The Meaning and Use of “Europe” in Swedish History Textbooks, 1910–2008

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Abstract
This article explores the different meanings of “Europe” in Swedish history textbooks over the course of the 20th century. Utilising the concept of myth, this textbook analysis looks at how the older history of Europe, and Sweden in relation to Europe, had changed by the end of the century. In particular, it examines the way in which Europe as a historically coherent entity is becoming attached to the idea of European economic, cultural and political co-operation in the wake of the Second World War. By using both quantitative and qualitative methods the study reveals that Europe as a concept has altered its meaning over time. Further, the study shows that the amount of text on Europe as an entity altogether increased in Swedish history textbooks in the latter part of the 20th century.

Keywords: history textbooks, Sweden, Europe, identity, myth

Introduction
Conceptions of European identity have attracted more attention in Sweden in recent years (see, for example, Broberg et al., 2007; Axelsson, 2009; Lindqvist Hotz, 2009). At the heart of the issue is a vibrant debate about what it means to be European. Since the word “European” has varied in meaning over time this question has often been difficult to assess (Johansson, 1992:48; Delanty 1995; af Malmberg and Stråth, 2002; Gardell, 2009:20-42; Karlsson, 2010:38-40). However, history is, and has been, a subject which creates and supports identity and this study aims to show how “Europe” and “Europeanness” have been depicted in Swedish history textbooks since the beginning of the 20th century.

It is commonly argued that Swedish history education promoted nationalistic sentiment in the first half of the 20th century; that a Nordic identity was coupled with this sentiment in the years following the First World War and that European co-operation after the Second World War encouraged education initiatives that promoted European identity in most European countries (Andolf 1972; Luntinen, 1989; Stobart, 1999; Pingel, 2000; Soysal and Schissler, 2005). However, little research exists into how these later changes were incorporated in history education. In particular, not much is known about how European identities were constructed.

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The questions this article seeks to answer include: What does “Europe” and “European” connote in Swedish textbooks produced over the course of the 20th century? To what extent is Europe a marker of identity? In what ways have constructions of Europe changed over time, especially in relation to the political European projects in the wake of the Second World War? How might this change be explained?

**Europe, Textbooks and Swedishness**

The question of Europe as a marker of identity in textbooks in different countries has received a degree of scholarly attention in recent decades. However, in this research there is often a troublesome normative aspect that advocates how Europe, or other overarching identities, should be depicted in order to promote understanding and cultural co-operation (Stobart, 1999:148; Pingel, 2000:111; Stradling, 2001:25–33; Janmaat, 2006:368). Other researchers have made it clear that such aspects are problematic and they therefore attempt to deconstruct the different meanings of Europe over time (Pilbrow, 2005; Pereya and Luzón, 2005). Further, some researchers simply plainly state that political history with an ideological agenda is a field for politicians and not historians (Axelsson, 2009).

A potentially more comprehensive approach is offered by the historian Challand (2009) who compares the idea of Europe, and of “the other,” in history textbooks in three different countries (France, Germany and Italy) between 1950 and 2005. The study concludes that Europe was constructed with different “others” over time, and that the 1990s appeared as the decade when the supranational narrative of Europe became most prominent (Challand, 2009:82–87).

Swedish identity coupled with a European identity has also been elaborated upon and previous research has determined that Swedish identity is linked with Europe. At the same time, researchers identified a demarcation in which Sweden (and the rest of Scandinavia) was depicted as an old, natural and self-sufficient entity, whereas Europe (the states of Europe) is new and artificial (Trädgårdh, 2000; Stråth, 2002; Østergård, 2006). Some research also points to a newer European identity that is evident in the emergent ideas of a Swedish Europeanness that flourished in the debate on Swedish membership in the European Union (Axelsson, 2006).

Several scholars have identified a mythology of Europe in the wake of European political and economic integration (Stråth, 2000; Stråth, 2005; Larat, 2005, Axelsson, 2009, Challand, 2009). This is, of course, the same kind of “creation” that the “imagined community” of the nations could be argued to be built upon (Anderson, 1983). Historian Stråth identifies a teleological European historiography which revolves around the Schuman Plan. In this historiography, there is a considerable amount of mythological subject matter. One is the myth of a “free Europe” as a conglomerate of fully-fledged welfare states. A second focuses on European co-operation
itself, starting with the attempt to settle the issues between France and Germany, and developing, in a teleological sense, into the order of integration and a common European identity (Stråth, 2005:267; Larat, 2005:273). There is, of course, also a more far-reaching myth of the old European nations that these new myths inexorably compete with (Geary, 2003).

The more “official” politics of European identity in the European Union have been explored by the anthropologist Shore (2000). By investigating the discourse of Europe in the information on European culture and integration, put forward by EU policy professionals, one of his conclusions is that the political idea of European history is a 3,000 year long “moral success story: a gradual ‘coming together’ in the shape of the European Community.” Two of the major contributors to this story are the history of the spread of Christianity across Europe and the French Revolution (Shore, 2000:57).

The Danish historian Knudsen (2006) has identified three different narration-models of European history. The first is attached to the nation-states and is essentially the history of the nations in Europe. The second model is tied to the idea of a European civilisation focused on either Ancient Greece or the French Revolution. The third is the history of a united Western Europe and could be considered a merger of the former two (i.e. the history of the co-operation of nation-states due to a common political culture) (Knudsen, 2006:110–111).

This historiography, or mythology, will be the starting point of this article. The intention is to examine the extent to which any of these mythological features of European civilisation are traceable in Swedish textbooks for upper secondary school before 1950, and to determine how they changed in the context of the two World Wars, the Council of Europe’s ideas of European integration in the 1950s and 1960s, the disintegration of the USSR and Swedish membership of the European Union in 1995.

However, with the concept of “myth” in mind, the article will explore an earlier history – not the history of the European Union, but the history of Europe as a whole. In this regard, critical questions include: Is there a tendency to push back European identity in time? Is European political identity from the second part of the 20th century made historically perennial? This is arguably one of the key aspects of myth; by making the present dictate the conditions of the past, the past becomes mythologised in the sense that the depiction of a historical event does not say as much about the context in which it happened as it does about the time in which it is written (see Smith, 1999:95; Bentley, 2005:51; Stråth, 2005:257).

**Methods and Sources**

Saying something about what kind of history pupils were taught 100 years ago is difficult. It is perhaps even more difficult to say anything about what they learned. It is, of course, not certain that the ideas put forward in curricula and textbooks are actually what pupils learn in the classrooms today, and the same goes for classrooms in the past (Apple, 1992:10; Nygren, 2011). Even so, this study only considered textbooks
Henrik Åström Elmersjö

and syllabi as source material because, even if we do not know if the intentions of these texts in fact governed discussions in the classrooms, it still offers a window into those classrooms and provides legitimate insights into history education in previous generations.

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods, utilising close textual analysis and some simpler quantitative measures (i.e., word-count) on some of the most widely used textbooks in Swedish upper secondary schools. The purpose of the quantitative approach was to establish a measurement of how use of the word “Europe” changed in the textbooks during the 20th century. The purpose of the qualitative approach was to establish the meaning of the concept of “Europe”. In this respect, the textbooks were approached with the intent of showing the meaning of “Europe” through a reading of the texts where words, virtues and meanings associated with the concept of “Europe” were at the centre of the analysis. Especially concepts associated with “Europe”, in direct contrast to other concepts associated with “the other” (i.e., the world outside Europe), were of interest in the analysis (see Said, 1978:1–28). In the words of Stråth, “Positive definitions are dependent on negative ones and vice versa, concepts such as ‘class’, ‘Islam’, or ‘Europe’ are established through distinction. They are politically constructed” (Stråth, 2005:261).

The textbooks analysed represent a range of key textbooks used at different periods in the 20th century. Each textbook was produced in direct relation to existing curricula and history syllabi. Ten textbooks for upper secondary school were studied. The selection of books to study was governed by a desire to analyse those textbooks that reached proportionately high numbers of pupils in any given period. However, the selection was also conditioned by a desire to analyse “new” books, (i.e., when they first came out on the market or were extensively rewritten). This meant that some books were analysed in their first edition even though it was not until, for example, the fifth edition that it was considered the most widely used book in Swedish upper secondary schools (Andolf, 1972:126). Until the beginning of the 1960s, the history course for upper secondary school was divided into Nordic (mostly Swedish) and general history (Ander, 1966:20). General history basically focused on broad developments in those parts of the world considered important at the time, with “all of history” held together in one narrative. Generally, the military and political history of Europe was at the centre of the subject; as was the military and political history of Scandinavia, with a special focus on Sweden, the centre of Nordic history. Textbooks issued in the latter part of the 20th century covered both the general aspects of history, as well as Nordic and Swedish history. The textbooks studied in this article are presented in Table 1.
Table 1: Upper Secondary History Textbooks under Study

| Authors (year)          | Edition | Type of History | Time Covered  |
|------------------------|---------|----------------|---------------|
| Pallin–Boëthius (1910) | 6th (1st in 1878) | General | ~1500–1910 |
| Falk (1922)            | 1st     | General        | ~1500–1919   |
| Jacobson–Söderlund (1941) | 4th (1st in 1933) | General | ~3500BC–1939 |
| Bäcklin–Holmberg–Lendin–Valentin (1955) | 2nd (1st in 1954) | General | ~3500BC–1954 |
| Bäcklin–Holmberg–Lendin–Valentin (1962) | 1st (based on the 1954 edition) | Swedish, Nordic, General | ~3500BC–1960 |
| Tham–Kumlien–Lindberg (1966–1967) | 1st (2 volumes) | Swedish, Nordic, General | ~1000–1965 |
| Graninger–Tägil (1973a, b and c) | 1st (3 volumes) | Swedish, Nordic, General | ~1200–1973 |
| Bergström–Löwgren–Almgren (1983) | 1st | Swedish, Nordic, General | ~3500BC–1980 |
| Sandberg–Karlsson–Molin–Ohlander (1996) | 1st | Swedish, Nordic, General | ~3500BC–1995 |
| Nyström–Nyström–Nyström (2008) | 1st (based on a 2001 edition) | Swedish, Nordic, General | ~3500BC–2005 |

For full bibliographical information, see the References below.

The different textbook authors were not considered actors in this study. For the purpose of this analysis textbooks were representative of their individual eras and not representative of different individual actors (e.g., authors or publishing houses). This could of course be considered a weakness of the study. However, the aim is not to see which actors held which views or how individuals influenced the history being taught, but to recognise the ideas of Europe that pupils encountered in the textbooks of different times.

The Swedish curricula for upper secondary school and the associated syllabi for history as a school subject changed a number of times during the 20th century. With regard to the textbooks under examination here, each textbook was written to correlate to a specific syllabus. Even if the syllabus for the school subject of history changed many times during the 20th century, only the syllabi which are of importance for the textbooks under study here were considered in this analysis.

Political Calls for a European Perspective

One of the questions addressed in this article is the extent to which possible changes in textbook portrayals of European and Swedish identity correlate with changing political ideas of Sweden and Europe during the course of the 20th century. A detailed analysis of key political ideas is beyond the focus of this article; however, it is instructive to explore some central developments in the construction of political identity during the second part of the 20th century.
Already in 1953, the Council of Europe wanted to see more elaboration of European perspectives in textbooks and history teaching within the member states (Stobart, 1999:147–161; Pingel, 2000:11; Nygren, 2011). Discussions on Swedish membership of the European Community have, since the end of the Second World War, been catalysts for discussions on European and Swedish identity (Westberg, 2003).

“Swedishness” as a non-European identity was a contested idea in the 1960s and was part of a bigger ideological debate on Swedish neutrality and the mixed economy. The political debates on Europe and the history of Sweden as a European country are very much connected to debates on the European Union and its predecessors (e.g. the European Coal and Steel Community, the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community) (Westberg, 2003:156; Axelsson, 2006). While the debates on EU membership were not identity-driven in any substantial way in the years before 1960, they were very much driven by identity in the late 1960s, the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. Westberg (2003:314) argues that it was through a change in the political parties’ ideas on the European identity as well as the need for influence that the membership application was approved in 1991.

The Idea of Europe in Curricula and Syllabi, 1909–2000

In 1909 history was one of the most important school subjects in upper secondary school. Mathematics was the only subject in which all students studied for more hours. For the “classical students”, Latin was naturally given greater attention and at the Natural Science Program, Physics involved more hours. The strong position of history in school was to change during the course of the 20th century with history becoming more and more marginalised. Indeed, history ended the century as a subject with one of the smallest time allocations in the curriculum. The subject also changed in a chronological perspective from an emphasis on modern history (1500–contemporary times) in the syllabus of 1909 to “all of history” (i.e. from the Neolithic Age to the present day) in the syllabus of 2000 (SFS 1909:20–21; Gy2000:69).

Nothing substantial is said about conceptions of Europe in the syllabi for the school subject of history until 1956 (AfS, 1956:288). Before this, history was divided into two parts: Nordic and General History. From the different themes in the syllabi between 1956 and 1981, it is obvious that Europe (and Sweden) featured at the centre of the subject, especially since it was emphasised that the focus should also go beyond Europe (AfS, 1956:288; AfS, 1961:546; Lgy65:183; Lgy70:293; Lgy70(81):10). The study of “the European Idea” was introduced in the mid-1960s (Lgy65:181). Significantly, in the 1981 syllabus it was suggested that a global perspective must not overshadow a European perspective and emphasis should be given to the idea that European nations are not only geographically but also culturally, politically and economically affiliated (Lgy70(81):11). Europe is also briefly mentioned in the syllabus from 1995 (correlating to the curricula of 1994), but only as a possible identity marker beside local, regional, national, Nordic and other non-geographic identities (GyVux1994:39–40).
In an overview, more nationally inclined history education existed before the Second World War. However, this changed in the post-war era when a European perspective seemed especially strong in the syllabi of the 1960s and 1980s, with a more global perspective apparent in the 1970s and 1990s.

A Simple Quantification of the “Europeanness” of Textbook Content

A quantitative study on the presence of the words “Europa” (*Europe*), “europeisk” (*European*), and all inflections of these words (for example, “Östeuropeisk”: *Eastern European*), in the selected textbooks was undertaken with a specific focus on those pages of text devoted to general history (i.e. *neither* Swedish nor Nordic history) of the period from the French Revolution in 1789 to the Congress of Vienna in 1815. The time frame was chosen because the events covered in the textbooks were common across all the books analysed. Of note, in the analysis no evaluation of what “Europe” means, (e.g., if it is a marker of a geographical area or a marker of identity) was investigated. It is important to keep in mind that almost all subject matter on general history, at least until the 1970s, was concentrated on the geographical area we call Europe. The texts are not always *about* Europe though, but about England, France, Germany, Spain and so on.

The total word count was estimated by counting the pages of narrative (disregarding pictures and boxes), the lines on each page and the average number of words per line. Then the specific words “Europe” or “European” were counted and the ratio between the total number of words and the number of times “Europe” was mentioned was established. The result is mapped out in Figure 1.

**Figure 1:** The Ratio of the Word “Europe” out of the Total Textual Space (measured in parts per million) and the Total Number of Words in Parts of Some Swedish History Textbooks (1910–2008) Covering General Political History of the Period between 1789 and 1815
This figure shows two distinct trends; the number of words describing the general political history of the period between the French Revolution and the end of the Napoleonic Wars has decreased, while use of the words “Europe” and “European” has increased over the past 100 years. Without overstating this finding, the 1960s could be considered a turning point, coinciding with the time when identity-driven debates focused on Sweden’s move towards European integration were increasingly salient. Considering the textbooks from before and after 1960 as different groups, the average ratio of the words “Europe” and “European” rose from 2.1 to 4.4 per thousand in the latter half of the 20th century. The total amount of textual space devoted to general political history between 1789 and 1815 is considerably smaller after 1960 and that of course could be a factor in the ratio being higher since it saves space to use a geographical marker that covers more ground (for example, by writing “Western European countries” instead of naming each individual country). However, the textbook produced in 1973 has more words covering this section of history than the textbook from 1955, but with a 50 percent higher ratio of the word “Europe”. Moreover, use of the geographical marker “Europe” instead of naming countries still leaves the reader with the perception of Europe as an established and united entity.

These findings might show that Europe as an entity has changed in the amount of space devoted to it in Swedish history teaching, but it says nothing about which values, virtues and problems are made connected to the concept of Europe and Europeanness. To say anything about what it meant to be European in the textbooks, we have to make an effort to understand the concept as it is described. Combining the two methods gives a picture of what it meant to be European and to what extent it was a significant or marginalised identity.

The Idea of 17th and 18th Century Europe Portrayed in the History Textbooks

To be able to follow changes in the meaning of Europe over time, one specific historical episode which will potentially shed light on the idea of “Europeanness” in the textbooks is examined in this study. In the tradition of “the other” as a marker of “we” (see Said, 1978:1–28) the episode chosen is the Europeanisation project of Tsar Peter around 1700. This event has been used to establish the Swedish view of Russia in former textbook research (Holmén, 2006). Here, it will show how textbooks convey Europe as they have to elaborate on what Tsar Peter did to make his country more European. This episode is elaborated upon in all textbooks except the one published in the 1970s. In this book there are a few lines mentioning the ideas of Tsar Peter (Graninger and Tägil, 1973a:232, 303), but only with regard to the Russian projects in Asia; besides this, there is a brief conclusion that the war against Russia ended the period of Swedish grandness. In this book other parts of history – within the time frame of 1500–1780 – will be investigated in order to establish the idea of Europe conveyed.

The earlier textbooks (i.e. those published before 1950) describe the Europeani-
sion project in a very extensive manner. Many of these texts are concerned with Peter’s personal attributes. The texts are identity-driven, but in a nationalistic sense with Swedish King Charles XII as the adversary of the “ignorant Russians” and their “evil Tsar.” The difference between Europe and Russia is the “cultivation” of Europe versus the “barbarism” and “weakness” of Russia (Pallin and Boëthius, 1910:114; Falk, 1922:129–131; Jacobson and Söderlund, 1941:226). There is also, in all these textbooks, but perhaps mostly in Jacobson and Söderlund (1941), a very Swedish sense of Europe. It is Sweden that is the centre of what is European and also the sole bearer of the defence against the “barbaric” Russians (Jacobson and Söderlund, 1941:226). It is the nation – with some of its identity within the Western European sphere – that is the main figure, while Europe is described in a positive manner because it is affected to some degree by the virtues of the nation. In other words, the positive image of Europe is a consequence of a nationalistic history where the nation is seen as part of Europe.

In Bäcklin, Holmberg, Lendin and Valentin (1955) the Europeanisation of Russia is described as a project that was only a meek attempt to civilise the Russians. “The Tsar, himself a crude barbarian with features of insanity, lacked a sense of Western European culture in a deeper sense. Human dignity, legal rights and individuality were unknown concepts to him” (Bäcklin et al., 1955:200). This is a shift in the description of what Europe was and what Russia was not. Instead of expressing the cultivation of Europe, it is human rights issues that correspond to European sentiment and what ultimately makes Russia a non-European country.

Graninger and Tägil (1973a) depict some other aspects of Europe in the chapter on the 17th century. There is a thread of change in European culture that runs through the chapter. The change is characterised by the differentiation of European culture as a consequence of the Renaissance (Graninger and Tägil, 1973a:191). Since this is not put up against anything else (like Russia, Asia or Africa), it is very difficult to say anything about the idea of Europe other than the basic vision of individuality described in this differentiation. Still, there is a very vivid description of the connections between Antiquity and the Renaissance and the European heritage deriving from Rome and Greece (Graninger and Tägil, 1973a:102–107). Perhaps the very global perspective that is evident in this textbook – and also in the syllabus for the 1970s – makes it difficult to express a typical “other”, and therefore the “we” is also clouded.

The idea of Europe is not very explicit in Bergström et al. (1983). However, beyond the demarcation between Eastern and Western Europe, the textbook’s depiction of Tsar Peter’s modernisation project conveys a picture of Europe as a society containing somewhat free, centralised, semi-industrialised societies with highly skilled labourers. In contrast, Russia appears as an agricultural state with a strong nobility and Church, and therefore not free. The presence of serfdom in Russia, and its implications for freedom (comparable to slavery), is also made explicit in contrast to Europe (Bergström et al., 1983:146–147).
In Sandberg, Karlsson, Molin and Ohlander (1996:233) there is an interesting reference to the older Swedish idea of the Russians: “It took until the 18th century until Russia experienced the same progress as Western and Northern Europe went through during the 16th century. Even if the Russians were not more ‘arrogant, deceitful and barbaric’ than other peoples it is probably a fact that the Russians were about 200 years behind in development.” According to this textbook, it is mostly geographical matters that can explain this situation. Because of its geographical location, Russia developed alongside Southern and Eastern Europe and not Western Europe. Following this line of argument, it was through moving the capital further west that Russia managed to become more European. However, it is also apparent here that Russia failed, at least in some sense, to become a Western European country, and this is considered a consequence of the negligence of human rights and the existence of serfdom in Russian society (Sandberg et al., 1996:238).

In Nyström, Nyström and Nyström (2008), some of the earlier textbooks’ ideas of Europe are again found: the idea of craftsmanship, and a regular army (which in the earlier textbooks were part of the evidence of Europe’s cultivation). However, serfdom in Russia is also mentioned as a major marker of difference between Russia and Europe (Nyström et al. 2008:112).

None of the textbooks makes a lucid remark on any religious matters that makes Europe a specific entity in comparison to Russia, with a small exception in the textbooks from 1955 and 1996. In part, this is probably because the religious demarcation in the textbooks before the 1970s is drawn between Christianity (the West) and Islam (the East), even if the pejorative slurs are less frequent in the later books (Pallin and Boëthius, 1910:76, 262; Falk, 1922:79; Jacobson and Söderlund, 1941:143; Bäcklin et al., 1955:123–124). In the later textbooks the subject of Islam and Europe is more or less avoided, but the distinction reappears in a more tolerant form in Nyström et al. (2008:111). Table 1 attempts to illustrate the similarities and differences in definitions over time.

**Table 2: The Meaning of “Europe” and the Depiction of “the Other” in Swedish History Textbooks’ Descriptions of the 18th Century**

|                              | Meanings of Europe                  | Description of “the other”          |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Pallin-Boëthius (1910)       | Cultivated, Occident                | Barbaric, Orient                    |
| Falk (1922)                  | Cultivated, Occident, Centralisation| Reactionary                         |
| Jacobson-Söderlund (1941)    | Swedish, Occident                    | Barbaric, Despotic, Lawless         |
| Bäcklin-Holmberg... (1955)   | Human dignity, Legal Rights, Individuality | Barbaric, Conservative, Orthodox |
| Tham-Kumlien... (1967)       | Occident                             | Orient                              |
| Graninger-Tägil (1973a)      | Individuality                        | Not explicit                        |
| Bergström-Löwgren... (1983)  | Semi-Industrial, Centralised, Free   | Agricultural, Slavery               |
| Sandberg... (1996)           | Free, Legal Rights                  | Slavery                             |
| Nyström... (2008)            | Free                                | Slavery, Reactionary                |
Note that the content of the textbooks produced by Bäcklin et al. in 1955 and 1962 is identical, therefore only one of them was analysed in this section. The major change in the conception of Europe between the first and the second half of the 20th century is the abandonment of the cultivated idea of Europe. If there is a line of development in the idea conveyed, the starting point in the first half of the century is distinctive notions of European cultivation vs. Russian barbarism, which changes into European liberalism/freedom vs. Russia’s conservatism/slavery in the second half of the 20th century. The distinction between the orient and the occident is most evident in textbooks from the beginning of the century, but previous research on other textbooks has argued that it reappears in the 1980s and 1990s (see Kamali, 2006:82–93).

The Idea of Contemporary Europe as a Historical Feature

Those pupils reading school history textbooks in 1910 would arguably be left with the notion that European civilisation is both the past and the future. For instance, European superiority is evident in the description of the colonisation of Africa. The Europeans are bold and have, as Christians, the right to superiority, while non-European rulers of Africa are considered “dreadful, slave-owners” (Pallin and Boëthius, 1910:255–256). The very last part of the concluding chapter of this book is a summary of the cultural field in the period between 1789 and 1910. The main character of this last chapter is “Europe” and “Europeans”. As for occurrences in everyday life within Europe, almost everything is said to be moving towards a better world which includes: an emphasis on the value of human life, religious life (especially the missionaries in the colonies), public education, the war industry (that can produce weapons to end wars more quickly) and free trade (Pallin and Boëthius, 1910:267).

Falk (1922) concludes his textbook by portraying (Western) Europe in opposition to Russia and heralding democracy as a particular European trait. Further, the colonies of the European states, Russia and Turkey seem to be considered “others” (Falk, 1922:310–314). Of note, the positive idea of Europe does not appear to have been broken by the events of the Great War which had ended only a few years before the textbook was published.

When describing the period between 1919 and 1939, Jacobson and Söderlund (1941) divided their last chapter into two parts. The first part describes “the victorious democracies” and the second describes “the totalitarian states”. Notions of European co-operation are almost invisible in the text as the individual states are made the main characters of the chapter. The principal theme is the division of Europe and not only the obvious divide between the democracies and the totalitarian states, but also between France and England (which is the name used for Great Britain). The League of Nations is mentioned as a failed (American) project which was almost entirely devoted to peacekeeping (Jacobson and Söderlund, 1941:376–387).

European co-operation in the wake of the Second World War is described in Bäcklin et al. (1955) as a political effort. Further, the textbook also claims that European
political co-operation has a long history, but readers are not familiarised with this alleged history of co-operation. However, European co-operation is not described as a complete success since it is also underlined that problems with integrating the European states arose as the member states of the Council of Europe did not want to concede any part of their sovereignty. Moreover, the Schuman Plan’s dividing features are also stressed by describing the idea of productivity stimulation as a weapon against communism – and therefore against the Eastern parts of Europe. The Schuman Plan’s Western European quality is thereby made obvious (Bäcklin et al., 1955:390). These features are elaborated upon even more in the textbook from 1973. Co-operation in Western Europe is not seen as a project for Europe in this textbook, but as a beneficial project for some European countries, i.e., the six countries that had been occupied and allegedly suffered the most during the Second World War: Belgium, France, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands and West Germany. Britain had not been occupied and the Iberian Peninsula and the Eastern parts of Europe are not included in the European discussion (Graninger and Tägil, 1973c:316–317). With regard to representations of the Nordic countries vis-à-vis Europe, textbook portrayals suggest that they remain at the margins of Europe “positioned beside the rest of Europe” (Graninger and Tägil, 1973c:317). The motives for different countries entering into the European partnership of the EEC are explained by national, economic rationales. A European identity is not mentioned, but only how different countries that entered the European partnership gained, economically, from the co-operation with other European states (Graninger and Tägil, 1973c:319–325). Economic policy is also the main explanatory feature of European integration in Bergström et al. (1983). The identity of Europe as a cause for the European people, or any connections to a Europeanness, is similarly not evident (Bergström et al., 1983:441).

After Sweden joined the European integration project of the European Union in the mid-1990s, the conceptions of Europe changed somewhat. It still does not seem to be a matter of identity, but the reasons for joining in the co-operation are not mentioned in Sandberg et al. (1996). Instead, joining the European Union seems to be such a natural step that the textbook narrative elaborates upon the reasons not to join previously. To be a part of Europe seems to be a given and it therefore needs to be explained what has held Sweden and Finland (which also joined the European Union in 1995) back. The reason given for this delay in joining the Union is the idea of neutrality which is conveyed as an obsolete argument when the Cold War was over (Sandberg et al., 1996:557).

There is still a divide between Western and Eastern Europe in the textbook published in 2008. Eastern Europe is described as a conglomerate of states that have problems in building a democracy, even if some countries are considered more successful. The most evident break of the narrative of Europe is perhaps between the 2008 textbook and those which preceded it. The European Union is seen as the manifestation of a dream. As the book emphasises, “When the Eastern Bloc fell, the
idea of a unified Europe gained momentum and vitality: the whole continent could now merge together” (Nyström et al., 2008:343). The teleological myth of Europe is also evident in the description of the European Union where the ideas in the Schuman Plan are seen as the embryo of a unified Europe (Nyström et al., 2008:342–344). This could be considered a new feature in the post-war era, particularly as European co-operation had only been described in economic terms before, or been seen as a sentimental dream in the inter-war period; a dream which had no history prior to the First World War (Tham et al., 1967:557–559; Bergström et al., 1983:387).

The Process of Europeanising Swedish Pupils

The analysis of 10 history textbooks published at different times during the 20th century revealed a change in the frequency of the words “Europe” and “European”, as well as a change in the meaning of those words. The subject matter on Europe increased and the idea of Europe and the identification with Europe on a political level changed during the course of the 20th century. Considering the different narration models discussed by Knudsen, the narrative on Europe seems to have shifted from the story of nation-states and European civilisation into a story which also incorporates the story of a common political culture. The Orient as “the other” is also an evident feature of the textbooks, especially the earlier ones conveying Europe as a Western, civilised and cultured part of the world. After 1960, when the meaning of Europe shifts from cultivated to liberal and free, it is downplayed more, but even if it is not called “The Orient” the antithesis of Europe is still to the East.

There is no evidence that Europe has been seen as “the other” in relation to “we – the Swedes”, but there is a vivid shift in the idea of Europe where it has played a more prominent role in the identity construction of Swedish pupils. At the beginning of the 20th century there was a clearer image of what was good and what was bad in an unpromblematic history with the nation as the central protagonist. This changed into a more complicated view from the 1960s/1970s and onwards, where different perspectives were featured in history education. This is not exclusive to developments in Sweden as this shift has also been shown in the history education in other countries (see, for example, FitzGerald, 1979 for developments in the USA and Janmaat, 2006 for developments in Ireland and the Ukraine). The more complicated overall view of history could help explain the changes seen in the idea of Europe in Swedish history textbooks, but as this change also coincides with a shift in the political debate on Europe and the political idea of “creating” Europeans it makes it difficult to wholly accept such an easy explanation.

It seems that the shift in the depiction of Europe and European identity is more complex and that at least part of the explanation lies in the political project of the Council of Europe and its ideas of how the European community is to be drawn together. The fact that these ideas were implemented in the Swedish curricula has also been recently demonstrated (Nygren, 2011). The Europeanisation of Swedish histori-
The mythologisation of “the European” and “Europe” is, to some extent, a feature of all textbooks produced since the beginning of the 20th century. In particular, this development appears to have deepened in more recent decades when the teleological myth of Europe as an entity and European co-operation has continued to be robustly conveyed to school children across Sweden.

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Henrik Åström Elmersjö

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Endnotes

1 The 1950 declaration of a supranational organisation in Europe, named after the French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman.

2 The Swedish school system changed on several occasions during the 20th century and this cannot be fully explained here. “Upper secondary school” means approximately the ninth to twelfth school years with the typical pupils being aged 16 to 19.

3 Graninger and Tägil, 1973 a, b, and c are considered one textbook, as are Tham et al., 1966 and 1967, since they are different volumes in the same series of textbooks.

4 For later years it was not possible to obtain accurate circulation numbers so the books produced in 1973, 1983 and 1996 were chosen because several editions were published following initial publication. In two cases a later edition was chosen (1910 and 1941); this was due to the fact that the first edition was too old and/or a second writer was engaged to update the textbook. The textbook from 1955 is the second edition, with the first edition having been published in 1954, but is considered equal by the authors. The same authors’ textbook from 1962 is the extended version with Swedish/Nordic history incorporated. The textbook of 2008 was based on an older book (published in its first edition in 2001) and made especially for a new syllabus (which was put on hold by the new government in 2006, a somewhat similar syllabus will be implemented in autumn 2011).

5 For several years the Swedish upper secondary school was divided into two programmes: the Classical Programme (latinlinjen), which focused on classical languages, and the Natural Science Programme (reallinjen).

6 Only two of the 17 programmes that students could choose from had History as a mandatory subject. These two programmes were chosen by about 48 percent of the students. However, over 95 percent of the population in an age group chose to study at upper secondary school at the end of the 20th century as opposed to less than 5 percent at the beginning of the century (Richardson, 2005).

7 However, since curriculum time also changed it is plausible that the time spent on the earlier parts of history was still more extensive in the early parts of the 20th century (see Larsson, 2001:45–50).

8 For the meaning of the abbreviations in the references in this section, see References: Curricula and Syllabi. All references in this section are official documents issued by the governing body of the upper secondary school.

9 According to a proposal for a new syllabus, to be put into use in autumn 2011, European cooperation after 1945 is, in itself, an important area of subject matter to study. The European subdivision of eras is also to be used in the chronological overview. Most of the syllabus is focused on knowledge regarding how history is used to create identities and on the concept of historical consciousness (Gy2011).