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Citizenship education, national identity and political trust:

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Abstract: The challenging effects of globalization upon the nation-state have been a recurrent theme in the social science discourse since the 1990's. Nationally organized education is also seen as challenged by new demands originating from globalization. In this article it is argued that 'nation-state' and 'national identity' are highly relevant concepts when discussing a citizenship education that seeks to develop a civic ethos with, potentially, a global reach. It is further argued that the understanding of such an ethos would benefit significantly from incorporating the role of political trust since trust has been identified as a main feature of the social capital that makes democracy work. Three themes are brought together: national identity and identification, the importance for democracy of political trust and the challenges citizenship education face when carried out in a national context but intended to manage issues that go far beyond the reach of the nation-state. The importance of citizenship education is discussed using recent research on the Swedish citizenship education classroom.

KEYWORDS: CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION, NATIONAL IDENTITY, POLITICAL TRUST, DEMOCRACY

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The challenging effects of globalization upon the nation-state have been a recurrent theme in the social science discourse since the beginning of the 1990's (Ruggie, 1993; Ohmae, 1996). Changes in the power relations between state and markets are said to decrease the state's ability to provide relevant public goods (Hobsbawm, 2007). The prerequisites for education are also challenged by globalization (Christensen, 2013). Within the framework of a nationally organized education future citizens should acquire the tools necessary to act in a global world. Here attention is directed towards one specific aspect of education – citizenship, or civics, education – in times of globalization. The role of the nation-state in a citizenship education aiming at addressing the challenges of globalization, is highlighted in the article discussing whether the nation-state has a role – even negative –, or, if the nation-state can indeed play a positive role in such efforts?

The role of the nation-state is discussed from the position that 'nation-state' and 'national identity' are highly adequate concepts when discussing a citizenship education that seeks to develop a civic ethos, relevant in today's globalized world. It is further argued that this discussion would benefit significantly from incorporating the role of political trust since trust has been identified as a main feature of the social capital that makes democracy work (Putnam, 1993).

The main purpose of the article is to discuss relationships between nation-state, national identity and political trust and how these can be related to the challenges globalization puts on citizenship education. A secondary objective is to illustrate, using recent research, how citizenship education may contribute to meet some of the demands these challenges set.

Three themes are brought together here: national identity and identification, the importance for democracy of political trust and the challenges citizenship education face when carried out in a national context but intended to manage issues that go far beyond the reach of the nation-state. The article's point of departure is the continued importance of the nation-state for organizing democratic processes and, thus, for citizens' demands for transparency, control and accountability regarding political decisions. This does not call into question the impact of globalization upon the nation-state. The claim is that the nation-state, in a comparative perspective and in most cases, still represents the best available form of organization in terms of democratic influence (Miller, 1999). But, as has been pointed out, '[a]ny political system should always *deserve* support' (Solhaug, 2013, p. 193, italics in original). Democracy should, according to Solhaug, be considered particularly regarding questions of trust, procedures and participation. Here the attention will be directed towards trust.

The above have implications for how the school, and especially citizenship education, carries its mandate. This mandate covers the issue of a civic, as contrasted to an ethnic, national identity and an understanding of the significance of a civic national identity for political trust and, by extension, democracy. A citizenship education, that meets current requirements on civic-ness, has been described as follows:

Citizenship education should help students acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function in their nation-states as well as in a diverse global society that is experiencing rapid globalization and quests by racial, ethnic, cultural, language, and religious groups for recognition and inclusion. Citizenship education should also help students to develop a commitment to act to change the world to make it more just' (Banks & Nguyen, 2008, p. 146f).

Knowledge, attitudes and skills required to function in the nation-state *and* in global society are stressed by Banks and Nguyen. In this article it is argued that the fulfillment of such requirements is facilitated by taking the nation-state and national identity into account. The former since the nation-state continues to constitute the framework within which mass education takes place. National identity and its content should be taken into account due to its implications for political trust. Sweden will here be used as an example for two reasons. First, the country often ranks high on measurements of civic national identity and of political trust and, second, the presence of an explicit citizenship education school subject, in Swedish called *samhällskunskap*, literally 'societal knowledge'.ⁱ

The article is divided into five parts. In the first is discussed the current status of the nation-state against a backdrop of its alleged disappearance or decreasing importance. The European Union (EU) is considered as a possible alternative organization for citizens' democratic control and as an object of identification. In the second part the concepts 'national identity' and 'political trust', how they are interrelated and their relationship to democracy, are considered. The third part deals with the concept 'bounded citizenship' and how it can be used to understand the process that makes a nation-state based education relevant regarding demands on civic-ness and global perspectives. The fourth part is based on current research conducted in Swedish citizenship education classrooms, the results being used to discuss to what extent this education can contribute to developing a civic national identity and political trust. Finally, conclusions are presented in the fifth part.

Current status of the nation-state

The end or the hollowing out of the nation-state has been a common and recurrent theme in the social science literature since the beginning of the 1990s (Guéhenno, 1995; Ohmae, 1996; Rhodes, 1994; Ruggie, 1993). Transformations of relationships between states and markets due to the collapse of the Bretton Woods system in the early 1970s and the subsequent enormous volumes of unregulated capital flowing freely across borders has been identified as a major aspect of declining state power (Strange, 1996). The state's decreased ability to provide public goods, because of the liberalization of market forces is another, erosion of the state's monopoly of coercive force owing to the rise of global terrorism, a third aspect (Hobsbawm, 2007). These phenomena unambiguously indicate that the nation-state faces significant challenges that, taken together, can entail transformations of the nation-state. But, as Marco Antonsich observes, the focus in many of the studies in this genre 'is almost

exclusively on the transformation of the structures and powers of the *state*. How this transformation affects the *nation* is somewhat passed under silence' (Antonsich, 2009, p. 282, italics in orig.).

While 'state' involves the exercise of power and governing, 'nation' can be seen as the realm of history and culture. 'State' certainly is one of many contested concepts in the social sciences (Dyson, 1993, p. 593). Still, definitions often include several of the criteria we find in Andrew Heywood's suggestion. He defines 'state' as 'a political association that establishes sovereign jurisdiction within defined territorial borders and exercises authority through a set of permanent institutions' (Heywood, 2000, p. 39). Globalization has brought challenges to the actual extent of state sovereignty as well as the proper importance of territorial borders. Still, institutions such as the police, courts, parliaments and educational systems remain distinctly tied to a nation-state. The existence of more or less permanent institutions would appear to be important characteristics of a state.

'Nation' is by no means a less contested concept but 'a classical definition' (Guibernau, 2004) is offered by Anthony D. Smith, saying that 'nation' can be defined as 'a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members' (Smith, 1991, p. 14). Obviously globalization, migration and multiculturalism have affected the nation. This is the case regarding, for example, the composition of the named human population, probably leading to a differentiation regarding myths and historical memories and the contents of the mass public culture. At the same time factors such as territory, a common economy and legal rights appear as stable and not to be subject to rapid change. Taken together it appears that the nation, irrespective of its civic or ethnic characteristics, remains an important object of identification. This is shown in a study presented by Marco Antonsich (2009).

Based on analysis of *Eurobarometer* data regarding 'national pride' and 'national attachment' for the period 1982-2005, Antonsich states that 'national identity continues to shape the predominant ways in which people make sense of themselves and others' (Antonsich, 2009, p. 281). An explanation for this could be the perceived relevance of the nation to provide its members with a sense of belonging. This is proposed in William Bloom's national identity dynamic (Bloom, 1990). According to Bloom national identity exists as a result of a mass of people going through a psychological identification process, the national identity dynamic, with the nation and of the surrounding world's recognition and acknowledgement of the nation. The identification process requires that '[T]he symbols ... [are] *appropriate* as a mode of behaviour and attitude for a particular and real experience' (Bloom, 1990, p. 51). Accordingly, national identity can be defined as:

[t]hat condition in which a mass of people have made the same identification with national symbols – have internalized the symbols of the nation – so that they may act as one psychological group when there is a threat to, or the possibility of enhancement of, these symbols

of national identity (Bloom, 1990, p. 52).ⁱⁱ

Potential such symbols can be, for instance, values regarding freedom or democracy, but also memories of historical events of national victory or defeat (Mock, 2012). When internalized, people are constantly reminded of their national identity through the use of routine symbols, such as flags, and habits of language (Billig, 1995). A democratic nation-state thus appears as a quite possible object of identification. Values connected with the democratic nation-state would further the development of a civic national identity. But, what with alternatives to such objects?

The obvious candidate would be the European Union, EU (Linklater, 1998).ⁱⁱⁱ EU has been singled out as the first post-national democracy. Its polity is, according to this view, based on a collective identity of shared cosmopolitan values and participation in a deliberative political process (Habermas, 2001:88ff). Habermas's reasoning is rather normative than empirical. However, our task is not to take a position regarding the character of the EU, but to address the extent to which people actually identify with the Union. Identification with a political object is, as will be discussed in the next part, essential for the emergence of political trust and, consequently, for democracy.

Results are conclusive regarding identification with the EU as compared to identification with the nation-state. The *Eurobarometer* survey carried out in the spring 2013 shows that 87 percent of respondents in the EU member countries define themselves primarily in national terms. 49 percent define themselves first of all by their nationality and then as European citizens, 38 percent by only nationality, 7 percent define themselves first of all as European citizens and then by their nationality. The proportion of the respondents who sees themselves solely as Europeans is 3 percent (*Eurobarometer* 79, 2013). These distributions have remained stable over time.^{iv} Strikingly large differences can be observed also regarding levels of trust nationally towards national vs. European institutions. A study conducted in Sweden 2012 shows a level of public trust of +21 towards the Swedish parliament as compared to a level of -25 towards the European parliament. For the national government the figure is +19 as compared to -22 for the EU Commission (Holmberg & Weibull, 2013).^v Also these distributions have remained stable over time. This distinct advantage of the nation-state, as compared to its non-state challenger as an object of identification, has implications for the role of national identity relative to political trust and democracy.

National identity, political trust and democracy

Democracy and the democratic state require trust and political institutions.^{vi} In order for political institutions to exist over time at least a minimum form of cohesion amongst the members of society is needed (Cederman, 2001; Kymlicka, 1995; Mill, 1975).^{vii} Historically the formation of nation-states has created a dominating ground for cohesion. National identity is a significant form nation-state cohesion has taken,

and takes, since the forming of national identities can be seen as an ongoing process (Billig, 1995; Bloom 1990). In a democratic society cohesion, or unity, can be created around democratic principles such as justice and equality which are essential for the protection of minorities and for enabling diverse groups to participate in public life (Banks & Nguyen, 2008; Gutmann, 2004). In order to understand present day cohesion as a possible basis for democratic political institutions it appears we have to take national identity and its relationship to trust into consideration.

Trust has been identified as one of the main features – the other being norms and networks – of the social capital that makes democracy work (Putnam, 1993). More specifically, democracy requires political trust since that is what links citizens to the institutions intended to represent them (Mishler & Rose, 2001, p. 30). Political trust can be defined as ‘the trust individuals have in their state-wide legal-political institutions and actors’ (Berg & Hjerm, 2010, p. 391). Without citizens’ trust in institutions and actors democracy risks to lose some of its legitimacy and, thus, its ability to function satisfactorily. Indeed, political trust can be seen as ‘essential to the proper functioning of democracy’ (Hetherington, 1998, p. 792; see also Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005).

National identity and political trust are interrelated. In order to examine this relationship, first of all, ‘national identity’ has to be problematized. National identity represents a specific, national, form of cohesion. This cohesion can have a wide range of content. Two suggested main categories are the ‘civic’ and ‘ethnic’ forms of national identity (Smith, 1991). The categories have also been identified empirically by quantitative analysis of mass survey data (Jones & Smith, 2001). These should be seen as ideal types used for analytical purposes, not as actually existing national identities. Current identities consist of mixtures of the two, ‘in varying proportions in particular cases’ (Smith, 1991, p. 15).^{viii}

A civic identity is characterized by political values such as freedom, the rule of law and democracy. In principle, such an identity can be achieved by anyone who embraces these values. The USA, United Kingdom, and France are states whose national identities, historically and to a high degree, have been characterized by this view. A national identity rooted in ethnic nationalism would, in contrast, regard identity as an expression of common descent. This identity can, in principle, only be achieved by those who display the typical features of the ethnicity concerned in terms of looks, blood relationships, or religion. Russia and Germany are states whose national identities, historically and to a high degree, have been characterized by an ethnic approach (Brubaker, 1992; Poole, 1999). As mentioned we are referring to ideal typical national identities. In reality, the states referred to, as well as others, display mixed forms of national identities based on civic-ness and ethnicity. The ‘mixture’ is the object of political struggles and can therefore be changed. In 1993 both France and Germany changed their laws on citizenship. France adopted a law putting an end to the previously applicable automatic acquisition of citizenship, at the age of 18, by aliens born in the country, thus moving in a more ‘ethnic’ direction. Germany, took a step in the opposite direction when, for the first time ever, it adopted a law admitting an entitlement to citizenship based on birth and residence (Hansen & Koehler, 2005).

Despite such examples of policy change it is reasonable to claim that national identities can be more or less civic or ethnic.

Civic and ethnic national identities are interrelated to political trust. In a study examining how civic and ethnic identities affect political trust in 18 European countries, Linda Berg and Mikael Hjerm claim that a strong civic national identity has positive impact on political trust whereas a strong ethnic national identity has a negative impact on political trust (Berg & Hjerm, 2010). The collective national identity explains ‘a substantial proportion’ of the differences between countries regarding the individual level of political trust, according to Berg and Hjerm (p. 403).^{ix} This, in turn, have implications for the existence of democracy; societies promoting civic values are more likely to succeed in promoting trust in political institutions while societies promoting ethnic national identities ‘are likely to have difficulties in getting the political trust needed for the existence of a liberal democracy’. The positive impact on trust from a civic national identity can be explained by the fact that in societies with a strong civic national identity non-xenophobic people display the highest level of political trust (Berg & Hjerm, 2010, p. 401). Further, political institutions can, by performing well, contribute to generating trust. Trust can ‘be nurtured by improving the conduct and performance of political institutions’ (Mishler & Rose, 2001, p. 56; see also Kumlin & Rothstein, 2010). Probably, this applies also to school as an institution, as will be discussed in the part on citizenship education.

State-organized mass education has been pointed out as the single most important institutional mechanism contributing to national identity (Gellner, 1983). In fact, formalized educational systems can be understood as ‘theories of socialization institutionalized as rules at the collective level’ (Meyer, 1977, p. 65). A concrete example of this is John Boli’s detailed description and analysis of the institutional origins of mass schooling in Sweden and how public schools became the prime tool for the realization of modern citizenship (Boli, 1989). Thus, by studying what occurs in school, and especially in citizenship education, we get a picture of the values intended to characterize the maintenance of national identity. This, in turn, provides an indication of whether the identity develops in a civic or an ethnic direction. But, how should we theoretically understand the process that makes a nation-state based education relevant regarding, to return to Banks and Nguyen, ‘the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function in their nation-states as well as in a diverse global society’? This question brings us to the concept of bounded citizenship and its importance for education.

Bounded citizenship and education

The bounded citizenship-concept is based on the idea, argued earlier in this text, that all communities require some form of cohesion in order to work. ‘All our experience of citizenship’, writes David Miller, ‘has so far been of bounded citizenship: initially citizenship within the walls of the city state, later citizenship

within the cultural limits of the nation-state' (Miller, 1999, p. 69). And, Miller continues, '[a]dmission to citizenship has always come with strings attached'. Citizenship is connected to both rights and duties and to give citizenship freely to anyone would 'risk undermining the conditions of mutual trust and assurance that make responsible citizenship possible' (*Ibid*).

Lars-Erik Cederman explicitly points to the main identity-conferring mechanisms – education, language and mass media – that make national cohesion possible (Cederman, 2001, p. 158f). Cederman uses these and his concept 'bounded integration' to discuss the likelihood of a European *demos* and of strengthening the Union's democratic legitimacy. But, the boundedness perspective can also explain the relative strength of national identities as compared to, e.g., an European identity. According to Cederman the national – bounded – identity is based on a community capable of uniting a population and guaranteeing 'a communicative capacity that enables deliberation and generates a sufficiently strong we-feeling that can carry the weight of effective and democratic governance' (Cederman, 2001, p. 157). The composition of this community should not be seen as fixed and given; anyone who, as suggested by the national identity dynamic, identifies with the relevant symbols of the nation can be included in the community. School, as a main identity-conferring institution, obviously can provide such relevant symbols. Nation-state based education, thus, seems highly relevant for developing a civic national identity.

Sweden will be used as an example since the country ranks high both in relation to the existence of a civic national identity and regarding political trust^x and since a growing body of research literature furthers our understanding of Swedish citizenship education.

In order for a citizenship education to contribute to the development of a civic national identity and political trust it should be based on values of, e.g., freedom, democracy and the rule of law. These values should be formulated not only in policy documents but ought to have an impact on actual teaching. It is difficult to imagine an actual teaching imbued with these values if they are not explicitly expressed in policy documents. However, the opposite is entirely credible. Thus, we have to examine both policy level documents and, especially, the citizenship education classroom. The latter is possible due to research conducted in recent years in Swedish citizenship education classrooms.^{xi}

Relevant Swedish policy documents are unambiguous regarding civic values. In *Curriculum for the upper secondary school*, under the first heading 'Fundamental values and tasks in the school', the first lines read:

The national school system is based on democratic foundations ... Education should impart and establish respect for human rights and the fundamental democratic values on which Swedish society is based.

/.../

The inviolability of human life, individual freedom and integrity, the equal value of all people, equality between women and men, and solidarity between people are the values that the education should represent and impart (Curriculum, 2011, p. 4).

These general guidelines for the whole school system are specified in the syllabus for Social studies:

Teaching ... should aim at helping students broaden, deepen and develop knowledge of people's living conditions based on different social issues. Political, social and economic interconnections today link together people from different societies throughout the world. Teaching should give students the opportunity to develop knowledge of issues relating to power, democracy, gender equality and human rights ... (Syllabus, 2012, p. 1).

The first specific aim for the subject is formulated thus:

Knowledge of democracy and human rights, both individual and collective rights, social issues, social conditions, as well as the function and organization of different societies from local to global levels based on different interpretations and perspectives (Syllabus, 2012, p. 1).

Hence, at the level of the national curriculum values relevant for developing knowledge, attitudes and skills required to function in the nation-state and in global society are clearly represented. Still, the national curriculum can be a different thing as compared to what teachers actually do in the classroom (Fredriksson, 2012). One way of exploring what happens in the classroom could be to examine the books used. But, it seems that textbooks in citizenship education is used to a rather limited degree. In fact, as a forthcoming study shows, citizenship education textbooks are almost not used at all in Swedish citizenship education classrooms (Olsson, forthcoming).^{xii} Instead other types of media and educational materials are used; internet, newspapers, brochures from government agencies etc. In order to get actual knowledge of the characteristics of citizenship education we have to rely on the research conducted in the citizenship education classroom or close by this classroom, e.g studies of teacher's tests or interviews with teachers regarding their teaching practice.

The citizenship education classroom

Specific research on Swedish citizenship education, regarding development of a civic national identity and political trust, is virtually non-existent. Research relevant here focuses rather on certain aspects of these phenomena, based on individual case studies dealing with different aspects of 'citizenship making' (Cf. Ekman, 2011, p. 123).^{xiii}

Admittedly, recent research regarding citizenship education gives us a picture that is partly obscured, sometimes contradictory. The uncertainty is due to continuing gaps in relevant research and to the fact that research hitherto has focused on different parts of the educational process; obviously you can get quite different results depending on if you ask teachers about what they do, if you study their written tests or if you observe their actual teaching. Thus, this research is not to be understood as a number of homogenous studies addressing the same problem, but as studies conceived in different contexts and on the basis of different research interests. Here these studies will be brought together in a common, albeit simple, analytical frame and used in

order to sketch out an interim picture of aspects of Swedish citizenship education. This picture will, in turn, be used to discuss the role of the nation-state, as object of identification and as provider of citizenship education, in a context facing the challenges of globalization.

Taking the above reservations into account the relevant research will be summarized according to the extent research on citizenship education show: (1) the presence of *knowledge* relevant for functioning in the nation-state as well as in a global context, (2) the possibility to develop *attitudes* relevant for functioning in the nation-state as well as in a global context, (3) the possibility to develop *skills* relevant for functioning in the nation-state as well as in a global context. The analysis of whether the goals regarding the nation-state and the global context are reached is performed continuously and summarized in the concluding section.

The first two points are directly related to a recurrent theme in Swedish research on citizenship education – the balance between the teaching of strictly cognitive elements (Swedish: *kunskap*) and education or upbringing regarding humanitarian and democratic values (Swedish: *fostran*). Some researchers see the two parts as partly contradictory (Bronäs, 2003; Svingby, 1989) while a growing body of research sees them as complementary. Sandahl (2011), who belongs to the second group, claims that the two parts are strongly intertwined and sees this as a characteristic feature of citizenship education. According to Sandahl – based on teacher interviews and classroom observations – both cognitive and upbringing parts of the subject are integral components of the teacher’s activities (Cf. Karlsson, 2011, p. 115).

Certainly we do not know if there are causal links between these activities and the composition of national identity and levels of political trust among Swedish citizens. But, whether what takes place in the citizenship education classroom points in the same or in the opposite direction as the national curriculum and syllabus, tells something about fields to explore further.

Dominating issues within the *knowledge* aspect of citizenship education are the Swedish polity and economics. Other important areas are the European Union, international politics, media and criminology (Odenstad, 2010, p. 129). Christina Odenstad, who builds upon tests conducted by teachers and collected in eleven municipalities, draws the conclusion based on striking similarities in the tests across municipalities, of a strong subject tradition within citizenship education. Thus, and not surprisingly, the dominating position of the issues of the national polity and of economics, as well as the prominence of the other issues, is corroborated by other studies (Bernmark-Ottosson, 2009; Karlefjärd, 2011, Vernersson, 1999). Torbjörn Lindmark, interviewing civics teachers, argue that the knowledge, skills and understanding teachers strive to develop among the students can be understood as, in Biesta’s word, the qualifying function of citizenship education (Lindmark, 2013). Similar conclusions are found in Johan Sandahl’s study on content and goals in civics education, as formulated by the teachers. According to Sandahl knowledge about the outside world has an intrinsic value for the teachers; knowledge and interest for the surrounding society is seen as a key to student’s future political commitment (Sandahl, 2011, p. 151). Peter Wall’s study on teaching on the European Union as compared to

teaching on the Swedish political system is instructive regarding all three goals of citizenship education as well as the issue of possible political objects of identification (Wall, 2011). Wall, studying civics teaching for students 14-15 years of age, shows that the instruction on the Swedish political system covers the goal of knowledge as well as those of attitudes and skills, the ultimate goal being the active citizen, participating in public life. Instruction on the EU, on the contrary, is limited to knowledge aspects. Active citizenship towards the Union is a non-existing issue. The EU is seen as a remote object and not as part of a factual Swedish polity. This, in turn, might have implications for the aforementioned discussion on nation-state versus the EU as possible objects of identification.^{xiv} If similar approaches are common in other member-states' civics education this is likely to hamper the possibility of developing a European *demos* and, thus, be part of the explanation why identification with the EU is of such limited extent.

We cannot assess the actual impact of the teaching regarding knowledge. But, taken together the reports indicate an education that enables knowledge relevant to function in both the Swedish nation-state (Swedish polity and politics, economics, media, criminology) and in a wider, global context (EU, international politics, economics, media). At the same time differences, regarding the objectives for the teaching about Sweden as compared to teaching on the EU, calls for reflection. The objective of the active citizen, as stated by the teachers, which is strongly present in the education directly relevant for the nation-state, appears to be largely absent in those parts that go beyond the nation-state.

The possibility to develop *attitudes* relevant for functioning in the nation-state as well as in a global context seems to be an obvious aspect of Swedish citizenship education. According to several research reports citizenship education is imbued with the promotion of democratic values and aiming at developing students into active citizens (Bernmark-Ottosson, 2009; Broman, 2009; Karlefjärd, 2011; Lindmark, 2013). According to Lindmark the aim of interviewed civics teachers is that 'students should be autonomous and independent actors in society' (Lindmark, 2013, p. 69). Studies conducted by Broman (2009), Almgren (2006) and Ekman (2007), address questions of direct or indirect effects of citizenship education. Anders Broman's panel study, with surveys conducted just prior to and at the end of a course in citizenship education, shows limited effects of teaching about politics and democracy on student's democratic orientations. Broman, using a socialization theoretical framework, concludes that school cannot 'be seen as a *general* democratic socialization agent', but as a *specific*, under 'certain conditions and towards certain individuals' (Broman, 2009, p. 228, italics in orig.). Ellen Almgren, using IEA-data, concludes that student's experiences of and attitudes towards school democracy does not cause higher levels of democratic competence (Almgren, 2006, p. 208f).^{xv} Tiina Ekman, also using IEA-data, shows that school has limited possibilities to affect student's attitudes regarding political participation (Ekman, 2007). Taken together the three studies confirm the view that democratic socialization is complex. What actually happens in the classroom is of importance but should be seen as a supportive condition, not as a necessary one (Cf. Broman, 2009, p. 229; see also Andersson, 2012). One such supportive condition

is pointed out by Annika Karlsson. Karlsson, interviewing civics teachers, finds that all agree on the importance of practical democracy training in the classroom setting, in order to further the development of democratic attitudes (Karlsson, 2011, p. 115ff). Still, Broman's previously mentioned study shows very limited short-term effects of basic citizenship education upon the students regarding democratic values, democratic institutions and democratic authorities (Broman, 2009). While Broman measures the effect of one specific course the other researchers describe the entire activity of citizenship education over time. Thus, the complexity of democratic socialization, with school as one among several possible influential agents, is important to emphasize once again.

Promotion of democratic attitudes appears to be prominent in civics teacher's talk about their education. If the same applies to their verbal and non-verbal behavior in the classroom we do not know with certainty. Because there is little to suggest that all interviewed teachers would exaggerate the extent of their actual teaching it seems reasonable to assume that Swedish civics teachers do their best to promote students' development of democratic attitudes and that such development facilitates for the students to become responsible citizens.

Knowledge, attitudes and *skills* are related to each other. Johan Sandahl points at the specific relationship between knowledge – expressed as the understanding of second-order concepts – and skills. Second-order concepts in citizenship education include perspectives, causality, evidence, inference and abstraction (Sandahl, 2011, 2013). First-order concepts, by contrast, are facts, terms and concepts closely bound to specific academic disciplines' subject matter. Students who master second-order concepts have approached the way trained social scientists think about the world by thinking critically, analyzing carefully and testing arguments with evidence (Sandahl, 2013, p. 174). Mastering such skills prepares the students for participation in public life.^{xvi} Our possibility to discern the extent to which the development of these skills are part of regular citizenship education appears to be partly dependent on the researcher's method of data collection. Anna Karlefjård, interviewing civics teachers, and Sara Blanck, interviewing teachers and doing classroom observations, both find clear indications of teaching in the direction of developing what can be called second-order concept skills. The same applies for Agneta Grönlund, basing her study on teacher interviews, classroom observations and teacher's comments on student's written tasks. In Karlefjård's study teachers stress students' abilities to problematize and reflect as particularly valuable and sought-after skills (Karlefjård, 2011, p. 94). Blanck, observing the role and impact of citizenship education in interdisciplinary projects, concludes that to the extent students acquire the skills associated with second-order concepts, the better equipped they seem to be for participation in public life (Blanck, 2014). Grönlund, studying teacher feedback to students, claims that the whole process of teacher-student interaction in citizenship education can be seen as 'a schooling into the culture of social science', including cognitive, conceptual and skills' development, regarding critical and scientific approaches (Grönlund, 2011, p. 121). However Tobias Jansson, studying teacher's written tests, argues that a major proportion of the tests are designed to measure explicit cognitive outcomes. Qualities

such as ‘analyze’ and ‘evaluate’ – that can be regarded as parts of second-order concepts – are also represented, but to a far lesser degree (Jansson, 2011). This may, in turn, be due to the difficulty to design and assess tasks with analytical and evaluative dimensions.

It can be discussed to what degree thinking and acting in accordance with what is stated in second-order concepts is necessary for an active citizenship. That such activity requires some analytical skills as, e.g., abilities to critical thinking or of taking different perspectives, is beyond doubt. Given a rather limited definition of such requirements it seems probable that Swedish civics education, when it comes to developing skills, rather reinforces than counteracts the aim of enabling for students to function both in the nation-state and in a wider, global context.

The positive but, probably, limited effects of citizenship education should be seen in the context of what primarily explains student’s civic competence: parental level of education (Ekman, 2011, p. 114f). Parents’ educational level has an impact in two ways. First, students from a favorable background tend to have a better civic competence from the beginning and, second, school classes with many students with highly educated parents seem to provide a ‘spillover-effect’ to the whole class. School’s biggest role, thus, is as a factor compensating for social and economic inequalities in society at large (Broman, 2009). But, in the perspective employed in this article, of the importance of trust in society, school might play an important role beyond that of bringing knowledge, attitudes and skills to students and to help developing their political trust. School is more than an educational institution; it is a major societal institution. Thus, its role for the development of trust in society at large, inter-personal trust, should not be underestimated. Bo Rothstein and Eric Uslaner have expressed this wider role of school like this:

If we had a choice, governments in high inequality/low social trust societies should opt for high-quality universal education programs. There are several reasons for this. One is that universal public education both creates a sense of equal opportunity and generates more economic equality. Second, it should give parents a sense of optimism for the future of their children, and since optimism is strongly connected to social trust, this would have positive effects. Third, such programs would bring children and young people from different ethnic, religious, and social groups together. Results from social psychology show that this is one important generator of social trust (Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005, p. 72n97).

In this article a very limited part of what can create or maintain societal political trust and a civic national identity has been examined. It seems reasonable that other activities than citizenship education undertaken by the school may be important for this. At the same time school can, as Rothstein and Uslaner show, matter in ways that go beyond its teaching commitment.

Conclusions

An apparent presence of civic values in Swedish policy documents and what actually happens in the citizenship education classroom may be of significance for the occurrence of a civic national identity and comparatively high levels of political trust among its population. Still, the provisional picture given here is partly obscured, sometimes contradictory. This uncertainty is primarily due to the fact that there is a lack of research projects and results, making systematic comparison and tracing of effects of citizenship education difficult. The observed contradictions can also be attributed to, *inter alia*, teacher's worldviews. Wall's study (2011) on politics teaching exemplifies this. When teaching Swedish polity and politics, teacher's ultimate goal is the active citizen, participating in public life. When teaching on the EU active citizenship towards the union is a non-existing issue. The EU is seen as a remote object and not as part of a factual Swedish polity possible to influence. Further, in the available research it is difficult to explicitly discern what knowledge, attitudes and skills that are promoted regarding the world beyond the EU.

But, taking these objections into account, we can see that recent research conducted inside or close to Swedish citizenship education classrooms clearly and unambiguously demonstrates efforts and actual teaching trying to meet several of the demands regarding an education making it possible for future citizens to acquire the tools – here expressed as knowledge, attitudes and skills – necessary to act both within the nation-state and in a wider, global, context. In fact, the relationships between a civic national identity and political trust and their importance for making democracy work suggest that the pursuit of such a citizenship has the dual effect of both supporting the nation-state form of democratic organization that has historically proven to be very successful, and to allow active and responsible action beyond the nation-state.

Thus, a concluding observation can be formulated saying that a nationally organized school, based on civic values, has in the Swedish case shown to play a positive role for developing such a citizenship. Accordingly, there is little to indicate that the challenging effect of globalization upon citizenship education implies that it would not be able to train and educate active and responsible citizens within a nationally organized school.

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ⁱ In Sweden citizenship-related issues are taught as part of the *samhällskunskap* subject. The subject is compulsory from primary school through, and including, upper secondary school and is based particularly on the academic disciplines political science, economics and sociology. 'Samhällskunskap' is translated officially to 'Social studies'. Here the focus is on citizenship aspects of the subject and therefore the term 'citizenship education' is used.

ⁱⁱ The paragraph on Bloom's national identity dynamic, including the quote, has been previously used in Lödén (2014).

ⁱⁱⁱ For a discussion regarding the possibility of identities beyond the European realm, see Lödén (2002).

^{iv} Cf *Standard Eurobarometer 52* (2000) or *Standard Eurobarometer 59* (2003). Michael Bruter criticizes the validity of *Eurobarometer* data regarding European identity on the grounds that the questions used ignore the fact that European and national identities tend to be positively correlated rather than opposed (Bruter, 2003, p. 1154). The criticism is warranted, yet still remain the strikingly significant differences between identification with Europe as compared to identification with the nation-state.

^v The figures represent a balance measure which can range between +100 (all respondents answer 'considerable trust'), and -100 (all respondents answer 'low trust').

^{vi} The observation that democracy requires education (Barro, 1999; Lipset, 1960) is here taken for granted as is the finding regarding the 'extremely high' correlation between education and democracy (Glaeser *et al.*, 2007, p. 79). For a critical examination of the relationship between education and political participation, see Persson (2013)

^{vii} The need for cohesion covers all types of organizations, according to organization theorists (Barnard, 1938; Mintzberg, 1993)

^{viii} For critical discussions of these concepts, see Guibernau (2004), Shulman (2002) and Zimmer (2003). A further important distinction is raised by Danish political scientists Mouritzen and Olsen when analyzing changes in Danish immigration policies: '[A]t the analytical level, the difficulty is that liberalism and nationalism are not necessarily mutually exclusive categories, especially when the "content" of a particular nationalism is civic and liberal' (Mouritzen & Olsen, 2011, p. 17). If 'liberalism' and 'nationalism' are understood as equivalents to the 'civic' and 'ethnic' concepts used here the distinction is of relevance for the current article in that it draws attention to the risk of confusing ideal types with empirical phenomena. Mouritzen and Olsen points to the fact that Danish nationalism's normative content is primarily civic. Still, here I follow the conclusion presented by Reeskens and Hooghe. After conducting an analysis of the civic-ethnic dichotomy based on survey data from The International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) across thirty-three countries, they conclude that: 'The analysis demonstrates that this dichotomous structure can indeed be detected and therefore the theoretical dichotomy can be considered as empirically valid' (Reeskens & Hooghe, 2010, p. 579).

^{ix} However, the opposite does not seem to be true. In a study based on data from the European Social Survey (ESS), covering 22 countries, Simonsen and Thomsen conclude that 'the relationship between social trust and ethnic tolerance is very weak among those who strongly prefer national cultural homogeneity', thus suggesting that 'parts of the international literature have overestimated the ability of social trust to create inclusive and coherent societies' (Simonsen & Thomsen, 2013, p. 205).

^x Regarding the occurrence of a civic national identity among eighteen national populations Sweden ranks second only to the Netherlands and regarding the prevalence of political trust Sweden is part of a 'high trust'-group comprised of the Nordic countries, Switzerland and the Netherlands (Berg & Hjerm, 2010).

^{xi} The research referred to herein was conducted largely by teacher-researchers at the graduate school FLHS (Swedish: *Forskarskolan för lärare i historia och samhällskunskap*, Graduate School in History and Civics) at Karlstad University 2008-2011, but also by other

researchers. The fourteen licentiate projects completed within FLHS are presented in Lödén (2012).

^{xii} The issue is disputed. Some researchers claim the continued importance of textbooks (see e.g. Ammert, 2011). Lindmark (2013) who finds, based on interviews with civics teachers, that textbook use is very limited, somewhat questions his own finding by interpreting other parts of the teachers' assertions as if they use textbooks to a larger extent than stated. Olsson, who performed participant classroom observations for long periods, is quite clear: textbooks are used to a very limited degree in civics and citizenship education (Olsson, forthcoming). A similar result is reported by Bernmark-Ottosson (2009, p. 76), based on interviews with civics teachers.

^{xiii} The research reported here deals primarily with upper secondary school (Swedish: *gymnasieskolan*), students being 16-19 years of age.

^{xiv} For a discussion on EU in a citizenship education context, see Lödén *et al.* (forthcoming).

^{xv} Almgren's study deals with students 14-15 years old, while Broman and Ekman study students at upper secondary level.

^{xvi} Christensen (2013) suggests that in order to function as a 'global citizen' it might be required to also manage what he calls 'third order concepts'. Such concepts involve self-reflection where students 'observe themselves observing how they work with the topic or problem at study and compare what they see with what they managed earlier in the education' (Christensen, 2013, p. 218). This tertiary learning process lies beyond the scope of this article.