University, Sweden

Abstract: Teaching about the Holocaust and other genocides is emphasized in Swedish History teaching. In Sweden there is a public authority commissioned to work with issues related to tolerance, democracy and human rights. It is this context and under these conditions, that Swedish History teachers select a variety of topics for their students to learn, as part of the History curriculum. In addition to the Holocaust, they teach about crimes against humanity committed under communist regimes, the genocide of Tutsies in Rwanda, and mass murder and ethnic cleansing in former Yugoslavia. Teachers use a multiplicity of uses of history and teaching methods. They conduct a scientific use of history when focusing on the historical contexts and explaining the background, motives and consequences of genocide. Teachers also stress the students' personal reflections and standpoints in a moral use of history. The teaching aims at developing understanding and empathy among students.

Keywords: History teaching, genocide, Holocaust, teachers, uses of history, Sweden.

Introduction

*"We still live in the shadow of the Holocaust."*² These are the words of the Hungarian Auschwitz survivor, author and Nobel Prize Laureate, Imre Kertész. Today the narrative of the Holocaust is present in our society. Seventy years have passed, but the Holocaust is still relevant because while its place in the past, it is still present today, because the event is interpreted from our own understandings and also because knowledge about this traumatic event influences our societies as well as us as individuals. We question the past from our present perspective and condemn the Holocaust. In the European context, to condemn the Holocaust has become almost synonymous, and a non explicit requirement, to being a European. However to condemn is more than a stance. It creates a community based on shared values (Judt, 2005, p. 804). This means that our shared values are part of our collective identity. Accordingly, the Holocaust is present in our historical consciousness and makes a bridge between the present and the past. Not least is this evident in popular culture, such as in movies and in the media.

Teaching about the Holocaust was strongly emphasized in Swedish schools after the release of a startling report from Centre for Research About Immigration (CEIFO) in 1997. The report argued that adolescents were not quite sure if the Holocaust had really happened (Lange et al., 1997, p. 56). Based on these findings, the Swedish government launched the *Living History Project* (later The Living History Forum), which was a major investment to improve education about the Holocaust in Swedish schools (discussed by Karlsson, 2000).

Schools have a special responsibility to teach its students about good values and ethics (Heater, 2004); therefore most people (in the Western world) think that it is obvious that schools should teach about the Holocaust and other genocides. However it might not have been enough.

There are few detailed or systematic studies on what History teachers teach about genocide, how they teach or how students understand and interpret the content (see, for example, Wibaeus 2010; Cole 2007; Totten et al 2004; Lange 2008; Husbands et al 2003). The limited research about teaching in practice is a problem when it comes to understanding how genocide is handled in schools and how it might be enhanced. We need more and alternative studies with different theoretical tools and a variety of methods. This article is focused on the 'supply-side' of teaching; that is, what teachers teach about and how they do it. This paper describes and, in the light of theories from history didactics, analyses how Swedish teachers teach about genocide. The questions concern central aspects of didactics and provide a good picture of teachers' intentions and thoughts about content and form in teaching (Ammert, 2011). Such questions can in practice-based didactic research be framed by the concept Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), which means that both knowledge of the content *and* knowledge about the students and the situation in the actual teaching and learning are important (Schulman 1987; Geddis, 1993). The main theoretical framework in my analysis is Karlsson's *uses of history* model (1999 and 2008) to categories the uses of history on the empirical results of the research that informs this paper.

There are two main sets of questions addressed in this paper. First, how do teachers define genocide, what content do they teach, and what are their aims? Second, how is the specific content treated and how do teachers explain genocides?

Method

The method used in my investigation is called the Delphi-method and has previously been used to obtain feedback and to present different possible descriptions and scenarios from experts. The method has also been used for educational research (Lindqvist & Nordänger 2007; Wiersam & Jurs, 2005). It operates by the researcher sending questions to a number of participants who answer anonymously. The answers are put together and the researcher can identify general patterns as well as idiographic opinions. Later, the informers get the possibility to read the compilation and verify them. In this case, participants were approached, viato answer in a narrative form and to justify their responses.

The participants were chosen from among teachers who have supervised student-teachers in secondary schools or in upper secondary schools in Sweden. It was assumed that these teachers are interested in didactic questions, aware and reflective of how they teach and probably rather dedicated to their work; although, of course, there can not be guaranteed. From this group of teachers, 40 were selected who had varying experiences of teaching, of different sexes, and employed in municipalities of different sizes and varying geographical locations. 28 of these teachers accepted to participate and completed the study. Due to the small population, the results are not representative with certainty, but the study is comprehensive and focused.

Genocide – definitions and selection

Before the results of the study and how the teachers define the concept of genocide are presented, it is appropriate to give background information regarding how it is defined in international conventions and in previous research. The very definition of genocide is to kill

an identified category of people. This is an act of punishment defined by the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in 1948. The definition is problematic and has certain weaknesses. One is that it comprises “acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group [...]” while social or political groups are excluded (Bring, 1994, pp. 74, 88). There is an obvious risk that organized violations of human lives will be excluded, and therefore the crime of genocide could be defined differently. This must be discussed and analysed in history teaching.³ Some of the participants in this study discuss its definition in a similar way:

To me genocide means to exterminate all or a part of a people due to their religion, culture, ideology, ethnic identity and so on. [...] The Holocaust is the persecution of Jews by the Nazis during the 1930s and the 1940s, when Jews, homosexuals, dissidents, disabled and others were executed in working camps and death camps. (Participant C, 2008-10-22)

In general, the participants define the concept when they exemplify:

To me [the] Holocaust is the intended extermination of the Jewish people in the countries the Nazis had invaded during World War II. [...] The Nazi extermination of Jews is even a genocide. (Participant Z, 2008-10-20)

In addition, some participants discuss and reason in their answers: “Another question is when persecutions become genocide, is that when a sufficient number of people from a group have been murdered? I suppose so, but the question is interesting” (Participant B, 2008-10-26). One teacher at an upper secondary school uses the definition from the UN convention, but she problematizes the definition with her students. This concerns a discussion similar to that raised above regarding which categories can be defined as victims of genocide (Participant L, 2008-11-22). The same participant stresses the focus on the 20th century, which she means is obvious in the UN convention.

Participant V answers in an ideological way when she says that “the Holocaust is considered worse than other genocides (even if that is not a fact!). The Swedish government has been very friendly to Israel and this project is a result of that” (Participant V, 2008-10-22).

Another part of this study deals with the selection process, meaning what the teachers choose to teach about, including what events, regimes or epochs were included in teaching about genocide. The results show that most of the teachers answer in a similar way. In almost every answer, the teachers say they teach about the Nazi regime, the Holocaust of the Jews, crimes against humanity committed under communist regimes, the genocide of Tutsies in Rwanda and mass murder and ethnic cleansing in former Yugoslavia. The selection is justified by the teachers’ words that the above mentioned genocides are important historical events for students to learn about in order to understand the world today. In addition, several participants argue that it is also important to teach about more recent crimes against humanity in order to show that genocide is not only crimes committed in the past. Another frequently used justification is that it is better to concentrate on fewer examples than to just give an overview of many examples (Participants Z, 2009-01-23; Y, 2009-01-26; and D, 2008-05-11), privileging depth over breadth.

Apart from the examples mentioned above, there are also several other crimes against humanity presented in History teaching. Among two of these events there is consensus as to the importance of teaching them: the Armenian genocide in 1915 and the European colonial conquests and treatment of South and Latin America during the 15th and 16th centuries. Occasionally participants also present other examples, but none of these are commonly recognized as genocides in Swedish History curriculum. For example the crusades, the inquisition by the Catholic Church, the US military treatment of native Americans in North

America, Mao and the cultural revolution in China, and “genocide in the name of Allah” Participant F, 2008-12-02).

Some upper secondary school teachers, as well as secondary school teachers, refer to a lack of time when explaining why they put genocide as one topic among others:

The time available differs from occasion to occasion. Without belittling genocide as such I would have a bad conscience when answering questions such as, ‘What ethnic minorities do you teach about?’ or ‘How do you accentuate aspects of gender in history education?’ (Participant L, 2008-11-22. See also Participant B, 2008-10-26)

Aims

In this study, the aims of teaching can be divided into three main groups of goals. The first, and dominant set of answers, contains aims similar to the aims in the national curricula.⁴ In general, the aims in the national curricula from 1994 expressed general historical knowledge. These were often vague with descriptions such as the students should be orientated about central historical events and should be able to explain the course of events and how that influences the present time. The answers are a bit surprising, because due to the Swedish national evaluation of compulsory school (NU03), two-thirds of the History teachers state that neither the curriculum nor the syllabus are decisive for the subject they are teaching (Skolverket, 2005).

In the second cluster of aims, teachers stress individual skills of the students, especially critical thinking. A typical answer is this, saying: “The student must, in my opinion, learn how people in powerful positions manipulate ordinary people and that they’ll stop at nothing to reach their goals” (Participant Z, 2008-10-20). In this second group, I have also placed those who stress that History education is about showing students how ordinary people have fought oppression and refused to conduct outrage. The point is to develop skills that enables you to see through propaganda and be critical towards information that you get. This is, in other words, a kind of “instrumental” vaccination against dictatorship and violations against human beings.

The third group is characterized by an ambition of deep reflection. This type of education aims at convincing students to acknowledge human values and the respect of human life. One teacher (Participant O, 2008-11-05) stresses the importance of gaining approval for human and civic responsibility among students. In some cases the approval passes on from teaching to encourage action. Another participant says: The goal is “to analyze and exemplify how to solve problems before they appear and afterwards to go on in societal life” (Participant F, 2008-12-02).

There are no prominent differences in the answers between teachers at secondary school and upper secondary schools. A general observation is that teachers present fairly vague definitions of aims for their teaching. The aims are similar to national aims and they are neither explicit nor explained. The subdivision into three groups of aims overlap with how aims in the national syllabi have traditionally been grouped. These can be characterized as orienting, approving or developing. *Orienting* means that History teaching aims at conveying an overview or a context; while *approving* means to anchor human values and a consciousness of involvement in common cultural heritage. *Developing* comprises the ability to interpret and understand society in order to review critically information from different kinds of sources (Ammert, 2008, pp. 3-4). Thus, the results of this study shows that History teachers follow these three types of aims presented in the national Syllabus.

Didactic concerns on how to teach

To introduce a theme, or a section, is of huge importance to many History teachers. The teachers in this study introduce the study of genocide in a variety of ways. The majority of the participants state that the background and interest are built from the historical context at the time of the end of World War I and from the time between the wars. The teachers also say that movies are very important in their work. Several teachers show the movie *Swingkids* to students in ninth grade. *Swingkids* shows how society was transformed and how young people were affected by ideological movements and sociological mechanisms during the Nazi era (Participant S, 2009-02-22). The film is chosen for other reasons as well – it is anticipated the students will identify more readily with a film about young people and their lives. Another film often mentioned is *Varför förintelsen?* (Why the Holocaust?). This is a documentary describing the lead up to the Holocaust. From the answers in this study, it seems as if teachers give priority to providing background and context in their teaching. Participant Y (2009-01-24) argues that background knowledge is crucial for students to understand that the Holocaust did not take place in a vacuum.

In the collected responses, there are descriptions from three teachers that diverge from the majority of their colleagues. The major difference is that they do not teach along a chronological time line towards a particular genocide, and they do not organize the commonly used theme with genocide, human values, and the conveying of democracy. One of these teachers instead describes a clear genealogical perspective in her relations to the past and the present; genealogical in the sense of taking a starting point in the present and freely over time seeking anchoring, patterns, and answers to questions (see Karlsson, 2003, pp. 29). This teacher, who works at a secondary school, introduces teaching about the Holocaust each year on the day of remembrance of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp in January 1945. With a starting point of the impact and the sense for present day of the Holocaust, the teacher turns to the past and asks questions about why there is a special remembrance day, why the Holocaust is considered a unique and decisive event, why this is important in Swedish History teaching and how such a terrible thing could happen (Participant O, 2009-02-17).

Another one of these teachers (Participant N), who works at an upper secondary school, provides a different perspective. She explains she adapts her History teaching to the program in which the students attend. She illustrates with students who study Natural Science how they can focus their study about genocide on medical and biological aspects of race and medical experiments. Social Science students, on the other hand, can concentrate on ideologies, while students in cultural alignment study expressions from art, for example with the film *The Architecture of Doom*.

Different teachers emphasize different content and various elements in their teaching. Some of the teachers choose to illustrate how propaganda was used and expressed, and how people were affected. They explain that propaganda is a method to change people's thoughts with the aim to turn society in a direction desirable for the regime (Participant V, 2009-02-06).

Some of the teachers describe and give examples of several exercises, in which students are to check and compare historical sources. It is thus practising skills to analyze sources by working with texts with a context that engages students. Others, mostly teachers in upper secondary school, describe a critical approach, but in this case in a more analytical way. One method used is teachers and students searching together for tools to help make systematic comparisons between different events (Participant E, 2009-01-31). One of the participants uses categorisation and categories such as 'perpetrators' and 'victims', as well as 'motives' and 'contexts'. Several teachers discuss how to relate historic contexts to the present time.

That is a good motive, but it has to be done with accuracy. To make comparisons over time on a scale of 1:1 is risky and often results in anachronisms.

There are also examples of how the participants teach in practice. As already mentioned, movies are very common in History teaching. Some teachers stress the importance of discussions, but very few explain how these discussions take place and what kind of topics they discuss. Interestingly enough, only a few say something about web sites. Teachers who do use the web in their teaching are more likely to teach in upper secondary school. They describe the internet as an important complement and actually an accepted source of information, since most of the students use the Internet for information and communication (Participant C, 2009-01-29). The most frequently used learning material are movies (including newly released feature movies) and documentary films. Examples of the latter are *Swingkids*, *Ninas resa* (Nina's Journey), *The Pianist* and *Schindler's List*. Upper secondary school teachers also mention films on later genocides, for instance *Hotel Rwanda*. Participant L mentioned a program-related media on the history subject, and says that one film she is showing to her students is *The Architecture of Doom*. This movie is about beauty and evil in the Third Reich. Some teachers demonstrate attempts with great ambition and creativity, when they tell that they have taken pieces from various programs with documentary pictures that are shown on TV in order to give a clear picture of different genocides.

A different kind of History teaching aims at developing understanding and empathy among the students. Teachers, especially those teaching in secondary schools, express such aims. For example, in an exercise, which is at the same time an examination, the students are told to write a letter from a time and a place where genocide has been committed to a receiver in the present time. Students may not simply use arguments from our time, but must also try to put themselves in the historical context. When it comes to exercises that discuss values and ethical issues, several teachers describe so-called four corner-exercises in which the students must take a stand on ethical issues and place themselves in positions that symbolize the different stances. However, it is not clear if and how teachers explain the direct relationship between ethical views of our time and industrial mass murder carried out under a dictatorial regime.

One common denominator is for schools to invite a Holocaust survivor who visits the school and tells about his or her experience. Several teachers explicitly mention that Holocaust survivor Benny Grünfeld visited their school to lecture and talk with students. A more expensive, but supposedly even more stimulating and horrifying, way to get a close experience of the Holocaust's cruel settings, is to visit one of the former camps that is open to the public. Among the participant in this study, there is only one teacher who tells about such a visit. In this case the visit was to Stutthof in northern Poland. The teacher is very positive about the trip and the insight the students got from visiting the place.

Can the unbelievable be explained?

Extraordinary events, such as genocide, are seemingly impossible to explain because they are so extreme. People have a hard time accepting the fact that behaviours of such a kind could be carried out. On a base level, it can be explained rather disrespectfully as "Zeitgeist." That is not an explanation in itself, but it is a basis for the ideal that reigned during the 1920s-30s, namely, efficiency, speed, strength, power and in its wake, elitism and disdain for the weak or deviant. Some teachers say that "we also place the events in their historical context." (See also Fernstein, 2004). Without further detail, however, this does not describe anything real. Sociological explanations also function in a similar way on the same fundamental level. In

this study the teachers mainly mention thoughts comparable with Zygmunt Bauman (1989) about a bureaucratic system built on and rewarding efficient and rational actions and solutions, where every cog in the wheel is important, as an explanation to how the Holocaust could be carried out.

If one follows an imaginary line from the general and more universal toward the more specific and culturally as well as politically unique, an descriptive level surfaces, based on ideological explanations. The teachers are dealing with such contextual differences when comparing Hitler's and Stalin's genocides. The teachers' responses, nevertheless, provide no clarification on the issue of what the differences actually are and how these can be explained. Comparisons are made, apparently, but they are made unreflected (Participant N, 2009-02-20). These comparisons show, however, similarities in form: both genocides were legitimized for ideological reasons and both thought that certain people must be cleared out of the way in order for a new and ideal society to emerge. Ideology is also the main explanation when the teachers say how dictators legitimized the fact that they suppressed or did away with those opposing the State. It could also be that acting in the name of the ideology was an important symbol of action for resorting to extreme methods, as was done in terms of both Communism and Nazism. The symbol would lie in showing the importance of ideology. In some of the teachers' stories the actual dictatorial ideologies appeared clearly evil and inhumane (for example, Participant E, 2009-01-31).

More precise and concrete explanations deal with the importance of certain individuals. It is, however, very uncommon for the teachers to clearly pick out individuals. A connection to the personal level exists, nevertheless, when the teachers describe the value exercises that are commonly used when studying genocide in school. Several teachers link the actions on the immediate level – the importance of standing up for human dignity when encountering another human being – to the actions on the greater scale – to meet groups of people in the same way as one meets people on a local level. On a specific and concrete level the participants also explain how it was possible in practice for the dictators to control society and people's perceptions in their direction. In this context they emphasize propaganda's importance as a tool in this effort. The words "propaganda" and "passivity of the masses" appear in several responses (Participant C, 2009-01-29).

Uses of history

The function and task of history didactics is to study and analyze the encounter between humans and history, in this case, the meeting with historical events such as genocide. Since this study has concentrated on the teachers' perspectives, the results are analyzed in the light of a theoretical model that deals with how history is used – the *uses of history*. The historian Klas-Göran Karlsson's typology is based on the uses of history being analyzed and systematized in terms of need, utility, user, and function. Karlsson's typology (2008, p. 56) presents seven different possible uses of history, which are briefly presented here: The *scientific use* discovers, uncovers and reconstructs the past. It deals with verifying and interpreting events and developments. The *existential* and *moral uses* are about connecting time dimensions, and orienting and anchoring people in history and hence in the present. The *moral use*, however, seeks consciously to re-discover oppressed groups or iniquities in the past in order to reach reconciliation and rehabilitation. A *political-educational use* is often employed by political elites in order to illustrate and influence. History becomes an instrumental tool to reach and influence people. The *ideological use* has the same function of constructing history, for instance to legitimize the existence of a state. *Non-use* of history also has the same function, except this time by concealing or blurring historical narratives,

traditions and artefacts from the public historical culture (Karlsson's last use of history, a *commercial use*, is not relevant here).

In this study, a scientific use appears particularly distinct, primarily in three distinguishable contexts: the first is in the formulation of objectives where the teachers emphasize that students should be able to see, interpret and explain how the past has influenced contemporary society. The second context is in the evaluation basis and concretized grading criteria. The following quotations are examples found in my study:

We check that you have knowledge of:

- The basic facts about *why* the Holocaust could happen,
- *Who* were persecuted and murdered,
- How it was that nobody did anything about the tragedy during WWII.

(Participant O, 2009-12-17)

Third, the teachers also put emphasis on the importance of comparing different genocides. One of the participants emphasizes the importance of students being able to put events in a context and explain how and why genocide was able to take place. She believes that students should find out facts about, and compare, the circumstances and background of Nazi Germany, the former Soviet Union and Cambodia (Participant L, 2008-11-22). In similar terms, another teacher (Participant H) reasons about the importance of students studying and learning about the mechanisms that are the conditions and driving force for genocide.

A large proportion of the teachers' responses fall under the category political-educational use in a sense to illustrate, debate and even convey or influence questions of values and perception of history:

In addition to the pure teaching in the classroom, we have at my upper secondary school for the ninth year in a row, a democracy day, where survivors from Nazi and Communist concentration camps appear for our ninth graders. We also usually tend to invite to that day a former neo-Nazi, who now tries to help young people with destructive behavior. (Participant Z, 2008-10-20)

It is interesting that clear connections are made between a willingness to be democratic today and to have survived a concentration camp in the past. The teachers thus counts on the students drawing the conclusion that a dictatorship has a view of humanity that does not agree with the one we have today, and therefore democracy is the best governance today as well as and in the future. In fact, the context is probably even greater, because that feeling which the survivors convey is more a question of basic human dignity and respect for human life. A survivor of a concentration camp is most likely, but doesn't have to be, a defender of democracy. Another point to raise is whether success is achieved by introducing former neo-Nazis to disenfranchised young people who exhibit destructive behaviours, in order for self-reflection to occur on their current situations. Neo-Nazis in Sweden have often been a small band of uneducated, delinquent men who take out their problems on immigrants (Brottsförebyggande rådet 2009, p. 124).

In the teachers' descriptions of how they use history, there is a clear normative tone. The rhetoric deals with convincing students that the Nazis were inhuman. The teachers seem to believe that it is important "to learn so that it does not happen again." (Participant Y, 2008-10-22). In the political-educational use of history, some teachers say that it is possible to learn from the past and that this is a priority. What is described here is a linear and instrumental approach towards historical development and a strong belief in history's educational effect and expediency.

The third type of use of history by which many teacher responses can be characterized is the moral use. One example of this is an answer such as teaching genocide is about

understanding the victims and feeling empathy for their situation. Another example is the value exercises which several teachers speak about: “Then we summarized the discussion and continued with value exercises about how one treats one another and how one can let things happen” (Participant O, 2009-02-17). Another teacher says she wants “to show that every person has a responsibility towards his or her fellow human beings. It was ordinary people who contributed to letting the Holocaust happen” (Participant O, 2008-11-05). Thus, moral and value emerge very clearly in the teaching, as can be evidenced from the following statement:

[...]At the same time I usually discuss with the students that the same thing that happened in Germany could happen here, and try to get them to understand that it could happen here if we stop thinking for ourselves and stop being so typically Swedish level-headed and let prejudices, fears and blinders take control. Connecting back to ourselves is, in other words, at least as important when we're talking about genocide. (Participant B, 2009-10-26)

The last sentence is the most important in this context: the importance of connecting the content to a time and a context which the student can understand and identify with, in other words an existential use of history.

In the teaching description of teacher S, she demonstrates on several occasions how the content relates to the students. She makes a film selection that is appropriate for the students' age and their interests in life and in the past. Her use of the movie *Swingkids* illustrates the situation during the interwar period and the class discusses how young people can be attracted to dictatorships (Participant S, 2009-02-22). Other examples show that the students write personal letters to the above mentioned survivor Benny Grünfeld, in which they reflect on what they have learned about the Holocaust. This also emphasizes that the individual's relationship to the past is important and makes sense. Another teacher says: “The goal is that students will understand events in the past and today and the consequences of them, be able to see the historical perspective” (Participant M, 2008-11-06).

To sum up, the different categories of teaching identified in this study will be elucidated. The results refer to teaching in a Swedish context, but they are likely to apply to teachers all over the world, because ethical values and moral issues are central in History teaching. The German historian Wolfgang Mommsen describes this as obvious when writing:

[t]he historian deals constantly with values, ideological positions and different normative systems – these are the very fabric of what he studies, and their mutual confrontation constitute in a way, the dynamism of the historical process. (Mommsen, 2000, p. 48)

Teaching a content with ideological or ethical overtones is challenging. The challenges are probably different in different countries, but the results in this article provide fuel for further discussions.

In contemporary Europe, where the narrative of the Holocaust is omnipresent, Swedish History teachers emphasize teaching about genocide and especially the Holocaust. They also teach about crimes against humanity committed under communist regimes, the genocide of Tutsies in Rwanda and mass murder and ethnic cleansing in former Yugoslavia. From the results, three categories or types of teaching are identified. In the first category, teachers stress the historical context and explain the background, motives and consequences of genocide; this is a scientific use of history and an example of traditional history teaching. A context and content based teaching that is also identified in an American study (Trombino, 2010), in which teachers also reported more exposure to historical thinking skills in content courses than in methods courses. In previous research the mutual significance between ethical values and a vital historical consciousness has been expressed (Rüsen, 2000, p. 61).

In the second category, teachers stress the students' personal reflections and standpoints. The characterization is likely valid also in countries other than Sweden. In History teaching it

is crucial to connect the context to the students for reflection and to evoke empathy. This category is characterized as a political educational use of history. There are also examples showing how teachers emphasize connections or encounters between the past and the present. When the students encounter education that aims at making them reflect upon their own responsibility this provides an example of moral and existential uses of history.

The third category of teaching is focused on historical lines and systematic studies on how human lives and human rights have been violated in different cultures and in different times. This category of teaching requires previous knowledge and is more common in upper secondary school. Cultural encounters may enable intercultural perspectives and wider interpretations, which are significant in a globalized world.

References

- Ammert, N. (2008). *Historia framåt: Inför arbetet med en ny kursplan i historia för grundskolan*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- Ammert, N. (2011). *Om vad och hur må ni berätta? – undervisning om förintelsen och andra folkmord*. Stockholm: Forum för levande historia.
- Bauman, Z. (1989). *Auschwitz och det moderna samhället*. Göteborg: Daidalos.
- Bring, O. (1994). *Folkrätt för totalförsvaret: En handbok*. Stockholm: CE Fritzes AB.
- Brottsförebyggande rådet och Säkerhetspolisen. (2009). *Våldsamt politisk extremism: Antidemokratiska grupperingar på yttersta höger- och vänsterkanten*, Rapport 2009:15. Stockholm: Brottsförebyggande rådet.
- Cole, E. (Ed.). (2007). *Teaching the Violent Past: History Education and Reconciliation*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc.
- Dagens Nyheter 2007-11-07
- Dulić, T. (2005). *Utopias of Nation: Local mass killing in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1941-42*. Uppsala: Uppsala universitet.
- Fernstein, S. (2004). What are the results? Reflections on working in Holocaust education. In Totten, S. Bartrop, P & Jacobs, S. (Eds.), *Teaching about the Holocaust: Essays by college and university teachers*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger.
- Fine, E. S. (1988). The absent memory: The Act of writing in post-Holocaust French literature. In B. Lang. (Ed.). *Writing and the Holocaust*. Ithaca New York: Cornell University Press, pp. 41-57.
- Geddis, A. (1993). Transforming subject matter knowledge: The role of pedagogical content knowledge in learning to reflect on teaching. *International Journal of Science Education*, 15(6), pp. 673-683.
- Gerner, K. & Karlsson, K-G. (2005). *Folkmordens historia*. Stockholm: Atlantis.
- Heater, D. (2004). *Citizenship: The civic ideal in world history, politics and education*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.
- Husbands, C. Kitson, A & Pendry, A. (2003). *Understanding history teaching: Teaching and learning about the past in secondary schools*. Maidenhead & Philadelphia: Open University Press.

- Johansson, A. W. (1997). Neutrality and modernity: The second world war and Sweden's national identity. In S. Ekman, & N. Edling (eds.), *War experience, self image and national identity: The second world war as myth and history*. Stockholm: Gidlund.
- Judt, T. (2005). *Postwar: A history of Europe since 1945*. London: William Heinemann.
- Karlsson, K-G. (1999). *Historia som vapen: Historiebruk och Sovjetunionens upplösning 1985-1995*. Stockholm: Natur och Kultur.
- Karlsson, K-G. (2008). *Historiedidaktik: begrepp, teori och analys*. In K-G. Karlsson, & U. Zander. (Eds.), *Historien är nu: En introduktion till historiedidaktiken*. Lund: Studentlitteratur, pp. 25-70.
- Karlsson, K-G. (2000). Varför sekelslutets historieintresse? Levande historia som statsorganiserat historiedidaktiskt projekt i Sverige, *Historiedidaktik i Norden*, 7, pp. 69-75.
- Kertesz, I. (2007). *Det landsförvisade språket: Essäer och tal*. Stockholm: Norstedts.
- Konventionen i Haag den 18 oktober 1907 ang. lagar och bruk i lantkrig; Bilaga: Reglemente ang. lagar och bruk i lantkrig. (IV Haagkonventionen).*
- Konventionen den 9 december 1948 om förebyggande och bestraffning av brottet folkmord (genocide), Artikel II*
- Krigets lagar: Folkrättsliga konventioner gällande under krig, neutralitet och occupation*. Stockholm: Försvarsdepartementet, Totalförsvarets folkrättsråd 1996
- Lange, A. (2008). *En undersökning om lärares erfarenheter av och uppfattningar kring undervisning om förintelsen*. Stockholm: Forum för levande historia.
- Lange, A. Löw, H. Bruchfeld, S & Hedlund, E. (1997). *Utsatthet för etniskt och politiskt relaterat hot mm, spridning av rasistisk och antirasistisk propaganda samt attityder till demokrati mm bland skolelever*. Stockholm: Centrum för invandringsforskning, Stockholms universitet och Brottsförebyggande rådet (BRÅ).
- Lindqvist, P. & Nordänger, U. (2007). *(Mis-?) using the E-Delphi method: An attempt to articulate the practical knowledge of teaching*. *Journal of Research Methods and Methodological*, Volume 1, Issues, 1.
- Mommsen, W. J. (2000). Moral commitment and scholarly detachment: The social function of the historian. In J. Leersen, & A. Rignet. (Eds.), *Historians and social values*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, pp. 45-56.
- Rüsen, J. (2000). Historical objectivity as a matter of social values. In J. Leersen. & A. Rignet. (Eds.). *Historians and social values*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, pp. 57-68.
- Schulman, L. (1987). Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 57(1), pp. 1-23.
- Skolverket. (2005). *Nationella utvärderingen av grundskolan 2003: Samhällsorienterande ämnen*, Rapport 252 2005. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- Spiegel, G. M. (2007). Revising the Past/Revisiting the Present: How Change Happens in Historiography. *History and Theory, Theme Issue 46*, pp. 1-19).
- Totten, S. (2004). Wrestling with the Definition of Genocide. In S. Totten. (Ed.), *Teaching about Genocide: Issues, approaches and resources*. Greenwich, Connecticut: Information Age Publishing, pp. 57-74.

- Totten, S, Bartrop, P. & Leonard, S (Eds.). (2004). *Teaching about the Holocaust: Essays by college and university teachers*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger.
- Trombino, D. L. (2010). *The Experiences of Secondary Social Studies Teachers with Historical Thinking Skills*. Virginia: Old Dominion University.
- Valentino, B. (2004). *Final solutions: Mass killing and Genocide in the 20th Century*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press.
- Wibaeus, Y. (2010). *Att undervisa om det ofattbara*. Stockholm: Stockholms universitet.
- Wiersam, W & Jurs, S.G. (2005). *Research Methods in Education: an Introduction*. Boston: Pearson.

About the Author

Niklas Ammert is Associate Professor of History and senior lecturer of History Didactics and History Education at Linnaeus University in southern Sweden. Currently he serves as Pro-Dean at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. Ammert teaches history didactics, history and cultural heritage studies. His research mainly focuses on history teaching, history education and the uses of history (how individuals and groups encounter, interpret and use history at school, in higher education, in politics and in other cultural and societal contexts).

Author Email: niklas.ammert@lnu.se

¹ The article is based on my book *Om vad och hur må ni berätta? – undervisning om förintelsen och andra folkmord*, Stockholm: Forum för levande historia 2011.

² Dagens Nyheter 2007-11-07. Kertesz describes the Holocaust's importance in the European historical culture with the following words: "One wants to join Europe and it hurts a little to know that Europe is not just about a common market and customs union, but also about the spirit and mindset. And anyone who wants to share in this spirit must alongside everything else undergo the test of fire by looking at the Holocaust morally and existentially in the eye." (translated from original in Swedish) Kertesz, Imre, *Det landsförvisade språket: Essäer och tal*, Stockholm: Norstedts 2007, pp. 58-59. See also Spiegel, Gabrielle M "Revising the past/Revisiting the present: How change happens in historiography" In *History and Theory, Theme Issue 46*, Wesleyan University 2007, pp. 1 and 11, and Fine, Ellen S, "The absent memory: The act of writing in post-Holocaust French literature" in Lang, Berel (ed.), *Writing and the Holocaust*, Ithaca New York: Cornell University Press 1988, p. 44.

³ Tomislav Dulić uses the concept "Mass Killing" and allows the aspects Intent, Systematics and Magnitude to be influential. See Dulić, Tomislav, *Utopias of nation: Local mass killing in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1941-42*, Uppsala: Uppsala universitet 2005, p. 12 and 21ff. The American political scientist Benjamin Valentino defined the concept mass killing (mass murder) as "deliberate killing of large numbers of people who are not carrying out acts of war." Valentino, Benjamin A, *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the 20th Century*, Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press 2004, p. 10. This discussion about the concept of genocide is carried out in detail in Gerner, Kristian & Klas-Göran Karlsson, *Folkmordens historia*, Stockholm: Atlantis 2005, p. 49ff. See also Totten, Samuel, "Wrestling with the Definition of Genocide" in Totten, Samuel, (Ed.), *Teaching about Genocide: Issues, approaches and resources*, Greenwich, Connecticut: Information Age Publishing 2004, p. 57 ff.

⁴ *Om vad och hur må ni berätta?* was published in 2011, before the new curriculum was implemented.