ELEVEN I SEN-MODERNITETEN
EN LÄROPLANSANALYS OCH DIDAKTISK MODELL

The student in late modernity:
a curriculum analysis and didactic model

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Abstract


This thesis applies Anthony Gidden’s theory of late modernity to upper secondary school education and, in particular, its impact on the notions of the self and self-identity. It provides an answer to the didactic question “to whom?” The intent is to understand the students at an existential level, and to understand how they are affected by the contemporary world. Giddens’ 1991 book, *Modernity and Self Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, is used as the theoretical framework. This thesis has two parts. In the first, I carry out a curriculum study of Swedish upper secondary school from 1970 to 2022 and interpret the curricula through the theoretical framework of late modernity. This shows how the conditions of ‘high modernity’ are reflected in the curriculum, which justifies considering how these conditions impact on the self-identity of our students and what this means for teaching. In the second part, I develop a didactic model that can assist in our teaching as it provides clarity on the student in late modernity.

_Nyckelord: Sen-modernitet; Giddens; Läroplansanalys; Didaktisk Modell; Globalisering_
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1. Introduction

This thesis is about the didactical question “to whom?” Who are the individuals that I am teaching to? I graduated from school over 25 years ago and cannot rely on my own experiences. I explore this question using, as a conceptual framework, the notion of late modernity as developed by Anthony Giddens in his 1991 book, “Modernity and Self-Identity”.¹ The purpose is to develop an understanding of how the sociology of late modernity impacts on the student and then to interpret the results in terms of their relevance to education, and finally to present these findings in terms of a didactic model that will assist me as a teacher. The idea is that the more clarity I get on the nature of the student the better I can adapt my didactic methods and practice to support their academic and personal development.

Although it is written in English, this thesis consists of research into the Swedish upper secondary school using Swedish documents. The empirical research involves a historical analysis of the evolution of the upper secondary school curriculum, in particular the first two chapters, called ‘inledande delar’, which describes the school’s purpose and values. I investigate how the curricula reflect society in the late modern world and how teachers are to prepare the student to operate in such a world. I then focus on the student, the reason for our institution. While attention is paid to the subject of social sciences (samhällskunskap), the theoretical framework, the findings and the conclusions should be relevant to all secondary school teachers. While the question of learning is not absent, focus is placed on the student’s self-identity. This is of direct relevance: how academically successful the student is at school in no small part is influenced by how he or she self-identifies. Self-identity is particularly relevant when teaching ‘samhällskunskap’, because of the societal impact on the self.

Professionally, this research will help prepare teachers by illuminating some parts of schooling that have more relevance than one might assume, such as the importance of day-to-day life, the issues of trust and of shame, the impact of transnational flows, as well as a new perspective on the student’s lifestyle choices. These factors are developed in the conclusions and informs the didactic model presented in the final discussions section. The model draws inspiration from Sjöström (2020), who notes: “When teachers make their

didactic choices, they are limited and influenced by local and national educational goals, but also more comprehensive cultural, socio-political and global processes.”

Aim

The aim is to develop an understanding on how the conditions of late modernity, understood sociologically, impact upon the student at upper secondary school. I first develop a theoretical framework based on Giddens’ 1991 book, where he argues that the conditions operating at the social level directly impact on the individual’s sense of self, because identity in late modernity is generated through the same reflexive mechanism. I then investigate how the upper secondary school curricula reflect the mechanisms that characterize social life in late modernity. This is done through a qualitative content analysis, using a historical methodology that takes into account the historical and intellectual trends at the time.

If the research can show that the conditions of late modernity, as defined by Giddens, are present and reflected in the curriculum, then it is relevant to consider how these mechanisms impact on the self-identity of the student, and what this means for teaching. This is the subject of my conclusions.

In summary, there are two aims. 1) Interpret the curriculum through the theoretical framework of late modernity provided by Giddens, and 2) to design a didactic model of utility to the teaching of social sciences in Swedish upper secondary school education.

Research questions

1. *How does late modernity impact on the student?* This is defined in the theoretical framework.
2. *How is late modernity reflected in the curricula?* This is presented in the results section.
3. *How do the conditions of late modernity impact on schooling?* This question informs the concluding sections.

Key concept

*Modernity.* Late modernity implies that the project of modernity is not over. The term refers to the amplification and globalisation of the conditions of modernity. The opposite of late modernity is not modernity but the traditional, pre-modern social order. Giddens

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2 Sjöström, Jesper (2020) ’Didaktik’ i Mona Holmqvist (red.) *Teorier för undervisning och lärande.* Malmö: Gleerups. p. 59
identified the features of modernity that cause social change, and his conceptual vocabulary is used in this thesis. Late modernity is a generic term to describe our contemporary world, while the term ‘high modernity’ is used by Giddens’ to describe the amplification of the conditions of modernity that have reached a crescendo.

*Reflexivity* involves constant reflection on the reasons for our choice. Such reflections were largely unnecessary in the pre-modern social world, where people’s life was largely fixed and regulated by customs, but become integral to modernity. Reflexive practice results in increased self-awareness. Reflexivity is not only among individuals but occurs also at the institutional level.

*Internally referential* means that a system is coherent within its own internal logic. For example using maths to explain math is an internally referential system. This is a key feature to understand expert systems. Institutions and expert systems are internally referential, they do not require external validation to exist. Such systems are themselves reflexive.

These are recurring concepts used in the text. Giddens argument is that reflexivity and internal referentiality impact at the broad level of institutions and expert systems -but even at the level of the individual. In late modernity the social order established by traditions has dissipated and there is no choice but to choose. The choices individuals make is internally referential, they make sense in terms of autobiography. The multitude of options available to an individual are themselves internally referential systems.

Another key concept is *ontological security*. This refers to the state of being a capable actor in a predictable environment. It is the opposite of existential anxiety. Ontological security is central to Giddens concept of the self. This emerges during infancy and is grounded in trust, including trust in the reality of the external world. This is described in the theoretical framework and informs the concluding sections.
2. Previous research on late modernity

The phrase ‘late modernity’ often appears in Swedish academic literature in the phrase ‘sen-eller postmodern samhälle’ to describe our contemporary era. This section aims to distinguish theories of late modernity from postmodernity and to identify previous influence of Giddens theory of high modernity on education.

Late modernity is a capacious term and sometimes largely synonymous with globalisation, another analytical term that emerged in the post-cold war world. The concept of ‘late modernity’ emerged in the early 1990s, as a response to rapid geopolitical and technological change leading to the increased global interconnectedness. This led to reflections on “education for late modernity”, where national investment in the education and training of young people is seen as key to developing the human and social capital necessary to compete in global markets. In education, a shift was also observed from state- to market-centred models of education. Concordantly, the concept late modernity is also used to denote the neoliberal economic world order, demonstrated by the rapid and intensive incorporation of formerly communist countries into the Western economic system. In education the changes associated with globalisation was felt first in the context of distance education, in terms of time space compression and digitalisation, and in adult education, in terms of the need for lifelong learning to adapt to international competitiveness in a knowledge economy.

Robert Cowen, writing about comparative education in the 1990s, uses the term late modernity to reflect on the geopolitical consequences of the time, contributing the concept of ‘transitology.’ He developed a model to visualize the difference between modern and late modern education in a two-axis model intersecting in the middle. This model was recently used, in 2022, as a theoretical framework by Karin Amos in the chapter ‘Which Vision of...’

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8 Cowen, Robert. ‘Last Past the Post: Comparative education, modernity and perhaps post-modernity’. Comparative Education Vol 32 (2) 1996 pp. 151-170
Geopolitical implications are also considered by Johanna Wyn who draws attention to the educational needs of developing countries that are now a part of global economic and social systems, and of new mass education systems that need to be able to meet students’ needs in a landscape of uncertainty. Peter Jarvis also gave geopolitical arguments for preferring late modernity over notions of post-modernity. Writing about comparative education in a global society he notes that developing countries are “in the throes of modernising”, rather than hopping over this stage into post-modernity. In a 1996 paper on comparative theorising about continuing education Jarvis uses late modernity “to relate the modernising process to the central features of the contemporary world – global markets, transnational companies and the rapid changes in information technology and international travel – all of which have aided the realignment of space and time.”

The term ‘late modernity’ in education is often associated with Peter Jarvis. It appears in the title of a 2012 compendium of his work, *Teaching, learning and education in late modernity*. Jarvis consistently used the concept of a ‘late modern age’, including in vol 3 of his series *Lifelong learning and the learning society* of 2008, which stood apart from the dominant trends in education by purposely ignoring postmodernism. A common theme in his work is the importance of lifelong education to respond to an interconnected world characterised by risk.

Jarvis views postmodernism principally through Lyotad (1986) and finds it wanting in comparison to other sociological explanation. Instead, he used Anthony Giddens extensively as his theoretical framework, in particular *The Consequences of Modernity* (1990) but also *Modernity and Self-Identity* (1991), in order to reflect on the education of adults and distance...
Jarvis applied Giddens’ theoretical framework to a 1993 paper, published in the Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, in which he aligns his famous theory of learning “and the theory of contemporary society as late modernity.”

Late modernity is characterised by the notion of reflexivity, which involves reflection on information that is considered in the light of previous experiences. Jarvis points out that all learning begins with experience and can result in three types of learning, including reflexive learning.

In his writing on life-long and distance education in late modernity, Jarvis uses Giddens’ conceptual vocabulary, defined in the theoretical framework, to consider the impact of the separation of time and space, the development of disembedded mechanisms, and the reflexive appropriation of knowledge. He concludes: “it is possible to interpret [distance education] as being symbolic of late modernity.”

He describes a number of features, “which underlie the typification of contemporary society as being one of late modernity”, which I discuss in this thesis.

This is not the first time that the book Modernity and self-identity has been used as an analytical framework to reflect on education. In 1995, Evans published “Matters of modernity, late modernity and self-identity in distance education”, where he writes about the relationships between distance education, late modernity and the self.

The unique contribution of this thesis is the focus on teenagers in traditional secondary schooling, rather than on distance or adult education.

**Reflexivity and reflective learning**

The link between the sociology of late modernity and the concept of reflective learning needs to be drawn out, as it is the main feature that intertwines late modernity with teaching and furthermore helps distinguish late- from post-modernity.

In sociology, theories of late modernity, as opposed to post-modernity, consider that the project of modernity is not over. The term is originally associated with Anthony Giddens in

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18 Jarvis, Peter (1993a) op.cit p.165

19 Jarvis lists industrial-capitalistic; space-time distanciation; disembedded mechanisms and expert systems; reflexivity and individuation. Ibid. p.168

England\textsuperscript{21} and Ulrik Beck in Germany\textsuperscript{22} who came to similar conclusions regarding the role of reflexivity in society characterised by risk and uncertainty. This was further developed in a co-authored book, along with Scott Lash, entitled \textit{Reflexive Modernization}.\textsuperscript{23} Bauman can also be cited as a late modernity theorist because although he enthused about the possibility of post-modernity he concluded that the modern period is not over, and proceeded to write a series of books on ‘liquid’ modernity.\textsuperscript{24} Jurgen Habermas is another scholar who also doubted the shift from modernity into postmodernity and his work is also found to underpin concepts of late modernity, for example Kemmis’ examination into the “conditions of learning in late modernity”\textsuperscript{25} is conceptualised in terms of Jurgen Habermas’ ‘systems and lifeworld’. There are several scholars that reflected on late modernity, and the term ‘high modernity’ is used to define Giddens’ contributions.\textsuperscript{26}

The characteristic feature of modernity, according to Beck and Giddens is reflexivity, and this extends into learning. The reflexivity of modernity, according to Giddens involves a constant examination and re-examination of social practises, which are “reformed in the light of incoming information about those very practises”\textsuperscript{27}. Jarvis considers that “the emphasis on reflective learning has mirrored the reflexivity of late modernity” (citing Jarvis 1987, 1992 and Mezirow 1990, 1991)\textsuperscript{28}. Similarly, Martin Dyke highlights the contribution of theories on late modernity on the role of reflection in learning.\textsuperscript{29} Reflective learning concerns the provision of a framework that helps make sense of experience, which enables people to learn from experience. Dyke notes the difference between the late modern view of reflective learning as developed by Jarvis and Mezirow. The latter had a more revolutionary view of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[$24$] Bauman’s liquid modernity is used as a theretical framework in Per Bjorn Foros and Arne Johan Vetlesen (2016) “Moral Education in Late Modernity”. \textit{Revue internationale de philosophie} vol.3 n° 277 pp. 305-325
\item[$27$] Giddens 1990:38
\item[$28$] Jarvis (1993a) p.173
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
education, which is not reflected in the corpus on late modernity. The post-modernist view of reflective learning promoted by Usher and Bryant\textsuperscript{30} is similarly characterised by emancipation from oppression and a view of power that is not included in theories of late modernity; Dyke finds these are “not dependent or loaded with expectations of emancipatory outcomes. Unlike Mezirow, Jarvis’ definition of reflection includes thoughtful actions that may or may not be a stepping-stone to critical reflection and action or emancipation.”\textsuperscript{31}

Nonetheless, these are not incompatible. Dyke points out that “with the work of Usher and Bryant on the one hand, and Jarvis on the other, we have a discourse in education that raises many of the issues identified by social theory as reflexive modernisation.”\textsuperscript{32}

Kemmis provides a helpful distinction between late-modern and post-modern educational principles. The late modern features the terms ‘reflexivity’ and ‘recursion’, while postmodern uses terms of ‘situationally-located narratives’ and ‘deconstruction’.\textsuperscript{33} Post-modern conceptualisations of reflective teaching education include “deconstructing reason in the shift to postmodernity” with the teacher as “deconstructor”.\textsuperscript{34} In Sweden, the postmodernist trend appears to have concentrated on the question of meeting with the ‘Other’\textsuperscript{35}, which coincided with a time of demographic change.

It is important to keep a conceptual separation between late modern and post-modern theories and not conflate the two, because they build on separate ontological premises, I refer here in particular to post-structuralism’s linguistic ontology. The relativity of knowledge is also absent from Giddens’ model of late modernity, where instead he provides an analysis on the impact of knowledge as transmitted through abstract systems on the individual. There was mention of Anthony Giddens in my teacher training, in the set text \textit{Vetenskapsteori för lärarstudenter}, where the authors attempted to appropriate Giddens as part of the postmodernist tradition, writing: “Giddens formulerar en samhällsdiagnos där han menar sig

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{31} Dyke (2006), op.cit. p.115
\item \textsuperscript{32} Ibid. p.120
\item \textsuperscript{33} Kemmis (1998) op. cit. p.286
\item \textsuperscript{34} Parker, Stuart (1997): \textit{Reflective teaching in the postmodern world: A manifesto for education in postmodernity}. Buckingham: Open University Press
\item \textsuperscript{35} This I found in the compendium on “Utbildning i det postmoderna samhället.” where most chapters used Zygmunt Bauman pre-liquid modernity as theoretical framework. Säfström, Carl Anders (red.) (2006) \textit{Den mångtydiga skolan: utbildning i det postmoderna samhället}. Studentlitteratur: Lund
\end{itemize}
kunna identifiera olika kännetecken på postmoderniteten."36 Giddens was not a postmodernist.37 The authors ascribe three features to Gidden’s work. The first two are correct: the impact of time-space compression on social relations, and late modernity as post-traditional landscape that requires reflexivity to navigate. However, the third point is not an accurate reflection of Giddens’ thought, when they write: ”Det tredje kännetecknet på postmoderniteten är att vi inte längre föreställer oss att kunskap kan vara säker och evigt giltigt. I stället har den blivit en social och kulturell konstruktion som alltid kommer att vara övergående.”38 I describe Giddens conceptualisation of late modernity, his theory of ‘high modernity’, in the next section, as described in the 1991 book *Modernity and Self Identity*. All page numbers in brackets in this thesis correspond to this remarkable book.

38 Brinkkjaer och Hoyen (2020), op.cit. pp. 47-8
3. Theoretical framework

This thesis is based on the work of Anthony Giddens and hence comes with his limitations, notably his tendency to rely on typological analysis. He develops an argument by relying on ideal-typical procedures, which invites imprecision and conceptual ambiguity. He focuses on ontology and ignores methodological questions. Nonetheless, Takayasu Nakamura, for one, has promoted using Giddens for developing mid-range theories in the sociology of education. He judges that that “within the groups of theories related to late modernity, Giddens’ seem to be the more conceptually robust” and has used the term ‘high modernity’ to distinguish Giddens’ contributions from other theorists. This is how the term is used in the abstract.

The contours of late modernity

With Modernity and Self Identity: self and society in the late modern age Anthony Giddens introduced a psychological dimension to sociology. He argues that the processes of modernity occurring at the institutional level “interlace in a direct way with individual life and therefore with the self.” (p.1) This section defines key aspects of modernity’s development, which subsequently will be sought out in the curricula.

There are two institutional axes to modernity that emerged in post-feudal Europe to become world-wide in scope, for globalisation is an outcome of modernity’s dynamism. The first Giddens calls industrialism: “the social relations implied in the widespread use of material power and machinery in production processes” The second institutional axis is capitalism, a system of commodity production involving competitive product markets and the commodification of labour power. “Each of these can be distinguished analytically from the institutions of surveillance, the basis of the massive increase in organisational power associated with the emergence of modern social life.” This includes the use of information to coordinate social activities (p.15).

Anthony Giddens wrote his books on modernity at the onset of a period of rapid geopolitical change that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 and which saw

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industrialism and capitalism create a world-wide economic system, as well as the nascence of the internet. This led Giddens to coin the term ‘a runaway world’ to describe the sense of change. Giddens defines three main elements involved in the condition of late modernity. The first is the separation of time and space. This is a central difference with pre-modern settings where, in everyday life, time and space was essentially linked through place. Digital devices have exacerbated this separation. Time and space become almost irrelevant and are recombined in ways “that coordinate social activities without necessary reference to the particularities of place” (p.17).

Disembedding, the process where social relations and activities are increasingly detached from local contexts and traditions, is characteristic of modern institutions and is the second major influence on modernity’s dynamism. The disembedding of social relations is a continuation and outcome of the process of the emptying of time and space. Disembedding mechanisms separate social interaction from the particularities of locales, “the ‘lifting out’ of social relations from local contexts and the articulation across indefinite tracks of time space” (p.18). Such disembedding occurs at a very general level through the scientific mindset of modernity that produces what Giddens calls ‘expert systems’. Expert systems “bracket time and space through deploying modes of technical knowledge which have validity independent of the practitioners and clients who make use of them. Such systems penetrate virtually all aspects of social life in conditions of modernity – in respect of the food we eat, the medicines we take, the buildings we inhabit [etc.], Expert systems are not confined to areas of technological expertise. They extend to social relations themselves and to the intimacies of the self. The doctor, counsellor and therapist are as central to the expert systems of modernity as the scientist, technician or engineer” (p.18).

Expert systems and symbolic tokens are the components of what Giddens calls generically abstract systems. Symbolic tokens are “media of exchange which have standard value, and thus are interchangeable across a plurality of contexts”. Money is the most pervasive example, but this also relates to schooling, where the grades our students receive are used within the country but also for entry into foreign institutions of higher education. Such abstract systems serve as disembedding mechanisms and depend in an essential way on trust. Everyone in late modernity encounters numerous abstract systems and gains only superficial familiarity with their complexities. “Trust brackets the limited technological knowledge which most people possess about coded information which routinely affects their lives” (p.19) and, in order to navigate daily life, trust often merges with pragmatic acceptance, as “a sort of ‘effort-bargain’ that the individual makes with the institutions of modernity” (p.23).

The outcome of the transformation of time and space, coupled with the disembedding mechanisms, is to drive social life beyond the grip of established precepts or practices. This provides the context for the thoroughgoing reflexivity which is the third major influence on the dynamism of modern institutions. Institutional reflexivity is “the routine incorporation of new knowledge or information into environments of action that are thereby reconstituted or reorganized” (p.243). Modernity’s reflexivity pertains to the susceptibility of most social activities to constant re-evaluation based on fresh information or knowledge. “Such information or knowledge is not incidental to modern institutions, but constitutive of them” (p.20). In terms of education, which is an abstract system, coordination and evaluation occurs at different levels, from classroom evaluations to oversight by government agencies and even internationally, through information gathered by PISA and OECD. Crucially, this reflexivity extends to the self: “The development of internally referential social systems is at the origin of the reflexive project of the self.” (p.145)

The reflexivity inherent in the institutions of modernity shapes new mechanisms of self-identity; in the context of a post-traditional order, “the self becomes a reflexive project” (p.32 italics in original) “What to do? How to act? Who to be?” become focal questions for everyone living under late modernity and which all of us have to answer. Reflexivity, therefore, “involves the individual in systematic reflection about the course of her or his life’s development (p.71). Such reflections occur in a context characterised by the ‘glocal’, where distant happenings influence proximate events. They impact on personal aspects of the self through mediated experiences, which are digitally transmitted, resulting in the intertwining of personal growth and societal frameworks that extend to global systems, all of which are reflexively appropriated. Individuals actively discriminate among types of available information as well as interpreting it on their own terms and based on their own biography. Therefore, social life in late modernity becomes internally referential.

Modernity and the self

This section provides an epistemological explanation to the otherwise nebulous concept of the ‘self’ that informs the research question How does late modernity impact on the student? Giddens’ model builds on his structuration theory, where he provides an answer to the question of the interaction between actors and structures by explaining how individual agency cannot be separated from social structure, as these are simultaneously produced and reproduced through social action and interaction.43 Within this theory he defined a ‘stratification’ model of action, which is the basis to his theoretical construction of the self,

with the premise “that to be a human being is to know, virtually all of the time, in terms of some description or another, both what one is doing and why one is doing it.” (p.35) This reflexive awareness is a characteristic of human action and explains the development of institutional reflexivity as an intrinsic component of modernity. Reflexive awareness extends to everyday life; people continuously monitor the circumstances of their activities as a feature of doing what they do, and are normally able, if asked, “to provide discursive interpretations of the nature of, and the reasons for, in which they engage.” (p.35)

**Ontological security**

Ontological security defines a state of mind enabling an individual to act with confidence when operating in a familiar and predicable environment. According to Giddens, it derives from a sense of continuity and order in events, including those not immediately present, that emerges as a newborn develops. Giddens relates ontological security to “the tacit character of practical consciousness – or, in phenomenological terms, to the bracketing presumed by the ‘natural attitude’ in everyday life” (p.37). Everyday life denotes a familiar and shared environment, and it is within this shared environment that an action is considered ‘appropriate’ or ‘acceptable’. The opposite situation is characterised by anxiety. Ontological security keeps existential anxiety at bay. Giddens draws on Garfinkle’s experiments to emphasise the fragility of the natural attitude and which can result in a flood of anxiety but is kept at bay by the ordinary conventions of day-to-day life (p.37).

Late modernity is not post-structuralist in nature, its ontology builds on Wittgenstein rather than Derrida. It is an embodied understanding of the Self. Giddens observes: “A fundamental aspect of the human condition is that human beings cannot care for themselves during the first years of life” (p.61). It is the very infant-mother dyad, formed during the first days of breastfeeding, from which self-identity emerges; an understanding of “me” and “not-me”. Giddens writes that this view is compatible with a view of a universally experienced world of external reality offered by Ludwig Wittgenstein. “Meaning is not built up through descriptions of external reality, nor does it consist in semiotic codes ordered independently of our encounters with reality. Rather, ‘what cannot be put into words’ – interchanges with persons and objects on the level of daily practice – forms the necessary condition of what can be said and of the meanings involved in practical consciousness” (pp.42-43). To know the meaning of words is to be able to use them as part of the routine enactment of day-to-day life. To come to know the meaning of the word ‘table’ is to know what a table is used for:

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45 Similarly, Peter Jarvis (2009) takes an embodied view of the human agent in his book *Learning to be a Person in Society* (London, Routledge,) through a recognition of genetic inheritance and that our ability to learn and adapt is a fundamental part of our evolutionary heritage.
“meanings presuppose sets of differences, but these are differences accepted as part of reality as met with in daily experience, not only differences between signifiers in the structuralist sense.” (p.43)

The ontological security felt by individuals is emotional rather than simply cognitive. The origins can again be found in infant development. Trust in the existential anchoring of reality rests on confidence in the reliability of persons, acquired in the early experiences of the infant. Giddens uses what Eric Erickson calls ‘basic trust’, that develops through the attention given by early caretakers, through which an orientation towards others, the object world, and self-identity, emerges. “An awareness of the separate identity of the parenting figures originates in the emotional emergence of absence: the ‘faith’ that the caretaker will return, even though she or he is no longer in the presence of the infant” (p.38). The emergence of consciousness is also related to the self as embodied: “A child does not learn that it ‘has’ a body, because self-consciousness emerges through bodily differentiation rather than the other way around… The child learns about its body primarily in terms of its practical engagements with the object-world and with other people” (p.56). This includes everyday communication, which involves a continuous monitoring of face and body. Caregivers also impact on the emerging notion of the self though establishing routines. Routines involve establishing the predictable environment that leads to a sense of ontological security. Trust is therefore a generalised attitude of mind, which has its roots in the connection between trust and personality development. It provides emotional support in the form of a ‘protective cocoon’ with which we are able to get on with everyday life (p.40).

The nature of the self, in this thesis, pertains to the student. Schooling is an important routine. Giddens draws on Goffman to argue that rituals of day-to-day life, such as schooling, serves as “coping mechanisms”, adding “This statement does not mean that such rituals should be interpreted in functional terms, as means of anxiety reduction… but that they’re bound up with how anxiety is socially managed. The observing of ‘civil indifference’ between strangers passing on the street, so brilliantly analysed by Goffman, serves to sustain attitudes of generalised trust on which interaction in public settings depends.” (p.46)

**Self-identity**

Self-identity is an existential question, related to ontological security, and to the ability to act with confidence in the world. The ‘identity’ of the self presumes reflexive awareness. It is not a given, it has to be routinely created and sustained in the reflexive activities of the individual. (p.52) A person with a reasonably stable sense of self identity has a feeling of biographical continuity, which they are able to communicate to other people. Self-identity is defined as “the self as reflexively understood by the persons in terms of her or his biography” (p.53). The existential question of self-identity is bound up in the ability to sustain a coherent
yet continuously revised biographical narrative. This is inherently interlaced with the abstract systems of modernity. “The reflexive project of the self,” writes Giddens, “takes place in the context of multiple choices as filtered through abstract systems” (p.5). Autobiography is therefore at the core of self-identity in modern social life. It is internally referential: the only significant connecting thread is the life trajectory as such. Personal integrity, as the achievement of an authentic self, comes from integrating life experiences within the narrative of self-development (p.80). Life experiences relate in a direct way to reflective learning; biography is central to Peter Jarvis’ ‘learning process’, which is based on responses to experience.

In this context lifestyle becomes existentially meaningful, for lifestyle is the outcome of reflexive engagement with internally referential expert systems. Life-style choices are decisions to become engaged with a more or less integrated set of practises at the expense of possible alternatives. They “give material form to a particular narrative of self-identity” (p.81). Life-style choices are conscious decisions that take place in the context of multiple choices as filtered through abstract systems, which today are digitally transmitted. Lifestyle choices in late modernity are a manifestation of the separation of time and space; they proliferate at the global level and impact at the individual level. The lifestyles chosen by students involve global influences transmitted to the very body of the student through digital means. The “electronic signal”, defined as “modernity’s own medium” (p.24), sits in every student’s pocket. Life-style decisions are organised in a coherent and self-referential way, and become grounds for identity formation, while identity is closely related to the ontological security of the student. The modern individual learns to experience security in a radically destabilised world through a self-created lifestyle. In this situation strategic life planning takes on special importance: “Life plans are the substantive content of the reflexively organised trajectory of the self” (p.85). This reflexive construction of self-identity depends as much on preparing for the future as on interpreting the past, which makes it particularly relevant to students in upper secondary education.

Shame is another component to Giddens’ analysis relevant to the student in late modernity. He argues that shame, rather than guilt, characterises late modernity. Guilt, which connotes a moral transgression, essentially depends on mechanisms “extrinsic to the internally referential systems of modernity, such as tradition”. In a world where self-identity becomes internally referential, shame rather than guilt becomes the predominant response to

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46 This phenomena of being able to engage reflexively and continuously with the process of constructing themselves is well described by McLeod and Yates investigation into students moving through secondary school. McLeod, Julie and Lyn Yates (2006) Making Modern Lives: Subjectivity, Schooling and Social Change. SUNY Press, Albany NY
transgression (pp.153-4). Shame and trust are closely bound up with one another, since an experience of shame may threaten or destroy trust (p.66).

The internally referential social systems inherent in modernity find their expression even in the most intimate of settings, resulting in what Giddens calls the pure relationship. This is internally referential; it is considered on its own merit and “depend fundamentally on satisfactions or rewards generic to that relationship itself.” The pure relationship is not anchored in external conditions of social or economic life, it is “a relationship initiated for, and kept going for as long as it delivers emotional satisfaction to be derived from close contact with others” (p.89). Trust is again a cardinal component, as it relates to the achievement of intimacy.

The reflexivity of the self, in conjunction with the influence of abstract systems, pervasively affects the body. Regularised control over the body is a fundamental means whereby a biography of self-identity is maintained, and at the same time the self, as embodied, is also on display to others. Routinized control of the body is crucial to sustaining of the individual’s ‘protective cocoon’ in situations of day-to-day interaction, and hence of vital importance for feelings of ontological security. The body becomes a core part of the reflexive project of self-identity. The body is “an action-system, a mode of praxis, and its practical immersion in the interactions of day-to-day life is an essential part of the sustaining of a coherent sense of self identity” (p. 99). Body regimes and the organisation of sensuality in late modernity are opened to continuous reflexive attention, against the backdrop of plurality of choice (p.102). Giddens examines anorexia nervosa to illustrate how the cultivation of bodily regimes is a means of reflexively influencing the project of the self. Eating disorders can be understood as casualties of the need to create and maintain a distinctive self-identity through a sustained engagement with a reflexivity of bodily development (pp.103-108). The body in late modernity is under tight control.

**Risk and control in late modernity**

Late modernity is characterised by increased and novel forms of risk, including high consequence risks associated with globalisation. These includes climate and emission, but also transnational crime, for example. Risk relates closely to the ‘protective cocoon’: within the settings of daily life, basic trust is expressed as a bracketing-out of possible events or issues, which could, in certain circumstances, be cause for alarm and even existential anxiety. The psychologically crucial part of the protective cocoon is that it deflects the hazardous consequences that thinking in terms of risk presumes, allowing people to get on with their lives. Simultaneously, living in a ‘risk society’ entails adopting a calculated approach towards the array of potential actions, both positive and negative, that constantly confront us
and which require a continuous evaluation of alternatives; the need to “anticipate future possibilities counterfactually in relation to present action.” (p.47)

Thinking in terms of risk management within institutionally reflexive social systems leaves out questions of morality, “for moral principles run counter to the concept of risk and to the mobilising of dynamics of control” (p.145). The dynamics of control established by modern institutions in relation to the social world are analysed by Giddens generically as ‘the sequestration of experience’. 47 The relatively secure environment of day-to-day life that maintains feelings of ontological security “depends on an institutional exclusion of social life from fundamental existential issues which raised central moral dilemmas for human beings” (p.156). Modernity involves the concealment from general view of crucial life experiences, particularly birth and death, which are institutionally sequestered in the hospital. Giddens cautions that self-development in late modernity “occurs under conditions of substantial moral deprivation. Sequestered from key types of experience which relate to the tasks of day-to-day life, and even longer-term life-planning, to existential issues, the reflexive project of the self is energised against the backdrop of moral impoverishment” (p.169). Hence, in late modernity, the pursuit of self-realisation occurs within a technically proficient, yet morally deficient, social context.

47 “The concealment from ordinary life from the following phenomena: madness; criminality; sickness and death; sexuality; and nature.” Giddens 1991 op.cit. p.156
4. Methods

A qualitative textual analysis was carried out on four consecutive curricula in order to carry out empirical research on how Anthony Giddens’ conceptualisation of late modernity is reflected in the Swedish upper secondary school curricula. This involves, the first ‘Läroplan för Gymnasieskolan’ (Lg 70) from 1970; the ‘1994 års Läroplan för de Frivilliga Skolformerna’ (Lpf 94); the 2011 edition of the curriculum, (Gy 11), and the 2022 version of Gy 11 that is currently in force. To understand the recent changes, I also used submissions by the state agency, Skolverket, to the parliamentary process that legislated the revisions to the text of the 2011 curriculum. I also looked at the social sciences (samhällskunskap) course plan, specifically the 2000, the 2011 and the 2022 editions.

The theoretical framework has identified the conditions of late modernity and the subsequent task was to identify if and how these appear in the curricula: how do these themes relate to the educational goals of upper secondary education? These conditions include the separation of time and space, abstract systems as disembedding mechanisms, and institutional reflexivity. The results provide a historical analysis of the Swedish upper secondary school curricula between 1970 and 2022 in order to answer the second research question: How is late modernity reflected in the curricula? The rationale is that if the conditions of late modernity can be shown to be pertinent to the curriculum, then the consequences of modernity, in terms of subjective experience, is of relevance to understanding our students.

The methodology used in the curriculum analysis is based on the historical methods of Quentin Skinner, who emphasised the importance of placing texts in their historical setting. Importantly, Skinner draws on J.L. Austin’s speech act theory. This is concordant with Giddens, who uses Ludwig Wittgenstein and his notion of ‘language games’, in his conceptual description of the subjective actor in Modernity and Self-Identity (see p.42). As a speech act, the meaning of the document “is inextricably connected to its historic context. To uncover the illocutionary meaning of a political document, the historian must therefore bring the analysis beyond the document itself and consider such things as the debate to which it contributed, the authors it was responding to, and the mores or conventions it was upholding or challenging.” This was the perspective used when examining the empirical material, the curricula.

48 Skolöverstyrelsen (1970). Läroplan för gymnasieskolan Lg 70. Svenska Utbildningsförlaget
49 These correspond to SKOLFS 1994:2, SKOLFS 2011:144, and SKOLFS 2022:13 respectively.
50 Citation from the entry ‘Quentin Skinner’ in the on-line Encyclopaedia Brittanica.
5. Results: Late modernity in the Swedish upper secondary school curricula

Lgy 70

The 1970 curriculum for the then newly established upper secondary school system can be seen as a response to the conditions of modernity, understood as institutions and modes of behaviour. Two axioms that characterise modernity according to Giddens are industrialism, including the social relations it entails, and capitalism. Public education emerged and expanded to accommodate more and more workers into the industrialising economy.

The remodelling of education to correspond with capitalism and industrialism also denotes another general feature of modernity, the rise of the organisation: “What distinguishes modern organisations is… the concentrated reflexive monitoring they both permit and entail. Who says modernity says not just organisations, but organisation – the regularised control of social relations across indefinite time space distances” (p.16). The 1970 curriculum sets goals and guidelines (fastställda mål och riktlinjer), which have featured with more or less detail in all subsequent curricula. Lgy 1970 provided detailed guidelines on how classes were to be organised through the inclusion of time plans as well as course plans. The time plans “ärger ramen för skolans verksamhet och utbildningens innehåll” while course plans “ärger i huvudmoment de områden, det stoff och de färdigheter som skall vara det väsentliga i undervisningen.”

This detailed curriculum reflects a centralised control over education, and the curriculum is a means for the reflexive monitoring of education.

The institutional reflexivity inherent in modernity involves not only external monitoring but also internal, within the organisation. This is also present in 1970, where the need for constant monitoring is placed in the context of the rapid changes caused by modernity: “I ett föränderligt samhälle måste skolarbetets innehåll och utformning fortlöpande omprövas”.

The reflexivity of modernity relates to what Giddens called internally referential systems, described as the circumstance whereby social relations become organised reflexively in terms of internal criteria, that is to say understood by its own internal logic. The internally

51 Lgy 70 ’Mål och riktlinjer’, rubrik ’Läroplanens roll’, p.16
52 Lgy 70 ’Mål och riktlinjer’, rubrik ’Inriktning mot framtiden’, p.9
referential systems of modernity can be seen the section ‘Samverkan’. Cooperation, it states “förutsätter en öppen intern information om bakgrunden till och handläggningen av uppkommande ärenden samt de konsekvenserna fattade beslut beräknas få.”

Through the 1970 curriculum one can see how the separation of time and space, while already present through the disembedding mechanisms of abstract systems, has accelerated to become the characteristic of late modernity associated with globalisation. Lgy 70 curriculum calls for close ties with the local community, ‘närsamhället’, a term which currently, besides one mention has largely disappeared from the curricula. Schooling was much more anchored to place than it is today. The governing document called on schools to cooperate “med det omgivande samhället och dess arbets-, förenings och kulturliv”54. This shows how the opposite to late modernity is not modernity but traditional life, for in pre-modern settings “time and space were connected through the situatedness of place… For the bulk of the population, and for most of the ordinary activities of day-to-day life, time and space remained essentially linked through place” (p.16). This is a principal vector of change that characterises life in late modernity: “The severance of time from space… provides the very basis for the recombination in ways that coordinate social activities without necessary reference to the particularities of place” (p.17).

Alongside recognising the social spheres of “hem-skola-samhället”, the international arena also features prominently in Lgy 1970. This is international, rather than transnational. It refers to inter-state relations rather than the impact of the global on the local. Schooling aims to develop a “känsla av internationellt medansvar”. This is coterminous with the social system of modernity, having expanded to incorporate all of world. To prepare students to operate in an international world, the curriculum considered it: “nödvändigt att utveckla, stärka och fördjupa den internationella orienteringen… “denna internationella orientering skall ges inte bara i de samhällsorienterande ämnena utan så långt möjligt i alla ämnen.”55

School be understood as the teaching of abstract systems, using Giddens’ terminology. These abstract systems operate as disembedding mechanisms and involve ‘symbolic tokens’, medium of exchange which have standard value, and ‘expert systems’, which have an internal coherency regardless of place or time. Education involves learning about abstract systems. These are self-referential; they operate through their own internal logic. There are

53 Lgy 70 ’Skolans inre arbete’, rubrik ’Samverkan’ in, p.23
54 Lgy 70 ’Skolans inre arbete’, rubrik ’Samverkan’ p.24
55 Lgy 70 ’Mål och riktlinjer’, rubrik ’Personlighetsutveckling och undervisning’ p.13
a multitude of systems, many of which can even contradict each other, but which are coherent through their own internal criteria. Hence knowledge is categorised into different ‘subjects’ at high school. In Swedish schooling, emphasis was placed on recognising the multiplicity of abstract systems and avoiding dogmatic imposition of one over the other. Lgy 70 states that “Undervisningen i gymnasieskolan skall präglas av opartiskhet, saklighet och allsidighet” and that: “som allmän regel för undervisningen bör gälla att objektivitetskravet skall sättas i centrum. Fakta och värderingar skall presenteras så allsidigt som möjligt.”

Students are expected to develop “ett självständigt och kritiskt betraktelsesätt”. A critical perspective, back then, was based on logic – to develop the student’s ability to “granska sakuppgifternas korrekthet, argumentationens uppbyggnad och slutsatsernas tillförlitlighet.”

Lpf 94

While the 1970 curriculum responds to the conditions of modernity the 1994 curriculum reflects late modernity, in particular the disembedding of time from space and the subsequent interpenetration of the global on the local. It came at a time of economic expansion, when neo-liberal economics was in a triumphant phase as new markets opened up in formerly communist Eastern Europe. This was a few years into what was considered a new historical period, the post-Cold War era. It was also when digital technologies became more prevalent and many households had their first personal computers. Such radical changes led to a sense of the need to keep abreast with rapid socioeconomic developments and greater emphasis has been placed on the need for ‘lifelong learning’. In Lpf 1994 we can read “Genom studierna skall eleverna skaffa sig en grund för livslångt lärande. Förändringar i arbetslivet, ny teknologi, internationaliseringen och miljöfrågornas komplexitet ställer nya krav på människors kunskaper och sätt att arbeta.” Here we see that the call for lifelong learning is followed by a description of rapid changes under late modernity. This is what was identified

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56 Ibid, p.12
57 Ibid.
58 Lpf 94. Gemensamma uppgifter för de frivilliga skolformera, rubrik ’Skolans huvuduppgifter’ p.5
by Peter Jarvis\textsuperscript{59} and Barry Hake\textsuperscript{60}. The phrase “en livslång lust att lära” was also included in the first paragraph of the 2011 curriculum\textsuperscript{61}.

Late modernity is also defined as a ‘risk society’\textsuperscript{62}; there are increased transnational risks as barriers between nation-states collapse, such as transnational crime, and the interdependent nature of our shared environment. The notion of sustainable development has featured since the 1994 curriculum. “Globala miljöfrågorna” is paradigmatic to the high consequence risk of late modernity. Giddens explains that living in the ‘risk society’ means “living with a calculative attitude to the open possibilities of action, positive and negative, with which, as individuals and globally, we are confronted in a continuous way” (p.28). He relates risk to “the colonisation of the future”, whereby possible futures are continuously ‘carved out’, based on risk assessments through counterfactual inference (p.111). As a result, late modernity is a time of high risk but also high opportunities, and entrepreneurship becomes a way of responding to this situation. This is reflected in the subsequent 2011 curriculum, which called on schools to develop among students “ett förhållningssätt som främjar entreprenörskap.”\textsuperscript{63}

The Lpf 1994 curriculum consists of two sections, referred to as the ‘inledande delar’ and which are still in use today. These pertain to 'Skolans värdegrund och uppgifter' and 'Mål och riktlinjer’. It has been revised but the template of the current curriculum was set in 1994. Modifications to these sections occurred mainly after the 2011 edition of the curriculum was published. The curriculum is brief and sparse on details, especially compared to its predecessor, Lg 70. The 1994 curriculum also reflects what Giddens calls ‘disembedding’ and how it relates to modern education. Textbooks, for example, are examples of the disembedding mechanism inherent in abstract systems, teaching expert knowledge through symbolic tokens regardless of when they are opened and by whom. It is the task of the upper secondary school to develop the student’s ability to engage with abstract systems though “ett alltmer vetenskapligt sätt”\textsuperscript{64}. The ability to navigate and evaluate competing and even contradictory expert systems, which become increasingly removed from the specificities of

\textsuperscript{59} Jarvis, Peter (2004) \textit{Adult education and lifelong learning: Theory and Practice} (3\textsuperscript{rd} edition) London: Routledge
\textsuperscript{61} Gr 11 (2011) 1. Skolans värdegrund och uppgifter. Rubrik ’grundläggande värden’ p.5
\textsuperscript{64} Lpf 94 2.1 Kunskaper, rubrik ’Mål att sträva mot’ p.9
time and place, become more pressing under conditions of late modernity. This is shown in the 1994 curriculum, in the section on ‘skolans huvuduppgifter’, where it says: “Eleverna skall också kunna orientera sig i en komplex verklighet med stort informationsflöde och snabb förändringstakt. Deras förmåga att finna, tillägna sig och använda ny kunskap blir därför viktig. Eleverna skall träna sig att tänka kritiskt, att granska fakta och förhållanden och att inse konsekvenserna av olika alternative.”

On-going reflexivity, which characterises late modernity, is accommodated in education through the notion of reflective learning, in which students are called to reflect upon their learning experiences. Both Jarvis and Dyke have specifically linked reflective learning to the increasing uncertainty and change in late modernity. Reflective learning is described in Lpf 94: “Eleverna ska få möjlighet att reflektera över sina erfarenheter och tillämpa sina kunskaper... Eleverna ska bli medvetna om att nya kunskaper och insikter är förutsättning för personlig utveckling.” As the theoretical framework described, this reflexive approach is not limited to education but is integral to self-identity in late modernity.

A hallmark of Lpf 1994 is its radically democratic nature, and this can also be seen in terms of institutional reflexivity. Democracy has been a guiding light of Swedish education since the 1948 school commission, in the 1970 curriculum the sense is that schools’ role is to develop youth to becoming vote-wielding citizens who can form their own thought-out opinions and students were to be given a voice in their education. This last was greatly amplified in the 1994 curriculum. The practice of democracy was to be implemented within the classroom; Lpf 1994 was remarkably short on detail regarding what is to be taught because this was to be decided upon through a dialectic process between the teacher and the students. The curriculum describes how students are to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their education, and states this is associated to school’s democratic mandate. While some conservate commentators have associated the absence of specifying the knowledge that is to be transmitted with post-modernism, specifically the relativity of

65 Lpf 94 1.2. Gemensamma uppgifter för de frivilliga skolformerna, rubrik ’Skolans huvuduppgifter’
67 Lpf 94 1.2. Gemensamma uppgifter för de frivilliga skolformerna. Rubrik ’kunskaper och lärande’
68 Lpf 94 2.3 Elevernas ansvar och inflytande pp 13-14
knowledge and distrust of grand narratives\textsuperscript{69}, I think the Marxist inspiration is more obvious. It strikes me that this is the influence of the pedagogical ideas of Paulo Freire, specifically the notion of a dialectic relationship between students and teachers, and an outcome of the ‘critical turn’ in education that emerged in the 1980s.\textsuperscript{70}

This democratic curriculum can also be understood in terms of Giddens’ emphasis on institutional reflexivity as characteristic of late modernity, defined as the regularised use of knowledge about circumstances of social life as a constitutive element in its organisation and transformation. Democracy is not only a subject to be taught but an on-going institutional practice. It reflects the internally reflexive nature of modern organisations. We can add that the nature of the democratic practices encouraged in Lpf 94 also relates to the desire to counter what Adorno et al. termed “the authoritarian personality.”\textsuperscript{71}

The local, the global and the transformation of day-to-day life.

This phrase, a subheading in Gidden’s chapter on the contours of high modernity, describes a principal feature of late modernity. The local and the global is to be understood as a dialectical relationship, with result in events in one part of the world having impact in another, often in unpredictable ways. This affects nations and organisations, but also individuals. The world in the early 1990s was sometime characterised by the term globalisation, and Giddens remarks “in a general way, the concept of globalisation is best understood as expressing fundamental aspects of time space distanciation. Globalisation concerns the intersection of presence and absence, the interlacing of social events and social relations ‘at distance’ with local contextualities” (p.21). 1994 was a time when Sweden was closely impacted by events occurring in the region, namely the expansion of the European Union and war in former Yugoslavia.

The 1994 curriculum calls for an international perspective that will “förbereda eleverna för ett samhälle med allt tätare kontakter över nations- och kulturgränser.”\textsuperscript{72} But this was no longer bilateral international relations; the supra-national level is introduced as an identity marker. This would have been influenced by the process that led to Sweden joining the EU


\textsuperscript{72} Lpf 94 1.2. Gemensamma uppgifter för de frivilliga skolformer, rubrik ’Skolans huvuduppgifter’
the following year. The international perspective involves developing a multi-layered identity, that includes a European identity, as well as knowledge on subnational identities (nationella minoriteter). In Lpf 1994, this is described as having “god insikt i centrala delar av det svenska, nordiska och västerländska kulturarvet” and ” kan bedöma skeenden ur svenskt, nordiskt, europeiskt och globalt perspektiv”. This shows how, as Giddens says, “The level of time space distanciation introduced by high modernity is so extensive that, for the first time in human history, ‘self’ and ‘society’ are interrelated in a global milieu” (p.32).

The 1994 curriculum came at a time of significant demographic change in Sweden. While immigration was a social reality when upper secondary school was founded in 1970, Sweden’s international solidarity motivated a generous asylum policy during the 1980s. War in former Yugoslavia saw a record 84,000 people seeking asylum in 1992 and by then there were considerable social frictions caused by opposition to migration. There were over 100 attempts to burn down refugee centres between 1990 and 1992. The 1994 curriculum can be seen as a response to this development; in the section ‘Förståelse och Medmänsklighet’ it stated: “Främlingsfientlighet och intolerans måste bemötas med kunskap, öppen diskussion och aktiva insatser.” International migration is a paradigmatic example of the interpenetration of the global and the local, which is an outcome of “profound processes of the reorganisation of time and space, coupled to the expansion of disembedding mechanisms – mechanisms which prise social relations free from the hold of specific locales, recombining them across wide times-space distances” (p.2).

School is given the task to help adapt to the social changes caused by cultural diversity. Since Lpf 94, the curriculum states: “Det svenska samhällets internationalisering och den växande rörligheten över nationsgränserna ställer höga krav på människors förmåga att leva med och inse de värden som ligger i en kulturell mångfald. Skolan är en social och kulturell mötesplats, som har både möjlighet och ett ansvar för att stärka denna förmåga hos alla som verkar där.” Similarly, the strategy defined in Lpf 1994 is still present today: “En trygg identitet och medvetenhet om det egna och delaktighet i det gemensamma kulturarvet stärker förmågan att förstå och leva sig in i andras villkor och värderingsgrunder”. Some changes made between 1994 and 2011 are revealing. The phrase from 1994 “förstår och respekterar

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73 Lpf 94 2.1. Kunskaper, rubrik ’mål’ pp. 9-10
74 Lpf 94 1.1. Gundläggande värden, rubrik ’Förståelse och medmänsklighet’ p.3
75 Ibid. The same text appears in the latest curriculum SKOLFS 2022:13.
76 Ibid.
andra folk och kulturer”⁷⁷ is replaced by ”kan samspela i möten med andra människor utifrån respekt för skillnader i livsvillkor, kultur, språk, religion och historia”⁷⁸. This addition of ‘samspel’ highlights the increasing ethnic diversity of Swedish schooling.

GY 11 (2011)

With the 2011 curriculum, Gy11, we find a return to specified learning outcomes. While the previous 1994 curriculum was short on detail, now there are more regulations on the content of the courses and how education is to be implemented. This recalls Giddens’ observation that surveillance is a characteristic of modern organisations. The reintroduction of surveillance, which was pronounced in the 1970 curriculum, likely re-emerged as an impact to changes in Swedish education following the decentralisation of schooling, responsibility moved from the federal to the commune level, and the entry of private actors into the field of education. Motivation for more centralised control is to ensure a ’likvärdigt’ education and ’Kunskapskraven’, were specified for each course. “Argumentet löt att en likvärdig undervisning endast kan garanteras med hjälp av klara och entydiga mål”⁷⁹

The reflexive practice of organisation in late modernity could also be seen in the 1994 curriculum, in the phrase “För att en skola skall utvecklas måste den fortlöpande ifrågasätta sina undervisningsmål och arbetsformer, utvärdera sina resultat och pröva nya metoder.”⁸⁰ Such institutional reflexivity is also apparent in the 2011 curriculum, which calls for regular evaluations of teaching by teachers and institutional evaluation by the school principals,⁸¹ considered important for schools’ development. This shows the dynamism of modernity’s institutions, which must be seen as reflexively organised expert systems. Giddens writes: “Modernity’s reflexivity refers to the susceptibility of most aspects of social activity, and material relations with nature, to chronic revision in the light of new information or knowledge. Such information or knowledge is not incidental to modern institutions, but constitutive of them” (p.20). Giddens argues that the same reflexive instinct also applies at the subjective level, and the implications of this for students is discussed in the conclusions.

⁷⁷ Lpf 94 2.2. Normer och värden, rubrik 'Mål att sträva mot’ p.12
⁷⁸ Gr 11 (2011) Normer och värden, rubrik 'Mål’ p.11
⁸⁰Lpf 94 1.2 Gemensamma Uppgifter för de Frivilliga Skolformerna. Rubrik ’Den enskilda skolans utveckling’ p.6
⁸¹ Gy 11 (2011) 1. Skolans värdegrund och uppgifter, rubrik ’Varje skolas utveckling’ p.8
It should be noted that this notion of the ‘glocal’ is accommodated for in the social science curriculum. The topic of globalisation is included in the third-year course. Globalisation, the document states, is to be considered at the individual, national and global level. The inclusion of the individual level accommodates Giddens’ argument that the mechanisms of late modernity impact on self-identity. This shows the relevance of viewing samhällskunskap, in particular, through the perspective of late modernity.

In terms of the identity of Swedish students, by 2011 multicultural Sweden was well established. Sociological issues related to identity and group belonging were included into the social sciences curriculum, including in obligatory education. The commentary material on ‘samhällskunskap’ from 2011 says: “Den nya kursplanen lyft fram sociala strukturer i samhället tydligare än den gamla, och den innehåller mer om identitetsutveckling och grupptillhörigheter i samhället.” We can also see how migration causes the international level collapses into the local level, which is what Giddens means by the dialectical relationship between the local and the global, with the addition in the 2011 curriculum of the sentence: “Det internationella perspektivet ska också bidra till att utveckla elevernas förståelse för den kulturella mångfalden inom landet.”

The mediation of experience

In its original 2011 version, the text in the ‘inledande delar’ of Gy11 was largely the same as in Lpf 94; however, there are notable additions to the text since 2017 regarding digitalisation, and which demonstrate the relevance of the concept ‘late modernity’ to understanding the upper secondary school curriculum. Giddens writes about the mediation of experience that “modernity is inseparable from its ‘own’ media: the printed text and, subsequently, the electronic signal” (p.24). Today the electronic signal is never far from our bodies; it is present in our smartphones. This phenomenon has also been considered from another theoretical perspective, that of post-modernism, but Giddens notes: “In conditions of modernity, in sum, the media do not mirror realities but in some part form them; but this does

82 The concept of globalisation appears in the social sciences curriculum as early as 2000, when it was included in the International Relations course (SKOLFS 2000:7). Globalisation is also characteristic of international economics, a course that was added to the program in Gy 2011.
84 Skolverket (2011) Kommentarmaterial till kursplanen i samhällskunskap. Skolverket, p.6
not mean that we should draw the conclusion that the media have created an autonomous realm of ‘hyperreality’ where the sign or image is everything” (p.27).

Digital technologies have been included in the curriculum since 1994, when the ability to use personal computers became an educational goal. By 2011 the term ‘modern informationsteknik’ was present but this became greatly reinforced with revisions made in 2017. In 2012, Sweden established the ‘Digitaliseringskommissionen’, which defined the term ‘digital competency’\(^86\), and digitalisation was mainstreamed into the Gy11 curriculum after revisions in July 2017.\(^87\) In the social sciences curriculum this included digitalisation’s impact on society, economy, the labour market, media, and democracy.\(^88\)

The contours of late modernity have involved the reorganisation of time and space, the expansion of disembedding mechanisms through abstract systems, and institutional reflexivity. The dialectic of the local and global has three main features: high consequence risks, the impact of distant happenings on proximate events, and mediated experience, “subsequently amplified though the electronic signal” (p.24). Giddens shows that these do not concern only the external world but even the subjective world. Remarkably, Giddens predicted this as an effect developing electronic communication, which is now understood as digitalisation, when he wrote:

> “With the development of mass communication, particularly electronic communication, the interpenetration of self-development and social systems, up to and including, global systems become ever more pronounced” (p.4 my italics).

The nature of digitalisation radically augments the disembedding mechanisms of abstract systems, that separate time from space, which result in the interpenetration of the global and the local. Individuals respond to this reflexively; information is not accepted as given, the choice of believing, or not believing, to act or not, is a conscientious decision. Self-identity, as a reflexive practice in late modernity, occurs in a dialectic relationship between the self and these global forces.

\(^86\) SOU 2015:28. Gör Sverige i framtiden – digital kompetens Statens offentliga utredningar från Klimat- och näringslivsdepartementet
The moralisation of social life

The reflexivity of self and society in late modernity soon runs against the limits that are inherent to internally referential systems, and these leave exposed questions of morality. Everyday life is characterised by choice but, “because it is non-foundational, at the same time offers little help as to which option should be selected” (p.80). Giddens observed in 1991 how “the expansion of internally referential systems reaches its outer limits” and that “on a collective level and in day-to-day life moral/existential questions thrust themselves back to centre-stage” (p.208). Two decades later, in 2011, we find moral questions in Swedish education to be tightly defined through a right-based approach.

The new curriculum in 2011 followed from an update in school law (2010: 800), which featured the inclusion of human rights alongside the fundamental democratic values that Swedish society rests on. “Utbildningen ska förmedla och förankra respekt för de mänskliga rättigheterna och de grundläggande demokratiska värderingar som det svenska samhället vilar på”89. Human rights were taught before, but would have previously been included as fundamental to democratic values – a democratic society cannot exist without the notion of human rights. They now stand independently, a judicial sphere lies outside the social realm, and prohibits disagreement. Although the 1970 curriculum states clearly that, in education, “eleven står I centrum” this was not specified in terms of specific legally binding articles. Now, with the incorporation on the UN Convention of the rights of the Child into Swedish law in 2020, it is. Students are to understand their moral worth in terms of bearers of rights. The current curriculum specifies: “Skolan ska gestalta och förmedla de värden och rättigheter som uttrycks i Förenta nationernas konvention om barnets rättigheter (barnkonventionen). Utbildningen ska utgå från vad som bedöms vara barnets bästa och eleverna ska få kännedom om sina rättigheter.”90 Additionally, the text of the 2008 law against discrimination, diskrimineringslagen (2008:567), which protects seven categories, is referred to in the 2010 school law and the 2011 curriculum.91

Re-moralisation has occurred through a rights-based approach. A human rights framework has been raised in order to answer the moral questions thrown up by late modernity. This

89 Gr 11 (2011) 1. Skolans värdegrund och uppgifter. Rubrik 'Grundläggande värden’, para.1
90 Gr 11 (2022) 1 Skolans värdegrund och uppgifter. Rubrik 'Grundläggande värden’, para.3
91 “Ingen ska i skolan utsättas för diskriminering på grund av kön, etnisk tillhörighet, religion eller annan trostruppfattning, könsöverskrivande identitet eller uttryck, sexuell läggning, för annan kränkande behandling.” i Gr 11 (2011) 1. Skolans värdegrund och uppgifter, rubrik ’Förståelse och medmänsklighet’
rights-based approach to moral questions, however, is a moral framework that is imposed from above rather than emerging up from society, “I överensstämmelse med den etik som förvaltas av kristen tradition och västerländsk humanism.”

**Gr 11 (2022)**

Questions around discrimination have been the focus of academic attention for decades, and this resulted in the 2022 revisions to the curriculum, including two new paragraphs in ‘Gymnasieskolans uppdrag’ concerning gender and sexuality. These changes result in a very different curriculum and hence this document (SKOLFS 2022:13) is considered a separate text. The theoretical framework has described how the reflexivity inherent in modern institutions is also inherent to individuals. In late modernity, the self becomes a reflexive project, and this reflexivity extends to the body. The remainder of this chapter will discuss the new additions, while its implications are considered in the conclusion.

In Gr 11(2022) the second paragraph in ‘Gymnasieskolans uppdrag’ now reflects an intersectional feminist approach to gender equality (jämlikhet). Paragraph 3 introduces a new topic, sexuality, consent and relations. Norms, and specifically the discriminatory nature of norms, is the uniting theme, and the rationale is to further the fight against gender and sexual discrimination. The 2008 anti-discrimination law introduced the idea of fluid gender identity (könsöverskridande identitet). Gender equality, has featured in Swedish upper secondary school education since its inception in 1970, which called for “jämlikhet mellan män och kvinnor — i familjen, på arbetsmarknaden och inom samhällslivet i övrigt. De bör orientera om könsrollsfrågan och stimulera eleverna att debattera och ifrågasätta rådande förhållanden.” The notion of ‘en likvärdig utbildning’ is also a cornerstone of Swedish education. Since 1994, educators have been called to encourage students to develop their interests “utan fördomar om vad som är kvinnligt och manligt.” This is now viewed in terms of norms, and schools have a responsibility to “synliggöra och motverka könsmönster som begränsar elevernas lärande, val och utveckling.” This is based on a norm-critical pedagogy; in Sweden ‘normkritik’, refers to revealing and countering the discriminatory and

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92 This oft-criticised phrase has been present since Lpf 94. It is currently in Gr 11 (2022) 1 Skolans värdegrund och uppgifter, rubrik ‘Grundläggande värden’ para.2
93 Lgy 70 Mål och riktlinjer. Rubrik ‘Elevernas sociala utveckling’ p.15
94 Lpf 94. 1 Skolans värdegrund och uppgifter. Rubrik ’En likvärdig utbildning’ p.4
95 Gr 11 (2022) 1 Skolans värdegrund och uppgifter. Rubrik ’En likvärdig utbildning’ para.3
exclusionary impact of norms. These revisions were approved in 2018, after the government in 2015 called for clarification and reinforcement of “jämställdhetsuppdrag i läroplanerna”.

The curricula reflect the changes to the notion of gender in relation to biological sex. In Lpf 1994 it says: “Skolan ska aktivt och medvetet främja kvinnors och möns lika rätt och möjligheter. Eleverna ska uppmuntras att utveckla sina intressen utan fördamor om vad som är kvinnligt och manligt.” The first categorisation, kvinnor och män, pertains to sex, while the terms kvinnligt och manligt, are social expressions corresponding to what was traditionally considered gender, ‘socialt kön’. Both components now focus on the social aspect as the first sentence reads: “Skolan ska aktivt och medvetet främja elevernas lika rättigheter och möjligheter oberoende av könstillhörighet.” The curriculum hence includes the concept of self-selected gender identity. There are, however, still two mentions of sexual dimorphism today, in the paragraph on 'jämställdhet', namely, “Skolan ska därmed gestalta och förmedla lika rättigheter, möjligheter och skyldigheter för kvinnor och män” and “kan begränsa kvinnors och möns makt att formar såväl samhället som sina egna liv.”

Gender has thus become personalised and protected through discrimination law. However, gender identity is also of minimal importance to the students’ education; education and teaching is to be organised and implemented so that students meet and work regardless of gender identity. Previously, the 1994 curriculum called on teachers to “se till att undervisningen till innehåll och uppläggningspekglar både manliga och kvinnliga perspektiv”, and this was replaced with the term “Jämställdhetsperspektiv” in 2011. Now, all education shall ensure that students meet and work together, regardless of ‘könstillhörighet’. The term ‘oberoende av könstillhörighet’ appears five times in the current curriculum.

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96 Enligt nationalencyklopedin är normkritik “metoder och teorier som används för att arbeta mot diskriminering och exkludering” (NE, 2016)
98 Lpf 94. 1 Skolans värdegrund och uppgifter. Rubrik ’En likvårdig utbildning’, p.4
100 Gr 11 (2022) 1 Skolans värdegrund och uppgifter. Rubrik ’Gymnasieskolans uppdrag’ para. 3
103 This corresponds to SKOLF 2022:13
The topic 'sexualitet, samtycke och relationer' now features in ‘Gymnasieskolans Uppdrag’. This replaces the topic ‘sex och samlevnad’ that was only mentioned under ‘Rektorns ansvar’. Sexuality is associated with’ elevernas hälsa och välbefinnande’.\textsuperscript{104} Sexuality is about identity; mental health as much as reproductive health; and considered integral to well-being. The issue of consent also reflects new legislation brought in after the ‘me too’ movement.\textsuperscript{105}

The topics of gender equality and sexuality are closely related, it was already in the 2015 Redovisningen av uppdraget om att främja jämställdhet inom skolväsendet’ that Skolverket argued that “sex och samlevnad” is far too narrow and decided to replace it with “jämställdhet, sexualitet och relationer” in order to place it in a broader context where “jämställdhet, intersektionalitet och främjande värdegrundsarbete är bärande delar.” Skolverket argued that the concept sexuality is “mer omfattande än ’sex’.\textsuperscript{106} The government subsequently requested changes to sex education in 2018.\textsuperscript{107}

Intersectionality is a cornerstone to these new additions. This perspective views interlocking categories of oppression, and categories are considered from a post-structuralist understanding, of signifier and signified, where power is always at play. Intersectionality was highlighted in the 2018 Skolverket submission to the government as the principal way to “ge eleverna möjlighet att utveckla kunskaper om könsmönster förmåga att kritiskt granska begränsande normer, värderingar och strukturer”\textsuperscript{108} and that research has shown the advantage of “att använda en intersektionell ansats för att komma åt hur olika normer och maktrelationer samverkar och påverkar varandra”.\textsuperscript{109} This finds its way into the curriculum with the inclusion of the term norms: students are to “utvecklar sin förmåga att kritiskt granska hur normer, värderingar och strukturer kan begränsa kvinnors och mäns makt att

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\textsuperscript{104} The association between sexuality and health and wellbeing is a characteristic of ‘comprehensive sexuality education’ promulgated by UN agencies. See UNESCO (2009) International technical guidance on sexuality education. An evidence-informed approach. Paris: Unesco


\textsuperscript{107} Uppdrag givet i Regleringsbrev 2018-06-28 (U2018/02877/BS (delvis), U2018/02960/S) om att förtydliga skrivningar om kunskapsområdet sex och samlevnad i läroplaner

\textsuperscript{108} Skolverket (2018) op.cit p.1

forma såväl samhället som sina egna liv”, and to “kritiskt granska normer, påståenden och förhållanden.”110 Because norms can be subsumed into investigating “påståenden och förhållanden”, its inclusion denotes a specific epistemological and ontological position. Previously, when norms were mentioned in the curriculum it related to the behaviour necessary for society to function. This positive view still exists but a negative view of norms as oppressive structures has also been added. This is closely coupled to Michel Foucault’s notion of power. Norms risk contributing to oppression and upholding power structures that can lead to exclusion, discrimination, and abusive treatment.111 It is in this context that we should understand the sentence “I utbildningen ska maktstrukturer kopplade till kön och hedersrelaterat våld och förtryck kritiskt granskas.”112

The methodology used in this research, that of historian Quentin Skinner, call on placing texts in their historical context and the debate to which they contributed or responded to. While the background influences to what can be seen as the first late-modern curriculum, Lpf 1994, is largely geo-political in nature, the background to the latest revision is to be found in academia. It is within the academic space that the notion of ‘normkritik’ and, subsequently ‘normkritisk pedagogi’, emerged. In addition to Foucault, this development built upon contribution from gender theory, queer theory, Paulo Freire’s Marxist ‘frigörelsepedagogik’, where the goal for the students to see the oppressive nature of society and are motivated to change it, and Kumashiro as ‘anti-oppressive education.113 A landmark text from 2010, entitled Normkritisk Pedagogik - Makt lärande och strategier för förändring114, was the outcome of a ‘queerpedagogiskt nätverk’ that started in 2007 and had particular animus against heteronormativity in society. ‘Normkritik’ shows how ideas that originate in universities become policies to be implemented in classrooms.

The outcome is that students in Sweden attend a post-modern school. While democracy was the lodestar in the 1994 curriculum, which stated that everyone who works in schools will have “ett demokratiskt förhållningssätt”, the current curriculum states that everyone working in the school will have a “ett demokratiskt och normmedvetet förhållningssätt.”115

110 Gy 11 (2022) In ‘Gymnasieskolans uppdrag’ and ’2.1 Kunskaper: Mål’, respectively
112 Gy 11 (2022) 1 Skolans värdegrund och uppgifter. Rubrik ’Gymnasieskolans uppdrag’ para. 3
115 Gy 11 (2022) 2.2 Normer och värden. rubrik ’Riktlinjer: Alla som arbetar i skolan ska’
It is however, striking that it is not a ‘normkritisk förhållningssätt’, considering Skolverket recommended the term “ett normkritisk förhållningsätt” in the conclusions of its landmark 2009 publication on discrimination, entitled *Diskriminerad, trakasserad, kränkt?*\(^{116}\) Perhaps the requirement for ‘normmedvetandet’ rather than ‘normkritik’ is an outcome of the democratic process in parliament?

In order to try and understand the differences between the terms, I have used a 2016 paper by Emilia Åkesson, available on Skolverket’s website, entitled “Normer, normmedvetenhet och normkritik”. When the term ‘normmedvetenhet’ is used, it is almost always placed next to normkritik, such as “ett normkritisk och normmedvetet perspektiv”, which is a recurring phrase. It appears that ‘normmedvetenhet’ means the ability to take a normcritical perspective. Åkesson writes: “I en normmedveten förståelse är makt och normer tätt kopplade till varandra” (citing Martinsson & Reimers 2008:20).\(^{117}\) While Skolverket has been promoting a norm-critical approach since at least 2009, the difference is that today it is an obligatory requirement for all teachers, no longer one perspective among others.

To close, it is worth reflecting on how a negative view of norms impacts on the notion of democracy, understood as majority rule. There is distrust of norms held by the majority, as these are considered oppressive to those who cannot or will not correspond to prevailing norms. In this regard the inclusion of human rights that follows after the mention of democracy is to show that majority rule is limited by human rights, they are a bulwark against the potentially negative consequences of democracy. (Similarly, the notion of ‘populism’ in democratic politics reflects an unease with the majority voice, who cannot be trusted.) Democracy is no longer the cardinal value, but something to be viewed with suspicion. This is why ‘normmedvetenhet’, as a ‘critical’ perspective, sits uneasily alongside democracy and the fostering of democratic norms.


\(^{117}\) Åkesson (2016) op.cit. p.2
6. Conclusions: The student in late modernity

The previous section shows how the conditions of late modernity are reflected in the high school curriculum. This is to give credence to the argument that the impact of late modernity, as described by Anthony Giddens, also applies to our students. These conclusions are my reflections of how Giddens theoretical framework of high modernity impacts on schooling. It is an attempt to answer the didactic question ‘to whom?’ at an existential level. I consider the student’s subjective experience of late modernity to answer the research question *How does this impact on schooling?* The final section will present a theoretically derived didactic model to discuss how late modernity impacts on learning in the classroom.

The reflexive project of the self

The principal impact is caused by the reflexive nature of life in late modernity. This includes the reflexive nature of the self, outlined in the theoretical framework, which is embedded in the internally referential systems of modernity that provides the framework for everyday life. Internally referential means it is organised reflexively in terms of internal criteria. As Giddens observed: “The reflexivity of modernity extends into the core of the self… in the context of a post-traditional order, the self becomes a reflexive project” (p.5). This describes how self-identity takes on particular importance in this post-traditional world. Our students respond to this reflexively, and this reflexivity extends to the body.

Late modernity generates novel forms of existential anxiety. Ontological security, the sense of stability and of a sense of self, is key for navigating life in late modernity, including existential questions about the self. Giddens has highlighted the importance of biographical coherence across the lifespan for achieving such a mental state. Self-identity is defined as “the self as reflexively understood by the persons in terms of her or his biography” (p.53) and feeling of biographical continuity underpins a reasonably stable sense of self-identity.

A characteristic of what Giddens calls ‘high modernity’ is the collapse of the global and the local, where events on one side affect life on the other through a dialectical relationship. This is not limited to our students with foreign background, it also affects those whose families have not moved. They too, in terms of their self-identity, are affected by the ‘glocal’. Giddens, in 1991, showed how self-identity and globalisation are inextricably linked: “Transformations in self-identity and globalisation, I want to propose, are the two poles of the dialectic of the local on the global in conditions of high modernity” (p.32). Since then, the separation of time and space has been rapidly amplified by digitalisation and digitally transmitted mediated experience saturates our daily life. The internet is the cardinal example of disembedding mechanisms, “which prise social relations free from the hold of specific
locales, re-combining them across wide times space distances” (p2). These are the conditions affecting the student in late modernity.

Giddens demonstrates the centrality of a reflexively constructed autobiography for self-identity under late modernity. This notion of biography is also central to Jarvis’ learning model, which relates learning to biography in different ways. Jarvis defines three types of outcomes, non-reflective learning, non-learning and reflexive learning, and relates non-learning to the notion of existential anxiety, citing Giddens 1991, where people seek recourse provided by dogma. Reflective learning is embedded in the conditions of late modernity. This is not simply that there are new and diverse options available to people in a post-traditional world, but that individuals are constantly forces to choose; we are presented with a pluralism of possibilities and few certainties. Jarvis writes “people have to judge things in the light of their experiences. Indeed, this is a world when reflective learning is inevitable! But for some, it is the precise situation which results in anxiety or non-learning, or both.”

He shows that non-learning, caused by existential anxiety, is also an outcome in late modernity.

Identity and transnationalism

The issue of identity has featured in the social sciences curriculum since 2011, in terms of “identitetsutveckling och grupptillhörigheter i samhället.” What we can take from Giddens is the importance of biography and that ontological security derives from a sense of continuity and order in events. The importance of biographical narrative for self-identity is of particular importance for the student of immigrant background, at least insofar as it is a longer narrative than that of a student whose parents have always lived in the same place. The influence of distant happenings on proximate events is more prevalent when there are family ties that link the students with foreign lands, and the ability to sustain cross-border family ties that result from international migration has been studied under the concept of transnationalism. This transnational level is prevalent, but not limited to people with immigration experience, as many families have cross-border social ties and networks even if they and their immediate family have not migrated. Transnational social spaces also encompass communities of shared interest, and as such is central to the notion of ‘lifestyles.’

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The transnational level is inevitable in terms of a coherent life narrative of the student of foreign background. The particularity of international migration is that, by creating cross-border international ties, the ‘pull’ of traditional life from the communities of origin can seek to impose itself onto social life abroad – and does so using the very same mechanisms of late modernity, in particular the dissolution of time and space and digital communication. Some students, however, may find that traditions that flow through transnational ties, in particular those to do with the “cosmic interpretations of the passing of the generations” (p.203), may be imposed upon them with greater or lesser degree of force, ultimately resulting in ‘hedersrelaterade våld och förtryck’. However, in principle, traditional norms are not accepted or rejected without question but are reflected upon first. This would suggest that self-identity in late modernity is a creative achievement. In late modernity, the pull of tradition has never been weaker, and we can choose from a multitude of internally referential abstract systems. Identity as a creative achievement is particularly apt for 1st and 2nd generation students of immigrant background. The reason is that with the way the international is interwoven within personal biographies, there is a plethora of material for them to pick and choose from in order to “create a distinctive self-identity, which positively incorporates elements from different settings into an integrated narrative” (p.189). Which customs and practices do you decide to uphold, if any? This is not to say that traditions are obsolete. A student may decide to get married in a church, but to accept or refuse a traditional practice is a reflexively organised decision, a ‘lifestyle’ choice. Hence, self-identity under late modernity is a creative achievement.

**Importance of the day-to-day**

Late modernity is characterised by risk, caused by the pace and extent of change. Take, for example, the current developments in Artificial Intelligence. This requires people to think ahead, to anticipate possible futures, and that can cause existential anxiety. Giddens recounts how, in such a situation, basic trust, which emerges at infancy, provides the framework for sustaining a sense of ontological security. Ontological security is reinforced by being able to operate in a predictable world, where the routine of day-to-day life keeps existential anxiety at bay. The ‘norms’ around every-day life are hence of cardinal importance to our students’ well-being. Outside the confines of the school, societal norms are also based on principles of normality and trust, as theorised by Goffman. The transmission of ‘grundläggande värderingar’ to the next generation has been included in all of the curricula. What this

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suggests is that it is not so much the meeting of the ‘Other’, which so preoccupied pedagogy in Sweden, but rather the ability to live together that is important in late modernity.

The uncertainty that prevails in late modernity, described in the theoretical framework, is caused in part by the disembedding mechanisms that are amplified through digital technology and which we carry on our bodies at all times. Traditional schooling, as an embedded routine, can be seen as a countermeasure to the destabilising influences of late modernity on the self.

Traditional high school is an embodied experience; we are physically present. Traditional, in this case, refers to the re-anchoring of place that late modernity separates through time-space distanciation. While late modernity is a post-traditional order, this does not mean the disappearance of tradition but rather that it is one option, available through reflexive appropriation. Traditional symbols or practices, such as graduation ceremonies, can themselves be reflexively organised and are then part of the internally referential set of social relations rather than standing opposed to it (p.150).

**Abstract systems and radical doubt**

Education is an abstract system, consisting of expert system and symbolic tokens – grades have standard value and are recognised across a variety of contexts. Education, as an expert system, is furthermore involved with teaching about other expert systems, defined as knowledge systems that are internally coherent and transferable from person to person. Abstract systems are based on the concepts of trust and radical doubt, and this has significant consequences for our students.

Doubt is a cornerstone of the scientific method. It is not a question of establishing ever greater certainty as there is always the chance new information overthrows established knowledge, even in the core domains of natural science. The scientific method is intrinsic to modernity, and it is the reflectivity inherent in modernity that undermines the certainty of knowledge. Giddens notes that science does not depend on the inductive accumulation of proofs, but on the methodological principle of doubt and that, when faced with unprecedented complexity and contradictory expert systems, *radical doubt* arises as a feature of late modernity. He cautions that “the integral relation between modernity and radical doubt is an issue which… is existentially troubling for ordinary individuals” (p.21). The abstract systems that impact on day-to-day life do not offer fixed guidelines but a multiplicity of possibilities. Even professionals have difficulty in shifting through the diversity of claims and counterclaims that characterise expert systems (p.84). At upper secondary school level, we are in a specialized world, where the linguistic vocabulary of expert systems is taught. Radical doubt characterises our interaction with expert systems, as there are competing and
contradictory expert knowledge systems. Radical doubt is hence the characteristic of a student’s relation with the contents of the course.

We should not disregard that some students may find it psychologically difficult to accept the existence of diverse, mutually conflicting authorities. They find the freedom of choice a burden and seek solace in systems of authority. “A predilection for dogmatic authoritarianism is the pathological tendency at this pole” (p.196), important considering education’s role to prevent the authoritarian personality. At the other pole, we find pathological states in which individuals are virtually immobilised through universal doubt. “In its most marked versions, this outlook takes the form of paranoia or paralysis of the will so complete but the individual effectively withdraws altogether from ordinary social intercourse” (ibid). This is one dimension to consider when it comes to students who avoid school and are ‘hemmasittare’.

**Trust**

The ontological security necessary for investigating and navigating abstract systems is based on basic trust, which emerges at the unconscious level; “learning the characteristics of absent persons and objects – accepting the real world as real – depends on the emotional security that basic trust provides” (p.43). Trust relations can be understood in terms of the formation of social bonds, emotively charged ties of dependence with other persons, beginning with the ties developed with caretakers (p.64), highlighting importance of trust in the relationship between teacher and student. The trust relationship the student has with the teacher forms a part of the emotional security that will allow for reflective learning.

Ironically, a world of academic specialisation does not contribute to the accessibility of expert skills and information to lay actors, it leads to deskilling. Giddens explains that “to be an expert in one or two small corners of modern knowledge systems is all that anyone can achieve [and that] means that abstract systems are opaque to the majority. Their opaque quality – the underlying element in the extension of trust in the context of disembedding mechanisms – comes from the very intensity of specialisation that abstract systems both demand and foster” (p.30). Giddens adds: “This is not simply a process where everyday knowledge is appropriated by experts or technical specialists (since very often there are imponderable or hotly disputed features of their fields of expertise); and it is not only a one-way process, because specialist information, as part of the reflectivity of modernity, is in one form or another constantly re appropriated by lay actors” (p.22). Trust and radical doubt are also of relevance to how the teacher engages with the contents of the course.

Trust is also the key feature to relationships under late modernity, where the traditional family life-cycle is contested by modernity. This is reflected in the curriculum with the term ‘relationer’ that replaced ‘samlevnad’, Skolverket found the prior term dated and ‘relationer’
omfattar det förhållande som bygger på ömsesidighet mellan två eller flera personer. Dessutom inbegriper relationer även förhållanden som inte nödvändigtvis behöver vara långsiktiga och varaktiga.” This reflects Gidden’s notion of *Pure relationship* as characteristic of the late modern age, and which is now included in sexuality education. “Pure relationships are internally referential, that is, depend fundamentally on satisfactions or rewards generic to that relationship itself” (p.244). The pure relationship, which is focused on intimacy, is sought only for what the relationship can bring to the partners involved and hence they end when no longer personally fulfilling, as the ties held fast by traditional concepts of marriage have dissipated. Giddens does write positively on the emergence of step-families noting how new family networks are created through voluntarily-entered-upon social ties (p.176).

**Shame**

Giddens shows that in respect to self-identity, the notion of shame is more important than guilt because shame is closely bound to the basic trust necessary for ontological security (p.65). Shame is also tied to the notion of biography and narrative, and at one point Giddens defines the ideal self as the ‘self as I want to be’ (p.68), noting that shame is closely linked to self-identity as it involves concern about whether the story a person maintains about themselves is sufficient. It depends on feelings of personal inadequacy, “and these can comprise a basic element of an individual psychological makeup from an early age. Shame should be understood in relation to the integrity of the self, while guilt derives from feelings of wrongdoing” (ibid). With regards to the interaction between student and teacher, this means it is of particular importance to avoid making students feel shame. Shame also pertains to the relationship the individual student has with other individual students, each of which has their own biography. The other side of shame is pride, or self-esteem: confidence in the integrity and value of the narrative of self-identity (p.69). Mechanisms of pride and shame are found in the social bond, and hence relevant to the interactions between a student and their classmates. Giddens writes: “pride is continually vulnerable to the reactions of others, and the experience of shame often focuses on that ‘visible’ aspect of the self, the body” (p.67). This would be of particular importance for students with könsöverskridade identitet.

**The body of the student.**

The notion of ontological security relates to the tacit character of practical consciousness, resulting in the ‘natural attitude’ in everyday life. This relies on basic trust in existential questions, which serves as a “screening-off device in relation to risks and dangers in the surrounding settings of action and interaction” (p.40). This provides emotional support in the form of the ‘protective cocoon’. Importantly, “Routinize control of the body is crucial to the
sustaining of the individual’s protective cocoon in situations of day-to-day interaction” (p.56). What Giddens has to say about the body is substantially different from how it is commonly theorised in the field of education:

“The issue of the body in recent social theory is associated particularly with the name of Foucault. Foucault has analysed the body in relation to mechanisms of power, concentrating particularly on the emergence of ‘disciplinary power’ in circumstances of modernity. The body becomes the focus of power and this power, instead of trying to ‘mark’ it externally, as in pre-modern times, subjects it to the internal discipline of self-control. As portrayed by Foucault, disciplinary mechanisms produce ‘docile bodies’ (citing Discipline and Punish (1979)

Yet important though Foucault interpretation of discipline may be, his view of the body is substantially wanting. You cannot analyse the relation between the body and agency since to all intents and purposes he equates the two. Essentially, the body plus power equals agency. But this idea will not do, and appears unsophisticated when placed alongside the standpoint developed prior to Foucault by Merleau Ponty, and contemporaneously by Goffman. Bodily discipline is intrinsic to the competent social agent; it is transcultural rather than specifically connected with modernity; and it is a continuous feature of the flow of conduct in the durée of daily life. More importantly, routine control of the body is integral to the very nature both of agency and of being accepted (trusted) by others as competent” (p.57).

Instead, the way we teach about the body today, influenced as it is by queer theory and queer pedagogy, produces radical doubt about basic biological categories related to the reproduction of the species. This is promulgated by expert systems, some of which offer 72 ‘gender identities’ for students to reflect upon: which best describes your current relationship with your body and sexuality? All the while the body is being reflexively monitored by the person in ways particular to late modernity, where the body “is less and less an extrinsic given [and] becomes itself reflexively mobilised” (p.7). Already in 1991, Giddens noted “What gender identity is, and how it should be expressed, has become itself a matter of multiple options” (p.217).

**The emergence of life politics**

Giddens’ closing chapter, entitled *the emergence of life-politics*, considers the implications of the primacy of lifestyle for self-identity in late modernity. Lifestyle is not something casual, quite the opposite, it is the outcome of the reflexivity of self-identity.
Lifestyle choices are an outcome of the ‘glocal’, the collapse of the global into the local, and the interpenetration of abstract systems with the self. Giddens describes life politics as “a politics of self-actualization in a reflexively ordered environment, where that reflexivity links self and body to systems of global scope. In this arena of activity, power is generative rather than hierarchical” (p.214 my italics).

Lifestyle actually features as a subject for social science in lower secondary school. Skolverket writes “I årsperioderna 7–9 finns ett innehåll som fokuserar på ungdomars identiteter, livsstilar och välbefinnande”, 123 Late modernity provides a comprehensive framework to understand the lifestyle, identity, and wellbeing of students. However, Giddens also writes about the limits of internally referential social systems, which are defined exclusively by internal criteria. Lifestyle choices are generated outside of the moral realm, but because they centre on questions of how we should live our lives “they cannot but bring to the fore problems and questions of a moral and existential type” (p.224).

Lifestyle choices are an outcome of reflexive thinking, including risk assessment and the constant evaluation of possible futures. This can help us understand the decision of some of our students to become criminals. Such risk assessment is central to the decision to adopt a criminal lifestyle because lifestyle is not the preserve of those financially secure, for ‘lifestyle’ refers also to decisions taken and courses of action followed under conditions of material constraints (p.6). Young people make risk assessments, such as the rebates they receive for committing murder before the age of majority, and act accordingly. This may help understand the increased number of criminals of school-going age in Sweden.

*Life-politics*, which emerges from the concept of lifestyle, is, according to Giddens, an extension of emancipatory politics, the progressive movements against racism, sexism, and homophobia. The fight against all forms of discrimination (to be conducted through post-modern epistemologies) characterises the latest revisions of the curriculum in 2022 and reflects such “emancipatory politics”. Under the perspective of late modernity this can be considered a transitional value: emancipatory politics is a precursor to life politics. Emancipation from the fixities of tradition and from conditions of hierarchical domination is necessary for enabling choices regarding lifestyle although these are intertwined, as virtually all questions of life politics also raise problems of an emancipatory sort: “access to means of self-actualization becomes itself one of the dominant focuses of class division and the distribution of inequalities more generally” (228). Life politics is therefore the politics of “self-actualization”. The term “self-actualization” is a valuable one for teachers to keep in mind when considering their students, in all their oppressed or oppressive manifestations.

123 Skolverket (2011) op.cit. p.23
7. Discussion:

A didactic model of the student in late modernity.

The didactic model begins with the student as represented by the self. This corresponds with the ideal that in teaching ‘eleven står i centrum’.

The internal circle represents the self as embodied. The external circle represents the ‘protective cocoon’ of ontological security. This provides the emotional stability for the student to engage with day-to-day tasks and routines, and is based on trust as a generalised state of mind.

Reflexivity is an ongoing component of the self, which extends to the body. It is how the student understands themself and engages with the world in late modernity.

In the classroom setting the student’s engagement with teaching is represented through a didactic triangle that includes the teacher, the course contents (kursens innehåll), and other students as classmates.

Fig 1: Classroom level

The teacher and classmates in this image are also represented by circles, to represent that they are also present and embodied. The course content is represented as a square, to represent it as mediated experience. However, in distance and on-line education, the teacher...
and the classmates would also be represented as squares, as they appear in digital space and are not physically present.

The relationship between the student and the teacher is characterised by trust. The student trusts the teacher to carry out the activities of teaching and behave as a teacher. Trust is also required when encountering modern abstract systems, which, due to their complexity, are accepted on the basis of trust. The student trusts the teacher and that the knowledge being taught is true.

The characteristic of the student’s relation with the content of the course should be seen in terms of radical doubt. Radical doubt is hence a consequence of meeting with the complexity and contradictory nature of expert systems. This relationship between the abstract system of modernity and radical doubt can be existentially troubling for ordinary individuals, which is why Peter Jarvis related this to non-learning.124

The concept of shame helps us understand developments in relationship between the student and their classmates. Shame is a characteristic feature of late modernity, a world where self-identity becomes internally referential. This is related to the reflexively constructed biography as the source of self-identity and determines how the student relates to those around them.

This triangular relationship equally applies to the teacher. 1) The teacher also relates to the course content with radical doubt, for all knowledge can be replaced by new knowledge, which is constantly generated through the internal reflexivity that characterises modernity’s institutions. 2) Trust is the characteristic of the teacher’s relationship with the class. The students trust that their teacher is knowledgeable, is qualified for his or her role, and can guide them through the course.125 3) Causing feelings of shame must be actively avoided when interacting with the individual student. It has dire consequences for the relationship as it impacts on the trust necessary for ontological security, which is required for the emotional state that will allow for learning. The student’s relationships with their classmates also needs to be considered. Of course, a teacher has their own protective cocoon, as does each student.

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125 Trust in their competency is probably the reason why students ignore the fact that Swedish teachers often dress like teenagers when at school.
The school level and the nation-state level have a thicker band, which represents the surveillance inherent in modern institutions. The school level and the societal level are also similar in that they represent norms, the established conventions that provide the sense of ‘normalcy’ (which Giddens has related to Goffman’s work) in every-day life. The school level closely relates to ontological security, in terms of the established routines and interactions in the day-to-day lives of the student.

The societal level, as Giddens remarks, represents the prominent institution of modernity, the nation-state.\textsuperscript{126} The school level extends to this societal level, as a successful secondary school education serves to prepare the student to operate and contribute to a modern, democratic and pluralistic society. The term nation-state is used as it incorporates laws and regulations that are backed by force. This also relates to ontological security when it denotes a predictable environment that the individual has learned to successfully navigate.

The transnational level represents the interpenetration of the global and the local. This is not exclusive to students with immigrant background, although the transnational social ties forged by family networks will be an important part of their biography, if not their day to day

\textsuperscript{126} “The sociologist’s ‘society’, applied to the period of modernity at any rate, is a nation-state, but this is usually a covert equation rather than an explicitly theorised one.” Giddens (1991), op.cit. p.15
lives. The transnational level principally corresponds to communities of shared interest that digital technologies have expanded and even amplified. This transnational level lies under the national level, as it is accessed at a fixed locality, which geographically is within a nation-state.

The \textit{lifestyle} level represents the cardinal role that lifestyle choices have for the reflexive project of the self in late modernity. It is emblematic of the collapse of the global with the local but, unlike the transnational level, it is represented above the nation-state level. The transnational level is accessed at a locality while lifestyle is something a person takes with them even when they leave to another country. Indeed, it may be the motivation for leaving. Lifestyle is not something whimsical, it is the outcome of the reflexive project of the self. It is a project of ‘self-actualization’ that occurs in the context of the dialectic of the local and global and the emergence of the internally referential systems of modernity.

Both the transnational circle and the lifestyle circle correspond to the students’ experiences. These are the experiences that are reflected upon by the student, which enable reflective learning to occur.
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