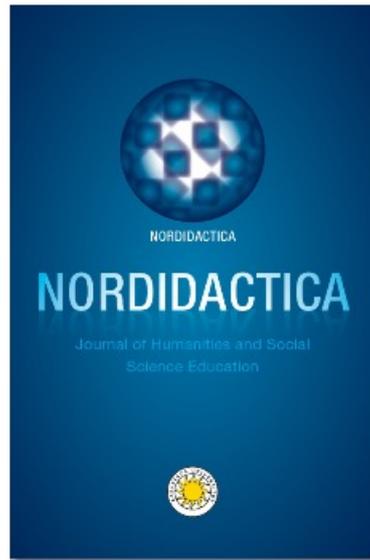


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History Teaching between Multiperspectivity and a Shared Line of Reasoning: Historical Explanations in Swedish Classrooms

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Abstract: This study investigates the presence of multiperspectivity in history teaching through teachers' constructions of historical explanations in classroom interactions. The concept of multiperspectivity is linked to the related concept of interpretation as a central aspect of comprehension of history, in particular to the idea of including different interpretations of the same historical event or process. This idea, as expressed in the current Swedish history syllabus, is contrasted with the notion of establishing a shared line of reasoning as a central aim of teaching practices. The study is built on classroom observations of three teachers in lower secondary school, and specifically analyses how historical explanations are constructed as more or less open to different interpretations. The results indicate that explanations only occasionally are presented as open to different interpretations, and that the degree of openness is influenced by adaptation to student groups, but also possibly by the content matter. The study suggests that the notion of multiperspectivity may come into conflict with the aim of establishing a shared line of reasoning.

KEYWORDS: HISTORY EDUCATION, HISTORICAL EXPLANATION, INTERPRETATION, MULTIPERSPECTIVITY

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The importance of including different perspectives in historical teaching has been emphasised by several history education researchers. Peter Seixas, discussing different approaches to history teaching, argues that inclusion of what he calls a 'postmodern' approach, in which no single perspective is promoted as 'the best', is vital for modern history education (Seixas, 2000). Likewise, Parkes (2011), argues for integrating a 'historiographic' approach into the curriculum, and Barton and Levstik (2004) call for history teaching to include consideration of multiple perspectives in history.

On a surface level, these researchers need not worry about this when it comes to Sweden, since the Swedish syllabus for history includes the ability to 'use a historical frame of reference that incorporates different interpretations' (Lgr 11, p. 163), meaning that the syllabus can be seen as supporting multiperspectivity. However, the corresponding knowledge requirements do not include the notion of different interpretations (Lgr 11, p. 171). This disjunction may mean that different interpretations are de-emphasised in assessment and thus in teaching, especially since the strong focus on assessment in the Swedish school system may influence teaching towards content that is easily assessable (Rosenlund, 2016; Samuelsson, 2018). Thus it is unclear to what extent the notion of including different interpretations, and thus at least the fundamentals of multiperspectivity, are reflected in actual teaching practices.

The focus of this article is on how historical explanations can be used to present different perspectives on the same historical event in history teaching. The study analyses the teaching practices of three history teachers in order to investigate the presence, or potential presence, of multiperspectivity in their classrooms.

In this context, I define multiperspectivity as the presence of at least two different interpretations of the same historical event. While multiperspectivity ought to include more than two perspectives, the presence of two perspectives indicates that teaching practices challenge the idea of a single 'best story' (cf. Seixas, 2000). Such interpretations tend to be based on differing selection and evaluation of causes and consequences, that is, different historical explanations (Frankel, 1959; White, 1973; McCullagh, 2004a; Hewitson, 2014; Chapman, 2009, 2011). The educational research on historical explanations is extensive, with several studies focused on how causal relations are formulated and expressed by teachers and students of history (Halldén 1994; Leinhardt, 1997; Lee & Shemilt, 2009; Montanero & Lucero, 2011). The student-focused research shows that the ability of students to understand historical explanations is influenced by how these are presented in class. On this point, Ola Halldén has argued that teachers and students have alternative frameworks for understanding a particular explanation, and that an important teaching aim is to establish a shared line of reasoning, that is, a common understanding of what happened, and how it is to be explained (Halldén 1994, 1997; cf. Olofsson, 2011). Studies that focus on the content of teachers' explanations in class indicate that historical explanations tend to be presented as multi-faceted in the sense that they include different types of causal factors, such as human and non-human (Halldén, 1994; Olofsson, 2011; Wendell, 2014). However, Lilliestam (2013) points out that the extent to which this influences student understanding seems to be dependent on the extent to which this distinction is actually made clear to students. The way explanations are constructed in a classroom context is also influenced by

teacher purposes, both connected to curricular considerations and ideas about what is important in history, as well as assessment considerations (Leinhardt, 1997; Wendell, 2014; Rosenlund, 2016).

In the context of this study, the concept of historical interpretations is taken to refer to the task of understanding accounts of historical events and why they may differ (Chapman 2009, 2011; cf. White, 1973, McCullagh, 2004a, 2004b). Chapman's studies of how students respond to the presence of differing accounts of the same event, as well as the research by Johansson (2012), and Nygren et al (2017), indicate that students, to varying degrees, are able to reason about why the accounts differ, the latter study emphasising the students' developed multiperspectivity. However, the notion of multiperspectivity can be seen as, at least on the surface, contrary to the Halldénian concept of a shared line of reasoning: if the teaching aim is to develop a shared understanding of a particular historical event, how can the notion of differing perspectives be incorporated into the same teaching? The research mentioned indicates that it can be done; the question here is to what extent it is actually done, and if so, how.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the extent to which historical explanations are used to promote multiperspectivity through the use of different interpretations in teaching practices. In order to fulfil this purpose, the following research questions are used:

- 1) To what extent are teachers' historical explanations in the classroom presented as open to different interpretations?
- 2) How can the construction of explanations in the classroom be understood in relation to factors that influence teaching practices, such as teachers' purposes, and adaptation to student groups?

The aim of the first question is partly descriptive and partly analytical, since it purports to describe teaching practices from a theoretical understanding of interpretative openness and closeness. The second question represents a tentative attempt to discuss why the explanations take the forms they do. Based on previous research and the limitations of the study, the factors that can be discussed in this regard are the teachers' intentions, curricular considerations (especially the history syllabus), assessment, and adaptation to the student groups. In the concluding discussion, I aim to relate the findings to the concepts of multiperspectivity and shared lines of reasoning.

Theoretical considerations

In this study, the theoretical point of departure is that historical explanations are interrelated with historical interpretations, and that this relationship is what makes historical explanations relevant beyond the scope of the strictly disciplinary. This relationship has been described in different ways by theoreticians of history (see for instance Frankel, 1959; McCullagh, 2004a, 2004b; Ankersmit, 2012), as well as history education researchers (Chapman, 2011). The relationship is complicated by the fact that any historical representation constitutes what C.B. McCullagh calls a 'summary interpretation' (McCullagh, 2004a). Thus, a teacher's instruction in the classroom in

itself constitutes an interpretation which is influenced by the teacher's understanding of history, as well as curricular considerations and adaptation to the current group of students (Halldén, 1994; Wendell, 2014). While teachers may possibly highlight this, the interpretative tasks of students in relation to explanations are usually directed towards particular explanations of events, in which the evaluation and justification of particular explanations take centre stage (Chapman, 2011). In this light, teacher representations of explanations can be discussed in relation to the extent these representations allow students to reason about the validity of the explanations, or if the explanations are rather presented as sets of facts to be memorised (Estenberg, 2016). The instructional task of teachers is further complicated by the need for students to comprehend the historical content included in the explanations, which includes both knowledge of the events and persons involved, as well as the organising (colligatory) concepts used, as well as comprehension of the causal relations between different parts of the content (Halldén, 1994; Woodcock, 2011).

The task of teaching historical explanations can thus be summarised as developing three interrelated comprehensions on the part of the students:

1. Comprehending the description of an explanation, including the historical content, including events, persons, historical concepts, and colligatory concepts (Halldén, 1994).
2. Comprehending the causal relations in the explanations, which may include both causal language and the kinds of explanations used (Woodcock, 2011; Wendell, 2014).
3. Comprehending interpretative aspects of the explanation, which may include the processes of evaluation and justification, but also the selection of explanatory factors included or excluded (Chapman, 2011).

Why is this kind of comprehension of historical explanations important? From a disciplinary perspective, it can be justified by it clarifying, as McCullagh states, 'what /.../ historians argue about' (McCullagh 2004b). In a wider educational and societal perspective, this comprehension can be seen as an aspect of developing historical consciousness, in which the competency of interpretation of the past is viewed as necessary in order to be able to orient oneself in the present and the future (Rüsen, 2004). If, as Rüsen states it, the aim of history education includes 'applying historical experiences, interpretations, and orientations to /.../ real life' (p. 140), it follows that a broader understanding of different perspectives on historical events should aid students in understanding present (and future) issues from different perspectives as well. Additionally, the ability to view events from different perspectives is important in order to develop intercultural competence (Johansson, 2012; Nordgren & Johansson, 2015; Nygren et al, 2017). The comprehension of explanations as interpretations can be seen as a building block for developing such multiperspectivity.

In a classroom context, the potential of developing this comprehension is affected by how the teacher represents historical explanations, foremost in the form of what the teachers say and do. As previously stated, teacher representations are the result of a complex set of decisions in which teachers are influenced by, among other things, their understanding of history, curricular considerations, and adaptation to the students. This

may mean that the teachers' explanations actually aim at fulfilling other purposes than developing the comprehension specified above. Especially relevant here is the previously mentioned notion of a shared line of reasoning (Halldén, 1994).

Study design and data collection

The study is a qualitative multiple-case study in which each teacher's sequence of lessons is seen as a case that can be analysed with regard to patterns in how explanations are presented and used. The data was collected through classroom observation of the history classes of 3 teachers in Swedish lower secondary school (student age 13-16). The informants were selected based on being employed as history teachers in lower secondary school (högstadiet), as well as being experienced teachers, having worked as teachers for at least 10 years. Besides these factors, willingness to participate as well as the possibility for the researcher to observe several lessons of one class was emphasised. In all, this means the data was collected through convenience sampling (Bryman, 2012). The schools involved, while being located in the same county, differ somewhat in their goal completion average; according to the Ministry of Education, the goal completion of school 1 for 2017/18 was about equal to the national average, while school 2's was higher, and school 3's lower (<https://www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/statistik/sok-statistik-om-forskola-skola-och-vuxenutbildning>).

The length of observation was limited to one topic included in the teachers' plans for the semester. Since teacher planning varies, this led to a varying number of lessons observed. Lesson length varied somewhat, but was on average 1 hour (80 minutes for the lessons of teacher 3).

The observations were conducted using two audio recording devices, A and B along with the researcher taking field notes. Device A was placed at the head of the classroom, close to where the teachers tended to start the classes, while Device B was kept in the back of the classroom along with the researcher, and was carried alongside the teacher when the teacher moved about. Teaching materials used by the teachers were also collected. The material was further complemented by an interview with each teacher, the main aim of which was to investigate each teacher's thoughts on what is important in history from a teaching perspective.

After each observation, I wrote a brief overview of the lesson as a scaffold for identifying parts of the audio recordings to transcribe. Since the focus of the study is on historical explanations, I used questions that led to reasoning about why or how something happened as an indicator of explanations being activated. Such questions could be stated by the teacher or by students, and can be explicit or implicit in the material. My representations of the teachers' explanations have been informed by what the teachers stated as the topics of their classes, and that each explanation presented here is the result of my interpretation of what each class was about. Thus the classroom interactions have been interpreted as aspects of the overarching topic that the teacher stated as the aim of the teaching. In all three cases, the topic was stated as a colligatory concept - World War II, The French Revolution, and the Neolithic Revolution, respectively.

All informants, both teachers and students, were informed beforehand about the study and its aims, and all students, and their parents, were asked to consent to the study, with the information that they and their parents had the right to refuse participation. While most students and parents readily consented to participate, in each class a number of students did not return the consent forms. In the case such students did join in explanatory discussions, those parts of the audio recordings and notes were not used for the present study.

Since the study is qualitative, the results, based on only three teachers, cannot be statistically generalised (Yin, 2013). However, the study can be used for what Larsson (2009) calls 'generalization through recognition of patterns' (p. 33). Such a study relies on a context-dependent interpretation of phenomena in order to discern patterns that may be useful for understanding the same phenomena in a similar context (Larsson, 2009). In this study, the phenomenon is the interpretative openness/closedness of teachers' explanations, meaning that it will add some understanding of how teachers can work with such complex phenomena in a classroom context.

Analytical categories

The theoretical model of comprehension of historical explanations forms a framework for analysing how teachers represent historical explanations, and thus what is offered in the classroom for the students to partake of. In the analysis, I have focused specifically on the third aspect of the model, the comprehension of interpretative aspects of the explanations, and how they are presented in the classroom. This can be categorised as to what extent the students are invited to analyse the validity of explanations. Such an analysis can be done by analysing aspects of the explanatory factors, such as causal weight and temporal proximity, or by presenting different explanations to why something happened, thus opening the explanations for different interpretations (Woodcock, 2011). However, an initial analysis of the explanations from this perspective gave very few indications of such openness. Rather, the degree of openness mainly appeared in the selection of content. Thus, a different analysis was done using basic categories constructed from the data to show to what extent the selection of content in the explanations show the potential of differing interpretations. Here, it became possible to distinguish between four degrees of openness in the selection of content, as follows:

Degree A: Explanatory factors are presented as sets of facts.

Degree B: Explanations are constructed through interaction, where the teacher corrects student input in order to achieve an explanation.

Degree C: Explanations are constructed through interaction, where the teacher accepts alternative input from students.

Degree D: Explanatory factors are constructed as parts of different interpretations.

Degree A corresponds to the notion of explanations being presented as sets of facts to be memorised, thus signalling that the explanations are not presented as open to

interpretation. In degrees B and C, explanations are constructed through interaction between teacher and students, indicating a potential for differing perspectives to be presented. In degree B, the interaction is more clearly directed by the teacher, who corrects student input when it does not suit the intended explanation, while degree C indicates that the teacher accepts alternative input from students. Degree D indicates that different interpretations are integrated in the presentation of an explanation, for instance by the teacher framing an event from two or more perspectives, or by a degree C interaction leading to different interpretations of the same event, approaching the notion of multiperspectivity as formulated by Nygren et al (2017).

Another aspect to consider is whether the explanations used focus on causes or consequences. In classroom interactions, teachers may present both causes and consequences of a certain event, and the degree of openness may differ between causes and consequences. Thus both aspects have been analysed, meaning an explanation may be presented as more open regarding causes than consequences (or vice versa) (cf. Montanero & Lucero, 2011; Wendell, 2014). In the results, the explanations of each teacher are presented in table format, including the different iterations of each explanation and their respective causal and consequential openness from A to D.

Results

Teacher backgrounds and considerations

The teachers participating in this study can be considered experienced, as they have been active as teachers for more than 10 years (see Table 1). They are educated as social studies teachers, history being one of the subjects within that block. There are, however, differences in what the teachers emphasise as important in teaching history.

Teacher 1 mainly emphasises a shared frame of reference as important for the students, arguing that this is necessary for students to be able to handle the other abilities expressed in the syllabus, such as source criticism and uses of history. Regarding explanations, he mainly focuses on the causes of events, expressing a wish to be able to include more consequential reasoning. He expresses a view of student knowledge as generally deficient in history: 'today's youths often know nothing - they arrive blank compared with before'. A particular circumstance of the current group of students is that they study with a focus on English, meaning that all of their classes are supposed to be taught mainly in English rather than Swedish. The teacher argues that this does not hamper the students in any significant way in the social studies subjects. The current group of students is characterised as not performing as well as earlier groups, but the teacher does mention that they've shown positive development over the last few months (Interview with teacher 1, 25/1, 2018).

HISTORY TEACHING BETWEEN MULTIPERSPECTIVITY AND A SHARED LINE OF REASONING: HISTORICAL EXPLANATIONS IN SWEDISH CLASSROOMS

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TABLE 1

Basic Information about the informants

Teacher	Age	Teacher Years	Other Subjects	Topic observed	# of lessons observed	Student Age	Notes
1 (male)	53	25	Social Studies	Second World War	10	15-16	Class taught mainly in English
2 (male)	53	13	Social Studies, Mathematics	French Revolution	10	14-15	
3 (female)	46	19	Social Studies	Neolithic Revolution	5	13-14	

Teacher 2, while also emphasising 'basic knowledge', places much more focus on consequences. While he includes explanations as one aspect of assessment, the examples he gives point toward how the larger aspects of history affected people living at the time: 'when one thinks about the Holocaust, you have to think about what it meant for people'. Teacher 2 also explicitly mentions storytelling as an important tool for making history interesting to the students. In regard to student knowledge in history, he is more guarded, expressing that students today are weak readers, which he as a teacher needs to take into consideration. His characterisation of the student group is that when it comes to history, they sprawl all over the grades, some performing very well, others not, but that no one risks a failed grade so far (Interview with teacher 2, 2/2 2018).

Teacher 3 emphasises the importance of students being able to orient themselves in time, that 'they can understand why the world is the way it is, and maybe can draw their own conclusion about why something happens in the future'. While she does acknowledge the importance of a sense of chronology, she states that the students only really need to know two dates: their own birth and 1789 (the French Revolution). The former, she argues, is in order for the students to place themselves in a historical context, while the latter symbolizes the advent of modernity. In marked contrast to teacher 1, this teacher states that 'I think the students know more today compared with before'. Teacher 3 heavily emphasises cause and consequence as important concepts in her teaching practices. The situation of the current group is characterised as problematic, since their overall performance in the social studies subjects so far has risked failing grades. Because of this, the teacher has reorganised her strategies in order to work very explicitly with concepts and models for cause and consequence in the class. Her hope is that this will help the studies not only in history, but in all the social studies subjects. While discussing this issue, the teacher compares the current group with a parallel group, noticing that this group, while performing worse, is actually 'more open to ask

questions /.../ in the other group they don't dare ask, because they want to be correct'. When asked if the current group can be said to be less adapted to school than their peers, she agrees that this is the case, for good and bad (Interview with teacher C, 16/4 2018).

A common feature of the teachers is that they all consider themselves social studies teachers (including the subjects of Civics, History, Geography and Religious Education), as opposed to history teachers in particular. However, Teacher 1 identifies History as his personal favourite subject, while teacher 3 instead favours Civics, and Teacher 2 actually favours Mathematics. Regarding the purposes of history education, the three teachers also take up different positions, teacher 1 most clearly emphasising a shared frame of reference as important for the students. Teacher 2 rather focuses on some kind of understanding of historical living conditions. This may be understood as a rational understanding of people in the past, which is variably labelled historical empathy or historical perspectives, or possibly identification with people in the past (Barton & Levstik, 2004). Teacher 3 instead focuses on the ability of students to place themselves in a historical context, drawing conclusions from the past about the present and, perhaps, the future. This aim is very close to how the concept of historical consciousness is expressed in the Swedish history syllabus (cf. Lgr 11, p. 163). However, besides in the interview, reasoning about the future does not appear otherwise in the material.

The openness of explanations in the classrooms

Teacher 1

The main topic of Teacher 1's classes is World War II. The teaching practices focuses on the events and actions that led to the war, as well as the events that constituted parts of the war. Thus teaching practices of Teacher 1 can be understood as providing content to the colligatory concept 'World War II'. The explanations identified relate to this purpose, initially focusing on the events that led to the outbreak of war, as well as explaining certain parts of the war, such as why Germany invaded Norway (see Table 2).

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TABLE 2

Explanations of Teacher 1

#	Explanandum	Causal openness	Consequential openness	Notes
1	Stock market crash (17/1)	A	A	
2	Hitler's personality (17/1)	A	-	
3	Ahed Tamimi's actions (18/1)	D	-	Not framed as history
4	Outbreak of World War II (24/1)	A	-	
5	Appeasement Policy (24/1, 25/1)	B, A	-	
6	Invasion of Norway (24/1, 1/2, 1/2))	B, A, B	-	
7	Battle of Britain (25/1, 30/1)	B, B	-	
8	Why people voted for Hitler (25/1, 29/1, 30/1, 30/1)	A, A, B, C	-	student-initiated
9	Why Hitler was elected chancellor (24/1, 25/1, 30/1, 31/1)	A, A, A, A	-	student-initiated
10	Operation Barbarossa (30/1, 30/1/1)	A, A	-	
11	Midsummer Crisis 30/1, 31/1	B, A	A, A	
12	Failure of Barbarossa (31/1)	B		
13	US intervention (31/1, 1/2)	B, B	-	

As the teacher himself noted in the interview, the focus of the explanations are on causal factors, meaning that the consequences tend not to be elaborated upon. The presentation of causes tends to be controlled by the teacher, either through him presenting the causes, or through questions and answers. An example of how an explanation with openness B is created is when the teacher uses the question-answer method in order to explain the invasion of Norway:

T1: Why do they take Norway, why Norway?

S1: It's got a large open coast and it's easy to send ships from Norway, and planes for that matter, from Norway to England.

T1: Yes, that's why /.../ one more reason, that has to do with Sweden... [name]

S1: I think they were going to march from Norway through Sweden and into the Soviet Union.

T1: Good guess, you're not far from, but that's not the main reason. You, you're getting there. Miss?

S2: Trains

T1: Pardon? Trains, it has to do with trains, but not quite, we're getting there closer.

S3: Sweden was neutral, so they didn't have to worry about Sweden attacking them.

T1: Yeah, that was a demand from Germany when they attacked Norway /.../ but why do they take Norway because of a Swedish reason? (A 24/1)

In this interaction, the teacher asks questions and the students provide answers, with the teacher correcting them, leading the conversation ever closer towards the intended goal, which is the Swedish export of iron ore to Germany, which the Germans wanted to protect.

While Teacher 1's explanations tend towards an openness degree of A and B, there are some exceptions. The most striking is explanation 3, which forms the introduction of the class on January 18. This explanation does not obviously connect to the main topic, and is presented to the students as a 'strange start'. The explanation itself concerns the actions of Palestinian teenager Ahed Tamimi, who was arrested by Israeli authorities in December 2017 for having assaulted Israeli soldiers (<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/palestinian-ahed-tamimi-arrested-israeli-forces-171219174834758.html>). After using a film to present the incident, the teacher then proceeds to present the event from two different perspectives:

T1: If you're an Israeli soldier or /.../ if you live in Israel, maybe you're on the Jewish side, you might think that 'yeah, put her away, she's a troublemaker, her family has been in the riots and in different kinds, protest marches, and they've done this kind of actions for years. This is the way she has been brought up. Let's set an example and put her away. This is what happens if you do this to the Israeli soldiers. So that's how many in Israel maybe think. What we didn't see and what we don't know is that two years ago the Israeli settlers, those who move in to Palestinian territory and take over the territories, they took over their well /.../ And an hour before the soldiers were standing in her backyard, she found out that her cousin had been shot in the face with a sort of a rubber bullet, which I don't know the condition of her cousin, but she is absolutely furious and very very upset and therefore she goes out there /.../ So you have two totally different stories here. [A] troublemaker, a riotmaker fires up big demonstrations that cause people to get killed in the demonstrations, and on the other hand she's a sixteen year old girl who [is] raising her fist against the Israeli army (A 24/1)

Here, the teacher provides two differing interpretations of the same event, presenting Tamimi as both a troublemaker and a fighter against oppression, depending on whom you ask. In this instance the openness degree is categorised as D. However, the explanation is not connected in any way to the main topic, and the teacher views it as a revisit of the religious studies that he and the class worked with the preceding semester (notes, 24/1).

The other instance of greater interpretative openness occurs in Explanation 8, about why people voted for Hitler. This explanation, along with explanation 9, can be seen as two components of a main explanation of how Hitler could seize power in Germany. That main explanation is not explicitly addressed during the lessons, but these two

explanations are included as questions in a questionnaire, which the teacher provides to the students, and with which they work during the classes:

Why and who do you think voted for Hitler so that the Nazi party became the biggest party in 1932?

Why was Hitler finally appointed Chancellor /.../ when over 63% did not vote for the Nazis, and when was this? (Teacher A's material, "Base course World War II").

Since the issue hasn't been explicitly addressed by the teacher during class, these two questions prove troublesome to several students, who ask the teacher for help. These student-initiated interactions lead to several iterations of these explanations. Of these, explanation 8 varies the most. On one end of the spectrum, the explanation given by the teacher is reduced through interaction. The student already knows that unemployment was high, and the teacher tries to present other factors, including the failure of the democratic parties to address the crisis and the fear of Communism. The student concludes:

S: So it's because of the unemployment.

T1: That is a major...

S: And the people want something new.

T1: Yes. (B 25/1)

In another interaction, with other students, the same explanation is instead expanded by students adding aspects

S1: but some of them voted because of retaliation and revenge for the Versailles Treaty, right?

A: Oh absolutely, totally.

S2: Weren't it mostly capitalists who voted for the Nazi party?

A: Yes, you would think so because...

S2: They don't like to be eh, like have the same pay like the workers and farmers and...

A: Yes, true, but at the same time, a lot of the people in the, a lot of the scholarly people /.../ thought of Hitler as an absolute lunatic, so they did not like Hitler. (B 30/1)

The teacher's initial set of causes (unemployment, fear of Communism, the failure of other parties) is supplemented by the students, with student 1 adding revenge for the Versailles treaty, and student 2 adding 'capitalists' as voters, arguing that they wanted to keep their advantages in relation to the working class. The teacher confirms the first addition, and also agrees to some extent with the second while attempting to nuance it. The interaction thus leads to an expanded explanation, with more possible causal factors than originally intended by the teacher. In this way, the explanation is opened up through the interaction, leading to openness C in this particular instance.

The general trend of low openness correlates with Teacher 1's emphasis on the importance of establishing a common frame of reference; the explanations thus appear

as relatively closed, indicating that what is important is that the students learn the facts. In this way, Teacher 1's presentation of explanations can be said to correspond mainly to the task of teaching explanations at the level of description. However, the complex nature of classroom interactions introduce some instability into the explanations; students interacting with the teacher can alternately reduce the explanatory factors, or provide previously non-mentioned factors, thus increasing the interpretative potential of some explanations. With one exception, this is not expressly used by the teacher to provide examples of different interpretations.

Teacher 2

Teacher 2 begins his class by introducing the overarching colligatory concept, 'the French Revolution', having prepared the whiteboard with a timeline of significant events associated with the revolution, along with a number of causes - they are not explicitly labelled as such, but are used as scaffolds by the teacher when explaining the Revolution. He also explicitly tells the students how their knowledge of the topic will be tested - by them writing an essay where they narrate the history of the French revolution from the perspective of a person who lived at that time.

TABLE 3

Explanations of Teacher 2

#	Explanandum	Causal openness	Consequential openness	Notes
1	French Revolution (20/2, 13/3, 14/3)	A, B, B	A, -, -	
2	Formation of National Assembly (20/2, 14/3)	A, A	A, A	
3	Storming of the Bastille (20/2, 13/3, 14/3)	A, B, A	A, -, A	
4	Execution of the king (20/2, 14/3)	A, A, -	A, -, A	
5	Reign of Terror (21/2, 7/3, 13/3, 14/3)	A, A, B, A	A, A, A, A	
6	Revolutionary wars (21/2, 14/3)	A, A	A, A	
7	Rise of Napoleon (21/2, 14/3)	A, A	A, A	
8	Failure in Russia (21/2, 13/3, 14/3)	A, B, A	A, -, A	
9	Restrictions on women (23/2)	A	A	

This introduction provides the framework for the explanations presented during the classes (see Table 3). Most of them relate directly to the French Revolution by explaining the causes of the events written on the teacher's timeline. At least one - explaining why women's lives were much more restricted than men's - is instead connected to the final exam.

The initial presentation of each explanation is provided completely by the teacher. For instance, the initial presentation of the causes of revolution in France is given in such a manner:

T2: This is what happened: in an agrarian society it is very important that everything works, that it's sunny, that it's warm so crops can grow, that it doesn't rain too much. The year before, 1788, had been abysmally bad, there had been crop failure /.../ believe me, people were hungry /.../ France was poor, yes they were, because /.../ at this time, England was also a powerful nation and France fought against them. (A 20/2)

In this section, the teacher presents two causes: crop failure and the wars with England in America. The presentation goes on to cover the weak king, the unequal society in France, and the Enlightenment ideas as causes. The presentation appears closed to any input, leading to an openness of A.

As Table 3 indicates, almost all of the explanations are presented during the first two lessons, and are then repeated during the two last lessons of the observed sequence. The time in between is mostly dedicated to the students preparing for the final exam, including coming up with a person and deciding on that person's name, profession and so on. In the repetitions, the teacher rather uses a question-answer mode, in which the students are considerably more active than in the first two classes. Since it is a repetition, the openness of these interactions is considered as B at the most. According to the teacher, this repetition was not part of his original plan, but rather an adaptation to the circumstances (observation notes 14/3).

Teacher 2 often includes consequences in his explanations, both immediate and long-term. For instance, Explanation 3, about the storming of the Bastille, includes both:

T2: People are crazy with happiness, but when they check what was actually in [the Bastille], they didn't find much. The many prisoners weren't so many, there were a few mentally ill and a few counterfeiters /.../ there weren't many weapons. There weren't many royal soldiers either, but this [event] has become a very important symbol for France (A 20/2).

This initial presentation focuses mostly on the immediate, and disappointing consequences; the long-term consequence of the event becoming a symbol of France is somewhat vague. In the repetition of the explanation on 14/3, this consequence is made somewhat clearer:

T2: But the third estate, the poor of Paris, they still have attacked /.../ the peasants have understood that /.../ there have been changes in Paris, people have actually opposed the king. We also want to do that. They kill nobles in droves (A14/3).

In this repeated explanation, the consequences of the Bastille as an example for the people in the countryside is made clear, and thus strengthens the presentation of the Bastille as an important symbol. The variation between the two instances is something that occurs in other explanations as well. Explanation 6, about the Revolutionary wars, is explained in two different ways the two times it is presented. The first time, the explanation is the result of foreign rulers reacting to the execution of the French king:

There were lots of wars. I'll explain why. In the neighbouring countries, like Austria-Hungary, Spain, /.../ there were kings. They were really frightened now because the king had been killed in France, and they think 'oh no, if this spreads, maybe I'll be killed too'. So they were really nervous (A 21/2).

The second time, the wars are instead explained as the actions of the French regime during the Reign of Terror:

What did they do? They tried to expand the borders of France, what did they do? /.../ They waged war, they seized other countries. (A 14/3)

This type of variation can be understood as two contradictory interpretations of the same explanations, leading to an openness degree of D in this instance. However, it is not clear that the students notice this variation at all, and the teacher does not point it out, leading to the conclusion that it is not intended as such.

Besides the repetitions during the last week, teacher-student interactions in this classroom revolve almost entirely around the students preparing for the final exam. The following example illustrates these kinds of interactions:

T2: Were you a soldier [at the Bastille]?

S: Yes.

T2: How did it feel?

S: It was awful, but I had to.

T2: Why did you have to?

S: It was for the country.

T2: OK, good, let's move forward a bit /.../ there is the king when he dies [shows picture of the execution of the king in the textbook]. Maybe you're not the kind of person that cries, but when you saw this, were you sad?

S: No, I was shocked.

T2: Absolutely... may I ask, is it you standing over there? [points to one of the persons in the background of the picture]

S: yeah.

T2: So you saw everything?

S: yeah.

T2: You have to tell about it. (B 9/3)

The teacher wants the students to relate to the historical events through imagining themselves there at the time, being affected by the events - a form of identification with people in the past (Barton & Levstik, 2004). The students seem to struggle with doing this on their own, and so the teacher uses these kinds of questions as scaffolds. The overall idea seems to be that while the causes of events are given, the consequences may vary depending on the individual, thus opening the topic to possibly different interpretations through these consequences (which would mean an openness degree of D). At the same time, such an operation seems to require a lot of contextual information in order for the students to not just come up with any consequences, but rather

consequences that are relevant to the French Revolution. As the students struggle with task, the teacher increasingly intervenes, providing possible ways in which their persons could have been affected. For instance, the Reign of Terror is given this interpretation:

If you're present at this time, you can think this way: that you're probably quite nervous at this time, anyone can die. So you should now that, it can be something to connect your essay to, that it was a frightening time (A 7/3).

In this way, the teacher provides contextual information, which, while necessary in order for the students to be able to complete their task successfully, also limits the possibilities for students to make different interpretations.

In sum, Teacher 2's explanations appear as having a low degree of openness. This seems to be the result of the nature of the assessment, as well as adaptation to how the students respond. The idea behind the final exam is that the students are supposed to understand how a person at the time of the French Revolution was affected by that event, and thus being able to construct reasonable consequences for such a person. Thus while the causes and consequences presented by the teacher are focused on description, the assignment presupposes a kind of interpretative potential for the students.

Teacher 3

Teacher 3 starts her teaching not by immediately focusing on the content, but instead on concepts, using the first lesson and part of the second (9/4 and 10/4) to introduce and work with the concept of a timeline, as well as the concepts of cause and consequence. Only after that does the teaching turn to the main topic, the Neolithic Revolution. Coupled with this introduction is an explanatory exercise that is not historical, but instead connected to the students themselves. In Table 4, this explanation has been labelled 'personality'.

The personality explanation exercise connects back to the previous timeline task, in which the teacher created a timeline of her own life, and then asked the students to create a timeline of their lives. The explanation exercise is then presented as follows:

T3: You will tell your comrade about your timeline, and your comrade will select one thing on your timeline /.../ that describes [you] /.../ and this is what you all will do. (A 10/4).

TABLE 4

Explanations of Teacher 3

#	Explanandum	Causal openness	Consequential openness	Notes
1	Personality (10/4)	C	C	non-historical, Several iterations 10/4
2	neolithic revolution (10/4, 13/4, 16/4, 23/4)	B, B	C, B	several iterations on 16/4, 23/4
3	Settlement in Fertile Crescent (10/4)	B	-	
4	Sedentary life (10/4, 13/4)	B, B	B, C	
5	Hierarchical society (10/4, 13/4)	B, C	C, C	
6	Writing (13/4, 23/4)	B, C	B, -	
7	First civilizations (13/4)	B	D	

The point of the exercise is to activate the students' reasoning about causes. While this does work, the content of the explanations - the students' own personalities - appears somewhat problematic. The students are asked to give an explanation of why their friend is the way they are. This calls for some kind of characteristic of their friend. The teacher attempts to guide the students towards descriptions that are non-controversial and positive. The way this works is shown in the following example:

T3: [to Student 1] If you were to describe [Student 2], what makes her into her?

S1: Well, she has two little brothers.

T3: Yes.

S1: She's kind of considerate, I think.

T3: She's kind.

Several students: Yes!

T3: Kind of, so the cause of her being considerate is because she has younger siblings?

S1: I kind of think so, she takes care of them.

T3: She takes care of them, yes.

S3: And she takes care of everyone else. (A 10/4)

Here the student provides both the 'cause' (the siblings) and a characteristic of her friend, with the teacher and other students weighing in to elaborate on the reasoning and confirm the characterisation. In other situations, the same kind of consensus isn't reached. When attention is turned to Student 1, for instance, she does not agree with the given description that Student 2 and the teacher give:

- T3: But [Student 2], how is [Student 1]? If we are to describe her?*
- S2: I have no idea /.../ I mean, she is really kind, but I don't see anything that...*
- T3: She's kind... why is she kind?*
- S1: But I'm not kind.... that's not me.*
- S2: It's because... I don't know.*
- T3: Is it because I [taught] her older sister?*
- S2: What?*
- T3: Is that why she's kind, because I taught her older sister and brother?*
- S2: She's been brought up well.*
- T3: She's been brought up well, so... yes.*
- S1: But my mom is kind, but I'm not. (A 10/4)*

Even though this interaction doesn't go into anything obviously sensitive, Student 1 clearly states that she does not agree with the description given. Student 2 also signals that she struggles with the application of this kind of causal thinking to a comrade, only coming up with a 'cause' by the end of the interaction. Other examples of resistance to the exercise occur in the interaction, with a student arguing that there are lots of different causes that have influenced his comrade (A 10/4). While there are several iterations of this explanation model during the lesson, the overall openness is judged to be C both causally and consequentially; while the teacher directs the students towards applying the causal model, both causes and consequences (here interpreted as the characterisations of students) is negotiated between her and the students.

When the teaching turns more directly to historical content, the explanations are more clearly guided by the teacher. However, she does not present the explanations herself, instead using films that present causes and consequences of the Neolithic Revolution in a narrative form. The explanations are then formed by the teacher asking students for causes and/or consequences, leading to an openness of B, the film having provided the content and the interaction serving to frame the content as causes and/or consequences. For instance, the discussion of inventions as a consequence goes like this:

- T3: cause or consequence?*
- S1: Both?*
- T3: It is actually a cause that we get new crops to cultivate, maybe wheat /.../ and then you invent different, like axes for example or sickles to cut, so in a way it is both cause and consequence. (A 10/4)*

Here, the model of cause and consequence as different things is complicated by what 'invention' can mean, something that the student points out. The teacher provides the elaboration in order to clarify how the same thing can be seen as both cause and consequence.

Over time, the main topic of the Neolithic Revolution becomes connected to the appearance of the first civilizations, exemplified by Egypt and Sumer. All other

historical explanations in the classroom interaction can be understood as sub-explanations that highlight certain consequences of the Neolithic revolution. Especially when the First Civilizations are brought up, students provide more input in the interaction:

T3: You build some kind of society, and what can that lead to?

S1: That hierarchies appear.

T3: Yes, that can also happen.

S1: Someone is the leader.

T3: Yes, someone is the leader, and then he may think that /.../ we should have their land, we are better than them. What does that lead to?

S2: war.

T3: Yes, it can lead to war.

S3: Societies wipe themselves out.

T3: Well...

S1: Class differences.

T3: Good.

S3: Less equality.

/.../

S4: The destruction of the Earth.

T3: No, not that serious. (A13/4)

Initially, Student 1 repeats information that has been brought up previously, but then the interaction widens, students providing different consequences, although the teacher signals the implausibility of the destruction of the Earth as a consequence. Later, the interaction turns to evaluating and even providing the possibility of different interpretations, since they discuss whether certain consequences are positive or negative. Teacher 3 sums up a part of the discussion:

T3: Here we got water which led to us being able to cultivate, and we settle, and this leads to floods, but can also lead to wars, and floods can be both positive and negative.

S1: Wars can also be positive and negative.

T3: Really? Now you have to explain how that is possible.

S1: When there is war, you win the war, and then you grow stronger and can build larger civilizations.

S2: But if you lose?

S1: Well, then you die.

T3: That is a good point, because we often think that wars are bad, many people die, but for the ones that take control, depending on the leader, it can be very good.

S1: It can be good, that is, it can be both good and bad. (A 13/4)

During the final lessons on the topic (13/4, 16/4), the students work with an exercise about the causes and consequences of the Neolithic Revolution. In the exercise, they are supposed to make a poster depicting the different causes and consequence, as well as spelling out the causal connections using words and phrases supplied by the teacher, such as 'because', 'led to', and so on. During the work, the teacher interacts with the students, mainly in order to get the temporal sequence of the causal chains correct.

Considering Teacher 3's strong focus on the concepts of cause and consequence, her teaching of explanations can be said to at least to some extent emphasise the comprehension of causal relations, not just descriptions. Her lesson plan primarily seems to be a result of her attempt to solve the problem that this particular class has not performed well in the other social studies subjects, yielding a simple way of making causal relations explicit. The more interpretative aspects of the interactions do not appear as explicit parts of the teacher's plan, though the explicit use of concepts may be one factor that facilitates such engagement with the material for the students.

Discussion

From the point of view of the researchers calling for increased inclusion of multiperspectivity, the results of this study of actual teaching practices probably seems disappointing. The analysis shows that explanations tend to be presented as relatively closed, with an openness degree of A or B appearing as the default form in all three cases. However, not all classroom explanations are entirely closed; all three teachers include some aspect of opening explanations to interpretations, though this tendency is limited, and most prominently occurs in Teacher 3's classroom. Only two instances of openness degree D occur in the material.

As regards factors that influence the teachers' explanations, ideas about what is important in history, assessment, and adaptation to the student groups all appear to play a part in influencing how the teachers decide to present explanations. Teacher 3 most obviously adapts her teaching to the student group due to her previous experience, although this indirectly indicates the influence of assessment - her main concern is that the students have failed previously, and now she has made adaptations in order to guide them right. Assessment also influences teacher 2's practices, since his entire plan is framed around an assignment. On the other hand, the assignment in question also reflects his emphasis on the experiences of the people of the past. Teacher 1 appears as comparatively less influenced by assessment (though it is still important in his classroom). Rather, his emphasis on a shared frame of reference seems to be the most important influence on the way he presents explanations, although the interactions with students indicate a high degree of adaptation to student input depending on the situation.

Thus, the main conclusion is that the extent to which historical explanations are used to promote multiperspectivity is limited, only appearing in certain instances. To some extent, teacher planning takes some kind of multiperspectivity into account, as the cases of teachers 2 and 3 indicate, including some openness in their explanations. Though this

rarely approaches multiperspectivity, it at least shows potential for it. One aspect that may limit the introduction of multiperspectivity is that some students desire simple, clear-cut explanations, reducing the complexity of what the teacher offers.

These patterns can be understood in relation to the concepts of multiperspectivity (Nygren et al., 2017) and shared line of reasoning (Halldén, 1994). While multiperspectivity is emphasised in the current syllabus, teachers need to carefully balance this need against the need for students to gain knowledge of certain historical facts. In the case of historical explanations, this balancing act becomes delicate, since explanations, while built upon facts, are open to different interpretations regarding selection and evaluation of content (White, 1973; McCullagh, 2004b; Parkes, 2011). In this balancing act, teachers may err on the side of caution, emphasising a shared line of reasoning and promoting a common understanding of both what happened and why it happened. However, if this caution goes too far, history will appear as closed to different interpretations. On the other hand, going too far in the other direction may lead to a confusing chaos of openness, in which all interpretations are treated as equal. Perhaps it is better to avoid this problem, instead focusing solely on establishing a shared line of reasoning?

The practices of these three teachers suggest that they, to some extent, do not agree with such a conclusion, although the inclusion of multiperspectivity appears to be a problem. To some degree, they acknowledge the importance of multiperspectivity and try to introduce it in certain instances, with varying success. The conceptual approach of Teacher 3 appears to have the most potential, allowing students to engage with the causal concepts in different ways, and being given examples both in close proximity to themselves and in the distant past. Arguably, this approach lays a solid groundwork for a gradually increasing inclusion of multiperspectivity as the classes go on (cf. Lilliestam, 2013; Woodcock, 2011). However, one aspect that needs to be taken into consideration is the actual historical content. Teacher 3 works with the distant past, to which it is arguably easier to apply different interpretations: the Neolithic Revolution is a large-scale process over a long time, for which we lack knowledge of central agents. In contrast, World War II is a relatively recent event, with the central events and agents having a special cultural standing in the present day. Such a topic appears as much more sensitive with regard to different interpretations of causes and consequences, and thus unrestricted openness in this case appears particularly problematic (cf. Parkes, 2011).

Noticeably, the contemporary event regarding Ahd Tamimi's arrest is instead presented from different interpretations of the causes. This treatment may stem from awareness on the teacher's part that both sides of the conflict have supporters in the classroom; nevertheless it is an example of how a sensitive topic can be presented from different perspectives. The fact that it is only done in this instance can perhaps stem from it being considered a contemporary issue, and as such, it is essentially unfinished, in contrast to the already 'finished' events of the past.

Besides the Ahd Tamimi explanation, the openness to interpretation mainly appears in regard to consequences, which indicates that at least these teachers find it easier to introduce different interpretations when it comes to consequences. However, limiting interpretations to consequences is in itself problematic: since causes are considered set,

history would appear as predetermined and fatalistic (cf. Wendell, 2014). Thus, while focusing on consequences may be a good way of introducing different interpretations that lead to multiperspectivity, it should not end there.

A possible way to promote multiperspectivity in the classroom would be to reconfigure the relation between the idea of a shared line of reasoning and multiple perspectives. In this study, they have appeared as if in opposition to one another, the teachers balancing between establishing a shared line of reasoning and opening up the explanations to interpretation. This opposition might be overcome, if the notion of multiperspectivity is more actively made into an integral part of how history education is organised. Then, multiple perspectives would become part of the shared line of reasoning.

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HISTORY TEACHING BETWEEN MULTIPERSPECTIVITY AND A SHARED LINE OF REASONING: HISTORICAL EXPLANATIONS IN SWEDISH CLASSROOMS

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