

The Use of History in Teaching American Politics in Norwegian Upper Secondary Schools

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Abstract

This thesis examines how American politics is taught in upper secondary schools in Norway, with special attention on VG3 English Social Studies. The thesis investigates the connection between history and politics through time and how history can be beneficial for understanding the present situation. In addition, the thesis examines the subject curriculum for VG1 and VG3 English in Norway to find how American politics is presented. Empirical evidence was collected through textbook analyses and interviews with both authors and teachers of English. The data retrieved from the analyses and interviews were used to answer three research questions: (1) How is American politics taught in upper-secondary schools in Norway, with primary focus on VG3 English Social Studies?, (2) How can history be used in American politics teaching? And (3) What is focused on when teaching American politics? Results from the study suggest that textbooks might affect the teaching of politics and that history is being used to make the pupils understand why the US is the way it is and why the Americans have the mindsets and culture they have. In addition, the study found that the implementation of the new curriculum can lead to some problems in relation to teacher students and the exams.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Thesis background

This thesis builds on both empirical research on political teaching and the historical connections between history and politics. Section 1.1.1 presents aspects of American politics teaching encountered in school, and some problems one might encounter as teachers. Section 1.1.2 looks into the connection between history and politics in the past, and the development of Political Science as a field of its own. These two sections form the basis for the aims and research questions presented in section 1.2.

1.1.1 Teaching American politics and my own experience from school

Both as a pupil and as a student teacher, I have encountered the subject of American politics in the classroom. As a pupil in vocational studies in upper-secondary I cannot remember being taught about American politics per se. The focus was on current issues, such as gun control in American, but little to no context or explanation as to why many Americans are for guns and when the right to bear arms was given. As a student teacher in praxis, much of the focus was on current issues as the teachers wanted us student teachers to teach that topic. The focus in teaching American politics seems to be on politics from above, meaning that political systems, parties and current debates and issues form the focus of the teaching. This is in line with Børhaug's (2008) findings on political education in Norwegian upper-secondary schools. Though he focuses on social science and not the English subject and American politics, his findings are much the same as my own experience from school. Børhaug (2008) claims that the focus of political teaching is to make the pupils make up their own opinion on different matters, but the politics from below, that is how one can be politically active or how the policy might affect the daily life, is missing. How people can participate in politics, other than voting, is not a part of the teaching. How different parties have changed through time and how peoples' mindsets, history and cultures affect politics are usually not included in the teaching of politics.

Though there is no need to teach Norwegian pupils how they can participate in American politics, it is important to teach the pupils that mindsets, history and cultures affect one's world view and political aspects. To teach a topic such as gun regulation in America to Norwegian pupils without making them aware of the differences from our own nation and the US will, for sure, make the pupils form their own opinions on the issue, but they will not fully

understand the matter in an American context. Robert Singh (2001) calls this the “comparative approach” to teaching American politics. Such a topic will grab the pupils’ attention and keep them interested in the subject. At the same time, the differences between the US to one’s own country will be prominent very quickly. Furthermore, teaching such a topic can quickly convey important themes that the pupils need to have an understanding of to fully be able to comprehend the US politics itself; such themes that can surface might be the importance of the Constitution and the different interpretations of it, the federal system, the role of the presidency and the different branches of government, as well as the mindset of American people and individualism.

In the last praxis-period when a fellow student and I were teaching VG1, we discovered that to find what to focus on was difficult when teaching American politics, as there is so much to choose from and not much time, especially in VG1. As the VG3 subject English Social Studies have specific political competence aims, it is natural to believe that the pupils will go deeper into the political aspect. In VG1 the teacher usually has a shorter time to go through the politics, and there are no specific competence aims on politics. Despite that, every teacher teaches American politics in VG1 as well, therefore one should be able to choose just what is necessary for the pupils to learn.

Singh (2001) claims that teaching American politics may be a bit problematic. For one, the political system and the governmental system in the US are complex and also very different from the Norwegian system. The huge influence of the Constitution, federalism, differences in political parties and the limitations of the different powers (checks and balances) are also different from the Norwegian parliamentary system of government. In addition, the pupils must understand the American peoples’ belief system and their thought on individualism (Singh, 2001). Though there is a rich body of information to take from, it might prove difficult for the pupils to master all of the information. A general surface knowledge of all the information may be sufficient enough, at least it will help the pupils understand the current issues and why the US is the way it is today.

A different aspect one, as English teachers, must take into consideration is the deep influence the US has on Norway. Pupils often have ideas about how the USA and Americans are, and those ideas are often prejudicial and stereotypes derived from movies, songs, and literature (Singh, 2001). Usually, the pupils have some idea or picture of how the American society and people are, as I have observed through all of my praxis periods. What they do not have an idea about is why they think of Americans and the US the way they do, or even why the Americans should act the way their own prejudice and stereotype say they do. To make

the pupils understand the politics of the US, one must make them aware of the prejudice and stereotypes they themselves think of as Americans and the US. The way Norwegian media presents American issues, politics and politicians may also be a factor in the prejudice Norwegian pupils might have towards American politics and society. One, as a teacher, must make the pupils aware of how one issue can be presented differently in different media, and that way help them get a broader understanding of the American society and politics.

1.1.2 Politics teaching in history and historians in political positions

History and politics have almost been synonymous to each other throughout the years, both in real life and as subjects in higher education. Ashbee (2013) claims that American politics often is a supplement to history or literature teaching in higher education in Europe. In the United Kingdom the study of US politics is still seen as a subfield of contemporary history (Ashbee, 2013). The focus in higher education, in relation to politics, is often seen to be concentrated around different political actors rather than the political processes or the institutional relationships (Ashbee, 2013). As there are few academics that work with or study the domestic politics of the US itself, Ashbee claims that the said study of domestic US politics will only be able to survive as a part or sub-theme of comparative politics or comparative political economy in Europe.

Though the study of US domestic politics is in decline, there are still reasons to why politics and history are closely related and tied together. If we look to history, we find that history was a sort of “school of statesmanship” as Armitage (2014) puts it. In the late 19th century and during the 20th century historians often doubled as politicians or authorities in politics, the historians were central when local governments were shaped, they also advised both presidents and emperors (Armitage, 2014; Kavanagh, 1991). Due to short-termism, where the focus is on right now and in the short run, historians disappeared more and more from policymaking in the 80’s and up to now (Armitage, 2014).

From around mid-20th century political science broke with history and became a subject of its own in the universities, but the connection with history still remained as most of the teachers were historians or philosophers (Kavanagh, 1991; Ashbee, 2013). This can be shown in the subject’s description from the University of Oxford from around mid-20th century: “The subject is taught by a very few specialists and a large number of philosophers and historians who approach it with varying degrees of enthusiasm or disgust.” (Ashbee, 2013). This description gives us an idea that there were still some disagreement surrounding the question of political science being a science of its own or if it should just remain as a

subfield of history. That the teachers or lecturers still had a connection to history was still evident in the 1960's when almost 40 percent of the people lecturing and teaching politics in higher education in Britain still had history as their undergraduate degree (Ashbee, 2013).

Even though political science was a sub-field of history for a long time, the two sciences have different methodologies, different ways to work with the issues in questions. Franzosi (2006) claims that social scientists, including political scientists, create their own data for their own purposes, meaning that political scientists work with models with dependant and independant variables to test their hypothesis. According to Indiana University of Pennsylvania's description of political science, political scientists, especially contemporary political scientists, seek to find how power, authorities, rules, laws, and constitutions affect peoples' lives. While political scientists work with the contemporary and the here-and-now aspect, historians often work with analysing texts from archives. Franzosi (2006) says historians deal with data created by others a long time ago, for purposes that are not the researcher's own. This means that historians work with old texts and objects to figure out how life or society worked at that specific time.

Though political scientists research special political phenomena or the contemporary, history and historical approaches are said to be helpful and it can therefore be beneficial to combine the two disciplines. As stated above, historians disappeared more and more from policymaking due to short-termism, but short-termism might be one of the reasons to why history should be used in relation to political science. History is a science that can be used to critically question short-term views, it can help complicate simple explanations about causes and consequences and it can help us discover new roads not yet taken (Armitage, 2014). In other words, history can help us expand the narrow horizons political science might result in. History can also help in political science when it comes to path dependency, if we look to history we can understand more and get different, more analytical answers to why a political aspect is path dependent (Mahoney and Schensul, 2006). History then matters in political science and in politics due to lack of information about the past when decisions are made. If a similar phenomenon has happened earlier in history information about the decisions made at that time could inform the policymakers and politics of today when concerned with a similar phenomenon. Even Winston Churchill saw the benefits of using history in relation to politics: "The longer you can look back, the further you can look forward" (Armitage, 2014).

1.2 Aims and research questions

My own experience and Singh's (2001) article show that there are still some problems or difficulties one, as an English-teacher, must take into consideration when teaching American politics. As there are huge American influence on Norwegian society, teachers must make their pupils aware of the differences and prejudice towards the American society, people and politics to be able to make their pupils fully be able to understand American politics. In addition to this, the relationship between politics and history has been prominent throughout history even when the two sciences split in mid-19th century in higher education. Therefore, it is likely that the use of history when teaching American politics is beneficial for the pupils and might make the information easier for them to master.

The aim of this thesis is to explore how American politics is taught in upper-secondary schools in Norway, with special focus on VG3 English Social Science, and how history is intertwined in the teaching. In more detail, the thesis investigates how different teachers teach the subject and what they focus on, how the textbooks are used in the teaching and how American politics is presented in the textbooks. It also investigates how the teachers, textbooks and textbook-authors use history to make the politics easier for the pupils. Three research questions will help us address this aim:

- How is American politics taught in upper-secondary schools in Norway, with primary focus on VG3 English Social Studies?
- How can history be used in American politics teaching?
- What is focused on when teaching American politics?

1.3 Outline

This thesis investigates how history can be used when teaching American politics and what the focus is on in American politics teaching. Chapter 2 examines the theoretical framework of teaching American politics in upper-secondary schools by looking into the English subject curriculum (LK06 ENG4-01, LK20 ENG01-04, LK20 ENG04-02) and didactics, as well as discussing how history can be beneficial for the teaching. Chapter 3 explains the methods and design of the study, before chapter 4 presents the result. Following, in chapter 5, is a discussion of the results. Chapter 6 presents a conclusion and answer to the research questions before practical implications and further research suggestions are given in the end.

2 Theoretical Framework

The following chapter will investigate the theoretical framework behind the use of history in the teaching of American politics in the Norwegian upper secondary school. The first section, 2.1, investigates the English subject curriculum and what it says about learning politics. Section 2.2 will explore the didactics surrounding political education and intercultural competence. The last section in this chapter, 2.3, will look into the connections between history and politics, and how history can be beneficial to politics teaching.

2.1 English Subject Curriculum

Teachers should at all times plan and execute their classes with the curriculum in mind, as the subject curriculum states what the pupils are supposed to know when they graduate.

Therefore, to fully understand how teachers teach American politics in upper secondary schools and how they incorporate history in this teaching we must look into the curriculum and the competence aims for VG3 English Social Studies and VG1 English. The curriculum in Norway recently got renewed, but it will be gradually incorporated until 2022. This means that for VG1 English the new curriculum is in use from 2020, while VG3 English Social Studies will still be anchored in the old LK06 until 2022. For this reason, I have chosen to examine the new LK20 subject curriculum for VG1 (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020, ENG01-04), and both the old LK06 (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006, ENG4-01) and the new LK20 (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020, ENG04-02) for VG3. That being said, English Social Studies are not a subject in the new curriculum, it has instead merged with VG2 International English and VG3 English Literature and Culture and has become a new subject; English 1 and English 2. This new subject will still entail several similarities with today's English Social Studies.

2.1.1 Competence aims

In the subject curriculum for first year Upper Secondary English there are no specific competence aims for politics, but these competence aims can be linked, in some ways, to how politics affects the society:

Pupils in VG1 English should be able to (researcher's own translation of the LK20 competence aims ENG01-04)

- Explain other's argumentation, and use this in follow-up answers in debates and discussions on different topics (also political and social topics)

- Explore and reflect on the diversity and social relations in English-speaking countries from a historical context

As stated above, there are no competence aims that are specific for politics teaching in VG1, but these two are the ones where politics are most prominent. This is because there are many debates and discussion surrounding American politics every day, and for a pupil to explain an argument that he/she does not necessarily agree with can make the pupils more understanding of how politics and governing works. The same goes for the second competence aim given here, how can one explore and reflect on the diversity and social relations in the US without looking into the politics and the history? One has to look to politics to fully understand how the country can be so diverse, and also to understand the social relations within the country. The Black Lives matter movement can be shown as an example for this case. How can the pupils fully understand this movement and what they stand for without looking at the politics in an historical context?

In both the current LK06 (ENG4-01) and the new LK20 (ENG04-02) for VG3, there are, unlike the competence aims for VG1, specific competence aims regarding politics and society. The pupils should also be able to discuss how historical events have affected today's society.

After completed VG3 English Social Studies the pupils should be able to (writer's own translation of the competence aims ENG4-01 LK06):

- Summarise, comment and discuss different point of views on societal issues
- Discuss how central historical events have affected the development of the American (and British) society
- Discuss political relations and systems in English-speaking countries – focus on the UK and the US
- Discuss social and economic relations in English-speaking countries
- Analyse a regional or international conflict where at least one English-speaking country is involved (e.g. USA)
- Discuss and debate current issues

In the new LK20 (ENG04-02) competence aims for English 1 and English 2, the pupils should be able to:

- Show understanding, reflection and critical thinking in an analysis of debates surrounding current social issues
- Explore and discuss how some English-speaking countries influence the language, culture and politics in other parts of the world

- Compare and convey social and political relations in two English-speaking countries from a historical context

As we can see from the competence aims above, both the current LK06 and the new LK20, the pupils should be able to discuss and compare both current political and societal issues from a historical context. What might be one of the biggest changes in the LK20 curriculum is that the focus is more on understanding the present and the current, but with help from history to fully understand how the present is at it is. Moreover, the focus has shifted from “international conflict where...at least one English-speaking country is involved” (ENG04-01 LK06) to “how some English-speaking countries influence” (ENG04-02 LK20) other nations and parts of the world. This might point towards a more international view and the international relations in the world, which is a new way of thinking compared to the old curriculum. Another big change in the new curriculum is that the learning progress is progressive, the competence aims for English 2 build on the competence aims for English 1 which again build on the competence aim for English VG1, more so in the new curriculum than the old LK06. This can be seen in the vocabulary used in the competence aims. VG1 pupils should be able to explain, while VG2 English 1 pupils should be able to show understanding and reflection, while VG3 should be able to compare and discuss. The new competence aims are more in line with Bloom Taxonomy from pedagogy (Imsen, 2017, p. 319). What we also can read from these selected competence aims is that we might need more than just the language in itself to fully be able to communicate with people from other nations such as the US. This is something that is referred to as intercultural competence in both the new and the old English curriculum, as well as in the didactics covered later in this chapter. We will look explore this in the next section where we discuss the purpose and relevance of English as a subject in school.

2.1.2 Purpose and relevance of English as a school subject

Another section of the Education Act and curriculum an explanation of the importance of the English subject is given, where the purpose and relevance are tied together with knowledge of the world. This is done both in the LK06 and the LK20, the biggest difference between these two curricula is the interdisciplinary topics in the LK20. These topics are supposed to link subjects together, and every subject should include some parts of these topics. For English subject this entails the two topics “democracy and citizenship” and “health and life skills” which I will come back to. Another change in the curriculum is that it seems a new global way of thinking is more prominent in LK20.

In LK06 the Anglo-American view is prominent, and the UK and the US are both mentioned explicitly in the competence aims while in the LK20 no specific countries are mentioned. This will maybe open for a more global view on the English subject and show that English is a worldwide language in a better manner than the LK06 did. In the section of the LK06 curriculum that explains the purpose of English as a school subject it says that the UK and the USA are central, both politically and culturally, in the world and that knowledge about the two nations will give the pupils a better foundation for further understanding global societal questions and international news. This part with the Anglo-American view is not present in the new LK20, the focus in LK20 is even more intercultural and global than that of LK06.

The curriculum clearly states that the English subject is beneficial for the pupils' intercultural competence, both LK06 and LK20 have interculturality incorporated in them. The English subject is essential for developing cultural understand and to help with the pupils' identity development. Providing different perspectives on a matter can give better insight into other peoples' mindsets, culture and way of life. This again can make it easier for the pupils to understand different life choices and life situations; this is where the interdisciplinary topic "health and life skills" come in to play. When pupils can understand different life choices and situations, they might get some new perspectives on their own health and way of life. By understanding different life choices and situations it will get easier for the pupils to understand social issues in the different countries. Furthermore, this understanding can later help the pupils see the world in different ways from different perspectives, which again will help them adjust their language and mindset depending on the social, cultural and political context they are in. For example, a Norwegian pupil may have their own thought about gun regulation, but cannot fully understand why a large part of the American population are for or against stricter regulation of guns without knowing anything about the American mindset, laws and way of life. This is also where the other interdisciplinary topic "democracy and citizenship" is relevant; the subject opens for other manners to interpret the world. The pupils should realise that his or her perception of the world is dependent on his or her cultural background.

2.2 Didactics

When it comes to the pedagogy and the didactics in regard to teaching politics and history in the English subject one could, of course, look into the didactics from social studies, but that

would not give us a clear answer as to why political education is present in the English school subject. As mentioned above, intercultural competence is important in the English subject curriculum and according to Dypedahl and Lund (2020, p.10-11) the Norwegian education authorities focus on global citizenship and respect for others which again is the core of intercultural competence. In light of this, a look into the didactics of intercultural competence and culture pedagogy and how that is related to the English subject can be beneficial to further understand why we should teach politics in Norwegian English classrooms.

2.2.1 Not Only Language Learning

A big part of the English subject is language learning and how we can use languages to communicate with other people and countries around the world. When we communicate with people from other cultures with different mindsets than our own, language competence might not be sufficient for communicating (Dypedahl and Lund, 2020, p.10; Bøhn et al., 2019, p. 158-159). As language competence might not be enough to educate a fluent English-speaker, teaching of culture came into the English subject gradually around the twentieth century (Hoff, 2018, p.68). Culture came to be understood, as Hoff (2018, p.68) puts it, as “the glasses through which we perceive the world”. This means that one cannot fully understand, and thereby communicate with, the world without knowledge of the culture and context. In the first half of the twentieth century teaching of literary texts faded more out to make space for culture, and thereby factual knowledge of different cultures became more prominent in the English subject. However, in the 1970’s culture was reduced again in favour for communicative competence and the thought that pupils should learn target language used in everyday life (Hoff, 2018, p.68). Later, in 1986, culture was seen as “a feature of language itself” (Hoff, 2018, p.69). This means that instead of being used as factual knowledge of a culture and country or as background context for linguistic practice, the relationship between culture and language was more in focus. The thought was that pupils could draw on cultural knowledge both from other cultures and their own to learn more language (Hoff, 2018, p.69).

Bøhn et al. (2019, p.158) defines intercultural competence as “the ability to communicate appropriately with people who have different mindsets and/or different communication styles”. Mindsets in this context means different ways of thinking, therefore pupils should be able to communicate and alter their language to people that may think differently from themselves. Further, this means that the pupils must understand how mindsets are developed. Our mindsets are affected by different socialisation settings in our family, school and work, as well as from media input and legal systems in our country. One

must understand that there is no clear line between our culture and mindset and other people's culture and mindset (Bøhn et al., 2019, p.159; Dypedahl and Lund, 2020, p. 58-67). In this process our own values, norms, attitudes and beliefs may be more noticeable than before when we can compare them with other people's values and beliefs (Bøhn et al., 2019, p.159). Being able to compare these values and beliefs is one part of what is called, cultural empathy and cultural competence where one is able to put oneself in another social context and able to understand different events and social issues from others' perspectives (Dypedahl and Lund, 202, p.58-67). To develop and achieve cultural competence and empathy, specific knowledge of culture is needed. A pupil must know about both small c culture (traditions, norms, way of living) and big C culture (history, literature and institutions) to be able to fully understand others' perspectives (Dypedahl and Lund, 2020, p.58-67).

2.2.2 Intercultural communicative competence

To be a fully competent intercultural speaker there are various types of knowledge, skills and attitudes one needs according to Byram's model for competent intercultural speaker (see figure below) (Hoff, 2018, p.72; Bøhn et al, 2019, pp.161-162).

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | Skills interpret and relate (<i>savoir comprendre</i>) | |
| Knowledge of self and other; of interaction; individual and societal (<i>savoir</i>) | Education political education, critical cultural awareness (<i>savoir s'engager</i>) | Attitudes relativising self, valuing other (<i>savoir être</i>) |
| | Skills discover and/or interact (<i>savoir apprendre/faire</i>) | |

In addition to knowledge of oneself and others and understanding our own attitudes, Byram's model suggests political education and critical cultural awareness as a part of being a competent intercultural speaker. These two are closely related as political education will teach the pupils about different practices and products along with the laws and political thought on different topics that again can affect peoples' mindsets and perspectives. While critical cultural awareness is the ability to evaluate and reflect critically upon perspectives, practices and products in both our own culture and other peoples' culture (Bøhn et al, 2019, p.161-162; Hoff, 2018, p.72). Byram's model suggests that a successful intercultural communication will depend on the speaker's ability to recognise how different cultural contexts affect the way situations, speeches, texts and utterances are interpreted (Hoff, 2018, p.72-73). In today's

society this might be a too subjective interpretation. If an American is talking to another American, they will, in this view, share the same culture and mindset while in the real life an American can be more than just an American (Hoff, 2018, p.73).

Teaching on the basis of intercultural competence should make pupils think and be able to discuss matters in a respectful manner which again may result in some changed opinions in the classroom (Hoff, 2018, p. 80-83). The pupils should be allowed, through teaching, to develop their abilities to pay attention to important cultural and intercultural features that can affect any sort of communication (Bøhn et al., 2019, p. 165). To do this the pupils must be trained to compare different mindsets and behavioural patterns of others with those of their own. A way to work with this is to work with dominant values and put them into different contexts. If the pupils work with something that many Americans value, namely the right to bear arms, they must understand not only their own mindsets and reasons for their arguments, but the pupils must also understand the mindsets of many Americans and why they value this right; they must understand the matter or issue from the context it is in, not from the context they are in (Hoff, 2018, p.80-85; Bøhn et al., 2019, p.165). To understand a situation or issue from someone else's point of view, which is called cultural empathy which I mentioned above, require a good knowledge of the background of other people or context they live in and to fully understand someone's background or context the country's history and politics become an important part of the knowledge required (Bøhn et al., 2019, p.170).

2.3 History and Politics

As stated above in the introduction, the relationship between history, historians and politics is close, and has been close for very long as Political science as a separate subject is relatively new (Kavanagh, 1991; Ashbee, 2013). Since politics was a subfield of history for a long time, and historians often held political positions in the society it is easy to assume that there must be a good reason to use history when teaching politics. This section will investigate further how history can help pupils understand politics and why it can be beneficial to connect the two fields.

2.3.1 Politics: why one needs history to fully understand

Even though political science is part of social science, there might be more connections to history than we might think. What exactly history can help us with regarding politics teaching

will be investigated in the next section, as for this section we will look more into why one should combine history and politics.

Churchill once said, “The longer you can look back, the further you can look forward” (Armitage, 2014), which can be connected to the short-term views of the politics and politicians today. History can help us expand the horizons and help us understand better the consequences and causes of a political decision and help us discover new undiscovered paths to a solution (Armitage, 2014). A longitudinal trajectory as a base or context can also be beneficial when working with causes of a political happening, there are often more causes than the contemporary cause (Collier and Mazzuca, 2006). A very good example here is The Great War, WW1, where the shooting of Franz Ferdinand is said to be the triggering factor to the war, but there are several other causes to why the war happened, such as imperialism, alliances, nationalism. Tilly (2006) argues that the use of history can help us build better explanations of both contemporary and past politics, this is because every political process occurs in history meaning that knowledge of the historical context is important. Both where and when a political process occurs influence how they occur, therefore one cannot necessarily understand a political process solely on what is going on in the present (Tilly, 2006).

Michael Oakshott, cited in Kavanagh (1991), claims that the study of politics should be historical because we need to be aware of the details in the material and to understand political activity as a tradition. Contemporary politics is connected with history, law, culture and society and it is necessary to take every aspect of this into consideration when explaining politics (Kavanagh, 1991). This means that one must have a basic understanding of every topic and aspect to fully be able to explain politics. For history this means that one should use history and historical approaches to analyse past events and political happenings that can help us illuminate contemporary political events (Kavanagh, 1991). To use history and historical perspective to shed light on current issues is what John Tosh calls “Thinking with history” (Tosh, 2008, p.120). On the question of why we should use history in relation to politics, Tosh argues that history provides a training in the rational considerations of evidence and arguments in political events and debates; the historical perspective will strengthen the pupils’ capacity to make informed judgements about contemporary issues and politics (2008, p. 120). By using history in relation to politics teaching one can make the students aware of the intellectual tools they need to understand and clarify the world around them (Tosh, 2008, p.126). Another benefit of teaching history and with a historical approach, according to Tosh (2008, p. 140) is that it forms the pupils and help them take considered and informed views on

current issues that are of public concern, they can do this when choosing a political side or in the polling booth later in life.

As to why one should combine history and politics it is clear that it benefits the pupils out in the real world as well as in the classroom. By understanding more of the past and how the world is the way it is, it will become easier for them to understand their world and issues of today. It will also help the pupils understand more of the different political views and sides and why there are different views, and by understanding the history behind those views their own choice on where they stand in the political spectrum can become easier to understand.

2.3.2 History as a tool for understanding

In his article “Why Political Science Needs History” Kavanagh (1991) presents five different aspects or points on what history or historical approach can help us with when working with politics. His first point is “History as source of material” meaning that all material for political science and the material one needs when working with politics is derived from the past, if this material had not been there one could simply not fully get a grasp on the politics of today. The second point Kavanagh makes is to use “history as an aid to understand”, this goes back to former section that a better understanding or greater awareness of the context in which a political event or behaviour occurs will help us understand the event itself in a better manner. Kavanagh’s second point can also be linked to Churchill’s statement that one must look to history to fully understand troubles in the political arena and spectrum today. A pupil will not, for example, be able to understand why Capitol Hill was stormed without knowledge of the historical background or the political climate in the US today and the reason to why the political climate is the way it is.

The third point in Kavanagh’s article is that one can use history when “generating and testing frameworks”. The main part in this point is that one can use history to test different theories, as well as compare cases where a political phenomenon occurs and look at similarities and dissimilarities to be able to understand how such a phenomenon could happen. For example, a comparison of the French Revolution, the American Revolution and the Russian Revolution will perhaps give us some similarities or dissimilarities to show how the different revolutions, and a revolution in itself, could occur and why they occurred at those specific times in the different countries. This approach is also used in news, as shown in *Dagbladet* by Bernt Hagtvet where he looks at parallels in history by comparing the polarised US under Trump’s administration to that of the end of the Weimar-republic and Hitler.

The two last points Kavanagh (1991) makes is to use history in the understanding of political concepts and to use “history as source of lessons”. The former point means that one must understand political events in the context and time it happened, moreover one must understand what the people or politicians of that specific time wanted. This also means that one must understand that political concepts change over time. For example, one must have knowledge of a specific time, say the time of the Founding Fathers and when the Constitution was drafted, to fully understand why the country was built on the principles it was built on. The latter point is a bit self-explanatory as one learns from history, so one does not make the same mistakes again. One can learn both from personal history and past political events, however one must be careful not to be misled from this history as one has to analyse and explain the past events to fully understand what one can learn from these events. On the other hand, history helps educate pupils to an understanding “of the successes and failures of how actors behaved in broadly similar situations in the past” (Kavanagh, 1991).

3 Methods and Design

This chapter outlines the methods and design of the study. The purpose of this study was to gather qualitative data to address the research questions of the study. Section 3.1 describes the method used in this study. The following section, 3.2, accounts for the design of the study and the data collection process. A short description of the analysis process is given in section 3.3. Subsequently, section 3.4 considers the study's validity and reliability, before the last section 3.5 presents the ethical considerations of the study.

3.1 Method

3.1.1 Qualitative research

According to Postholm and Jacobsen (2018, p.89) qualitative method is used to collect information and data about the reality through language and words. The intention with qualitative method is to understand and describe what the subjects of the study do in certain times; in this study this relates to what and how teachers teach politics (Postholm and Jacobsen, 20018, p.95. Qualitative methods are often time consuming and it is therefore common with smaller samples or interviews. The aim in such a study is not to find numerical data or generalised conclusions that apply for everyone, the aim is to shed light on different aspects or methods related to the research questions. In relation to this thesis, qualitative research was applied to get a deeper understanding of the research questions, and to understand different ways of working with the subject.

The qualitative data for this thesis was gathered by conducting interviews with two different groups, one group of upper secondary teachers and one group of textbook-authors. In addition, data was also gathered by analysing three textbooks, in regard to the research questions, before interviewing the authors. The main reason for including qualitative data in the study was to get a deeper understanding of how teachers work with politics in regard to history and how textbook authors present politics and history in their books. A second reason, related to the first, is that people are often more detailed and in-depth when speaking, rather than writing or answering a questionnaire, which again can strengthen the validity of the study.

3.2 Design and data collection

3.2.1 Interviewees

The process of recruiting teachers for interviews started early on in October 2020 by contacting different upper-secondary schools offering English social studies, both in Agder and Rogaland. After a while, three teachers volunteered to be a part of the study and to be interviewed. After choosing the books to be analysed, two authors from the VG3 textbooks were contacted and asked to be a part of the study and to elaborate on the process of writing a textbook and how the authors chose to present the politics in their books.

The sampling strategy used for this study is known as the typical sampling where the subjects studied are “typical” for those on the outside (Creswell, 2013, p. 230). The criteria for being interviewed were that the interviewees should have knowledge of teaching English in upper-secondary, more specifically knowledge of teaching politics in VG3 English and/or VG1 English. All of the teachers who participated in the study had more than ten years of experience in teaching English, two of them had taught VG3 English Social studies for several years, while one of them taught the subject for the first time this year. Two of the teachers also taught VG1 English and were asked to reflect and compare how they worked with the topics differently from VG1 to VG3. For the second group, the authors, the criteria were to have knowledge of writing textbooks, the competence aims and the representation of politics in the books. One of the authors has more than ten years of experience from teaching VG3 English and has knowledge of how the subject is taught and the competence aims in regard to the subject. The other author interviewed has several years of experience in teaching at all levels and has been involved in several textbooks. Therefore, both of the authors were very well qualified to be part of the study.

3.2.2 Choosing books

As a supplement to the interviews, three different books were analysed to help answer the research questions and to get a broader understanding of the issue. Two of these books are written for VG3 English Social studies, while the last book is written for VG1 English. Different books were considered to be a part of the thesis, but after some considerations and investigation *Access* (Anthony et al., 2018) and *Matters* (Farstad et al., 2018) were chosen for the VG3 course, while *Citizens* (Andersen et al., 2020) was chosen for VG1. The reason to why *Access* and *Matters* were chosen was that the two books are very different in structure,

the books are published by two different publishers, and they are presumably the two most common books used for VG3 English Social studies.

In VG1 the new curriculum was implemented in 2020, as stated in chapter 2.1, therefore many of the earlier books are renewed to fit the new LK20 as well as some entirely new books were published. The focus here was to find a book that was especially written with the new curriculum in mind, not an “old” book made to fit the new competence aims. Though there are many good books published, the one chosen for this study was *Citizens* (2020). Every book chosen for this study was, in addition to these reasons, chosen with the knowledge that the interviewees used these books in their teaching.

3.2.3 Data collection

Three steps were conducted to collect data for this study to get a broader and deeper understanding of how politics are taught in upper-secondary schools and how history is implemented in the teaching. The first step was an analysis of the textbooks chosen, and the second step was interviews with the authors of two of the books, the last step was to conduct interviews with three teachers who work in upper-secondary school.

3.2.3.1 Interviews

The aim of the interviews was to get more insight in how teachers work with the textbook, how they teach politics in VG1 and VG3 and how they implement history into their teaching. The aim of the interviews with the authors was to get a deeper understanding of how they work with politics and history when writing the textbooks and how they choose how to present the issues in their textbooks. The interviews were mostly conducted in Norwegian, with the exception of one interview. The interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher, and most of the quotes used in the thesis are the researcher’s own translation. The interviews were conducted one-to-one through Zoom.

The interviews conducted were semi-structured (appendix 1 and 3) which means that the interviewer has prepared questions and themes beforehand, but the questions are asked where it is natural to ask them. The interviewer is open for other themes or perspectives from the interviewees, and elaborations and discussions on different points or issues are welcomed (Postholm and Jacobsen, 2018, p.121). For the teachers there were three main topics with questions related to each topic. These topics were textbooks, their own experience from teaching and the use of history. For the authors’ interviews the focus were on the structure of

the book, and how they worked with different parts in the book to help the students understand the politics. The interviewer focused on speaking as little as possible to let the interviewees explain and talk as much as possible. The interviewer asked questions for elaboration or for further explanations of themes and points made by the interviewees. According to Postholm and Jacobsen (2018), the meaning of a qualitative method is to understand the other person's perspective and to come up with common opinions to develop knowledge of a topic (p.95; p.117). Due to this some discussion between the interviewer and interviewees occurred to fully understand their perspectives and reasonings.

3.2.3.2 Books

The aim of the book-analyses was to get a broader understanding of how American politics is taught in upper-secondary. As many teachers use the textbook as basis for their teaching one might obtain a better grasp of what is focused on in politics teaching, and furthermore how history is incorporated to make politics easier to understand. The main themes for the analysis were the structure of the book, the representation of politics and how politics is connected with history, and last how the book uses pictures or tasks to help the pupils understand the politics presented (appendix 5).

3.3 Data analysis procedure

Analysing is, according to Creswell (2013), when one takes the data apart before one puts it together again to summarise (p. 24). One should categorise the material to make it more understandable and comprehensible in relation to the questions at hand, meaning that one must find patterns in the data before the data is categorised into themes (Postholm and Jacobsen, 2018, p.139). For this study the interviews with the teachers are the main data, while interviews with authors and book analyses are used as supplementary data to gain more knowledge and understanding of the research questions.

3.3.1 Transcribing and analysing interviews

Before the interviews were analysed, they were carefully transcribed by the researcher. The interviews were listened through several times to avoid mistakes and to secure an accurate transcription. Creswell's (2013) process of qualitative analysis were followed when analysing the interviews which entails preparing, organising and categorising or coding the data (p.261). Questions and answers from the transcriptions were put into different themes or categories

before an analysis of the different themes were conducted to find similarities and differences in the way the teachers work with politics in VG1 and VG3. The same procedure was used when analysing the authors' interviews. Here the questions and answers were categorised to find similarities or differences in the way the authors try to convey the politics in their books and how they work with or connect history with politics to do this. These interviews were also categorised to find differences or similarities in the way the authors think when it comes to the structure of a textbook.

3.3.2 Analysing textbooks

Before going in depth in the textbooks, the researcher skimmed through the book and looked at the index to get an idea of how the structure was in the different books. Then the books were read through closely, with special focus on the political sections of the books. The researcher had formed question beforehand which formed the basis for the analyses, see appendix 5. The answers and questions then followed the same process as for the interviews. These were categorised into different themes before differences and similarities in the three books were examined.

3.4 Reliability and validity

3.4.1 Reliability

Reliability is connected to the consistency of the findings, meaning that if the study was to be replicated at different times the results would be approximately the same as the original findings (Creswell, 2013, p.177). As this study examines how politics is taught in English upper-secondary and how history is being used in this teaching, it is natural to believe that these findings will alter with time as new teachers are educated every year. Another consideration when it comes to reliability is that the new curriculum is not yet implemented in VG3, which furthermore can mean that the teaching of politics may alter with the new curriculum.

According to Creswell (2013), ambiguous answers or questions as well as the interviewees health can be factors to unreliable data. To secure clear questions the research supervisor checked the questions before the interviews were conducted. To ensure that the answers were not ambiguous or unclear the researcher used follow-up questions to clarify or made the interviewees elaborate more on the subject. As the interviews were conducted through the internet the recording instruments had to be placed at the correct place according

to the computer's speakers. To ensure that the recordings were clear and easy to understand the instruments used were tested several times to find the best placement for them.

3.4.2 Validity

The validity of the study entails the limitations of the study and to the researcher's own research (Postholm and Jacobsen, 2018, p.222). This means that validity is connected to the researcher's own interpretations of the data, the researcher should be self-reflective about the role he has in the research (Creswell, 2013, p.283). Though it is difficult to obtain perfect validity, some arguments that this study is valid can be made.

One of the arguments to ensure the validity of this study is that the study is not solely based on teachers' interviews. The analyses of the textbooks and the authors' interviews were added. By combining the results from these three parts the result from the study has more validity. Another argument regarding the interviews is that the semi-structured interview opens for more input from the interviewees, which again can lead to perspectives not yet thought of by the researcher. To ensure the validity of the study even more, observations of teachers teaching politics could have been conducted, but as a result of the roaring pandemic and the national advisements of not travelling this was excluded from the study. To get even more different perspectives on the matter interviews or questionnaires among pupils could have been conducted. One could find how the different approaches of teaching American politics worked with the pupils. At the same time, one could investigate how motivation for political teaching are amongst pupils. This approach was thought of, but to be able to discuss in detail the findings of the study, the researcher together with his supervisor decided not to conduct such a supplementary approach as it would have demanded more space than this MA-thesis.

The qualitative approach was chosen for this study as the answers given orally are often more in-depth than if the answers are given in writing (Postholm and Jacobsen, 2013, p.118). According to Creswell (2013), the data from the interviews can be "deceptive and provide the perspective the interviewee wants the researcher to hear (p. 240)". To avoid this the researcher asked follow-up questions that could give a different answer than the first. The fact that three teachers were interviewed strengthen the study's validity when it comes to perspective, as all of the teachers had different educations and interests and provided different perspectives.

When it comes to analysing textbooks, one must consider one's own personal preference for a textbook. The researcher has no experience in using or teaching with these

books and had little knowledge of the books before analysing them. Therefore, the objectivity in regard to the textbooks was held. Another part to consider, in regard to the validity of the analyses, is that the research supervisor is one of the authors of *Matters*, but as he did not have any part in the analysis of the book it is not likely to be a threat to the validity of this study.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The project was reported to the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) since data and personal information through interviews was gathered, it was shortly after approved. Information letters and consent forms (appendix 8) were sent to the participants a while before the interviews, and NSD's guidelines were followed to ensure the privacy. The audio recordings from the interview were recorded on the university's recording instruments and the audio files were deleted after transcription. NSD concluded that the project was in line with the rules of privacy and data concerns (appendix 9).

The project was voluntary; therefore, the participants were informed through consent forms that they could withdraw from the project if they wanted to. The participants were all adults and could legally consent to the project. They were also informed that identities would be kept anonymous, and that personal information was to be kept out of the thesis.

4 Results

This chapter will present the findings and results from the study. Both textbook-analyses and interviews were, as mentioned, conducted to collect the data for this study. The data was collected to help answer the research questions:

- How is American politics taught in upper-secondary schools in Norway, with primary focus on VG3 English Social Studies?
- How can history be used in American politics teaching?
- What is focused on when teaching American politics?

The results are presented in three different sections. The first section (4.1) presents the analyses of the different textbooks, section 4.2 presents the findings from the interviews with the textbook-authors. The results from the teachers' interviews are presented in section 4.3, before results surrounding the new curriculum are presented in the last section 4.4. All the interview extracts used in this thesis are translated by the researcher, unless else is specified. The extracts have been marked with numbers and the original Norwegian extracts can be found in appendix 7.

4.1 Book analyses

The book analyses were conducted to obtain a deeper understanding of how American politics are taught in upper-secondary schools. As many teachers use the textbook as a basis for their teaching, an analysis of the textbook might give insight as to why the teachers choose the information they choose. Analysing the textbooks might additionally give us information on how teachers structure their teaching, and how they combine and connect history and politics. Since the focus of this study is VG3, two books for English Social Studies were analysed in addition to a relatively new textbook for VG1. The two books for VG3 are structured very differently, that together with them being the two most notable books for that specific subject made it easy for the researcher when choosing books to analyse. As for the third book, *Citizens*, it was chosen because it is written after the new curriculum for VG1 and is very different in the representation of politics in contrast to the other two books. This is to be assumed since VG1 has no specific competence aims regarding politics.

The book analyses are presented book by book to make it easier to understand the differences in the books. The findings from the analyses are later, in section 5, discussed in relation to the research questions and the interviews conducted. The books were analysed on the matter of how the politics is presented, how the politics and history are connected,

structure of the book, and finally how literary texts and tasks are used to shed light on the political issue at hand.

4.1.1 Citizens

Citizens was written in 2020 for English VG1, it is based on the new curriculum for the English subject (ENG01-04). The book is built up of four main themes and one “course”-section in the end of the book with different writing and reading strategies. The book is written in a worldwide manner, focusing not only on the US and Britain, but on several English-speaking countries. In relation to literacy, the literary texts presented in the book are used to show different aspects on a matter already presented by the factual texts. The texts used are from varying English-speaking countries which again will show different perspectives on a subject. Tasks together with literary works in the textbook will help the pupils understand the issue at hand and help them understand the said issue in today’s society.

The book presents issues and problems that are global and international such as immigration, climate change, overpopulation and gender equality. It does so from varying perspectives from around the globe. In the “Culture” section in the book different cultures are explored, and it is explained that knowledge of the different cultures can help us communicate when in contact with different cultures and people. Intercultural competence and the idea of globalism comes to show in this section. A way this section explains the interculturality is by looking into minorities in different English-speaking countries, such as the Maoris in New Zealand, to show how immigration can change the culture of a country.

When it comes to politics, there are little specific politics presented in the book, per se. The “Citizens” chapter of the book focuses on democracy and society. It looks into how a society comes together to do their duty, such as to vote, but the chapter additionally looks into discrimination of certain groups in a society. It is first when we come to the part about democracy some politics are presented. Not only does the book explain what democracy means and how one can participate in the democracy, it further explains the American system and how it has inspired other countries. The two-party system, and differences between the parties, are briefly presented before some issues that the American democracy is encountering and may encounter at a later time are shown. The Constitution and its role in the American society is of big interest in this chapter to understand the society of today’s American and its issues. Some issues and problems that are thought of as American, such as gun control, are presented with different perspectives. In this chapter the issue of gun control is presented with

an American view as well as a perspective from New Zealand. The tasks afterwards ask the pupils to compare the nations and the laws in regard to the said matter.

The history used in this book is connected well with both the main themes of the book and also the different issues presented. A way history is used by the authors of this book is that for most issues presented a “background”-text is provided. This short “background”-text provides the historical background the pupils need to know in order to fully understand the issue presented on the following pages. In relation to the politics presented, history is well intertwined with the presentation of the American system. The weight is put on the writing of the Constitution and how that sparked the belief of the American people one sees today. History is also connected with different current issues, where earlier riots or demonstrations are connected with those of the current.

4.1.2 Access

The issue of *Access* analysed here is the one published in 2018 for VG3 English Social Studies. The book is built up of alternating chapters on the US and Britain, meaning that chapters 2,4 and 6 are about the US. The first chapter on the USA presents the history chronologically. The next section deals with the political system and traditions and how they impact the political life of today. The last chapter on the US focuses on challenges and tensions in the American society today. A special focus is paid to the matter of Black Americans. Each chapter has some sort of “Focus”-text specially written for the themes in the different chapters to make the pupils be able to go more in-depth in the themes. The authors of the book explain in the beginning of the book that it is structured this way because it is a well-known structure.

When we get to the chapter on American politics the first thing presented is the American system. First, governmental layers and the different branches of government are presented. Second, a brief explanation of separation of power and the advantages and disadvantages it can lead to. Following, the book explains the development of parties before the two major parties is presented. In addition to this, the chapter also looks into the political influence from Great Britain and compares the two governments and show how they came to be how they are to this day. It also presents how the American system and politics have influenced and affected other countries both in past and present, such as the governmental influence in other colonies in South America and Norway. When it comes to current issues, the issues are presented with different perspectives from the present, but little about the politics that lies underneath the problems or issues. In the history section of the book some

political aspects are presented, but only to explain that specific happening presented; there is no connection to the present or how the historical political decisions can be seen in today's society.

As stated earlier, the history section presents the history chronologically with small paragraphs showing different aspects of the country's history from the first colonists to the Trump presidency. Though there is a purely historical section in the beginning of the book, some history is presented in the later chapters. Each chapter starts off with a short "background"-text to provide more context about what is being presented in the chapter. In the FOCUS-parts of the book special issues are presented in greater detail, one of these FOCUS-parts is about Black America. Here the history from beginning to present is presented to get a deeper understanding on the different issues presented. This is recurrent throughout the chapter on current issues where three conflicts or issues are presented: "health care reform", "the fourth estate", and "patrolling borders". The pupils are here given information about these conflicts in the history section, as well as an explanation of what it is really about and how the conflicts are today.

4.1.3 Matters

Written in 2018 for VG3 English Social Studies, *Matters* provides a more intertwined portrayal of politics and history. The part of the book that focuses on the USA starts off with the past and present of the country starting with the Cold War and the US as a superpower and the nation's history and politics up to now. It then explores the US as a unique nation and what makes the US so unique. Before topics such as immigration, race and multiculturalism are presented. This is explained from a historical approach and a present one. Later it focuses on some current issues which can be related to the first part. The next big section explores the US politics which will be more detailed below. The last factual section of the book focuses on the economics and the economic issues. The authors state, in the start of the book, that this book is more in line with how the subject is being taught and how the exams are.

A large section of the chapter on the US concerns itself with American politics. This section is again divided into five parts: How the USA is governed, Separation of Power, Political Participation, Presidential elections and Recent trends. The first part explains the ideas the nation is built on and how the government in the US is built. It then explains federalism and what that entails for the nation, thereafter it looks into the different federal powers, state powers and local powers before some ongoing governmental struggles are presented. Second, the separation of powers is explained with the different branches,

legislative, executive and judicial, before checks and balances works. The third section looks into what it means to vote, what one can vote on or for. It then explores the parties, focusing on the Republican and Democratic party before a short paragraph on third parties is provided. It does so with explaining why and how the different parties came to and how they evolved to be what is today. Part four investigates the process of the presidential elections, here recent history is used to exemplify different issues. The last section looks into recent trends in American politics starting with Obama's administration up to Trump. Again, history is used to exemplify or see parallels.

The only history used is the history needed to explain and connect the matters presented to get a full understanding of it. Therefore, history is more merged with the politics and current issues throughout the book. History is used to explain the political relationship between the US and Europe, as well as to explain how the American politics and society came to be how it is today. A comparison of Trump with earlier presidents, such as George W. Bush, is used to show similarities and dissimilarities and to further show what weighs in in an election. Some parts are explained explicitly such as the different branches of government, but when checks and balances and how the branches can override each other historical examples are given to give a better understanding of how it works in action.

4.2 Authors' interviews

Two textbook authors, some writers of *Matters* and *Access*, were interviewed to supplement the understanding of the textbooks and the structure of the books. The interviews were conducted with the research questions in mind to understand why the books are structured the way they are and how they connect history and politics, as well as how literary works are used to promote the politics. The interviews were semi-structured focusing on letting the interviewees talk. The themes for the interviews were mainly the structure of the book, literary works and tasks in the book and the aspect of merging history and politics. That being said, both of the authors have several years of teaching experience meaning that they came with own thoughts on how one might work with such a matter in a classroom. Most of the quotations were translated by the researcher and the original quotations can be found in appendix 7.

4.2.1 Structure, layout and use of history

Though the two textbooks are structured very different from each other, there seems to be similarities between the authors' answers in regard to the connection between history and politics. When asked about why the book was structured the way it was, both authors said they used history as an aid for understanding the present:

Author Access (1):

The idea was that I would begin with the historical basis because I believe that history is fundamental for understanding the events of today.

Author Matters (1):

I had taught English Social Studies for some years and made a course that was thematically divided where history was used as a context or background for the themes.

4.2.1.1 Access

That both authors see history as important in relation to politics might suggest that the presentation of history in the textbooks should be somewhat the same, which is not the truth; the books are very different. That being said, the two authors have different backgrounds, praxis and education therefore different answers surfaced when asked about why the books were structured the way they were. The author of *Access*, who is an historian, had different reasons as to why the book was structured in the matter it was:

Author Access (2):

I began the process by trying to present a perspective on the US history that wasn't just that things happen, but why they happen.

Author Access (3):

It was logical for me to begin with history and then move on to the political system and then move on to some of the basic conflicts that exist in the country and to introduce them. These issues would relate to the history given and it would become comprehensible for the student.

Author Access (4):

My approach was to give them (the students) the fundamental foundation and make them connect the dots, especially through questions and also through literature that reflected on the past and present to make it easier for them to connect the dots.

Author Access (5):

Two books before *Access* we understood that we do not have to do one country at a time, it may be more interesting to compare the two countries by placing them in sections based on themes rather than countries.

Author Access (6):

Another aspect of it is because we have a record of using and dealing with the matter in that way. The teachers who use the book and have used it are acquainted with how the material is presented. I think it is a popular way for people to work with the material.

As *Access* does not focus on other nations than the US and the UK, the author suggested that the structure could benefit other parts of the teaching as well:

Author Access (7):

We felt by doing it that way that we opened up for comparing other nations with both (the US and the UK). Some articles also deal with that in the book. The structure also makes every theme more explicit to the pupils with differences between the countries.

The author was asked how he concerned himself with the content of the book. The author suggests that there is a lot of discussion, but the authors' own interests might also play a role in the finished textbooks:

Author Access (8):

How much contemporary perspective we want to have and how much of the eternal/long term aspect or eternal political system did we want to have? We decided that we cut down on the history and the system and give a lot more place to the contemporary because things have been very dramatic in the society.

Author Access (9):

You have to make choices. Sometimes you have to cut out the things you love in order to be able to fit things in and make a comprehensible narrative, at the same time it cannot be too thin.

4.2.1.2 *Matters*

The author of *Matters* has several years of experience in teaching English Social Studies and took into account how the subject was being taught in the classroom when working on the textbook. The author states that the structured used in the classroom sparked the idea of how the textbook should be structured:

Author Matters (2):

I start current to get the students' interest before we learnt the basic to understand the issue today before we went back in time and saw the issue in a historical perspective.

Author Matters (3):

One of the most important things we teach the students is to see parallels. I changed my teaching to an approach where we looked at parallels in American history when we talked about a theme and my students got more engaged in the themes because they got the chance to come up with parallels where they felt they knew something.

Author Matters (4):

It's not just about the progression lines as the curriculum describes, but also to see some similarities and to see what can be used as arguments and as comparisons. It is really about how I, instrumentally, discovered that it was beneficial for the students and that they got more engaged as it was more than just cramming facts and events.

On the question of how the author worked with co-workers to figure out what information to put in the book the author suggests, like the author of *Access*, that one's own interest together with current issues can be found throughout the book:

Author Matters (5):

I think one has to work with the current and that that will guide us to what we put in the books, but with current issues it is not long before much of the information is irrelevant even though we try to think ahead.

Author Matters (6):

In addition, one's own interests will also come to show throughout the textbooks and the information chosen to be in the book.

Author Matters (7):

It's a bit scary with the open curriculum in Norway as many teachers follow the textbooks slavishly. If one let one's own interests dictate what we put in a textbook, we can end up with students who does not necessarily get the competence they should have. What is the point of pure history chapters if the students will not get a history question on the exam?

4.2.2 Use of literary texts to enlighten the politics

It seems as the two authors agree when it comes to the use of literary texts in a textbook. There is some underlying common understanding that the literature should be used to show different perspectives on a historical or current matter:

Author Access (10):

I do not believe one can separate the history, literature and politics; everything needs context to be understandable.

Author Matters (8):

Our thought was that all literature should shed light on or say something about a debate or issue.

4.3 Teachers' interviews

Three teachers from different upper-secondary schools in Agder and Rogaland were interviewed to get a good grasp on how politics is taught in VG1 and VG3, and how history is used within the teaching of politics to make it more comprehensible for the pupils. All the teachers have taught English for several years and are experienced teachers, two of them shared knowledge of teaching VG1 in addition to VG3. It was also one of the teachers' first year teaching English Social Studies, which might be a consideration when talking about the structure of the teaching. The interviews were semi-structured and focused on letting the teachers share their knowledge on politics teaching. The main themes of the interviews were use of textbook, their own practice, with the use of history and focus of the teaching, and disadvantages and benefits of using history in politics teaching. The new curriculum for the English subject, especially for VG3, was also paid some attention to.

4.3.1 Use of textbook

When asked to what degree the teachers use the textbook there seem to be differences in praxis. What they all agree on is that the textbook serve as one of many different sources in the subject:

Teacher 1 (1):

I stick to it (the book) and try to let the pupils get to know it and use it as it is the most important source of knowledge for the pupils. They use it as a primary source when they write a task, but they supplement with other sources of information as well.

Teacher 2 (1):

The book is one of many texts, I follow the structure of *Access* when I am teaching politics since it is so complicated.

I am never really satisfied by any textbook. There is always something that can be changed or done better, and there is also the factor of having more available material on the web. I am not that fond of textbooks, so I tend to find much of the material myself.

Teacher 3 (1):

In VG3 I use the textbook less and less. I use the textbook on the parts that are not changeable, such as the history and the political systems.

In VG1 I have used the book pretty much as it was new last year with the new curriculum and new perspectives on themes.

4.3.1.1 Thoughts on structure of the books

All three teachers have experience in using *Access* and were asked how what they thought of the structure of the book. The results show that they all find *Access* somewhat segmented:

Teacher 1 (2):

We have used *Access* earlier, and I think it is a bit segmented.

Teacher 2 (2):

If one wants the history to shed light on today's situation the structure in *Access* is not very beneficial, but if one wants pure history then the history-chapter is exciting.

Teacher 3 (2):

Access has OK chapters and a logical structure.

The history-chapter in *Access* might seem disconnected from the rest.

One of the teachers interviewed used *Matters*, while another had been on a crash-course regarding the same book. When asked about the structure of *Matters* they saw the benefits, but also some disadvantages of the book:

Teacher 1(3):

It presents current themes and puts them into a historical context, which I like very much.

Teacher 2(3):

I attended a course on *Matters*, and I think it is a smarter structure in regard to the exam questions the pupils might get.

Teacher 1(4):

There are some disadvantages with the structure as well. You don't get the chronological history; it is a bit back and forth which can be a disadvantage for some pupils who need the chronology. But *Matters* has timelines one can use.

The one teacher who used *Citizens* VG1 states that it is a good book with good themes, the politics is merged more into the different themes as there are no specific politics competence aims for VG1:

Teacher 3(3):

When it comes to *Citizens*, it has four main themes that are nice and good themes. It is also possible to mix the themes to link everything more together. But there is no division between the UK and the US, both countries are intertwined in all the different themes.

Teacher 3(4):

This book, *Citizens*, interprets this (politics) as a part of democracy and citizenship which is one of the interdisciplinary topics in the new curriculum. That is where they put weight on the politics.

4.3.2 Structure of their own teaching

A part that affects how the school year is structured is the news and the current issues in both the US and the UK. This can be found in the answers to the question if the teachers compared the politics in different nations throughout the year or if they focused on each country individually:

Teacher 3(5):

What also guides the structure of the teaching is the things that happen in the world and the two countries.

Teacher 1(5):

This year I started with the USA, because it was more natural due to the election. We just started on the UK, therefore there has been no comparison between the countries yet. As for a later time we might compare them.

Teacher 2(4):

I have taught the US now because it was more practical due to the election, I will start with the UK now but without comparing them. It has been a dramatical year in the US

so there is a lot to take from, but I have structured it by individual countries rather than comparison.

As for the two teachers who use *Access*, the structure of the book might affect how they plan their school year:

Teacher 3(6):

I have usually had a crash course in history at the start of the semester where I explicitly showed the parts I found important. The problem with doing it that way is that there are rarely any clear history tasks on the exam. Therefore, I decided to drop the crash course in an attempt to connect the history more to the specific themes. A downside with that is that one loses the consistency and chronology in the history, but it is easier to tie it together with the themes.

Teacher 2(5):

I did a period in the start of the semester with history, just like *Access*, where I showed the parts I meant would be important and relevant later.

The pupils appear to be the reason as to why the teachers did not compare the nations' politics and systems throughout the year:

Teacher 2(6):

It is probably easier for the weakest pupils to do it this way (nation by nation).

Teacher 3(7):

I have asked my pupils and they say they would like the politics isolated and individually for each country rather than comparing them.

4.3.3 Focus of politics teaching

Different answers came up when asked what the teachers chose to focus on when teaching American politics. There appears to be an agreement to focus on the ideas the US was founded on, freedom and individualism and how that comes to show through history and society, as well as division of power, checks and balances and the historical aspect to make the pupils understand why the system was chosen. Since this school year was an election year the focus was also on polarisation, news and current issues, and voters and political participants:

Teacher 1(6):

This year it was natural to focus on polarisation and the electorate and to put that into a societal context.

Teacher 2(7):

It is natural to focus on the basic idea in the US about the individuals and freedom and how that comes to show through history and the society. In addition, there has been a lot of focus on Black Lives Matter because it is something that engages the pupils, and they have some knowledge about.

One has to look at the group of pupils to see how much specific politics and systems one can focus on, if the pupils are engaged, we can pay more attention to it. I feel that there might be a bit too much of “the old days”.

Teacher 3(8):

I talk about the basic idea the politics is based upon and the mindset around division of power and individualism and the enlightenment.

I use some time on the historical aspect to make the pupils understand why the Americans chose the system they chose. If the nation had been founded in a different time the system would probably have been different.

4.3.4 Using history

There appears to be a consensus on how history is used when teaching politics:

Teacher 3(9):

I use history where it is relevant for the understanding. We look at historical happenings to understand the context of a current issue. If we are to talk about the relationship between African Americans and White policemen, we cannot talk about it in a context of 2021, the history provides a way to deeper understanding.

Teacher 1(7):

If we talk about the inauguration ceremony and the mindset the Americans have about the USA as an ideal nation, we must look back at history to explain why they think the way they do, even if the reality is not that.

I think history is a natural part of the teaching when we teach American politics, we need it to be able to explain how the system and nation is.

Teacher 2(8):

If one does not have any history, it gets very difficult to understand the politics as it is two sides of the same coin.

The teachers came with these answers when asked to find some benefits and disadvantages of using history:

Teacher 1(8):

The pupils can get a bigger picture of why things are the way they are and why people think the way they do. It is important to get a holistic understanding of how things are the way they are.

Teacher 2(9):

It can turn into too many facts, too much pure history.

Teacher 3(10):

It is easier to concretise to explain something or to exemplify. Additionally, many pupils are fond of history, so it is easier to teach and concretise. The disadvantage might be that it can be very confusing, and one wishes to pull too many threads and when you get to the point the pupils are lost or you are out of time. One can do too much of it.

4.3.5 VG1

The two teachers who teach VG1 English were asked how they dealt with American politics as there is nothing specific in the curriculum on American politics for VG1. The consensus appears to be that a basic knowledge about the politics and history is enough for the pupils to understand other matters:

Teacher 2(10):

Usually, I do not focus that much on politics in VG1, but sometimes it is beneficial to have a superficial and basic knowledge. We focus very much on politics this year though due to the election; Trump was a gold mine when it came to politics because the pupils were interested in him.

Teacher 3(11):

In VG1 we focused on citizenships and democracy the American way and glossary surrounding those themes. We also examined how different media sources covered the election. We talked about demonstrations, the attack on the Capitol and the inauguration. We saw some debates and looked into laws and voting in the US.

What has happened this year is that we might have been caught in the old way of being a teacher. Even though we work more based on themes, like the new curriculum, we have focused more on the US and American themes because it so prominent in the media.

The thing is, there is never political questions on the exam. Very little political reflection is expected.

4.3.6 Differences from VG3 to VG1

The main difference between politics teaching in VG1 versus VG3 appears to be the level and depth of the teaching:

Teacher 3(12):

The pupils seem to have more knowledge of the American rather than the British political system in VG1. We talk a bit about impeachment and checks and balances but on a much easier level than in VG3.

In VG3 the exam questions can be pure political or political with a historical point of view, but pure historical questions are rare.

In VG1 it is much more basic knowledge and to find out what the pupils know from before, therefore there might not be as much history in VG1.

Teacher 2(11):

In VG1 we, shortly and simply, went through the political system, then the pupils made posters about it before we had some debate. In VG3 we had much more debates and more in depth about the politics as they are supposed to know more. We did debates where some of the pupils were republicans and had to argue the way the republicans would have.

In VG3 we started with the US and American themes in the beginning of the semester and ended the American part in mid-December. In VG1 we used about three weeks, so it is more on the surface.

4.3.7 Teacher education

In the interviews we talked about the teachers' education and they all said the education helped them be prepared to teach a subject like English Social Studies. However, one of the teachers came with some claims about the teacher education nowadays:

Teacher 3(13):

When I get student teachers, especially when they are to teach VG3 English, they rarely know anything about British or American politics. Some of them know a bit because they are interested and invested, but they do not have any classes or education on the matter. I do not know if it is the way the course of the study is built, but they have not learnt any politics, systems or culture at university level. The problem with that is that as a newly educated teacher, without any education on the matters, you know just as much about the different themes as your pupils. It is a huge problem when teachers do not have education in political systems in the English-speaking world.

There is an enormous disagreement between the curriculum for Lower and Higher Upper Secondary Schools and what is being taught at the universities.

Many of the newly educated teachers will, eventually, not be prepared to teach VG3, they can manage VG1 and VG2 but not the last year.

4.4 New curriculum

As the new curriculum is being implemented in VG3 the following years, both authors and teachers were asked about how they thought the new subject would turn out:

Teacher 2(12):

The competence aims are so wide and vague, we are therefore in a dangerous time where the textbooks might control too much

Teacher 3(14):

It is very open so it would be very helpful if one could talk with other teachers about how to interpret it.

Author Matters(9):

It might end up with the subject being more structured by the textbooks as the competence aims are so broad. One might not get a common understanding with the new competence aims the way we have had with the US and the UK. In a way it might be a good thing, but on the other hand it might be a bit scary.

We might be headed for a new approach to teaching or focus area:

Author Matters(10):

I think we have to stop thinking as a traditional teacher, we have to start to think more project- and theme-based teaching.

A textbook according to the new competence aims cannot only focus on the UK and the US anymore, one must at least visit other continents to cover other English-speaking countries.

Teacher 3(15):

What might be tempting when new competence aims are implemented is to follow the same well-known tracks, but when we think about the enormous coverage of American politics in Norwegian media it becomes a nation we need to talk about. One might look at other nations as well, especially in regard to cultural influence by other countries in the world. It is not only the USA and the UK that influence other nations.

Author Matters(11):

The new subject might show, at least according to the competence aims, that the literature can say something about the culture and the history and that it can be used in other ways.

Teacher 3(16):

There is still a lot to go through in VG3, it might be that we are to tone down the political aspect and focus more on the literary aspect.

4.5 Summary

The results from the interviews and book analyses showed some trends among the teachers that should allow for further discussion of the research questions. The book analyses presented different ways of portraying American politics, while additional information from the authors gave further information for understanding the textbooks. The interviews with the teachers showed some similarities and diversities in how American politics can be taught and how history can help with the teaching. A more detailed and thorough discussion of the findings will be presented in the next chapter.

5 Discussion

5.1 Teaching American politics in praxis

One of the aims for this study was to find how teachers in Norwegian Upper-secondary schools taught American politics. The research questions asked, “How is American politics taught in upper-secondary schools in Norway?” and “What is focused on when teaching American politics?”. As Singh (2001) proposes, there are difficulties when teaching American politics as the American body of government is so different from our own and the American culture and mindsets must be understood to be able to fully understand the politics. For an English-teacher in Norway the competence aims should be what guides the teaching and what we as teachers focus on when teaching, but is that the case? The competence aims in Norway are quite open so can it be that textbooks guide us more than the curriculum?

According to the curriculum for English the main focus seems to be on the current aspect of the politics and the society. The pupils should, in VG1, be able to explain arguments used in debates and reflect on diversity and social relations from a historical perspective. What seems to have happened in VG1 is that the interdisciplinary theme democracy and citizenship is where the curriculum and textbook authors try to pull the politics in to the teaching. The problem then is how much politics should one talk about and what kind of politics? A general consensus between the two VG1 teachers interviewed is that a general knowledge of the American system and government will be sufficient enough for the pupils to be able to understand the current issues they meet in the news on a daily basis. The textbook authors of *Citizens* appear to have the same idea as there is little politics presented other than the current issues such as immigration and gun control. What shines through in the new curriculum for VG1 is the intercultural aspect and the more global way of thinking in contrast to the old English curriculum. We will get back to the intercultural competence later on, but the general idea in *Citizens* is that the pupils should be shown different perspectives on different matters. For instance, the textbook presents a text on guns in the US and in New Zealand to show two different aspects on the same matter.

The two teachers who teach both VG1 and VG3 both said they used the book frequently due to the new curriculum to get an idea of how the new subject should be, teacher 3 said this about the use of textbook in VG1:

“In VG1 I have used the book pretty much as it was new last year with the new curriculum and new perspectives on themes.”

The other teacher said that they are never satisfied with a textbook as there is always things that can be better. A problem with this is that if teachers use textbooks too much or too slavishly when a new curriculum is implemented, is it then the new curriculum that guides the teaching or is it the different textbooks being used? When asked about teaching VG1 both teachers said that they did not use much time on the US and the politics, for them the current issues were more prominent. This is also in line with the competence aims for VG1. Though the new curriculum for VG1 is more theme-based, one of the teachers said that the teachers' might be caught in the old way of working this year with too much focus on the USA previous semester due to the election. Teacher 3 stated that the exam for VG1 rarely requires any political questions, and history is just required to be able to answer current issues, therefore it might not be much focus on the historical aspect of the subject either.

In the curriculum for VG3 English Social Studies the competence aims state that the pupils should be able to discuss political relations and systems, discuss different point of views on societal issues and show how central historical events have affected the development of the American society, as well as debate current issues. The curriculum for VG3 (ENG4-01 LK06) also opens for comparing the politics and society in different English-speaking countries. The two textbooks for VG3 presented in this study, *Access* and *Matters*, present two very different ways of working or teaching American politics in VG3. *Access* uses an approach where history, politics and current issues are divided into different chapters, while *Matters* presents the politics in one chunk and current issues in another, but history is used to exemplify and contextualise for the pupils. *Matters* only uses the history needed to help the pupils understand the matter they are dealing with, while *Access* has a "start-to-current" history chapter.

The author of *Access* said the reason they chose to structure the book that way was because many teachers were acquainted with the structure and that they wanted the pupils to connect the parts together themselves. The book gives the pupils the foundation of information they need to connect the dots themselves. A pedagogical problem with this view is that the weakest pupils in a class might not be able to connect the dots unless they are explicitly pointed out for them. A second problem with this approach is that the paragraphs in the history-chapter are relatively short, meaning that they might not provide enough information to build up the context needed to understand the politics presented later on. All three teachers had experience in using *Access* and they all said that the book was a bit fragmented, especially with the history-chapter in the beginning. The structure is not beneficial if the history should work as a context for the current. Though the teachers did not

find the structure very beneficial, two of them recorded that they either this year or earlier years had followed the structure of the book to some degree when teaching. For example, both of them had a crash course in the history of the USA in the beginning of the year where they explicitly pointed out the elements they found important for understanding the country as a nation.

Matters, on the other hand, presents the history needed to understand the matter at hand. The author of *Matters* claimed that the course was about showing parallels and similarities or differences in history, and that was what they tried to do with the textbook. When working with a theme one can just flip a page and everything needed to understand the situation is right there, you do not have to go back and forth between chapters to understand the issue. Two of the teachers interviewed also claimed that *Matters* were a better structured book in regard to the exam. This use of history in the textbook can be seen in light of one of Kavanagh's (1991) ideas, presented in section 2.3.1, where one could use history to analyse past events or political happenings to illuminate the contemporary politics or events. Teacher 1 and the author of *Matters* saw some difficulties with the book in praxis. The history is not necessarily chronological because it is connected to the specific problems presented. This means that some pupils may find it difficult to keep track on the history or be confused due to the time jumping. The author claims that this is the reason why they included timelines in the book.

As stated above, the curriculum opens for comparison between the politics and culture of different nations. The structure of *Access* is beneficial for comparing the US and the UK by alternating the chapters between the two countries. On the other side, *Access* did not include other English-speaking countries. The author claims that this is due to the high number of countries one could choose from, also the structure in itself opens for comparison. If a teacher chooses to include Nigeria it is possible to do so if it is desired. *Matters* actually includes two different countries in the back of the book, but there is no comparison to the US at all. This is also in line with the answer the teachers gave. None of them used the comparison approach throughout the year, but late in the school year when the pupils knew enough about the two nations they opened for comparison. The three books agree on how literature can be used when teaching American politics. All three books have literature which shed light on different issues and that shows different aspects. The author of *Access* (10) claimed that one could not separate history, politics and literature as they all are connected, and it is impossible to understand one of them without the other. A historically correct text can provide a better perspective and information on a political happening than any teacher can provide.

The result from the teachers' interviews show that all of them agree upon the fact that the textbook is only one of many sources the pupils should use in the course. Teacher 2 said that "the book is one of many texts, I follow the structure of Access when I am teaching politics since it is so complicated". The results also show that to focus on one nation in one semester and the other nation in the second semester is the most common way to teach. This year all the teachers started with the US, both in VG3 and VG1, due to the American election in November. "What also guides the structure of the teaching is the things that happen in the world and the two countries." said the third teacher about the structure of the teaching. Since the curriculum has current issues and debates, in addition to how understanding these issues in a historical context, as important elements how can one as teachers and authors choose what to focus on? What is important that the pupils know in order to understand the American politics and contemporary issues?

5.1.1 Focus areas

One of the issues I had in my praxis period was to know what to focus on when teaching politics, what is important for the pupils to know? As Singh (2001) suggests, the body of information to take from is huge, and a mastery of everything is simply too much to ask from pupils in upper secondary schools. The competence aims in Norway are very open so one can almost interpret them anyway we feel, but how can every pupil get the same education and knowledge? According to Ashbee (2013) there is paid little attention to domestic US politics in higher education in Europe, the focus, according to him, is on political actors rather than political processes and institutional relationships. When the authors were asked how they concerned themselves with this hard job of selecting information they both claimed that the current, what happens here and now, is an important guide to show them what to focus on. They both also claimed that the authors' interest had a lot to say as to how the book came to be in the end. The interesting part here is if the results show that the authors and teachers are somewhat in agreement of what is important for the pupils to know.

The book analyses and the interviews with the authors show that the books are focusing mostly on the same parts, maybe except from the current issues. If we look at the politics, all three books pay attention to how the American system is built, though *Citizens* does so in a very short manner. *Citizens* very briefly explains the two-party system and the constitution. Additionally, some focus is paid to how the society comes together to vote, and about discrimination and gun control. The book is very brief in describing the system and presents some struggles for the democracy. When concerned with discrimination and gun

control the pupils are given several perspectives to the case, but the question is whether the pupils really understand why the different perspectives exist. There is not enough information about either the US mindset or history or the mindset and history of the people from the other nations presenting the other perspectives. Both *Access* and *Matters* focus on the governmental layers, separation of power and the different branches, *Access* also provides some disadvantages and advantages of separation of power. This is in contrast with Ashbee's findings from higher education as both *Access* and *Matters* focuses to some degree on how the different layers of government and institutions work together. The ideas the nation was built on appear to be a focus area, such as federalism and individualism. The different parties and their history are presented in both books as well as how the Americans can participate politically by for example vote. The findings from the interviews with the teachers seem to present some of the same focus areas as those of the textbooks. Two of the teachers said they focused on the American mindset and the basic idea the US was founded on, division of power, the importance of freedom and individualism and how that is prominent through history. Current issues were also elements the teachers paid attention to. This year some attention was paid to polarisation, electorate and the election. Due to the election in November one can argue that this is the reason as to why so much attention was paid to the parties and the candidates, but that would not explain Ashbee's findings that the focus is on political actors in higher education if we assume that there is some similarities between upper secondary and higher education.

When it comes to current issues, the two books are more divided as to what to pay attention to. This might be due to the many different issues one can pick from or due to different interests from the authors' side. Both *Access* and *Matters* concern themselves with immigration, *Matters* also focuses on gun laws, poverty and fear of socialism. Meanwhile, *Access* concerns itself with healthcare reform and the fourth estate. Furthermore, a large section of the book is focused on Black Lives Matter. The teachers, this year, said they focused more on the election and the debates surrounding the election, as one could expect in an election year. One of the teachers said that they talked a great deal about Black Lives Matter as it is something that interest the pupils. Teacher 2(7) claimed that what they focused on depended on the pupils:

One has to look at the group of pupils to see how much specific politics and systems one can focus on, if the pupils are engaged, we can pay more attention to it. I feel that there might be a bit too much of "the old days".

These findings further contradict Ashbee's assumption that there is little focus on domestic US politics, though he might be right in one part. It appears as the focus when it comes to current and domestic issues is not exactly on the policy making, but rather on getting the pupils to understand the different perspectives and to make up their own mind about it, as Børhaug (2008) also suggests. The societal side of the issues might be of more interest than the policy surrounding them.

Another interesting part the study unveiled, as touched upon earlier, is the exams. To some degree it seems like the exam is more guiding than the competence aims. The authors of *Matters* state in the beginning of the book that it is more in line with how the exams are. In the interview the author of *Matters* also asks what the point of a pure history-chapter is when the exam does not have any clear historical questions. The same goes for teacher 3(6) who said that the crash course in history was dropped this year because the teacher wanted to connect the history better to the politics and current. One of the reasons of dropping the crash course was because the pupils would never be asked a historical question on the exam. The same teacher also claims that political questions are rarely asked in VG1 which means that there is paid little attention to the political aspect in the classroom.

5.2 Using history

The last aim for this study was to find how history is being used when teaching a topic such as American politics. As stated earlier, historians used to teach the subject of politics in higher education for a long time so it would be natural to think that history should be used when teaching American politics. Both the new and the old curriculum say that the pupils should be able to compare political relations from a historical context as well as be able to explain how central historical events have affected the development of the American society. As presented earlier in section 2.3.1, history can help the pupils expand the horizon and help us build better explanations to a current political or societal issue. Tilly (2006) suggested that one cannot understand a political process just from the present, one needs the history to fully understand it. The author of *Access* agrees on this part as he finds history to be fundamental in the understanding of the current issues and contemporary politics. Findings from the interviews with the teachers also add to this belief as teacher 2 stated that one cannot teach politics without history as it is "two sides of the same coin (8)".

In both *Access* and *Matters* current issues are presented with a historical background and context. This is consistent with Kavanagh's (1991) point that one needs history as a

context for the contemporary situation. Teacher 3 stated that they used historical happenings as context for the current issues in the US. For example, when the teacher touched upon the relationship between white policemen and black Americans, they had to look to history to be able to explain the tensions between the two groups. Another point Kavanagh (1991) made was that one could use history to compare cases where political phenomenon happened to look at similarities and differences. This is where the structure of *Matters* is beneficial as the history is used throughout the book to compare presidents, periods or political happenings. This is also a thing the author claimed they did on purpose as she says the subject is about looking at historical perspectives and parallels in history. In my opinion, this is what *Access* fails to do. The current issues have a good connection to the historical background and context, but when it comes to the government, power of separation and the basic ideas the US was built on the connection to history and the historical parallels seem to be forgotten. This can also be seen in the results from the teachers' interviews where all of them claimed that the chapter on history felt a bit disconnected with the rest of the textbook. The teachers also said, when asked about benefits of using history, that it is easier to exemplify and concretise (Teacher 3(10)) when one could look to historical events when teaching politics. For example, it would be easier for the pupils to understand what impeachment is if one could exemplify it with either Trump or Clinton or when teaching separation of power one can look to history to show how a presidential veto work, just as *Matters* has done.

Though several teachers said they used history where they felt it was relevant such as to present context, the biggest part where all of them used history, and where the authors agreed, was in relation to the American mindset. Teacher 1 mentioned that history was used in class to explain the way the Americans think. As stated above in the section on focus areas, the teachers said they focused on the basic idea and the ideologies the American nation was founded on and to let the pupils understand how and why this way of government was chosen. This can be seen in connection to Kavanagh's (1991) point that we need history to understand what the politicians of a specific time meant and wanted with the decision they made. If the pupils do not have any knowledge of why the Constitution was written the way it was, it becomes difficult to understand the politics and societal issues of today. As teacher 3 said, "If the nation had been founded in a different time, the system would probably have been different". They want their pupils to understand the background for why the nation is the way it is today.

One of the teachers (teacher 1(8)) said that it gets easier for the pupils to see the bigger picture and to understand why things are the way they are in the US and why the Americans

think the way they think on certain topics. It is of course the teacher's point of view. Though this might be true, there cannot only be benefits of using history in teaching American politics. If one as a teacher is very interested in a certain topic, one can fall in the trap of focusing too much on the historical events and politics and missing out on the contemporary issues that are present in the news. Teacher 2(7 and 9) says that the teaching can turn out to be based on too much historical facts and put too much focus on the old days. Though many pupils are fond of history, according to teacher 3(10), one cannot only focus on the historical events when so much is happening every day. Another thing one must consider is that though it might be easier for the pupils to understand something when we use history to concretise and exemplify, we as teachers must know where to stop. It can be confusing for the pupils if we pull too many threads. Moreover, if one connect too many dots the pupils are lost when you first get to your point (Teacher 3(10)). There is a need for balance, if we focus too much on the history the pupils might not be able to connect the history to the contemporary situation, but on the other side if we focus too much on the contemporary the pupils will not be able to fully understand the political and societal problems they are presented in the news.

5.2.1 Intercultural competence

As stated in the theory section, both the old and new curricula emphasise intercultural competence. The English subject is supposed to help develop cultural understanding and present different perspectives which again will provide us with different mindsets. The new curriculum LK-20 states that by being presented with different mindsets one can understand different life choices. That statement appears to be what *Citizens* is based on, as it presents different perspectives from all over the English-speaking world as the new curriculum focuses on. A problem with this is that, as presented in section 2.2.1, if one is to communicate with people with a different culture or mindset from your own, knowledge of the said culture and mindset is required. If a textbook such as *Citizens* does not present enough information about the culture and the reasons to why they have the mindset they have, how are the pupils supposed to understand the different perspectives presented in the book? In *Citizens* the issue of gun regulation is presented with two different perspectives, one from the US and one from New Zealand. The pupils should get to see how people from the two nations think differently in a matter, but how are the pupils supposed to know why the people have those meanings they have in regard to gun regulation without getting enough background knowledge of the two cultures?

If we look to the didactics, Byram's model says that learning politics will help us understand different mindsets and perspectives as the laws and policies in a nation are what contributes to our mindset and culture. Teaching with the approach used by the interviewed teachers, it may help the pupils to evaluate critically upon different perspectives. If the pupils are taught why the Americans have the mindset they have, by focusing on the basic ideas the nation was founded on it might be easier for the pupils to understand why many Americans are pro guns. As stated earlier we as teachers must help the pupils understand an issue from the context it is in, not from the context the pupils are in. This is, additionally, where history comes in as Tosh (2008), presented in section 2.3.1, claims that history can help pupils make informed judgments about the current issues. By understanding why a nation is the way it is, it is easier to understand the mindset and perspectives of the people in that nation. If one understands the past, one can understand the present. If we keep to that way of thinking it does not explain why there is little focus on the historical perspective in VG1 (teacher 3(12)) or in the textbook analysed for VG1, *Citizens*. The textbook presents short historical backgrounds on the current matters but what about the political aspect? How can a pupil in VG1 understand the issue without knowing the history of the political aspect of the matter or understanding the basic ideas of individualism and federalism in the US? If the focus is on getting the pupils to understand the basic ideas of the nation in VG3, why is that part excluded in VG1? If we think of intercultural communicative competence, are the pupils in VG1 capable of really communicating with a person from the US if they only know the different opinions they might have, but without knowing the reason to why they have the opinion they have? The intercultural competence that is presented in the curriculum seems to be in line with Børhaug's findings of political education in Norway, the main idea is to make the pupils form their own opinions on a matter but without making them aware of, and making them understand, why they really have that opinion.

5.3 New curriculum with ignorant teachers?

One of the biggest changes in the new curriculum for VG2 and VG3 that will be implemented in 2021 and 2022 is that it has more global perspective in the way it is written. The focus is no longer on the US and the UK, but on the English-speaking world as a whole. One of the problems arising then is what countries should be chosen, and why? For instance, in the competence aim on English-speaking countries' influence on language, culture and politics in different countries, which, out of all the English-speaking countries, should we choose? Two

of the teachers also said that the aims are so open and wide that it is difficult to interpret. Both teacher 2(12) and the author of *Matters* claimed that the new subject could be more structured by the textbooks, which I find to be a bit scary as both the author of *Access* and the author of *Matters* claimed earlier that the authors' interests guided the content of the books. In addition to that, when writing a textbook that suits the new curriculum one cannot longer only focus on the UK and the US. There might not be a common understanding between teachers on what to teach due to the open competence aims. It might seem as LK20 is more focused on the current social and political issues. If we look to *Citizens* that is based on the new curriculum for VG1, it might look as we can end up with a more theme-based teaching (Author *Matters*(10)). A problem then, as presented in Singh (2001), can be that if we start to teach thematically, different things might surface that the pupils essentially need to know to be able to understand the theme we are teaching.

When it comes to what countries we should choose, teacher 3(15) claimed that we might end up in the same old track we are in now. Because of the enormous coverage on American politics in Norway we might not have a choice. Can we choose to teach about some other English-speaking countries instead of the US, even though the pupils hear about the US all the time? On the other hand, if we are able to hold a more global way of teaching, we might be able to change the news coverage in 10,15 or 30 years. Teacher 3(16) also said that the competence aims seem to focus more on literature, meaning that we should tone down the political aspect. Meanwhile, the author of *Matters* read the competence aims in a way that showed that we could use literature to shed light on history and culture as well, to use literature in different ways. If teachers who have worked with teaching for a long time cannot agree upon what to teach with the new curriculum, is it too ambiguous? A different problem we may encounter is the exam. Most of the teachers said they focused on specific elements or dropped other parts because questions about it were never given on the exam. If the competence aims are so broad as they seem, and teachers choose to focus on different countries, how can we then have the same exam for every class in Norway?

The new competence aims still include debates and current issues, but as one of the teachers asked, are the newly educated teachers able to teach a subject with focus on cultural and political aspects? From my own praxis, I have felt that something is missing in my education, the cultural and political aspect of the education. The same goes for teacher 3. When student teachers visit this teacher's school, they are rarely allowed to teach VG3 because they have no education in politics or culture from a higher level. Some of the teacher students are interested and therefore have some knowledge about it, but are newly educated

teachers able to teach with a curriculum that focuses on intercultural competence and a global way of thinking if they have no or very little education on the matter themselves? One of the problems we might end up with is poorly educated teachers teaching with several different newly written textbooks all over the country, which might end in pupils learning very different things with the teaching based on the same curriculum.

5.4 Limitations

This study has some limitations to it. First, as mentioned earlier, the group of interviewees was very small, therefore it might be difficult to generalise the findings. Ideally, more teachers should have been included to get a more representative result for how teachers use history. A second limitation was that the researcher failed to get in touch with the authors of *Citizens*, though this study focuses more on VG3, an interview with the authors of *Citizens* could have given answers to the structure and the content of the book. Third, there are several textbooks out there for both VG1 and VG3, an analysis of several books could have resulted in a better insight to how history and politics are presented in the textbooks. Fourth, some of the answers given are the teachers' thoughts on how it might be beneficial for the pupils, questionnaires aimed for the pupils could have helped us see how they find the use of history beneficial in politics teaching. A final limitation is the researcher's bias. The researcher has education both in English and history and is very fond of history which might have impacted the interpretation of the results. The researcher has tried to be as objective as possible when conducting the study but is impossible to be fully objective.

6 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to answer three research questions related to teaching American politics and the use of history in this teaching. The thesis started with examining the subject curriculum to see what it says about teaching American politics. Then we explored the didactics to see what the didactics say about why one should include politics and history in the English subject, before we examined the connection between history and politics and how history could be beneficial for politics teaching. Textbooks were analysed and interviews with textbook-authors and teachers were conducted with the goal of answering the three research questions.

- How is American politics taught in upper-secondary schools in Norway, with primary focus on VG3 English Social Studies?
- How can history be used in American politics teaching?
- What is focused on when teaching American politics?

6.1 Conclusion of results

The thesis examined how American politics is being taught in upper-secondary schools and what the focus of the teaching is. The findings showed that teachers see the textbook as one of several sources, but the structure of the textbooks might play a role in the way the teachers structure their school year. This can be seen with the two teachers who used *Access*, they both did a crash course in history just like the book. The results also showed that there is a consensus on teaching one nation at a time without much comparison on politics or culture. Both textbooks and teachers base the teaching on the contemporary issues. The teachers claimed that what happens in the news are what guides them when it comes to subject content. Another factor that comes to play is the exam, several of the teachers said the exam was fundamental when it comes to the areas they choose to focus on. Despite that, the focus in VG3 appears to be on getting the pupils to understand the American values and ideas by teaching about the Constitution and the time the nation was founded. This was also connected to the contemporary issues, to understand the current issues the teachers and authors said history and historical context of the issues were important factors. Another focus area was that of understanding how the layers of government worked with the separation of power and to let the pupils understand why this way of governing was chosen. In VG1 on the other hand, little focus was paid to the history or the political aspect. Both the book and the teachers focus more on different perspectives on contemporary issues, but the pupils may lack some

education in the cultural, historical and political aspect to fully be able to understand the issues. The aspect of understanding the contemporary issues from the context it is in, which is prominent in VG3, appears to be lacking in VG1.

When it comes to history, the theory says that history is beneficial to understand the present and to be able to understand why a nation is the way it is. One cannot understand different perspectives on gun regulations without knowing the historical and cultural context of the matter. The findings from the interviews and analyses suggest that history is being used to look at parallels of a contemporary happening, as well as being able to contextualise a current political issue. The findings also suggest that there are several approaches of using history, some focused solely on history in the beginning of the year while others explored history throughout the year depending on the theme of the teaching. In VG1 there were little emphasis on the historical aspect of the teaching. The teachers and authors claimed that history was beneficial as it is needed to be able to understand the politics of today and the American mindset and culture. History, in addition, helped with opening horizons and letting the pupils see the whole picture and different perspectives on a matter.

As the interviews were semi-structured an issue in regard to the new curriculum and the teacher education surfaced in the interviews. The teachers and authors were not sure of how to interpret the new curriculum as it is, to some degree, ambiguous. One of the teachers claimed that it could be interpreted in a way that we could keep teaching the way we do now, but with more focus on the whole English-speaking world. A problem with that is that one might end up with a subject being controlled by the textbooks and the different textbook authors. The intercultural competence seems to be more in focus with the global way of thinking, but if we are heading in the same direction with VG3 English as we are with VG1, is it then really intercultural competence or is it just a representation of different perspectives? The pupils are supposed to be able to understand the different mindsets and to adjust their language according to the cultural context, but they might not be able to do that if they have no education in the culture, history and politics of a nation. The competence aims for 10th grade state that the pupils should explore and reflect on mindset, way of living and cultural expression forms, so the pupils should have some knowledge. The issue here is that the focus might be on the mindsets in itself, and not on why they have that mindset. Additionally, the pupils might need a refresh on the issue in VG1 to understand it properly. They need an understanding of why the people they encounter have that mindset they have, not just understanding that they have a mindset. A second problem is that of the news, as the new curriculum opens for different perspectives from all of the English-speaking world, it is then

possible for some teachers to exclude teaching about the US. How can the pupils then understand the massive coverage on US politics and current issues if the teachers get to choose to exclude teaching it? A third problem will then again, as one of the teachers claimed, be the one of teacher education. If many of the newly educated teachers have no education on a higher level in subjects about culture and politics, how can they be able to teach a subject with focus on the intercultural competence? There might be a need for obligatory culture and politics classes in higher education for teacher students.

6.2 Practical and pedagogical implications

Despite the limitations, section 5.4, the results of this study can prove valuable for the English subject and teachers. The results show that we might stumble upon some problems when the new curriculum for VG3 is implemented in regard to focus areas. There are several ways of including history when teaching American politics, as this study has shown, but with the new curriculum focusing more on the contemporary society and to provide different perspective we cannot forget that the pupils must understand why these different perspectives are present. Though the teachers might need to change the way of teaching to a more theme-based approach, the historical, political and cultural context and background provided in the teaching of the old curriculum cannot be forgotten as it is a huge part of what makes the pupils understand different mindsets and what makes them build their intercultural competence.

6.3 Suggestions for further research

This thesis examined the representation of history in textbooks and in teaching, but with focus on the teachers' perspectives. There are several articles, some presented in this study, that suggest that history can be beneficial for understanding the present. The author of *Access* claimed they presented the history in the beginning to let the pupils connect the dots themselves, further studies could be conducted on the pupils' perspectives on the use of history in politics teaching. This way we may end up with a result that shows how one can use history in the best way possible to help our pupils understand the matters better.

The results showed that there seem to be a mismatch between the teacher education and what is being taught in the schools. By examining the teacher education at different institutions, interviewing several newly educated teachers and comparing the curriculum for upper-secondary schools with that of higher education one can investigate if there really is a

mismatch or if the students, in teacher education, themselves choose other subjects in higher education or if the political, cultural and historical aspects of the education really are missing.

Furthermore, this study suggests that the way of teaching may need to change with the new curriculum to a more theme-based approach. One could investigate and compare the new and old curriculum to find what the main differences are and how these changes might end up changing the way teachers teach.

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Appendix 1. Interview guide teachers (in Norwegian)

Intervjuguide lærere

Lærebok

1. Hvilken lærebok bruker du i undervisningen?
2. I hvilken grad bruker du læreboka i undervisningen?
3. Hva syns du om oppbyggingen av boka, og hvorfor?
4. Har du vurdert en annen lærebok til dette emnet, hvilken og hvorfor?

Egen praksis

1. Er undervisningen din basert på sammenligning av politiske institusjoner i ulike land eller fokuserer du på ett og ett land om gangen? Hvorfor?
2. Hva fokuserer du på i din politikkundervisning?
3. Hvorfor og hvordan velger du ut hva du skal fokusere på?
4. Hvordan bruker du historie i din egen undervisning?
5. Hvorfor, etter din mening, bør man blande eller ikke blande historie og politikk i undervisningen?
6. Hvilken type historie fokuserer du mest på i undervisningen?
7. Tror du elevene får en bedre forståelse for politikken når de har det historiske bakteppe?
8. Er det viktig for deg å linke fortid og nåtid, i dette eksempelet historie og politikk?
9. Hva syns du om den nye læreplanen for VG3?

Fordeler og ulemper med å bruke historie

1. Er det noen fordeler for deg som lærer med å bruke historie i politikkundervisningen?
2. Er det noen fordeler for elevene dine ved at du bruker historie?
3. Ulemper ved bruk av historie?

Appendix 2. Interview guide teachers (translated to English)

Interview guide teachers

TEXTBOOKS

1. Which textbook do you use in your teaching?
2. To what degree do you use the book in the teaching?
3. What do you think about the layout and structure of the book? Why?
4. Have you considered other textbooks for this subject? Why and which?

OWN PRACTICE

1. Do you use a comparative approach, meaning that you compare politics in different countries, or do you split the teaching into different countries and focus only on that country for a specific amount of time?
2. What do you focus on in your politics teaching?
3. Why and how do you choose what to focus on?
4. How do you use history in your own teaching?
5. Why, in your opinion, should/shouldn't one merge the teaching of history and politics?
6. What kind of history do you use, and which time periods do you focus on?
7. Do you think your students get a better understanding of politics when they have the historical background?
8. Is it important for you to link past and present, in this case history and politics?
9. What do you think about the new curriculum for VG3?

BENEFITS AND DISADVANTAGES OF USING HISTORY

1. By using history when teaching politics, are there any benefits for you as a teacher?
2. Are there any benefits for your pupils when you use history in connection with politics?
3. Disadvantages with use of history?

Appendix 3. Interview guide authors (in Norwegian)

Intervjuguide forfattere

1. Hvordan velger dere ut informasjon og innholdet til boka?
2. Hva fokuserer dere på når dere velger ut informasjon?
3. Hvorfor valgte dere å strukturere boka på denne måten?
4. Hvordan jobba dere med kompetansemålene og læreplanen når dere skrev og valgte innhold til denne boka?
5. Ser du noen ulemper med strukturen på boka? Fordeler?
6. Hvordan jobba dere med tekstene i boka for å lage oppgaver og spørsmål?
7. Hva tenker du om den nye læreplanen og de nye kompetansemålene?

Appendix 4. Interview guide authors (translated to English)

Interview guide authors

1. How do you select information to use in your book/content of the book?
2. What do you focus on when choosing information?
3. Why did you choose to structure the book the way you did? Split/no split between politics and history
4. How did you work with the competence aims when writing and choosing information for this book?
5. Do you see any disadvantages surrounding the layout and structure of the book? Advantages?
6. How did you work with the texts in the book to make tasks and questions?
7. What do you think about the new English subject that replaces English Social Studies?

Appendix 5. Textbook analysis guide (in Norwegian)

Analyseguide av lærebøker

Hvordan fremstilles politikken i lærebøkene?

Er politikken og historien separert, eller bruker man historien inn i politikken?

Hvilken historie blir brukt og hvordan blir den brukt?

Er det god balanse mellom historie og politikk?

Blir litterære tekster brukt til å forklare politiske hendelser? Hvordan?

Forklarer de hvorfor de har valgt den oppbygninga av boka de har valgt?

Appendix 6. Textbook analysis guide (translated to English)

Textbook analysis guide

How is the politics presented?

Is the politics and history separated or is the two subjects merged together?

What kind of history is being used and how?

Is the balance between the history and politics good?

Are literary texts used to explain political events? How?

Do the authors explain the structure of the book?

Appendix 7. Interview extracts

Interview extracts

Author Access (1): (originally in English)

The idea was that I would begin with the historical basis because I believe that history is fundamental for understanding the events of today.

Author Matters(1):

Jeg hadde undervist samfunnsfaglig engelsk i noen år...jeg lagte på en mate et kurs som var inndelt I tematiske bolker hvor jeg bakte inn i historien som et bakgrunnsstoff.

Author Access (2):

I began the process by trying to present a perspective on the US history that wasn't just that things happen, but why they happen.

Author Access (3):

It was logical for me to begin with history and then move on to the political system and the move on to some of the basic conflicts that exists in the country and to introduce them. These issues would relate to the history given and it would become comprehensible for the student.

Author Access (4):

My approach was to give them (the students) the fundamental foundation and make them connect the dots, especially through questions and also through literature that reflected on the past and present to make it easier for them to connect the dots.

Author Access (5):

Two books before Access we understood that we do not have to do one country at a time, it may be more interesting to compare the two countries by placing them in sections based on themes rather than countries.

Author Access (6):

Another aspect of it is because we have a record of using and dealing with the matter in that way. The teachers who use the book and have used it are acquainted with how the material is presented. I think it is a popular way for people to work with the material.

Author Access (7):

We felt by doing it that way that we opened up for comparing other nations with both (the US and the UK). Some articles also deal with that in the book. The structure also makes every theme more explicit to the pupils with differences between the countries.

Author Access (8):

How much contemporary perspective we want to have and how much of the eternal/long term aspect or eternal political system did we want to have? We decided that we cut down on the history and the system and give a lot more place to the contemporary because things have been very dramatic in the society.

Author Access (9):

You have to make choices. Sometimes you have to cut out the things you love in order to be able to fit things in and make a comprehensible narrative, at the same time it cannot be too thin.

Author Matters (2):

Jeg starter current for å gripe interessen til elevene med current social issues, så lærer vi det grunnleggende for å forstå issuet i dag før vi så går tilbake i tid og fulgte issuet historisk.

Author Matters (3):

En av de viktigste tingene vi lærer elevene er å trekke paralleller. Jeg byttet til en undervisningsform hvor vi så på paralleller til amerikansk historie når vi snakket om et tema og elevene ble mer engasjert i emnene fordi de fikk sjans til å komme med paralleller der de følte de kunne noe.

Author Matters (4):

Det handler ikke bare om utviklingslinjer sånn som læreplanen ber om, men også å se litt på likheter og hva som kan brukes som argumentasjon og sammenligning. Det handler egentlig om det at jeg helt instrumental oppdaget at det var nyttig for elevene og de begynte å bli engasjert fordi det ikke handlet om å bare pugge fakta og hendelser.

Author Matters (5):

Jeg tenker at man må jobbe litt med det aktuelle som skjer og det styrer også veldig hva man legger inn i bøkene, men det går ikke lenge før mye info er irrelevant selv om vi prøvde å tenke fremover.

Author Matters (6):

I tillegg er det jo egne interesser som også gjerne blir litt tydelige gjennom lærebøkene og det som blir tatt med i en lærebok.

Author Matters (7):

Med de åpne læreplanene man har i Norge er det litt skummelt, for mange lærere følger lærebøkene slavisk og når man da lar egne interesser diktere hva man tar med i boka man ende opp med elever som ikke nødvendigvis får den kompetansen dem skal ha. Hva skal man bruke rene historiekapitler til når man ikke får det på eksamen?

Author Access (10):

I do not believe one can separate the history, literature and politics; everything needs context to be understandable.

Author Matters (8):

Vi har tenkt at all litteratur skal belyse eller si noe om et innlegg i en debatt eller et problem.

Teacher 1 (1):

Jeg holder meg til den og prøver og la elevene gjøre seg kjent med den og bruke den da dette er den viktigste kilden for kunnskap for elever. De bruker den som primærkilder når de skal skrive oppgaven, men supplerer med andre informasjonskilder også.

Teacher 2 (1):

Boka er på en måte en av mange tekster, så jeg følger strukturen i Access når man skal ha om politikk siden det er såpass komplisert. Jeg bli aldri helt fornøyd med noen lærebok. Det er liksom alltid noe som kan endres og gjøres bedre, også er det det å ha mer tilgjengelig materiale på nett også. Jeg er ikke så veldig glad i lærebok, så jeg er veldig glad i å finne stoff selv

Teacher 3 (1):

VG3 så bruker jeg mindre og mindre boka

Så jeg bruker boka på de delene som ikke er foranderlige sånn som historien og systemene.

I VG1 så har jeg brukt den ganske mye for den var helt ny i fjor med ny læreplan med ny vinkling på temaer.

Teacher 1 (2):

Vi har brukt denne Access boka før, og den syns jeg er litt oppdelt

Teacher 2 (2):

Hvis man vil at historien skal belyse dagens situasjon så er ikke inndelingen i Access veldig hensiktsmessig, men om man skal ha ren historie så er det jo et spennende kapittel som tar opp mye spennende.

Teacher 3(2):

Access har greie kapittel og logisk oppbygging

Historiekapittelet i Access kan virke litt påklistra på begynnelsen

Teacher 1(3):

Den tar opp aktuelle tema og setter det inn i en litt historisk sammenheng er det jeg liker godt.

Teacher 2(3):

Jeg var på kurs i Matters og tror det er en lurere struktur ut fra den type eksamensoppgaver elevene får.

Teacher 1(4):

Det er jo klart det er jo noen ulemper med det også at man ikke får den kronologiske historiegangen, det blir litt frem og tilbake som kan være litt ulemper for noen elever som trenger og vil ha det kronologisk. Men Matters har jo noen fine tidslinjer som man kan bruke.

Teacher 3(3):

Når det gjelder Citizens har den fine temaer, fire hovedtemaer som er veldig fine og greie temaer. Det går også an her å blande litt temaene for å linke det mer sammen. Men i Citizens så blander man både UK og US i de forskjellige temaene

Teacher 3(4):

Denne boka vår, Citizens, tolker jo dette inn som en del av medborgerskap som er ett av de overliggende tverrfaglige temaene i fagfornyelsen. Det er der de legger vekt på det politikken da.

Teacher 3(5):

Det som også styrer det, er det som skjer rundt i verden og de to landene.

Teacher 1(5):

Sånn så i år så har jeg begynt med USA, for det ble mest naturlig med tanke på valg. Vi har nettopp begynt på Storbritannia så foreløpig er det jo litt sånn land for land, men at en på et senere tid kan sammenligne landene.

Teacher 2(4):

Jeg har undervist USA nå fordi det var mer praktisk med valget, så tar jeg UK nå snart uten å sammenligne det noe særlig enda. I tillegg har det vært dramatisk år i USA så man har hatt mye å ta av, så jeg har delt det mer opp i land.

Teacher 3(6):

Vanligvis har jeg hatt crash course i historiebiten hvor jeg dro ekstra frem de hendelsene jeg tenkte var viktigst. Problemet med å gjøre det sånn er at historieoppgaver dukker veldig sjeldent opp på eksamen per se. Derfor har jeg i år bestemt meg for å ikke kjøre crash course for å knytte det mer opp mot de ulike temaene. Man mister jo da litt av sammenhengen og utviklingen i historien, men det er lettere å knytte det opp mot hvert tema.

Teacher 2(5):

Jeg kjørte en bolk på begynnelsen av året med ren historie, som i Access, hvor jeg påpekte de delene jeg mente var viktigst og som ble relevant.

Teacher 2(6):

I tillegg blir det nok lettere for de svakeste elevene å gjøre det sånn

Teacher 3(7):

Jeg har spurt elevene mine også og de sier at de helst vil ha politikken hver for seg i stedet for å se på de to landene parallelt og sette det opp mot hverandre.

Teacher 1(6):

I år var det jo naturlig å fokusere litt på spesielt det med polarisering og velgermasse og sette det inn i en sosial sammenheng.

Teacher 2(7):

naturlig å fokusere på grunntanken i USA om individet og frihet og hvordan det går som et tema gjennom historien og samfunnet. I tillegg har det blitt mye Black Lives Matter fordi det er det elevene er engasjert i og har noe bakgrunnskunnskap om. Man må se elevmassen an for å se hvor mye man kan ta med av spesifikk politikk og oppbyggingen av systemet, er elevene engasjerte i stoffet så kan man jo gjerne bruke lenger tid på det. Jeg føler også at det kanskje kan bli litt for mye gamledager.

Teacher 3(8):

I USA så snakker jeg gjerne om hva politikken er basert på og tankegangen rundt det med maktfordelingen og individualismen og opplysningstiden. Jeg bruker litt tid på det historiske for at elevene skal forstå hvorfor amerikanerne har valgt dette systemet og bygd det opp slik. Hadde landet vært skipa i en annen tid hadde det kanskje vært et helt annet system.

Teacher 3(9):

Jeg tar historien med der det blir relevant for forståelsen. Vi ser også på de historiske hendelsene som knyttes opp for å forstå situasjonen i dag. Skal man snakke om forholdet mellom African Americans og White policemen kan man ikke snakke om det i en kontekst av 2021. Historien gir en måte å forstå mer av et tema.

Teacher 1(7):

Hvis en snakker om for eksempel denne inauguration-seremonien og den tankegangen som amerikanerne har om USA som et ideal-land, det hører man jo i alle disse talene, da må man se litt tilbake i historien for å forklare hvorfor de tenker sånn selv om virkeligheten er et godt stykke unna.

Jeg tror bare det er en naturlig del når man underviser politikk i USA, det må liksom til for å forklare hele opplegget om hvordan systemet er.

Teacher 2(8):

Jeg tenker hvis man ikke har noe historie så blir det veldig vanskelig å forstå politikken fordi det er jo to sider av samme sak.

Teacher 1(8):

Elevene kan få et større bilde på hvorfor ting er som de er. Og hvorfor folk tenker sånn som de tenker. Det er veldig viktig for i det hele å få en helhetsforståelse på hvordan ting er som de er.

Teacher 2(9):

Det kan bli veldig mye fakta, litt for mye rent historisk

Teacher 3(10):

Det er enklere å konkretisere for å forklare noe og eksemplifisere. I tillegg syns mange elver at historie er gøy så det blir lettere og mer konkretiserende.

Ulempen er kanskje at det kan bli forvirrende og man ønsker gjerne å dra inn for mange ting så når man har kommet til poenget så har elevene falt av eller at tida har gått fra deg. En fare er jo at man kan gjøre for mye av det.

Teacher 2(10):

Jeg har i veldig liten grad hatt fokus på politikk i VG1, men av og til er det å kunne ha en overfladisk kunnskap greit. Vi hadde veldig mye politikk i VG1 nå på grunn av valget, Trump var jo en gullgrube når det kom til politikk for elevene var interessert i han.

Teacher 3(11):

I VG1 så har vi fokusert en del på citizenship og om demokrati på amerikansk vis med litt begrepsforklaringer, og valget for å se på hvordan ulike kilder dekket valget.

Så snakka vi om demonstrasjoner og angrepet på kongressen og inauguration. Vi så på det med å stemme i USA og lovene. Vi så også på debatter.

Det som har skjedd i år er at man gjerne har blitt litt fanga på den gamle måten å være lærer på så selv om man jobber mer temabasert så har vi vært mer i USA og amerikanske temaer fordi det er så fremtredende i mediebilde og mye skjer der.

Det som er, er at det dukker aldri opp politiske oppgaver på eksamen. Det er veldig lite politisk refleksjon som blir forventet.

Teacher 3(12):

Når det gjelder politikk i VG1 så kan de mer om det amerikanske enn det britiske systemet. Vi har også snakka litt enkelt om impeachment og checks and balances på et mye enklere nivå enn VG3

Men i VG3 kan oppgavene være helt konkrete om politikk eller historisk vinkla, men rent historiske oppgaver er sjeldne.

På VG1 så er det mye mer på overflaten og ser på hva de kan fra før, så det er kanskje ikke like mye historie der.

Teacher 2(11):

I VG1 gikk vi gjennom det politiske systemet veldig kort og enkelt også laget de plakater om det og hadde litt debatt. I VG3 var det mye mer debatter og mer i dybden av politikken da de skal kunne mer, vi kjørte debatter der de noen var sentrumsrepublikanere og måtte argumentere slik de ville ha argumentert.

I VG3 holdt vi vel på til midten av desember med USA og temaer knytte til USA. I VG1 var det snakk om tre uker, så er mye mindre i dybden.

Teacher 3(13):

Når jeg får studenter på besøk, og spesielt når dem skal være med å undervise VG3 engelsk så kan dem ingenting om britisk og amerikansk politikk.

Noen kan det fordi de er interesserte og har følget med, men de har ikke hatt noe undervisning om det. Jeg vet ikke om det er måten studiet er bygd opp på, men dem har ikke lært noe om politikk eller kultur eller system på universitetsnivå. Problemet blir da at man som utdanna lærere ikke har hatt noe om det på universitetet så man kan omtrent like mye om de forskjellige temaene som elevene sine og det er et kjempeproblem når man ikke har noe om politiske systemer i den globale engelskspråklige verden.

Det er en enorm uoverensstemmelse med det som står i læreplanene og det som blir undervist om på universitetene.

Mange av de nyutdanna er jo da gjerne ikke forberedt til å undervise på VG3, de kan klare seg greit på VG1 og VG2 men ikke på siste året.

Teacher 2(12):

Kompetansemålene er så diffuse og vide og da er man inne i en farlig tid for da kan lærebøkene få styre veldig mye.

Teacher 3(14):

Det er jo veldig åpent så det er jo veldig til hjelp om man kan snakke med andre lærer om hvordan man skal tolke det.

Author Matters(9):

Det kan jo kanskje ende med at faget blir mer lærebokstyrt da det blir så vidt. Man får gjerne ikke en sånn felles forståelse med de nye læreplanmålene sånn som vi har hatt med US og UK. På en måte er det kanskje en god ting, mens på en andre måte kan det være litt skummelt.

Author Matters(10):

Jeg tror man må slutte å tenke som en tradisjonell lærer, man må begynne å tenke litt mer prosjektbasert eller temabasert.

En lærebok ifølge disse nye målene kan ikke bare fokusere på UK og US lenger, man må i alle fall spre seg over kontinentene for å dekke andre engelskspråklige land.

Teacher 3(15):

Det som er litt fristende når man får nye læreplanmål er at man går i de samme sporene, men når man tenker på den enorme dekningen av amerikansk politikk i norske media så er det jo det landet vi må snakke om.

Men man kan jo kanskje trekke inn andre land, spesielt med kulturell innflytelse av andre land i verden, det er jo ikke bare USA og Storbritannia som har innflytelse utenfor landegrensene.

Author Matters(11):

Det nye faget belyser gjerne, i hvert fall kompetansemåtene, at litteraturen også sier noe om kulturen og historien og kan brukes på andre måter.

Teacher 3(16):

Det blir fortsatt veldig mye man må gjøre i VG3, det kan godt være at man skal tone ned det politiske og mer over på det litterære.

Appendix 8. Information letter and consent form

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

The Use of History in American Politics Teaching

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å finne ut i hvilken grad historie blir brukt i undervisningen av britisk og amerikansk politikk. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Formålet med prosjektet er å finne ut hvordan lærere legger opp undervisningen av amerikansk politikk i engelskundervisning og om historie blir brukt aktivt i undervisningen av amerikansk politikk med hovedfokus på VG3 Samfunnsfaglig engelsk med sammenligning til VG1 engelsk. Dette vil bli undersøkt gjennom analyse av de to mest brukt lærebøkene i Samfunnsfaglig engelsk, *Matters* og *Access*, og læreboka *Citizens* for VG1 studieforberevende engelsk. I tillegg til intervju med lærere som underviser engelsk. Spørsmål som vil komme opp gjennom oppgaven kan vil være: Hva fokuserer lærerne på i amerikansk politikk? Hvordan og hvorfor velger lærerne ut hva de skal fokusere på? Hvordan knytter man historien med dagsaktuell politikk? I hvilken grad blir historien brukt i klasserommene under politikkundervisning? Hvordan forholder lærebøkene seg til historien når temaet er politikk? Hvilke fordeler og ulemper er det ved å isolere disse to temaene? Hvilke fordeler og ulemper kan oppstå ved å knytte historien opp mot politikken? Får elevene en lettere forståelse av politikken om man bruker historien som bakteppe? Prosjektet er til en masteroppgave i engelsk.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Universitetet i Agder/ Institutt for fremmedspråk og oversetting er ansvarlig for prosjektet. Prosjektansvarlig/veileder er Alf Tomas Tønnessen, førsteamanuensis ved UiA Student som gjennomfører og skriver oppgaven er Jan Skjørvestad

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Du får spørsmål om å delta fordi du enten underviser VG3 Samfunnsfaglig engelsk eller er elev i faget. Henvendelsen er sendt til 7-8 skoler som igjen tar kontakt med sine lærere i det nevnte faget.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

For deg som deltar i prosjektet innebærer det et intervju. Intervjuet vil vare i fra ca 30-60 minutter, og intervjuet vil bli tatt opp med en diktafon tilhørende UiA. Intervjuene vil bli transkribert og anonymisert hvis intervjuet inneholder personopplysninger. Lydfilene blir destruert etter transkribering.

Intervjuene vil inneholde spørsmål om deres undervisning og planlegging av amerikansk politikkundervisning og bruk av historie i undervisningen, hvilke lærebøker som blir brukt, og deres syn på historiebruk med fordeler og ulemper.

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Det er kun studenten som skriver oppgaven som har tilgang til lydfilene. Det er også samme person som transkriberer intervjuene. Prosjektansvarlig/veileder vil også ha tilgang til transkripsjonen. Intervjuene vil bli nummerert, og kun merka med «elev» eller «lærer».

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?

Opplysningene anonymiseres når prosjektet avsluttes/oppgaven er godkjent, noe som etter planen er juni 2021. Lydopptakene vil allerede bli sletta kort tid etter intervjuene.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg, og
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Universitetet i Agder, Institutt for fremmedspråk og oversetting har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

- Universitetet i Agder, Institutt for fremmedspråk og oversetting ved:
Alf Tomas Tønnessen (alf.t.tonnessen@uia.no, tlf.: 91876566)
Jan Fenne Skjørvestad (jansk16@student.uia.no, tlf.: 95229382)

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til NSD sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:

- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller på telefon: 55 58 21 17.

Med vennlig hilsen

Prosjektansvarlig

Alf Tomas Tønnessen

Student Jan Fenne Skjørvestad

(Forsker/veileder)

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet *The Use of History in Politics Teaching*, og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- å delta i intervju

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Appendix 9. NSD approval letter

NSD sin vurdering

Prosjektittel

The Use of History when Teaching Politics

Referansenummer

657775

Registrert

29.09.2020 av Jan Skjørvestad - jansk16@student.uia.no

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Universitetet i Agder / Fakultet for humaniora og pedagogikk / Institutt for fremmedspråk og oversetting

Prosjektansvarlig (vitenskapelig ansatt/veileder eller stipendiat)

Alf Tomas Tønnesen, alf.t.tonnessen@uia.no, tlf: 91876566

Type prosjekt

Studentprosjekt, masterstudium

Kontaktinformasjon, student

Jan Skjørvestad, jan_skj@hotmail.com, tlf: 95229382

Prosjektperiode

01.09.2020 - 11.06.2021

Status

20.01.2021 - Vurdert

Vurdering (2)

20.01.2021 - Vurdert

Behandlingen av personopplysninger er vurdert av NSD. Vurderingen er: NSD har vurdert endringen registrert 19.01.2021.

Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet vil være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet med vedlegg den 20.01.2021. Behandlingen kan fortsette.

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

NSD vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Lykke til med prosjektet!

Kontaktperson hos NSD: Henrik Netland Svensen Tlf. Personverntjenester: 55 58 21 17 (tast 1)

05.10.2020 - Vurdert

Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet vil være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet med vedlegg den 05.10.2020, samt i meldingsdialogen mellom innmelder og NSD. Behandlingen kan starte.

DEL PROSJEKTET MED PROSJEKTANSVARLIG

Det er obligatorisk for studenter å dele meldeskjemaet med prosjektansvarlig (veileder). Det gjøres ved å trykke på "Del prosjekt" i meldeskjemaet.

MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER

Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være

nødvendig å melde dette til NSD ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Før du melder inn en endring, oppfordrer vi deg til å lese om hvilke type endringer det er nødvendig å melde:

https://nsd.no/personvernombud/meld_prosjekt/meld_endringer.html Du må vente på svar fra NSD før endringen gjennomføres.

TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET

Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger frem til 11.06.2021.

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG

Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake. Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a.

PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER

NSD vurderer at den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger vil følge prinsippene i personvernforordningen om:

- lovlighet, rettferdighet og åpenhet (art. 5.1 a), ved at de registrerte får tilfredsstillende informasjon om og samtykker til behandlingen
- formålsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikke, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke behandles til nye, uforenlige formål
- dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet med prosjektet
- lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lengre enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet

DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER

Så lenge de registrerte kan identifiseres i datamaterialet vil de ha følgende rettigheter: åpenhet (art. 12), informasjon (art. 13), innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18), underretning (art. 19), dataportabilitet (art. 20).

FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER

NSD vurderer at informasjonen om behandlingen som de registrerte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13.

<https://meldeskjema.nsd.no/vurdering/5f50ab4b-480f-496f-9288-409f14d2ea9a> 2/3

25.1.2021 Meldeskjema for behandling av personopplysninger

Vi minner om at hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER

NSD legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1. f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).

For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må dere følge interne retningslinjer og/eller rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

NSD vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Lykke til med prosjektet!

Tlf. Personverntjenester: 55 58 21 17 (tast 1)