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Social studies in a newly (re)born democracy

- Teaching social studies on a secondary level in Nepal

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LAU370

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Abstract

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Titel: Social Studies in a newly (re)born democracy – teaching social studies on a secondary level in Nepal

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Summary: The aim of my study has been to explore how the subject of social studies is taught in Nepali schools, in relation to the political situation of the country. I have studied the role and purpose of social science in Nepali schools, in relation to its approach on democracy and citizenship.

I have used ethnographical methods to conduct my study. The ethnographic approach and methods fit my study since the field was an unknown context for me. I have chosen a triangulation of methods, using observation, informal interviews, in-depth interviews and a review of documents as my methods.

I have made observations and informal interviews in two different schools in Kathmandu. I have also made four in-depth interviews with the teachers in social studies at the observed schools. Finally I have reviewed textbooks used in the schools.

My results have shown that the teaching in relation to democracy and citizenship in Nepal puts an emphasis on the rights and duties of the citizen as a way to explain democracy. The schools in my study also emphasize the creation of a national identity amongst the pupils as a foundation for practicing their democratic rights and duties and contribute to the nation. There is a gap between what is taught about democracy and the reality of democracy in Nepal. There is also a gap between the theoretical vision of child centered education and the authoritarian teaching in the classroom.

I discuss the role of social studies as a contributor to consolidating democracy in Nepal. I also discuss similarities between Sweden and Nepal and claim that education in both countries applies a functionalistic approach to democracy. I argue the importance for Sweden as well as Nepal to apply a normative approach in education for democracy where the pupils are seen as valuable citizens and the democratic values are at the center of education.



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1 Introduction

During my education to become a teacher in social science I have come to take special interest in questions concerning democracy and how Sweden as an old and established democracy manages to educate pupils towards becoming active citizens, promoting our democratic values. My personal experiences have been that we apply a very “static” approach to the subject. Democracy is not controversial in Sweden and therefore the teaching, at least in the compulsory school focuses on conveying facts about how the democratic system works in Sweden, how to vote and which political parties we have. I have experienced a lack of problem-orientated, dynamic teaching with focus on the pupils’ attitudes and values towards democracy.

A few years ago I visited Nepal because my brother lives there and since that first time I have been back several more times. It was an overwhelming experience to visit one of the least developed countries in the world- especially since it was during a time of great turbulence in Nepal. The country was in a middle of an internal conflict concerning whether Nepal ought to be a democracy or not and what part the king should be allowed to play in the country’s politics. Since I am born and raised in a democratic society I have always taken the western democracy as the given aim for all countries without questioning it. In Nepal however I came across many opinions that woke my interest to study democracy more. Some of the Nepalese I came in contact with despised democracy, equating it with corruption, an opportunity for the politicians to make themselves rich on foreign aid. They wanted a monarchy under a king who cared about his people. Other persons were deeply involved in the political movements working to make Nepal a republican democracy, lead by representatives elected by the people.

In 2008 Nepal abolished monarchy and became a republican democracy and is now run by a coalition government and a parliament elected in the public elections in April 2008 (Hachhethu, 2009: 2, 57). The state is now based on an interim constitution, which establishes Nepal as a federal democracy. A new constitution should be drafted by the Constituent Assembly and be presented in April 2010. The democratization of Nepal is of course still going on, with conflicts, discussions and progress as well as backlashes but the country is, according to its constitution, a republican democracy. I have by contacts in Nepal followed this development with great interest, and I am curious to see how the democratization of Nepal progresses or declines.

As a teacher I believe that the educational system plays an important part in a society and that what in a society is taught to the children says a great deal about the society as a whole. Osler & Starkey states that “education in democratic states has always been, either explicitly or implicitly, about strengthening democracy” (Osler & Starkey, 2005:1). In Sweden it is clearly stated in the curriculum that the school has a responsibility to raise its pupils to become citizens that embrace and practice their democratic rights and responsibilities (Lpo 94:3). For a country like Nepal, that is in a state of continuous political struggle and uncertainty I believe the role of the schools to be crucial for the future in Nepal.

The social anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1975) defines culture as “An ensemble of stories we tell ourselves about ourselves” (1975:448). This perspective gives me a starting point for

analyzing how democracy is implemented in society by studying how the children of Nepal are taught and raised to become democratic citizens. What stories does the Nepali society tell its children about democracy?

2 Aim and purpose

The aim of my study is to explore how the subject of social studies is taught in Nepali schools, in relation to the political situation of the country. What values in form of views on democracy and citizenship do representatives in Nepali schools want to convey? My focus will be to study the role and purpose of social studies in Nepali schools, in relation to its approach on democracy and citizenship seen within a cultural framework.

My study is based upon the following questions;

- What is the role and purpose of social studies in Nepali schools, in relation to the political changes in the country?
- What do the textbooks in social studies used on a secondary level say about democracy and citizenship?
- How is the subject of social studies, related to democracy and citizenship, taught in Nepali schools on a secondary level? How is the subject conveyed?
- How is democracy and citizenship understood and interpreted by Nepali teachers in social studies on a secondary level?

I use the term social studies instead of the more precise term social science since the subject is called social studies in Nepal's educational system.

3 Background

In this section I give a background about Nepal to create a frame of reference for my research. First I give a brief outline of Nepal based on a combination of facts and my own experiences. From there I move on to describe the political history and the current politics of Nepal that I believe is needed to understand how democracy is viewed and taught in Nepal.

3.1 Nepal- an outline

Nepal is a small country situated between China and India. The country has a diversified countryside. The mountains of Himalaya cover a great part of the country with peaks like Mount Everest and Annapurna. In the southern parts of Nepal on the other hand, the soil is fertile and there is jungles as well as large cultivated areas. There is a great variety in the population of Nepal, with more than 20 different ethnic groups. There are also an undefined number of castes. Nepal has previously been a Hindu state by constitution, but is since 2006 a secular state without any formal cast system (Landguiden, 2009: 2-3).

The first thing that strikes me on arriving to Kathmandu is the amazing mountain scenery that comes visible from the airplane. High, white peaks that stretch up and above the clouds. As

the airplane descends the hills with all its terraces become visible until finally I can see the city of Kathmandu as it stretches out in the valley. As I'm sitting in the car of my Nepalese friend and contact person, watching Kathmandu through the window I can clearly see the urbanization I have read about. The estimated annual population growth in Kathmandu is 4.7%, and according to statistics from 2006 there are 856 000 inhabitants in Kathmandu. Totally in Nepal the population is estimated to more than 28 millions (Landguiden, 2009:1). However, the population count in Kathmandu is likely to have increased since 2006, and the numbers are, according to my Nepalese friend not very exact. Disregarding the exact number it's a fact that the population of Kathmandu has grown explosively. This is obvious when one sees the streets of Kathmandu, small and winding, overcrowded with cars, motorcycles, bikes, people and cows. The air is sometimes hard to breath because of the smog, and many persons are wearing shawls or masks to protect themselves from the worst fumes. As we are driving I can see new buildings rising towards the sky and I see the increasing amount of small huts down by the riverside. My Nepalese friend confirms my observations; the slum is growing on the brinks of the Bagmati River which flows through the city.

The rapid urbanization has lead to air pollution and traffic problems as well as problems with sufficient water and sanitation in Kathmandu. The city is also facing problems with providing electricity to its citizens. There are constant power cuts, where I live we have 4 hours of power cut every day, but when the weather is cold and dry in February and March the power cuts can last up to 16 hours per day. This causes disturbances for the Nepalese enterprises and factories as well as for the households. A simple example of disturbance for a household is that it is impossible to store fresh products and leftovers from a meal since the refrigerator is likely to be dead for 4-16 hours every day!

Nepal is on the UN list of the 25 least developed countries in the world. Approximately 80% of the population is working with agriculture, and more than 38% of the population is living in absolute poverty. The literacy rate is low; only 40 percent of the population is literate (Landguiden, 2009: 2-8). The poverty is visible all over Kathmandu, but as in many poor countries I find huge contrasts between the newly built hotels, the newly opened Kentucky Fried Chicken and the beggars on the streets, the children sitting and sniffing glue, wearing clothes so old that their original colors' have faded into a bleak brown color. As for the countryside it feels like entering an entirely different world. The landscape consists of miles after miles of slopes where people for hundreds of years have cut out terraces to be able to cultivate the soil. The terraces are small and there people grow rice, corn and wheat. There is no electricity and the farmers are plowing their terraces with wooden plows and oxes. I have during my visits in Nepal had the chance to visit and live for some days in a farm house in one of the little villages in central region of Nepal. For someone like me who is used to a warm, large house with every facility imaginable the difference is enormous. Here the food is cooked over an open fire in a small dark kitchen and the animals are sleeping inside the small clay houses. But the farmers are far from the poverty one can find in Kathmandu. The villages are often able to grow enough food for themselves and their families, even though it's a hard and exhausting work. And everywhere one can see the children in their school uniforms. As well in the countryside as in the city of Kathmandu the school children are visible everywhere – a proof that a large part of Nepal's population is very young. More than 40% of the population is below 14 years old (Landguiden, 2009: 2)

Even though Nepal has been a secular state since 2006, religion is present everywhere. Most of the people in Nepal are Hindus but Buddhism is also a widespread religion, especially in the areas bordering on Tibet. Most people have a small temple in their home, where they

sacrifice some rice or flowers to their house god every day. In Kathmandu the Hindu temples and the Buddhist stupas can be found in every part of town. In many places the religions are combined and Buddha is displayed as a statue between statues of Vishnu, Shiva or some other of the over 2 million Hindu gods. Religion is easy enough to see, and to some extent also to understand. The cast system is a completely different matter, even though its roots can be found in the Hindu religion. The cast system was abolished in 1963 (Vaidya, 2001:10) but still the system is practiced to a certain degree throughout the society. The cast system is complex because it is mixed with different ethnic belongings and it is practiced differently depending on how traditional one's family, village or city is. Vaidya defines the traditional Hindu castes in the order that follows as Brahmins (priests), Kshyatrias (warriors), Vaisyas (businessmen and farmers) and Sudras (labourers) but Vaidya states at the same time that there are many more castes within this system and that the system depends on which region or ethnic group one belongs to. According to this he claims that studies of castes and ethnic groups are one of the most complex studies in the world (Vaidya, 2001:9-10). The term ethnic is complicated with both cultural and political aspects, but it is a term that is used by the Nepalese people and it relates to the different independent kingdoms that later came together and formed Nepal. I do not intend to elaborate on this issue more than to say that it is a problematic term.

I will not factor in caste or ethnicity in this study for the simple reason that it might overshadow my interest and aim of the study. I feel however that it is important to mention this since it is one very important dimension of the Nepalese society and something I have met several times during my time in Nepal.

3.2 A brief political history of Nepal

Nepal originally consisted of over 50 small kingdoms squeezed in the mountainous area between China and India. The nation was unified in 1768 and became a coherent territory under one king, Prithivi Narayan Shah. The King created the Shah dynasty, and the Kings of Nepal have since that time been from the Shah dynasty. During the years 1768-1846 the king of Nepal had absolute power and was seen as chosen by the gods (Landguiden, 2009:6). The Royal rule in Nepal lasted from 1768 until 1846 and was characterized by political struggle between parts of the royal family in Nepal. This was a time of political chaos and the violence and anarchy it created affected large parts of the country (Hachhethu, 2009:25-26). This cleared the way for the next phase of rule in Nepal; the rule of the Ranas.

The Rana family was one of the noble families competing for the rule of Nepal. They grasped the power by a massacre, where the other royal families competing for power were murdered. Due to this the Rana family was able to enforce a strong hold over the ruling power in Nepal, so strong that they ruled for 104 years, until 1950. During the Rana oligarchy Nepal was ruled by a prime minister whose post was inheritable. There was also a king, but the position of the king was weak, the kings were merely figureheads towards the people of Nepal (ibid: 26-27).

The Rana rulers are described by several Nepalese authors as reactionary rulers who opposed any kind of development in Nepal, for example Vaidya, describe the Rana rule as following:

The Ranas, during their rule of almost 104 years, maintained a status quo in every area and did not allow new dynamic, innovative ideas or trends of modernization to penetrate Nepal so as to keep them firmly in the saddle of power in Nepal (Vaidya, 2001:71).

Hachhethu stands out from the other authors by giving credit to the Ranas for making some reforms in Nepal, for example the establishment of the TriChandra College. Hachhethu continues however with claiming that most of the reforms were only for benefit of the Ranas themselves. When it came to making reforms to improve the living conditions for the people of Nepal, Hachhethu agrees with other Nepalese authors that the Ranas denied the Nepalese people the opportunity to develop (Hachhethu, 2009: 28).

Though the Rana family had a firm hold over the rule of Nepal and their rule were strong and oppressive towards the Nepalese people, it was not calm or without conflicts. The Rana family didn't have much competition from other noble families, as had been the case before they came into power. Instead, the political power struggle which took place during the Rana dynasty was the internal struggle between different members and parts of the Ranas. This power struggle eventually weakened the Rana oligarchy and made it possible for new players to enter the political arena (ibid).

The Rana rule was overthrown in 1951 by an armed revolution. The revolution was lead by a political party; the Nepali Congress together with the King of Nepal; King Tribhuvan. This revolution was unique because of its unlikely alliance; Tribhuvan who had inherited his position as an old tradition, and the Nepali Congress which was, and still is, a political party. The uniqueness of this alliance was however also a problematic factor when the revolution was over. To overthrow the Ranas had been the only matter the different parts of the alliance had in common but their other interest differed from each other; the king wanted to be more than the figurehead he had been during the Rana regime, and the political parties wanted a multiparty system with an elected government in power (Hachhethu, 2009: 29). The opinions of King Tribhuvan seem to be somewhat different depending on the author. For example, Vaidya describes in his book *Nepal in political crisis* King Tribhuvan as the main promoter of establishing democracy in Nepal and of writing the constitution of Nepal in 1951 which declares Nepal a monarchy-democracy where the power is shared between a parliament and the king (Vaidya, 2001:26). Other authors claim that the king was forced to make compromises and give the political parties more power than he wanted to (e.g. Hachhethu, 2009:29). However, there seems to be a consensus that the interim constitution that was presented in 1951 can be said to be the first real step towards a democratic Nepal. The constitution was the first one to divide the power between different institutions. According to this constitution the power was divided between the king and the government. The constitution also separated the executive, the legislative and the judicial power. After the reactionary Rana rulers the new government and the king advocated progress and development.

Despite the steps taken towards democracy the political situation was far from stable. During the time between 1951 and 1960 the government changed ten times even though the only public elections took place in 1959. Those internal power struggles between different political parties caused the new king, Mahendra (King Tribhuvan died in 1955) to seize power by a coup in 1960, where he dissolved the newly elected government and parliament in favor of what is known as the Panchayat system.

The Panchayat system was described in the new constitution which King Mahendra introduced in 1962 and stated that "The sovereignty is vested in His Majesty and all powers – executive, legislative and judiciary – emanate from him" (The constitution of Nepal 1962 in Vaidya, 2001:150). The Panchayat system dissolved the practice of political parties and

imposed partylessness. The king still kept a parliament and a few ministers, but they were not elected by the people, but appointed by the king. The Panchayat system lasted until 1990, and despite the political regression to autocracy the development and progression of society which was started during the short time of democracy continued under the Panchayat system. The cast system was abolished and a Civic Code was established which stated all people's equality in relation to the law, although those reforms were more theoretical changes than changes in reality. The development of infrastructure, health and education were also improved, at least marginally (Hachhethu, 2009:30-31).

However, during the 30 years that the Panchayat system lasted the political parties strengthened and advocated for a political change. Eventually they managed to get support from the people and in 1990 the Nepali Congress and the United Left Front joined together in a mass movement, called *Jana Andolan* that succeeded to reestablish a multiparty democracy. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1990 declared Nepal as a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy. The king had a withdrawn position in this new system; he was mainly a ceremonial king without the power to rule the parliament or the government.

The new democracy in Nepal lasted until 2001, with public elections of representatives to the parliament held in 1991, 1994 and 1999. The new democratic system had the promise of creating political stability in the country. However, the high expectations of the people failed as the political representatives quickly became corrupt. The governance by the elected representatives severely diminished peoples trust in the government institutions and in the democratic system and the political instability which had characterized the Nepali society since the very beginning continued to flourish. The political instability, the corruption and the lack of development in the rural areas in Nepal became the starting point for the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), CPN-M and its armed rebellion. The rebellion started in 1996 and had its center in the underdeveloped western districts of Nepal (Landguiden, 2009:5, 8).

In 2001 the country was shaken when the King, Birendra and almost the entire royal family was murdered. It is not known exactly who was the guilty of the murders – it is said to be the crown prince who murdered his entire family and in the end also took his own life. The cause is said to be an infected argument about who the prince was going to marry. However, another theory is that the guilty one was King Birendra's brother, Gyanendra, who was the only survivor and who claimed the throne after his dead brother (ibid:9).

The civil war between the CPN-M and the government continued, and the country was severely affected by the war; the prime minister proclaimed a state of emergency and the CPN-M was declared to be terrorists. During this time of severe crisis King Gyanendra dissolved the government in 2002 and selected the new government himself. Nepal was now retired to its autocratic monarchy.

The civil war continued, and gradually the CPN-M extended its controlled territory. The other political parties tried to negotiate with the guerilla but the CPN-M demanded to negotiate with the king only. In 2005 the king dropped all pretences of supporting democracy and a multiparty system, as he abolished the government, put the armed forces under his own command and introduced several limitations to the political rights such as freedom of speech and freedom to meet and organize. These actions caused seven of the political parties who had previously been in power to form an alliance with the CPN-M in order to reestablish the multiparty democratic system. The seven parties also negotiated a truce with the CPN-M, a truce that was not kept for long since the army under the kings' command did not accept it.

The intensity of the conflicts increased and the CPN-M drew closer and closer to Kathmandu which is the sole center of power in Nepal. The eight-party alliance, consisting of the seven political parties that had previously been in power and the CPN-M arranged mass demonstrations throughout the country. The demonstrations are known as the *Jana Andolan II* and attracted approximately three to four million people (Hachhethu, Kumar & Subedi, 2008:2). During the demonstrations in Kathmandu about ten persons were killed by the king's armed forces. This caused the protest to escalate and the king was forced to reestablish the government. The government and the CPN-M initiated peace talks and the government reversed all the decisions made by the king during the conflict and took control over the armed forces. The peace talks eventually lead to a truce and a temporary parliament where the CPN-M participated. Public elections were planned to take place in 2007. The king was allowed to remain on the throne but without any of his previous political power.

The elections were delayed because of long drawn negotiations and quarrels between the different political parties, but were held in 2008. The elections resulted in victory for the CPN-M who became the biggest party in the parliament and was able to form a government together with two other political parties; Unified Marxist-Leninist (UML) and the United Left Front (ULF). The Maoist leader Prachandra became prime minister. The parliament voted in 2008 for an abolishment of the monarchy and King Gyanendra was forced to leave the royal palace.

3.3 Current politics in Nepal

The political instability which seems to have been the reality in Nepal since the nation was formed can be seen clearly throughout the political history of Nepal. Different forms of government have been established, abolished and reestablished again. The current politics doesn't seem to be any exception.

Since the civil war was ended in 2008 with the abolishing of the king and the public election of representatives to the parliament an unstable democracy has formed. But it seems that the internal power struggle and corruption still flourish. The Prime Minister from the Maoists, Prachandra, left his post in the beginning of 2009 after a conflict with the president. The president who comes from the conservative party Nepali Congress is according to the interim constitution of Nepal a ceremonial president. However, the power struggle between the prime minister and the president caused Prachandra's resignation from his post. The government reformed without the Maoists and does now consist of an alliance with more than 20 different political parties. The Maoists are still in the parliament with 227 out of totally 601 seats and are now trying to once more reform the government. The interim constitution is supposed to be replaced by a new in April 2010 and there are huge discussions in the government and the parliament concerning the contents in the new constitution. Strikes and demonstrations are still going on in Kathmandu; during the time I have been here it has been at least 4 mass demonstrations and two *bandhas* (general strikes). Some of the demonstrations are organized by the Maoists to gain support for their home coming into the government and to promote their suggestions to the new constitution. Others are organized by different political groups that want to ensure that their rights are taken into consideration when drafting the new constitution. The demonstrations are peaceful for the most part, but some violence and burning of cars or tires have also occurred.

4 Previous research

4.1 Democratization in Nepal

As mentioned previously the political situation is still not stable, there is a continuous debate going on in the Nepalese newspapers as well as among people in the schools, in the restaurants and in the temples.

A study made in 2008 shows that despite the power struggles and the slow progress in shaping the constitution a majority of the Nepalese people support the development and put their trust in the ongoing process (Hachhethu, Kumar & Subedi, 2008:92-93). The survey also stresses the importance of the democratization to stay on track in order to keep the trust of the people, especially the people from low castes or from the rural areas who have less trust in the democratization than the people living in the Kathmandu valley or who come from the higher and more educated castes (ibid:94). The trust in democracy is lower amongst groups that have been excluded from power during earlier movements for democracy, such as low caste groups or uneducated people in the rural areas. Those groups have now risen a strong demand to be included in the democratization process of Nepal (ibid:89-90).

Fredholm stress the importance of inclusion as an important part of democratization. Her study shows that people involved in the different political parties and NGO: s (Non Governmental Organization) in Nepal has a vision of democracy that stretches beyond the formal meaning of a government elected by the people. The interviewees in her study want to see a democracy where low caste groups and other previously discriminated groups are included and where the people are closely connected to the politics (Fredholm, 2007:47). Fredholm tries to define where in the process of democratization Nepal is, drawing on the theory of Rustow who define four phases of democratization; the first phase being the creation of a national unity, the second an inconclusive political struggle. The third phase is called the first transition or the decision phase and the fourth phase the habituation phase (Rustow 1979, quoted in Fredholm, 2007:29-30). Analyzing the situation in Nepal according to this transition theory Fredholm finds Nepal in the third phase, where there have been some kind of compromising and decision of establishing a democracy but where the negotiations are still going on and important decisions are still being made (Fredholm, 2007:41). Fredholm also brings up some challenges that a state in the transition to become a democracy usually need to address at some point. The main challenges are to keep the time limitations; new rules must be established within a reasonable time and new institutions must be built to support the democratic form of government; to manage the high expectation of the people and to avoid new conflicts based on ethnicity or religion to develop (Fredholm, 2007:49-51).

From what I have seen and heard during my time in Nepal I can only partly agree with the conclusions of these two surveys. Observing the political situation today I can see that Nepal right now are facing the above mentioned challenges for a state in transition towards a democracy. The time limitations are a crucial point in Nepal today. The public elections were held, although almost one year later than planned and soon it is time for the government to present the new constitution. Due to the political discussions and conflicts between the political parties in the government however many people have doubts whether the constitution will be made in time, or indeed, that the government will be able to draft a constitution at all. This is also connected to the challenge of managing the high expectations. Many previously excluded groups have high expectations of inclusion which have created discussion, others have high expectations that the political leaders will be able to take Nepal out of poverty in a

short amount of time. I believe that the challenge of managing the high expectations are a huge problem for the CPN- Maoists since they as the leaders of the revolution have promised many rapid changes in all parts of the society; from decreasing poverty to make huge land reforms and so on. Their diminished power since they left the government will make it hard for them to keep those promises and this has already led to a decrease in support for them.

I believe that Nepal is at a critical point right now. The trust in the democratization process that is described by Hachhethu et al (Hachhethu, Kumar & Subedi, 2008:92-93) seems to decrease for each day of quarrel between the political parties. Some people still have trust in the democratization process but the support for the new form of government is rapidly decreasing since the government has not yet succeeded in fulfilling what Hachhethu et al defines as the top priority of the Nepalese people; to restore peace and calm to the country. (ibid:43).

4.2 Education in Nepal

The school system in Nepal consists of two compulsory levels and one optional level. The primary level, from grade 1-5 and the lower secondary level, from grade 5-9 are compulsory. The higher secondary level, from grade 10-12 is optional. The government schools are free of charge but the pupils are to buy their own books and school uniforms (Landguiden, 2009:2).

The fact that the schools on the lower levels are compulsory does not necessarily mean that all children attend school. In a survey published in 2001 by Sharon Stash and Emily Hannum, the authors show that the number of children who enroll in school has increased rapidly but that there are great differences depending on gender and caste. There are significantly more boys that are enrolled in the school system, and the difference rate gets higher after primary school, showing that boys have more access to education on a secondary level (Stash & Hannum, 2001:40-41). The access to school enrollment can also be seen to depend on with caste you belong to, where children from higher castes, especially boys, are higher represented in the education system on all levels than are girls or children from lower castes (Stash & Hannum, 2001:49). The survey concludes that children who have access to education have increased explosively between 1965-1991, but that there are still many inequalities in who have access to the system that need to be addressed by the government in order to live up to the claim of education for all (Stash & Hannum, 2001:37,42).

Another survey published in 2004 by Saurav Dev Bhatta shows the result in the School Leaving Certificate, an examination that is made in grade ten and is seen as the most important exam for most people in Nepal, the exam that decide the career of many Nepalese students (Dev Bhatta, 2004:57). Dev Bhatta's survey shows that the pass rate in general for this exam is low, less than 45% of the pupils taking the exam pass. The author also points out that even in recent years when the number of pupils taking the exam has increased the pass rate has not increased, signaling low quality of the education on a secondary level (Dev Bhatta, 2004:59). The survey concludes that private schools have a higher pass rate, a conclusion in line with the common opinion that private schools keep a higher quality in their education (Dev Bhatta, 2004:114). The result also shows that more boys than girls are taking the exam, and that girls in general have a lower pass rate in the exams (ibid). There are also differences in the number of pupils that take the exam and that pass the exam depending on which district in Nepal they live in. The Kathmandu valley and the regions close to Kathmandu have a higher number of students that both take the exam and pass it than more distant regions (Dev Bhatta, 2004:115-116). In all, the survey concludes that there are wide

differences and inequalities between students depending on gender, region and whether they attend public or private schools that need to be addressed by the government (Dev Bhatta, 2004:118).

5 Theoretical framework

In this part I will give a theoretical framework for my thesis. Grasping, understanding and teaching society and democracy involves a lot of different aspects. First I will discuss the “ontology of democracy”. What is the nature of our knowledge of democracy? The word is used in everyday language and most people have a picture of what democracy means. But there are certain parts of democracy which need some explaining. After that I will discuss the issue of citizenship. This has connections with the concept of nationalism, of duty and morals. The nation state is by definition discriminating, those who belong to the nations are defined by those who are excluded. No nation claims to include the whole world’s population. Yet it seems that democracy needs the idea to unify the people. Last I will discuss how the terms of democracy and citizenship can have relevance for schools.

5.1 What is democracy?

The term democracy is commonly used throughout society as an ideal; for countries, for organizations, for schools, and in later years also for enterprises. Democracy can be explained as easily as a simple translation from the Greek language from where the origin of the word is. *Demokratia* comes from the Greek words *demos* (the people) and *kratos* (to rule). The translation will be as easy as “rule by the people” or peoples’ rule. This is however an explanation which only touches upon a small part of the meaning of the word democracy. To be able to expand more on the subject I feel the need for a more exact and detailed definition.

Robert Dahl (1998) makes it clear that democracy is not one clear defined and strictly followed model of government. Dahl describes how democracy has evolved differently in different times and societies, and how democracy in different forms and shapes has been invented and practiced throughout the world. In studying models of democracy in different societies Dahl points out many differences between the various practices of democracy, for example participatory democracy in contrast to the representative democracy (Dahl, 1998:ch 2). Regarding these variations Dahl explores what unites them, the mutual features that can be found and from these common features he defines five criteria for a democratic process:

1. Effective participation
2. Equality in voting
3. Gaining enlightened understanding
4. Exercising final control over the agenda
5. Inclusion of adults

(Dahl, 1998:37-38)

Dahl describes these criteria as opportunities granted to citizens living in a democracy. The five criteria grants the opportunity for the members included in the democratic society to both have equal opportunities to voice their opinions about different policies and issues and have equal opportunity to vote. To the criteria of equality in voting also comes the demand that the votes are counted as equal. No members’ vote counts for more than another. To be able to use those rights the third criteria is significant since it implies the opportunity for

every member to gain knowledge about the issue at hand. However, to learn about, to be able to voice one's opinion and to have the opportunity to vote is not enough according to Dahl's definition of democracy. The members must also be able to set the agenda. Which issues should be discussed and which policies are to be drafted? The members need to have an opportunity to decide and to change the agenda. Finally, the last criterion implies that all adult members in a society permanently residing must have all the first four civic rights. This is a clear statement that a democracy must be inclusive to all its members (ibid).

Albert Weale (2007) suggests a definition of democracy that clearly shows the contrast to non democratic governments and that, like Dahl, includes different varieties of democracy. Weale defines democracy as "in a democracy important public decisions on question of law and policy depend, directly or indirectly, upon public opinion formally expressed by citizens of the community, the vast bulk of whom have equal political rights" (Weale, 2007:18).

Weale explains that the most important part of this definition is that the laws and government policy in some organized form depend on the public opinion since this is the criterion which most clearly separates a democracy from a non democratic form of government. Weale states however that the definition does not imply that the government must take the public opinion into account in every small decision but that the public opinion must be a formal institution which is used in a formal way. The definition takes into account different varieties in democracy, but Weale stresses the point that public opinion needs to be expressed in a formal and regular way, for example by elections or popular votes, not by actions outside the political system such as demonstrations or riots (Weale, 2007:18-19).

At last, Weale includes in his definition that a vast bulk of the citizens ought to have equal political rights. He explains that this is an important part of the definition of democracy but that it is hard to define in more detail exactly who should be included in "the vast bulk" and if it can be justifiable to exclude some groups from political rights, such as prisoners or other minor groups (Weale, 2007:20).

Those two definitions of democracy which I have chosen to study more closely offer similarities and differences, a clear signal that democracy is not uncomplicated. The main similarities that can be found in those two definitions are the importance of the public opinion as the keeper of the power. By elections or other methods, Dahl and Weale seem to agree that a democracy has to have the public opinion as a formalized foundation for the form of government. There seems to be some differences however in how specifically defined this must be. Dahl offers a more exact definition where he pinpoints four criteria which secure the public opinion; effective participation, equality in voting, gaining enlightened understanding and exercising final control over the agenda. Weale on the other hand does not offer that aspect of "how" in his definition but gives a more theoretical aspect.

When comparing Dahl's criteria "*inclusion of adults*" with Weales "*the vast bulk of whom have equal political rights*" we can see the major difference between the two authors. Dahl finds it necessary to include all members in a society, even if they are not citizens but merely residents in the society somewhat permanent. He only excludes children which he means are by tradition judged as in need of a parent or a guardian while growing up (Dahl 1998:75). Weale on the other hand justifies his more vague demand that a vast bulk of the citizens should have equal political rights by giving examples from countries that are seen as democracies even if they exclude some groups from the political rights, for example

prisoners, or give some groups more influence, for example the British government that previously gave graduates two votes each (Weale, 2007:20).

In studying those different definitions of democracy I see both strengths and weaknesses in them. Weales definition is more applicable since it is not as absolute as Dahls. However, Dahls definitions have higher demands of what a country need to do in order to call itself a democracy. Dahl also takes in consideration criteria needed for using one's political rights, gaining enlightened understanding which is most important in order to make democracy more than a political structure, to see that democracy is a process of human interaction and needs to be understood as such. For this reason, I will mainly use Dahl's definition of democracy from now on.

5.2 Democracy as ideal and practice

Dahl describes that democracy can be looked upon as either an ideal form of government or as a practice. "Democracy as an ideal" is according to Dahl a term that consists of the values; the vision of democracy; the reasons why we want democracy and what democracy should give to its citizens. I will use the term democracy as an ideal to describe this from now on. Democracy as a practice is how the democratic society works, what political institutions are needed for making democracy possible? How does our democracy work? Dahl means that it is important to analytically separate the ideal and the practice from each other but to be able to see the connection between them. He states that the ideal of democracy is most probably not possible to achieve to its full extent in practice. There will always be circumstances stopping countries from being perfect democracies. Therefore, Dahl says, if we do not separate the ideal from the practice it is easy to lose faith in democracy if the democratic form of government does not initially work perfectly. However, if we lose the connection between the ideal and the practice totally then the word democracy will lose its meaning. Anything can be a democracy if we do not know what we want to achieve with being a democracy, or what values we want to convey (Dahl, 1998:26-31)

Dahl states that the ideal of democracy must always be present, not as a reality, but as an inspiration to remember why we think that democracy is the best form of government, and as a yardstick from which we can measure our democratic practice and find ways to improve it to move closer to the democratic ideal (ibid). To move the practice closer to the democratic ideal might be difficult and demands great changes in a society. It is however necessary according to Dahl that the democratic ideal and the democratic practice doesn't move too far from each other. If the gap gets too large the ideal will lose meaning for the practice and lead to a decline of democracy (Dahl, 1998:188).

In time of crisis of some kind, Dahl describes how many countries such as France, Great Britain, Germany, Spain or Chile have experienced that the democratic system runs the risk to be criticized or even abolished. For some countries a political, economical or military crisis have lead to the fall of democracy (for example Germany in 1934 or Chile in 1973) whilst in other countries democracy has survived the crisis and might even have been strengthened by the experience. Dahl defines some crucial points that create favorable conditions for a democracy to survive and become long lasting. One of these crucial points is the creation of a supportive political culture. This means that a vast majority of the people has a strong belief in the ideal of democracy, that the citizens of the country indeed are democratic citizens who know what democracy means and why it is important (Dahl 1998:156-157). To create a supportive political culture in a country is difficult and takes time. Creating a culture means

that some kind of traditions must form and be socially recognized and it takes time before several generations in a country has created a common political culture. There are no obvious ways of creating this kind of supportive political culture (Dahl 1998:158).

5.3 Citizenship, identity and the nation state

As we can see in the previous section the terms citizens and citizenship are words commonly used while speaking of democracy. A democracy is dependent on the participation, or at least, on the support of its citizens. But what does it really mean to be a citizen, and which limitations are there to citizenship?

Osler & Starkey (2005) define three essential aspects of citizenship; citizenship as a status, as a feeling and as practice. Citizenship as a status has its base in the nation states, since almost all people in the world are citizens by law in a state, whether a democratic state or not. *Citizenship as a status* can be said to be the relationship between the state and the individual, describing what rights one has as a citizen and what obligations you have to the state (p.10).

Citizenship as a feeling differs according to Osler & Starkey from the legal status of being a citizen in the sense that this deals a lot more with identity. To feel like a citizen means to feel that you belong to a community and that you identify with its members and with the community as a whole. Citizenship as a feeling however, is not necessarily that closely connected to the state as citizenship as a status. Often one more identifies a belonging to a small community than to a state. (Osler & Starkey, 2005:11-12). It might be one's town or village which is the base for one's feeling of citizenship rather than the nation state. It is easy for the state to count its citizens in number, but in order to make them feel like citizens of a state other actions are needed, such as emphasizing unifying issues; language, national symbols or national traditions and festivities. Usually the school plays a part in trying to make all students feel a sort of belonging to its nation (ibid). There is also a great risk that some people who identify with the community are excluded because they are not citizens in any legal meaning. They might be refugees or immigrants, or a part of a group which is excluded by the state, for example women or members of a minority religion (Osler & Starkey, 2005:12-13).

Benedict Anderson describes the nation states as imagined communities; the participants do not have personal relations with all the different actors. They have met a very small part of this community and it is very unclear what they actually have in common except for language and legal status (Anderson, 1992:20-22). A French doctor probably has more in common with an Indian doctor than with a French waiter or construction worker. A Nepalese teacher and a Swedish teacher have more in common with each other than with the aristocracy of their own countries. In spite of this quite banal insight the nation is in itself the most important legitimacy in the world according to Anderson. To serve the nation, to be a good citizen and to do your share for your country is a common motivation and mentality all over the world. Politics may lack a power in explaining the big questions, life and death, heroes and demons, history and future. The nation as an imagined community can explain these issues. It gives the citizens meaning, a cause, an enemy, something unifying (ibid). Of course this has positive effects as well as negative. The positive effect can be seen as a sense of belonging and respecting the rules made in the community. Democracy is based on decisions concerning everyone which means that there must be some reason why a decision should be followed. For a democracy to work the citizens must respect the rules established through a democratic process. The negative side is of course that imagined enemies can be real enemies, the love of

the community can exclude those who do not belong and in worst case it can turn into hate against outsiders of the community. The nation state can be exclusive as well as inclusive and a too strong feeling of belonging to a nation state could be the beginning of destructive nationalism (ibid).

Citizenship as practice is the aspect of citizenship that is closest related to democracy. To practice citizenship implies interaction with other citizens working to change things in the society. It could be changes in different arenas, social and economical as well as political. The practice of citizenship is not closely related to the belonging to a nation state but to citizens as agents for change (Osler & Starkey, 2005:14-15). One way of practicing citizenship is connected to the democratic nation state – the practice of voting and electing political representatives. However, the practice goes far beyond that. To practice citizenship can also be to use you power as a consumer in order to change society or to be an activist in a global environment or human rights movement. In those situations the citizenship is cosmopolitan and dependent on a specific strive or goal that unifies people in different nations (ibid).

Osler & Starkey argues for an education that encourages the cosmopolitan citizenship, the citizenship that is global and implies a feeling of common identity between people in different parts of the world based on the identification with specific values such as the human rights and the universal humanity (Osler & Starkey, 2005:20-21). They describe the change of citizenship that occurs along with globalization and increasing migration throughout the world. The distance between citizens in different nations are shrinking, making way for mutual understanding and a sense of belonging to each other (ibid). This is not a process that will happen of itself however, since the connection to the nation state is still strong and identification to the nation state is also necessary to keep in order for the citizens to practice democratic rights such as voting and electing political representatives. Osler & Starkey argues that cosmopolitan citizenship could be a way of unifying people around the world around the same values while at the same time keeping the connection to the nation state or community for enforcing the universal values in the own state or community.

5.4 Children – the young citizens?

In the definition of democracy written by Dahl, adults are included in the democratic process and have the political rights of a citizen. Children are left out of the definition, as they are left out as democratic agents with the right to vote in most of the democracies in the world. Osler & Starkey describe the common way of looking at children not as citizens that could be valuable in the task of democratization or the strengthening of democracy but as consumers of education for an active citizenship in the future (Osler & Starkey, 2005: 38).

At best they are viewed as citizens-in-waiting who need to be inducted into their future role. All too often, however, they are seen as needy individuals whose incompetence needs to be addressed (Osler & Starkey, 2005:38).

Even if this is the common way to view children in relation to citizenship Osler & Starkey also argues that there has been some progression made on the international level. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was established by UN in 1989 and the convention has been ratified by 192 states. There is much more to be done for implementing the convention in different countries over the world, but the issue has been put on the international agenda, thus affecting policy making and education (Osler & Starkey, 2005:41-42). The CRC emphasizes that children are citizens in the aspect that they are entitled to the

same political rights as adults. It is clearly stated in article 13-15 that children possess freedom of expressing themselves, of thinking for themselves and belonging to the religion of their choice. It is also stated that children have the right to form or take part in associations like any adult (The Convention on the Rights of the child, 1989: art 13-15) The only political rights that the CRC does not mention that are mentioned in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights is the right to vote, to elect political representatives and to be elected that is stated in article 25 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (The covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1994: art 25). The CRC continues with stating that every child has the right to education (article 28) and that

The education of the child shall be directed to...the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin (Art 29).

Thus the CRC makes a strong statement that children are to be seen both as actual, active citizens in terms of their political rights but that they are also to be seen as citizens-in-waiting, in the aspect that they need to be educated to take full part and responsibility the society. Osler & Starkey welcomes the statements made in the CRC, but also sees a need for improvement to further establish children as active citizens today (Osler & Starkey 2005:55). They also point out a challenge when educating for citizenship and democracy. That is the often experienced gap between the democratic ideal that the schools often convey and the reality in which the students live where they can experience lack of influence and democratic rights. The gap has to be bridged by the children's active participation in society and in the schools, or as the authors put it;

Once children and young people are recognized as having political [participation] rights their claims to engage as citizens and make a valuable contribution to communities and to schools and other institutions can begin (ibid:56)

5.5 Democracy and education

Dewey states that education is a social function and that what is being conveyed through education will vary depending on the values and ideas of the communities educating its members (Dewey in Lauder, Brown, Dillabough & Halsey, 2006:91). A democratic society is characterized by the reliance on mutual interests as the way of applying social control and by the constant adaption to new situations and ideas created by the constant social interaction between members of the society. For a democratic society, consisting of social interactions that lead to progress of the society, some kind of systematic education will be of great interest. One reason for this is the way of applying social control as mentioned above. A government that depends on the support of its citizens both to be elected but also for the citizens to obey the laws made by the government need the citizens to be educated to understand and agree on the terms of the society (ibid:94). However, Dewey finds this explanation somewhat superficial since democracy means more than the form of government. Democracy means a way of living characterized by communication, by social interaction between people from different countries, different races and classes. This increased social interaction has widened the area of common interest and mutual values. According to Dewey there has at the same time been an increase in individualization, since every citizen in a democratic society is important with unique opinions and experiences. To balance and maintain the combination of a broadened arena of common interest and an increased

individualization, a systematic education that puts emphasis on educating citizens rich in initiative and ability to adapt to a society in constant change and progression, is of the utmost importance (ibid:94).

The importance of education for democracy in a democratic state may be clear enough. Another question however is what approach that education should have. What should the schools' approach to a democratic education be?

Englund separates two different understandings of democracy; the *functionalistic* and the *normative*, the functionalistic understanding of democracy implies that democracy is understood merely as a systematic way of making decisions while the normative understanding of democracy means that democracy is an aim in itself because of its values and ideas of the active and influential citizens (Englund in Jonsson, 2003:50-51). When applied in education the functional understanding promotes an education for democracy structured as a well defined topic with specific facts about the democratic form of government. The normative understanding of democracy on the other hand would suggest an education that creates opportunities for the pupils' active participation in democratic society with focus on every citizen's equal rights and the values surrounding the term democracy (ibid). Englund can be seen as a representative for reconstructivism, a philosophy that sees the construction of a successful democracy as one of the tasks for educators. To do this it is necessary to build education for democracy on social interaction and create opportunities for pupils to form their own opinion and take part of others' perspectives in a continuous dialogue (Sundgren, 1996:21-22). Englund describes this approach to knowledge and democracy as the deliberative dialogue (Englund in Jonsson, 2003:61).

Sundgren means that the approach the educational system takes on educating for democracy is not only decided by the way democracy is understood but also on the approach to knowledge. Sundgren points out two different approaches to knowledge; the traditional way that has been the reigning for hundreds of years and which is based upon knowledge as something static, as objective facts that the pupils are supposed to learn by writing, listening and rehearsing. This approach implies that knowledge is something that exists independent of the learner. The learner is only to take the existing knowledge into his own memory and mind (Sundgren, 1996:14-15). I will call this understanding of knowledge *the static* approach. The other approach to knowledge discussed by Sundgren is based on the assumption that knowledge is a process, something that is changing and evolving in the interaction between the learner and the surrounding world. According to this approach knowledge is not objective facts; it is our construction of the world made by interaction with others together with our own experiences. This approach also views knowledge as contextual, we need to apply specific facts to our own context in order to understand them and use them in our process of knowledge (Sundgren, 1996:13-16). I will call this approach on knowledge *the dynamic* approach.

Sundgren claims that a static approach on knowledge is likely to reduce learning for democracy to learning about democracy, meaning that democracy is being taught as specific facts about a form of government that the students need to learn. He argues that the dynamic approach to knowledge is necessary as education then will put emphasis on the other aspects of democracy mentioned by Englund and educate the pupils own understanding of democracy and in that way create independent pupils that think for themselves and participate in the development of the school and society as a whole (Sundgren, 1996:17-19).

5.6 Democratic education or education for democracy?

Dewey describes one of the dilemmas of democracy. The democratic form of government is today organized in nation states, making identification with the nation necessary to feel part of the democracy. Democracy, however, promotes values more universal and not connected to a specific state. That is one part of the dilemma in educating for democracy – is it possible to maintain the connection to the nation state and identify with the universal values of democracy at the same time? (ibid:99-100).

One of the fundamental problems of education in and for a democratic society is set by the conflict of a nationalistic and a wider social aim (Dewey in Lauder, Brown, Dillabough & Halsey, 2006:99).

Education has always played an important role in democratic nations in order to create a kinship between different individuals and minor groups in the nation state. To educate the people has been, and is, a project of creating a national identity (compare Anderson 1992:20-22 and the imagined communities). In order for democracy to work the citizens need to be supportive, loyal and accept the laws and rules of the society (Sundgren, 1996:100-101). This perspective can easily become a dilemma in the education for democracy. On one hand the aim of education is to make sure the democratic state survives but on the other hand the aim is to raise independent citizens that express their opinions freely even if those opinions are not always the same as those of the nation state (ibid). This is a crucial dilemma for schools to deal with when educating its citizens; is school educating for democracy or does it apply a democratic education?

5.7 Democracy in the education of Nepal

The national curriculum of Nepal was latest updated in 2005. The national curriculum serves as a framework for the syllabuses in different subjects and for the textbooks. The curriculum is divided into different sections, describing the context of the curriculum, the vision and goals with education in Nepal, the structure of education in Nepal and the implementation of the curriculum (National Curriculum Framework, 2005).

In the curriculum there is much emphasis on values. The curriculum states that one of the most important aims of education is to “inculcate value among children” (National Curriculum Framework, 2005:8). The intended values are both individual values such as “cooperativeness, honesty, respect for elders, civic duty, love and help for children, women and helpless people” (ibid) and values more related to the society, where democracy, human rights, justice and peace are mentioned as important values to promote in the education system (ibid).

The vision of education in Nepal is clearly stated in the curriculum as

The vision of school education is to develop citizens who are knowledgeable, skilful, competent, responsible, reliable, healthy, cooperative, good mannered, ethical, optimistic, nationalistic, and humanitarian, who believe in democracy, human rights, and diversity, and who have the ability for critical thinking to face the emerging challenges of the twenty-first century in a productive manner. Such citizens will be capable to live independently, contribute to national development, and work for national and international peace and security. (National Curriculum Framework, 2005:19)

The national curriculum don't provide any explanation or definition of democracy or citizenship; however in the guiding principles for the curriculum emphasis is put on a curriculum that is inclusive, non-discriminating and based on a child-centered approach (National Curriculum Framework, 2005:19-20). The curriculum describes more specific goals for education in the different levels in the education system. The overall goal for education on a secondary level is

To produce competent and healthy citizens who can contribute to economic development and are familiar with national traditions, cultural and social heritage, and democratic values. Its ultimate aim is to produce middle level human resource to make solid contributions to the all-round development of the country (National Curriculum Framework, 2005:28).

The curriculum continues with more specific objectives for education on the secondary level that concerns for example the importance of learning about and practice democratic values, to develop a positive approach to and a pride for the nation of Nepal, to develop a civil consciousness and to make the pupils a valuable resource in the development of the nation (ibid, 28-29).

To make some kind of conclusion the national curriculum put emphasis on a value based education where the values being taught should be the values of a democracy. Social justice, peace, inclusiveness and non-discrimination are described as key values in the education. Another aspect of value based education put emphasis on the individual values such as honesty and civic consciousness. Finally, the curriculum states that the education should be child-centered in order to produce creative, skilled citizens that can make a valuable contribution to the development of the nation.

6 Methodology

6.1 Design of the study

There are different ways to approach a study, and a variety of methods that can be used. The choice of research methods shall be appropriate for the researched issue. Kullberg (2004) describes two ways of approaching a research question. There is the justification approach, where the researcher has a hypothesis that he or she is testing with the research. This approach is called the deductive approach. The deductive approach is associated with quantitative methods, that is to say methods where you are counting or measuring, but the qualitative method can also be used with a deductive approach. The other approach is the discovery or inductive approach, meaning that the researcher strives to discover different ways to understand the researched issue. The discovery approach is often associated with qualitative methods where the researcher tries to describe or explore a research issue (Kullberg, 2004:53-54). My field of study is unknown to me and since my research aims to explore and understand how teachers in Nepal construct their opinions and values on issues concerning education in social studies, democracy and citizenship I have chosen to work with qualitative, inductive methods in my research.

Ethnographic methods are commonly used to study something that is seen as exotic, something which is not a part of our own cultural context. The ethnographic methods are supposed to describe phenomenon or values in a culture without passing judgment on the

cultural context (Marshall & Rossman 2006:82). I believe the ethnographic approach and methods fit my study since the field of my study is an unknown context for me. Doing ethnographic research is trying to see what the persons who are studied see, to try and understand their perspectives on what is being studied. Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) describe the methods of ethnographic research as follows.

In its most characteristic form it involves the ethnographer participating, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions – in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995:1).

In order to conduct an ethnographic study it is common to use several methods which strengthen each other in the aspect that they give the researcher different perspectives on the researched issue. Kullberg call this a triangulation of methods or multiple methods (Kullberg, 2004:75). I have chosen to make a triangulation of methods, using observation and informal interviews, in-depth interviews and review of documents as scientific instruments of my research method.

6.2 Observations/informal interviews

Observations are a research instrument for the ethnographic approach where the researcher studies and makes field-notes concerning the chosen object of the observation. There are many ways to make field-notes, but the purpose of observations it to be able to study behaviors which may be important keys for understanding and interpretation of a situation (Marshall & Rossman 2006:99). I have concept observations as an important method for me in order to gain some kind of understanding of the field for my study. Johansson & Svedner suggest that observations of the field are valuable for later in-depth interviews since the interview then can be partly based upon the findings during the observations (Johansson & Svedner, 2001:27). Since I have never before seen any Nepalese schools I felt the need to observe the schools, the classes, the teachers and the students as a foundation for later interviews.

Observations may vary in the degree of participation. The researcher can decide to be a full participant in all activities going on during the observations. He can also choose to be a silent, withdrawn observer who does not participate in any way, and then the researcher can chose to situate oneself somewhere in between a full participant and a passive observer. In order to gain full access to the field of study some participation is usually required (Marshall & Rossman, 2006:72-73). I decided that it would be impossible for me as a foreign student to be a totally passive observer and I didn't find it desirable to create that kind of distance between myself and my field of study. According to Wolcott (quoted in Ely, 1991:45) the researcher can have three different roles as a participant observer. He can be the active participant who takes part in all activities and that has some kind of work in the field, for example working as a teacher in the observed school. The researcher can also be a privileged participant. The privileged participant does not take full part in the activities but is well known and trusted in the field. Thus, he will get easy access to information and sensitive matters. The third kind of participant is the limited participant. The limited participant is not known by the observed field, thus he builds up a trust. The limited participant interacts with the field, making notes, asking questions and so on (Ely, 1991:45). I have tried to take the role of the limited participant during my observations, in the aspect that I have interacted with the pupils and the

teachers during my observations. I have not been an active participant since I have neither taken the role of a student during the classes nor the role of a teacher. I have not had the option of being the privileged participant. That would have required working in a known field, or staying in the field for so long that I gained total trust from the persons involved. As a student to become a teacher I have gained some access to the field in the way that the teachers have understood my interest for the field. I have tried to maintain my role as a researcher that observes, asks questions and involves in some activities during the classes and during break-time. I have interacted with the pupils and teachers to try to find out as much as possible about the teaching/learning situation.

The role as a limited participator opens up for the researcher to ask questions about things observed, to gain a better understanding of the event. Those conversations or dialogues that spring up spontaneously during the observations can be called informal interviews (Kullberg, 2004:115). Questions are asked concerning an observation made by the researcher or a situation that the researcher feels the need to expand on, to get the findings verified and to talk about possible interpretations so that misinterpretations can be avoided.

I have made observations and informal interviews in two different schools in Kathmandu. I have been observing the activities of the schools for eight days in all, visiting approximately 20 different classes, mainly classes in social studies but also some classes in English and science. I have been writing field notes throughout my observations, the field notes have been organized as suggested by Marshall & Rossman in two different columns; one column used for describing the events that takes place and one column for my own spontaneous comments and analysis of the events (Marshall & Rossman, 2006:99-100). After each day of observing I have edited the field notes, expanded my comments and analyses on some issues and rewritten the notes in a narrative way where my comments and interpretations are included in the text. During my time observing I have also made several informal interviews. The interviews have not been recorded but written down in connection to my field notes. The informal interviews have mainly been with different teachers. I have only talked in more detail with one or two of the pupils. My intention was to include the pupils more in the research but due to the language difficulty and the fact that the pupils were very shy this was not possible.

In my case, classroom observations have helped me to see the context in which the pupils are taught. By observing I got the opportunity to experience how the teaching is organized and what was taught to the pupils. This has been valuable in contextualizing the in-depth interviews as well as in data for the study.

6.3 In-Depth Interviewing

Interviews can be divided in two main categories; the structured interview where the researcher has made questions in advance which are supposed to be asked to all the interviewees in the same order and the qualitative in-depth interview where the researcher starts out without clearly defined questions that are to be asked in a specified order to all the interviewees. In-depth interviews are important to get the perspective of the participant, to hear the values and opinions of the person interviewed (Johansson & Svedner, 2001:24). In-depth interviews can be used as a way to expand on questions which have been raised during the observations (Marshall & Rossman 2006:99). To really be able to keep an open mind and let the informants make their own associations I have not made specific questions to be asked in a predetermined order. Kullberg recommend that the researcher think about or write down

some topics for the interview rather than questions prepared in advance (Kullberg 2004:121). I have followed this recommendation and drawn a mind-map (appendix 1) that includes the different topics I wanted to talk about during my interviews. From that mind-map I have been flexible and asked questions related to the answers I was given by the people interviewed.

When conducting qualitative, in-depth interviews it is of the utmost importance to ask open, authentic questions that allows the interviewed person to describe her own opinions and ways of looking at the issue (Kullberg, 2004:113-114). Another important matter to keep in mind is to listen attentively to the interviewed person and tries to understand what he or she says, rather than planning which question you are going to ask next. Lack of listening will change the in-depth qualitative interview to a structured interview (Johansson & Svedner, 2001:25). Those two aspects are not easy to deal with as a researcher. I have tried to keep this in mind when I have conducted my interviews but it has been difficult and something I have needed to remind myself of from time to time. To avoid this problem as much as possible I have been careful to transcribe every interview before conducting the next one. By listening to my own questions and the answers given I have learned after each interview things to avoid and things that can be developed further.

In all I have made four in-depth interviews with teachers in social studies on the observed schools. The four teachers I have interviewed have been the same teachers whose classes I have observed, which made it possible for me to relate my questions to what I have observed during their classes. Each interview has taken between 30 and 50 minutes, the ones where I have used an interpreter took longer time because of the translation.

The interviews have been a valuable method that has given me much data for my analysis. However this method has its negative sides; the language has been an obstacle for making the interviews flow like a normal conversation. I have made two of the interviews with an interpreter and two of the interviews without the interpreter, depending on the interviewed person's skill in English. I have not noticed any major differences in the answers from the interviewed persons that can be related to the presence or absence of an interpreter, but I have found the interview to be more relaxed when the interpreter was absent. It is important for an ethnographic researcher to adjust to the interviewed person, to make her or him feel comfortable (Kullberg 2004: 121). I have therefore only used an interpreter when I have found it absolutely necessary. I have chosen to perform the in-depth interviews in available classrooms in the studied schools. This has been a choice of convenience but also a way of making the interviewed persons more comfortable and relaxed. I have noticed that even though they were pleased to be asked to be interviewed, it has been a stressful situation for them. One reason could be that they were to be asked to do interviews in English, but also taking into consideration that Sweden is seen by many Nepalese teachers as a good example when it comes to good teaching and having an effective educational system. I have tried to make the situation as relaxed a possible without compromising the quality or credibility of my research. I have recorded all the interviews and tried to transcribe them down to the last letter, with the exception of the two interviews where I have used an interpreter. In those interviews I have not transcribed what was said in Nepali (for obvious reasons) but only the English part of the conversation. Transcribing can seem as something technical and easy, but Marshall & Rossman gives a deeper perspective on the matter. The way we speak can differ greatly from the usual way of writing. Thus, the researcher might be tempted to make the transcripts more easily read by editing them while transcribing. This can, however, lead to some interpretations done by mistake as the researcher tries to make the transcriptions more readable (Marshall & Rossman, 2006:111). This problem has affected my transcribing. When listening to the

interviews I have sometimes had problems hearing some of the words used. I have tried to transcribe as literally as possible and I believe that I have avoided interpretations made by mistake but of course some kind of simplifications may have occurred. This also means that I have chosen not to correct grammatical mistakes made by the interviewees in my transcriptions, which can be seen in the presentation of the results.

6.4 Review of documents

When using observations as a method of research one finds artifacts important for understanding the context in which you observe. Marshall & Rossman write that a necessary supplement for the researcher using qualitative methods is some sort of contextual review of documents used by the researched field (Marshall & Rossman, 2006:107). This review doesn't have to be a major part of the data collection but it is important to serve as supplement to the data collected by observation or interviews (ibid: 107-108). I have chosen to review some of the most used documents I have seen in the observed schools; the textbooks. The textbooks are used in every class, and many teachers are teaching closely to the contents of the textbook. I have used the textbook in social studies for level 9 and 10 as a supplement to my interviews and observations. Those textbooks are authorized by the government and intend to follow the syllabus closely. All government schools use these books that are provided in either English or Nepali. I have used the books in the English translation after having compared it with the Nepali textbook. All illustrations are the same and my interpreter also confirmed that the contents of the books are the same. One of the observed schools used the books in Nepali; the other one used the English version.

6.5 Selection of schools and interviewees

6.5.1 The schools

According to the aim of my research, the natural setting for my study was in Nepal and to be more specific, in Nepalese schools. I had a contact person in Nepal who is a tourist/trekking guide with a business in Kathmandu. He is not directly involved in schools but has a broad network of contacts. I asked him if he could help me to get in contact with two or three government schools in Kathmandu. I chose to make my observations in two schools situated in Kathmandu for two main reasons; one was the convenience. By observing schools that I could reach by the local bus made it possible for me to be present at the schools a longer time and also to be more flexible than if I had studied schools situated in remote areas. My second reason to study schools in Kathmandu was that I have both read (e.g. Dev Bhatta, 2004) and heard that differences between schools in the countryside and in Kathmandu are enormous. In order to be able to draw some kind of conclusions from my study I chose to limit myself to one area.

My observations have taken place in two different schools; situated in different parts of Kathmandu but still placed centrally in the city. One of the schools was a government school while the other was a community school. A community school in Nepal means a school owned by members in a neighborhood or a small community. The community school is not a private school in the aspect that it is supposed to gain profit to its owner. The school is a non-profit school where the pupil fees are used to run the school and several of the owners are parents to the students of the school. The government school has no fees for the pupils.

Choosing those particular schools have been a choice of convenience and a question of access (Marshall & Rossman, 2006:70). Through my contact in Nepal I got access to these two

schools which have both been in order with my requests of schools in Kathmandu, and partly with my request to observe government schools. At first my intention was to observe two government schools, but when I found out that the community school was obliged to use the same curriculum, syllabus and textbooks as all government schools I decided that it would be interesting to observe a community school as well. Both schools are situated in areas that are not the poorest parts of Kathmandu, but not the rich parts either. From what I have been told by my contact person and also understood during my observations the observed schools are schools where the lower middleclass Nepali family living in Kathmandu could send their children.

6.5.2 The interviewees

Aspers define different techniques for sampling in a study. One of the techniques is called the selection by role and means that the researcher is interested in the perspective of a person in a certain role (Aspers, 2007:92). This has been my motive to choose to interview teachers in social studies, teaching on a secondary level. I wanted to interview teachers rather than politicians or students since teachers have a mission as civil servants to teach the contents of the curriculum and the syllabus, which gives them a specific role in society. Their experience in working with social studies gives them a unique perspective on my research questions.

I have chosen to interview the social studies teachers who work in the observed schools. I chose those teachers because I wanted to be able to relate the interviews to the observations I had done in their classrooms, and also because they were obvious interviewees since we had established a contact during my observations that probably enabled me to have more relaxed interviews with them than I would have had with teachers to whom I was a complete stranger. All four of the interviewed teachers have government education for teachers and are thus qualified to teach at the secondary level. Two of the teachers were men and two were women.

6.6 Ethics and considerations

When conducting a study which involves individuals, it is most important to treat the people participating in the research with respect and consideration. The Humanistic Social Science Research Council in Sweden has established ethical guidelines that contain four main demands to protect individuals who take part in a study;

- The demand of information
- The demand of consent
- The demand of confidentiality
- The demand of utilization

(The Humanistic Social Science Research Council,
1996:6 [my translation from Swedish])

The demand of information means that persons participating in the study should be informed of the aim of the study in an understandable way and they should have been informed that their participation is voluntary and that they have the option to quit their participation if they want. When it comes to children below the age of 15 and if the study is of a sensitive nature the parents ought to be informed and consent to the participation of their children. The demand of confidentiality means that the persons or the places participating in a study should not be recognizable in the final report or in any kind of research documents. Finally the demand of utilization means that the data collected are only allowed to be used for research (The Humanistic Social Science Research Council, 1996: 7-14).

In the process of establishing contacts with schools in Nepal I sent the first plan of my study to my contact in Nepal, which he presented to the schools that agreed to take part in the study. After my arrival I informed the schools in more detail about my study, but since I have been open with my research questions according to the results of my fieldwork I have only given the schools brief information and then answered their questions. The first persons I had contact with on both schools were the headmasters and they agreed to let me observe in the school. As for the teachers all of them got information about the study before they agreed to give interviews. I was also careful to explain that I would not mention any names in my thesis and also that they didn't have to answer questions that felt uncomfortable. I also asked their permission to record the interviews. They seemed to have no problem with participating and two of them expressed their appreciation for being asked about their opinions. None of the interviewees refused to answer any questions.

As for the observations I found myself in a dilemma concerning the pupils. I didn't have the possibility to get consent from their parents for several reasons; I observed different classes and I have met approximately 500 pupils during my observations, it would have been impossible to inform all the parents and ask for their consent – especially as many of the parents were illiterate. I asked the teachers what they thought and they gave me permission to observe the classes. I asked in every class if the pupils accepted me there and the answer was always yes. I realize that this is not the perfect way of doing a study but it was the best solution I could find and since I don't believe my study to be of a sensitive nature to the pupils and I have made the schools anonymous I believe to protect their identities and interest in an acceptable way. My interest has not been the individual pupil's actions but the teaching as a whole. In my field notes and transcriptions I have given the teachers and the pupils' fictive names.

6.7 Validity and reliability

The term validity concerns the question if the researcher has explored the issue he or she intended (Kullberg, 2004:73). Many factors can affect the validity of a study; the questions asked can be aimed in the wrong direction or include other aspects than intended. Another factor can be that the interviewees or informants are not completely honest in their answers (Stukát, 2005:128). I have tried to give my study as high validity as possible; by being present in the field of study; schools in Nepal, I have avoided to lose focus and investigate something that was not my intention, I have chosen to use different methods to study the same field, thus decreased the risk of getting answers which are not honest. I have also spent quite some time in the field, something that usually corrects false answers or misinterpretations. However, by choosing ethnographic methods I have intentionally been open minded to influences from the field and have tried not to be blinded by my research question when observing or in interviewing. To follow the research questions too closely would have affected the validity of the study since I could have excluded important data because of too much focus on my own preconceived ideas of the field in relation to the aim of my study. I have tried to create a balance by observing and interviewing with an open mind but also with continuously reading the field notes and transcriptions, relating them to the aim of my study to see if I have missed important part of my research questions.

When it comes to the term reliability it concerns how trustworthy the study is; how precise the methods are used and how authentic the collected data is (Kullberg, 2004:73-74). In choosing the methods for my research I have used what can be called multiple methods (Marshall &

Rossmann, 2006:109) or a triangulation of methods (Kullberg, 2004: 75). Using multiple methods can be seen as a way to make the result of the research more reliable since the different methods strengthen each other. Rather than putting one's trust in one-side data the triangulation gives data from different perspectives and increase the reliability of the study (Kullberg, 2004:83). In this aspect I believe my study to have a good reliability. I have also tried to make sure to use the methods with as much precision as possible; I have made recordings and transcriptions from all in-depth interviews. I have also made field-notes from my observations. The field-notes have been made according to a systematic described under *observations/informal interviews* and all field-notes have been dated and saved. Due to this I am of the opinion that my study has good reliability.

6.8 Methodical limitations

There are always matters that could have been done to make the study more extensive, reliable and valid. I have experienced three major limitations when doing the study. The first limitation concerns the time spent on the field. The strength of ethnographic methods is that the researcher is present on the field of study for a long time, thus becoming somewhat an insider on the field rather than an outsider. To spend a long time on the field would make the study more reliable since possible misinterpretations or false information corrects itself by time (Ely, 1991:50-51). Due to time constraints I have not been able to be on the field for such a long period of time that would have made me an insider. I have spent several hours and days observing the field but not weeks, months or years. This must be seen as a limitation to my study that affects the reliability in a negative way.

The other limitation concerns the range of my study. I have made a priority to limit myself to observe two schools and interview four teachers. I have also limited myself in choosing schools in Kathmandu. This will affect my results in the way that I cannot claim my study to be generalizable in reflecting how schools in general in Nepal and teachers in general in Nepal view the subject of social studies in relation to democracy and citizenship. One must assume that the results presented here are not applicable on schools in rural areas of Nepal, on private schools or on all schools in Kathmandu. The great differences between schools in the urban area and in rural areas have also been pointed out to me by the interviewed teachers and must be taken in consideration as a limitation for this study. During my time in Nepal I have visited one school in a small village and though I did not have the possibility to make any scientific research there I have been there two times and can confirm the difference from schools in urban areas. However, to give a general picture of how Nepali schools and teachers view the issue would have demanded another method of research and has not been my aim. I wanted to make a qualitative study to explore the participants' unique view on the issue and understand their perspective as good as possible.

Finally the language must be seen as a limitation for my study. Both I and the interviewees have spoken English, a language none of us have as our first language. This has opened up for possible misunderstandings. During the observations I have also experienced the language as a limitation since I have only been able to take part in the translated information and communication with those teachers and students who had a problem with English has been somewhat limited.

6.9 Processing the data

When using ethnographic methods the researcher collects a big amount of data that needs to be analyzed in some way. Kullberg emphasizes the importance of making a well structured and systematic analysis of the collected data to ensure the reliability of the study (Kullberg, 2004:175). Aspers call this systematic process of analysis “to code the material”, meaning that the material is collected by the researcher, divided into smaller parts and organized to make an analysis possible (Aspers, 2007:157). Aspers differ between primary data and secondary data. The primary data is the material the researcher has created, for example field notes or transcriptions from interviews while secondary data is material that is relevant for the study but not created by the researcher, such as articles in newspapers or textbooks. Both of those sources could be used in the analysis and makes the total data (Aspers, 2007:158-159). When the researcher has all the data, the material should be coded, both according to what kind of material it is but also according to relevant themes or categories (ibid). Kullberg describes that the researcher is organizing the material in the search for main features (Kullberg, 2004:183).

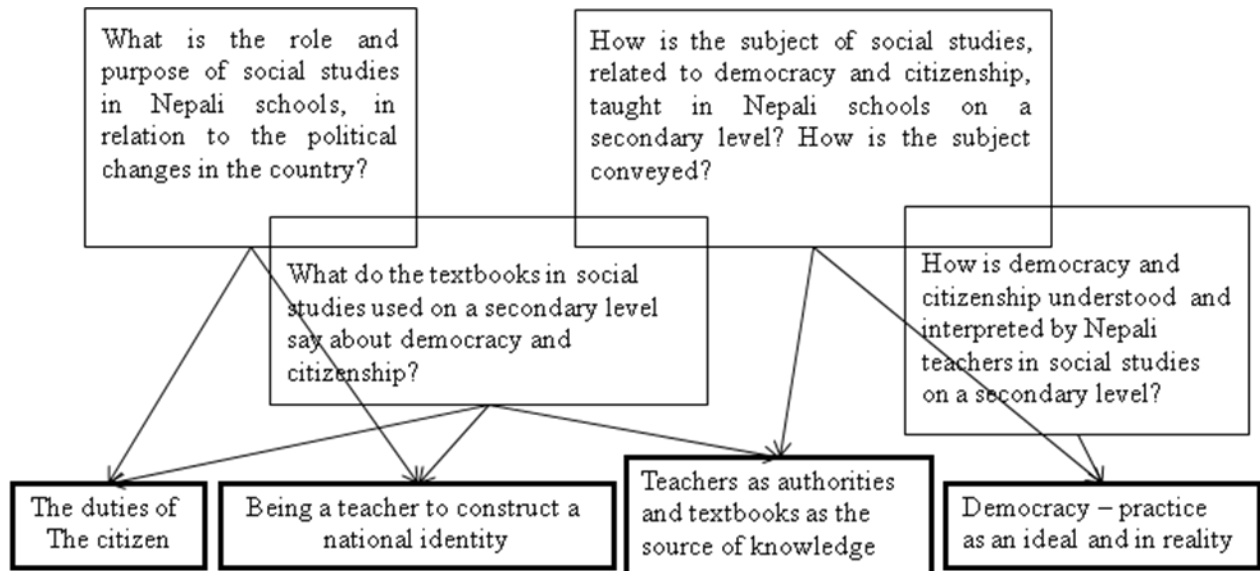
I have collected both primary data (my field notes and transcripts from the interviews) and secondary data (the textbooks). To organize the data I used different color codes. At first I coded the material according to my research questions but as I worked through the material I found that the results did not follow the research questions but flowed into each other and formed new patterns and that following the research questions closely did not make good enough use of the material. Instead, by reading the material with my research questions in mind I created six different codes, or themes that reflected the main topics in the materials; “teachers as authorities and the textbooks as the source of knowledge”, “the duties of the citizen”, “being a teacher to construct a national identity”, “contextual descriptions” and “other things of interest”. All of my material was color coded according to these themes and organized around them. The codes called “contextual descriptions” and “other things of interests” were not as closely connected to the research questions. Those results have been used more restrictively in my analysis but have still served as an important framework for understanding the material better.

7 Results

In this section I present the results I have found in my material in relation to my aim; exploring how the subject of social studies is taught in Nepali schools, in relation to the political situation of the country. What values in form of views on democracy and citizenship do representatives in Nepali schools want to convey? The results shall also be read in relation to my research questions;

- What is the role and purpose of social studies in Nepali schools, in relation to the political changes in the country?
- What do the textbooks in social studies used on a secondary level say about democracy and citizenship?
- How is the subject of social studies, related to democracy and citizenship, taught in Nepali schools on a secondary level? How is the subject conveyed?
- How is democracy and citizenship understood and interpreted by Nepali teachers in social studies on a secondary level?

When processing my data, I felt the need to organize the material in categories that could not be directly translated to my research questions. The results intertwined with each other and I decided to create themes for analysis drawn from my research questions. This figure shows how the themes connect with the research questions and which questions are intertwined.



The processed data has consisted of field notes as well as transcriptions and parts of the textbooks in social studies. I present the results according to the different themes I have found in processing the data, and use extracts from the observations, interviews and textbooks to give a complete picture.

7.1 Teachers as authorities and textbooks as the source of knowledge

When starting to observe the activities of the schools the physical setting in the classrooms occupied my thoughts as well as the rituals that all the classes, disregarding what subject was taught, contained. This is an extract from my field notes on the first day in one of the schools;

I follow the teacher in social studies into the classroom. The classroom is dark with no lamps, only the light that comes in through the two windows. The pupils are already sitting in their seats but when we enter the classroom all of them stand up and say “god morning mister” and “god morning miss” in chorus. I go to sit in the back of the classroom while the teacher goes to the front where a whiteboard is hung on the wall. To stand next to the whiteboard he steps up onto a low platform that makes him a head taller. The classroom is long and narrow. The pupils are sitting in rows on benches with narrow writing-benches or desks in front of them. The benches are divided by a small aisle. The classroom is crowded; I count to 42 students present (field notes, 2009-11-10).

After a couple of days observing, I began to see a clear pattern in how the pupils were taught;

The procedure in the classroom follows the same pattern: The pupils are in their seats when the teacher walks in. They stand up and greet him/her. Then the teacher gives a short lecture, followed by questions asked to the pupils. When questions are asked to the whole class, all pupils answer at the same time. When it is a question to a specific pupil, she rises from her seat and answers standing up. After answering the pupil remain standing until the teacher gives permission to sit (field notes 2009-11-18).

Both observed schools have those kinds of disciplined rituals when teaching in the classroom. I never saw any other methods used in class; it was always the same pattern with small varieties. The discipline however is not only shown in the pattern that every lesson follow with lecture followed by rehearsal questions from the book, it is also seen in all the small actions that show the teacher as a clear authority. The raised platform on which the teacher stands when he or she teaches, the request from the pupils to be allowed to sit down, the constant addressing of the teachers as miss, ma'am or Mr. all shows the accepted authority of the teachers. One of the teachers expresses in his interview dislike that teachers have such a high position in relation to the pupils. It is not right, he says, and it also puts a lot of pressure on the teachers, especially when it concerns knowledge about the rapidly changing political situation in the country;

We must be up to date all the time because the students, every student have such trust...that the teachers know everything. Whether I know or not, but they think that teachers know these things (Interview 4, 2009-12-01).

With the authority of the teachers there are also unwritten rules of behavior. The teachers don't interact very much with the pupils outside the classroom, and as a foreign student I got the same status as the teachers, including the same unwritten rules;

During the lunch break I leave the teachers staff room and walk slowly around the grass area that is the schoolyard. Some of the pupils are playing volleyball in front of the school. When I stop to look at their game one of the pupils asks shyly if I want to play. I say yes and the game begins. The pupils are really skilled and soon I am warm and tired. After a while I leave the game and settle myself in the grass. Some of the pupils come and sit next to me, starting to ask me questions. They are curious of who I am and of Sweden. We only get the chance to talk for a few minutes before the headmaster comes up to me and tell me in a very firm voice that it is time for tea. I follow her across the schoolyard, thinking that my playing and talking to the pupils might have been seen as inappropriate (field notes, 2009-11-11).

If the teachers are the authorities for the pupils, the textbooks are the main source of knowledge for the teachers. After observing the schools for several days I notice that they are teaching very close to the contents of the textbooks, and the pupils also seem to be used to this. This is an extract from my field notes during a class in social studies;

The teacher walks up to the whiteboard that hangs on the wall at the front end of the classroom. He writes the topic of the day; obstacles of industrial development in Nepal, on the whiteboard. He asks the pupils what obstacles there are to industrial development. The pupils open their books and read in chorus the obstacles listed there. The teacher writes down the obstacles on the whiteboard. After writing, the teacher talks the pupils through every matter on the board. He explains the meaning of them and asks the pupils some questions about what he has just told them. When he has explained

all the obstacles the teacher tells the pupils to ask questions if there is anything they don't understand. One pupil asks about the meaning of one word. After explaining the word the teacher asks the pupils what ways there are to solve these problems and increase the numbers of industries in Nepal. The pupils read in chorus from the book and the teacher make notes on the whiteboard. Before ending the class the teacher read the entire chapter aloud (field notes, 2009-11-30).

During one of my informal conversations with one of the teachers, a teacher in English, I ask about the textbooks and he tells me that the textbooks are authorized by the government and are based on the syllabus in each subject. I ask if the syllabuses are available in English and he say no, they only exist in Nepali. But the books are constructed to follow the syllabus closely. He believes that is why the teachers are so dependent on the book. They know that if they teach according to the books they are also following the syllabus and fulfill their duty as a teacher (field notes, 2009-11-11). When I have studied the textbooks more closely I can see that all topics addressed in the classes are in the book. There is one difference I can see however. The textbooks include one or two "classroom activities" at the end of each chapter where it is suggested that the pupils have different kinds of group dialogues or discussions. Those discussions I have not seen in any classroom I have observed, only the contents of the books seem to be strictly followed, not the suggested methods.

In another informal conversation with one of the teachers in social studies he tells me that he has learned many different methods to teach during his education but he finds it hard to apply those methods in the classroom, due to several factors. One factor is time, the pupils are used to the more traditional teaching methods and to change that will take time and there are so many topics the pupils need to learn before the examinations that he find it hard to give time to develop another method of teaching. Another factor is the level of the pupils. He says that many of the pupils are incapable of that kind of more abstract thinking that is needed and that they are also too shy to voice their own opinions. It is easier for both them and himself if he teach according to the usual pattern, even though he sometimes feels he is not doing as good a job as he would like to (field notes 2009-11-12).

Of course nothing is as absolute as it may seem, and as I continue to observe different classes I notice that some of the teachers try to create a more equal situation in the classroom and encourage the pupils to think for themselves and give voice to their opinions. There are not many pupils however who speak out their opinion in front of the teacher. In a conversation with my sister in law who is Nepali, she claims that the entire society is used to obey the authority. She gives an example from the college where she studies. All of the students in her class are experienced and work in leading positions in different Nepalese companies' but they still never contradict the teacher or voice their opinion against his. She believes that the values you are brought up with as a child have strong roots in you, and not speak back to authorities is a deeply rooted value in Nepal, a value that prevents people from speaking their opinion about the corruption or other example of bad governance in Nepal.

7.2 The duties of the citizen

In the interviews with different teachers we talked about their motivation to teach, why they became teachers and why they chose to teach social studies. We also discussed what the teachers considered to be most important for their students to learn in social studies. One of the teachers describes what she believes is the most important part of social studies and why;

T1: Political science is the most important for the students to learn because there are so many changes in politics in every country, especially in Nepal. Within one year there are two or three governments. And the students need to know about this because the students will lead the nation in the future. In the future the students will be the political leaders. They will lead the country in a good way. To do this, they need to know about political science. It is necessary for the students because they are going to be our leaders tomorrow and they will lead the nation (Interview 1, 2009-11-18).

The teacher emphasizes the importance for the pupils as future citizens and political leaders to know the political situation and the changes that are made all the time. Another teacher puts it in a slightly different way

T2: Especially in social studies there are so many topics, and they are all important but the major topics are fundamental rights, human rights, civil rights and what are the duty and the responsibilities of the citizens. These topics are the main topics, I think. This is the main topics that the students should know. If they have this knowledge they can value themselves so he [the student, my remark] can develop his country and he can claim for his rights. And he can contribute with something for his country. What country gave me he should not ask, but he should ask how can I contribute to my country? That is the main point. And this topics is most important to teach the students.

L-L: And when you say that the duties of the citizens are important, what do you mean? What is the duty of the citizens in Nepal, according to you?

T2: A good citizen, a responsible citizen, should pay tax. He should contribute to the natural and cultural resources of his country. Awareness of that when you are taking your rights it affects others. You should have that awareness (Interview 2, 2009-11-19).

This teacher stresses the importance for the pupils to know their rights and duties, in order to claim those rights and to contribute to the country. He also mentions some of the things associated with a good citizen. This teacher is not alone in pointing out the aspect of contributing to the country and become a good citizen. Another teacher gives a similar description on what is important in social studies

T4: Most important to teach is constitution. Because that is the main law of the nation, that drives the nation. If there is no constitution, then lawless. If there is no law there is no rule. There is no law and order. Everyone is free, to do anything. So constitution is the main thing. If they know about the constitution they know their fundamental rights, they know about their duties. If they know of their rights and duties then the nation can work properly. Without rights and duties there will be very much disturbance in the nation. So, I must know my right, I must know my duty to cast my vote, to elect the government. These are my duties. But right to freedom, right to voting, right to culture...these are my rights. So they should know right and duty. If everybody knows right and duty, they should obey their duties, like moral duty, civil duty, legal duty we should know our duty. If we forget our duties then the country can't run properly (Interview 4, 2009-12-01).

The responsibilities and the rights of citizens in a democracy seem to be a crucial point for the teachers to convey to the pupils, with special emphasis on the duties of the citizens.

T3: We should have to be responsible! That rights and duties are the two sides of a coin ...and some rights are written in the constitution and people should know the rights are

granted and how can we utilize it. That's the main thing, and another thing is that...that...agreeing to the rules and regulations, all should obey the rules and regulations! And...we have, we should have the feeling of not...of selflessness, yes? And we need to avoid the habit of selfishness and working for the welfare of others, yes?

This perspective is also clear in the classes taught in the different schools. The importance of the citizens is underlined not only when the teachers talk about politics or topics related to democracy and constitution, but appear also during other topics. I observe one class in social studies where the topic is water.

The teacher lecture about the importance of water for our survival and he talks about the problem with water in Nepal. He tells the pupils that 70% of the population in Nepal lack access to sufficient water for drinking. The pupils are following the teachers lecture in the book, some of them take notes. The teacher explains that water and development are closely connected. The citizens are the most important pillars on which Nepal rests, and the citizens need sufficient water in order to be healthy and able to work, study and contribute to the development of the nation (field notes, 2009-11-10).

There seems to be a strong emphasis on the citizen and the nation in speaking of democracy. The rights and the duties of the citizen are in focus and the role of social studies seems to be partly to teach the pupils about their own importance as future citizens.

7.3 Being a teacher to construct a national identity

To contribute to the nation is also an important message that is conveyed to the pupils. Most of the teachers highlight this as something that signifies a good citizen. The curriculum expresses the need to “produce competent and healthy citizens who can contribute to economic development and are familiar with national traditions, cultural and social heritage, and democratic values” (National Curriculum Framework, 2005:28). Several of the teachers also express that a responsible citizen gives contribution to the nation and to give a contribution to the nation is an important reason for them in choosing teaching as a profession.

T3: To make, to make the students a good citizen of the country, that is my dedication
L-L: ...and what is a good citizen to you?

T3: That...who can contribute for the welfare of the nation...not for a personal benefit but the nation and to, to work for others welfare to...that is a good citizen (Interview 3, 2009-12-01).

Or expressed in a slightly different way

T4: Teaching is, it is a way of...it is the way of service to the nation also. Teacher is that person which can actually give the service to the nation. Education, especially education...all the changes that takes place in the world it happens due to the education. It's because education is the eye of the society so I liked to enter into the field of education (Interview 4, 2009-12-01).

This teacher expresses his view of education as a factor for change in a society, and teachers have a part to play in order to serve the nation and encourage necessary changes. One of the other teachers expresses a similar view of the importance of education

T2: One thing is to give a good knowledge because our country is a very poor country and people are uneducated and illiterate and they are not aware of good education. So I want to give a good education because I belong to a village. I am from the village life. Good education gives empowerment to the poor and those who live in the villages. That is why I want to teach (Interview 2, 2009-11-19).

The emphasis on getting the pupils to identify with their nation is something I see in many of the activities that take place in the schools – the contents in the classes of course but also in established traditions and rituals;

When I arrive at the school at eleven o'clock when the school is supposed to start I see that the basketball court is full of pupils. The pupils are standing in straight lines, their faces turn to face a small stage in the front. On the stage is the headmaster and two of the older pupils. There is also a speaker and a large drum. When all of the pupils are lined up properly one of the older pupils on the stage starts drumming at a slow pace. At every drum the pupils move together, one step to the left, one to the right and so on in a kind of drill or dance. After doing this a few minutes the headmaster bids the pupils good morning and the pupils answer in chorus. When the greeting is finished the speaker starts to play and the pupils sing along with high, clear voices. One of the teachers explains to me that they are singing the national anthem of Nepal. They do this every morning before starting the classes (field notes, 2009-11-09).

There are several other ways in which the education is constructed to make the pupils identify with and feel proud of their country. In the textbooks used in social studies the headlines of each chapter starts with the word “our”; “Our community and Our nation”, “Our traditions, social values and norms”, “Our civic life” etc. The textbooks put a lot of emphasis on Nepal, and other countries are only briefly described, if mentioned at all. (Our social studies class IX and X, 2009). In the chapter “our traditions, social values and norms” we can read the following section;

Our country has fertile soil not only for the crops and vegetation but also for great people. It has produced many great people who have made great contributions to different fields. We respect them, remember them and for their great deeds. The Government has declared such great people National Personage. We shall now study briefly about each of them (Our social studies, class IX, 2009:80).

The National Personages mentioned in the book are amongst others Buddha who was born in Nepal, Prithvi Naryan Shah, who first unified the different small kingdoms and is described as the creator of the nation and King Tribhuvan who by his involvement in the overthrowing of the Rana rulers is called “the Father of the Nation” (Our social studies, class IX, 2009:81-85).

7.4 Democracy – practice as an ideal and in reality

When it comes to the understanding of democracy and how the subject of democracy is taught it is closely connected with what is mentioned above; the emphasis on responsible citizenship and the national pride and identity.

Democracy in Nepal can be said to be understood and explained more in the terms of rights, duties and constitution rather than in terms of what is democracy in relation to other forms of government. In looking in the textbooks of social studies there is no chapter specially dedicated to explain democracy with its values or its practice. However, there is a chapter called “Our civic life” where the form of government in Nepal is explained as well as the constitution of Nepal, the rights and duties of the citizen and the human rights (Our social studies, class IX, 2009: 103-132 & Our social studies, class X, 2009:123-156). The rights expressed in the textbooks are the human rights with freedom of speech, right to equality, right to organize and so on. The duties of the citizen are divided into three sectors; legal duties (to follow the law), moral duties (to live according to the values and norms of the nation) and civic duties. The civic duties described in the textbook are; loyalty to the State, obedience to the laws of the State, duty to pay taxes and duty to vote honestly (Our social studies, class IX, 2009:120-121).

One of the teachers interviewed describes her understanding of democracy as follows;

T3: Democracy? Democracy is to ensure people have freedom, but it should have certain rules and regulations to...and people have to follow it, continuously, eh? And it is learned by the government, ensure to peoples how to live freely, yeah? And for their, gain their rights which are granted by the constitution...we have to enjoy the rights! But...it should not be misused. We have to utilize in proper manners by the name of realizing the rights we have should not hamper to others rights... that is democracy (Interview 3, 2009-12-01).

The rights and the utilization of the rights in a democracy is the main point in democracy for this teacher. One of the other teachers explains democracy like this;

T2: Like, democracy means, if you can select, if you can vote to select your representatives in the parliament, and the representatives they will make a constitution, and they will run the government. If you have such right then you are exercising you rights in a democracy. If citizens can feel their fundamental rights, the human rights, their legal right and their moral rights. If you can feel, if you feel secure and if you are getting all these things it means you are in a country where there is democracy (Interview 2, 2009-11-19).

Both of those teachers stress the issue of democracy in practice – the people must know and feel their rights and use them in a good way for the country to be a democracy. This understanding of democracy as a practice rather than an ideal or a set of values explains why the teaching and the textbooks are focused on the different practice of democracy. The teachers are well aware that they should teach those rights and the democratic practices and they all have a positive approach to democracy in general. However, there seem to be a difference from their view of how a democratic practice as it should be, as an ideal, and their views on the democratic practice in reality in Nepal. The four teachers are in agreement that Nepal does not practice democracy.

T2: In practical life there is no democracy. Still we are not getting our rights; still we are deprived of our rights. But in theory we are a democracy. But not in practical life. And another thing...In Nepal especially, politics starts in school level and in college level. And there are no separate people involving in politics, we are all involved, so we are not

getting a good education and the classes are not running well. Sometimes strikes, sometimes demonstrations, always something. And the main target is the schools.

L-L: How do you mean that the main target is the schools?

T2: What happens, the political leaders comes in the school to aware them and to motivate them to involve in some political party. So they are taught here and then in college they involve in politics. So they involve and they also learn the bad political behavior. So it's difficult. In every issue, small issue, tiny issue, they come with physical violence and physical power. It is not a spiritual type of violence in Nepal and we [the political parties as I understand it] always prefer physical power as a way to solve political issues. Very rarely we have peaceful discussions or demonstrations, we go for the demonstrations where they are burning tires and everything, you know? And that kind of politics is not good (Interview 2, 2009-11-19).

This teacher criticizes the democracy in Nepal today and also addresses the problem of a bad political culture that has risen in Nepal where violence has become a common element. One of the other teachers describes the democratic problem in Nepal in a similar way;

T4: Ehh... I think in Nepal now it is only the name of democracy but now I think it's a...mobocracy. Because in democracy it is a rule of law, but here is not rule of law, here is impunity...if you have lots of people you can go and chanting slogans, you can do anything and your demands will be. I think this is not democracy, I think this is mobocracy. Only by the name of democracy. Because people are unable to put forward their demand, only the mob can put forward their demands. That way it is the name of democracy, but it is a mobocracy. Because the people are suppressed by the mob...there is no rule of law. If you should have done anything it should be through the government or any of the political parties. But now you are being suppressed, this is not the system. Not actually practicing democracy (Interview 4, 2009-12-01).

The unorganized involvement in politics by violent demonstrations is one of the obstacles for democracy according to the teachers. The lack of respect for the law and the rules of the country are seen as a huge problem for the society, together with a distrust in the present political leaders who according to the teachers should be the ones taking responsibility for running the country in a good way towards democracy but who are working for their own benefits.

T3: The main issue is that the political leaders, they are irresponsible, yes? And they are doing the work for their personal benefit only; they do not think about their cognizance and the peoples and lack of education. And the people, they do not know the meaning of, the rights of democracy. And if the persons do not know about this and the leaders have not done what were expected of them...then there will be no democracy (Interview 3, 2009-12-01).

The different teachers describe the democratic problem of Nepal as a combination of bad governance by the leaders and irresponsible citizens who does not know how to involve in good politics but who involve in political protests and violence. They also see different factors to change the situation and make Nepal a democracy in reality as well as on paper.

T4: I think this is the very critical time for Nepal. Now political leaders, in my opinion should come in consensus, should come in negotiating. Now, the situation in Nepal is very bad and it is going wrong way...we should bring it in track. Because for 200 years

we have been ruled by monarchy. Now, after 200 years we are entering the republican system. And in the transition period we must be very serious. Because the mob can take the law in their hands and so...very good leaders is needed...statesmen, I think leader is a statesman. Political leaders should be statesmen.

L-L: And, who do you think is responsible for making these changes?

T4: All the political parties. Because we are practicing democracy and in democracy political parties are the main...political parties should come in consensus, they should ehh...find the solutions. Immediately, because after six months our country should give the new constitution. If we are not able to give a new constitution then our nation will fail. Our nation might be like Afghanistan, like Iraq and many others like foreign forces may come and then we will suffer. This way, it is very serious (Interview 4, 2009-12-01).

T2: The main responsibility to give democracy to the citizens is the responsibility of the leaders. And they should know they duties, they should contribute the democratic practices to the country. If they are morally well, if they try to contribute for the country then obviously we can feel democracy. And the leaders should work for the citizens. And if awareness rises one day we will feel democracy like the European countries. If not, Nepal will have the same situation as the African countries, Ethiopia, Congo, Sudan, where there is no peace and no development. The leaders have to start working for the people, not for their positions! (Interview 2, 2009-11-19)

These teachers put strong emphasis on the political leaders as those responsible for making the country develop into a democracy. The teachers seem to agree that the leaders are important but some of the teachers have other perspectives as well;

T1: What will happen to democracy in the future in Nepal we don't know, it is uncertain. For democracy to be, the people should get education. Without education I think democracy is not successful in Nepal. Due to the political instability in the country, the political leaders actually are not governing our country in a good way. Nepotism and favoritism is common. They are not making the country prosperous; they are actually making themselves prosperous. There are different political parties in the country and different political parties have different foreign and different economic and social policies. So due to the political instability, today there is one government and they are going to start making one kind of policies. And tomorrow the government will change, another political party will come, then they make their own kind of policies. Making policies and spending money. Due to this situation, the political system in Nepal, in my opinion, will not be prosperous. Democracy will not be prosperous. To make democracy prosperous every people should be educated. They should not be guided by misconceptions and misstatements by the political leaders, they should select themselves. And that is difficult, but important for us to teach in the classroom (Interview 1, 2009-11-18).

8 Analysis and conclusions

In this part I will interpret and analyze the results in relation to the aim and research questions, using the theoretical framework. I will also present the conclusions I have drawn from the study and try to answer my research questions.

8.1 Combining an authoritarian tradition with democratic values

The way of teaching I have observed in the classroom and also seen reflected in the traditions and physical settings in the schools suggests that the education in Nepal rest upon the approach to knowledge described by Sundgren, where knowledge is seen as objective facts and the pupils are seen as learners who are supposed to learn the objective facts the teachers convey (Sundgren, 1996:14-15). This is the approach I call the *static approach* to knowledge. Sundgren means that this approach tends to make democracy a subject with specific facts that the pupils should learn rather than practicing democracy in the classroom with an education that put emphasis on the pupils and their views on democracy (ibid:17).

For me it appears that the Nepali education system is struggling between two different understandings on knowledge and on democracy for that matter. On one hand the national curriculum in Nepal states that its vision is to “develop citizens who [...] have the ability for critical thinking to face the emerging challenges of the twenty-first century in a productive manner” (National Curriculum Framework, 2005:19) as well as having as a guiding principle that the teaching in Nepal should follow a “child-centered approach” (ibid:22). Those statements stand in contrast to the actual teaching in the schools where the teachers set the agenda and where there are few forums for the pupils to apply critical thinking or to voice their own opinions. I believe this to be a conflict between a cultural tradition of respecting and obeying authorities, also expressed in the curriculum as the aim to “inculcate value among children” (ibid:8), where some of the values expressed are respect for elders and cooperativeness and the more recent emphasis on democracy and its values, child-centered education and the development of critical thinking among students.

This struggle between different approaches to knowledge and teaching can also affect the view on democracy conveyed in the schools. Englund writes about the functionalistic and the normative understanding of democracy where the functionalistic view is likely to make teaching about democracy a well defined topic with specific facts about democracy as a form of government while a normative view will emphasize the values of democracy and to make the pupils participate as active citizens (Englund in Jonsson, 2003:50-51). The teachers navigate with great difficulty trying to combine these somewhat incompatible objectives of education, with the result that the education in practice is taught according to the static approach on knowledge without the perspective of pupils as active participants who should create their own knowledge and opinions in interaction with others. But the contents, what is said to the pupils and what is written in the books is somewhat more in line with the normative approach to democracy and child-centered approach to education. There is a clear difference between what is being said and what is being done.

8.2 Creating a supportive political culture?

I find the emphasis on citizenship and the rights and duties of the citizens that appears clearly throughout my study as one of the dominating way of teaching about democracy fascinating.

The curriculum stresses the issue of educating children to become good citizens. For example one of the national goals for education stated in the curriculum reads as follows; “to produce citizens who participate in and promote the democratic process” (National Curriculum Framework, 2005:19). The values that are supposed to be inculcated in the pupils through school education (ibid:8) are well in line with the rights and duties of the citizen which the teachers bring up in their interviews. Some of the teachers express that good and responsible citizens are needed to make the country run properly and that it is important to teach the pupils that. When Dahl defines democracy and discusses the different aspects of democracy he finds that democracies will at some point go through a major crisis, where the form of government is questioned. When looking at countries that has experienced those crises he concludes that the difference between the countries who managed to maintain the democratic form of government during this crisis and those who did not succeed but where the democratic government was overthrown by another form of government is the existence of what he calls a supportive political culture (Dahl, 1998:156-157). A supportive political culture is crucial for democracy to be stable and long lasting. To have a supportive political culture means that most of the citizens are aware of the democratic values and gives a strong support for them (ibid).

Dahl does not offer any given way of creating a supportive political culture, but in relation to the curriculum in Nepal and the thoughts the interviewed teachers put forward I would suggest that one of the purposes of putting emphasis on the citizen in teaching about democracy is to create that supportive political culture and in that way stabilize the democratization in Nepal. Dahl points out that the process of creating a supportive political culture is a long process since it requires new traditions to form and establish the culture includes most part of the citizens (Dahl, 1998:158) but maybe the groundwork for creating this culture has begun in the Nepalese schools.

If the purpose of putting emphasis on citizenship is to create a supportive political culture in Nepal and inculcate those values in the students it is interesting to analyze how the pupils are seen by the schools and by the teachers. In this section I have already quoted one of the national goals for school education, to produce citizens who participate in and promote the democratic process. I believe this says a great deal about the view the education system applies on their pupils. The word produce implies that the pupils are not yet citizens, the school needs to inculcate certain knowledge for them to become citizens. This is in line with the education in the classroom where the pupils learn about the rights and duties that are bestowed on adults; the right to vote, the duty to pay tax etc. Osler & Starkey means that this is a common approach to children – they are not yet citizens but citizens-to-be (Osler & Starkey, 2005:38). They point out a problem in viewing children as too immature to be full worthy citizens when educating for democracy. There is a risk that the pupils experience the gap between the values and ideas of democracy and their own reality as excluded from several of those values. This could make the pupils less interested and more skeptical against the concept of democracy since they seem to have no place in it until they grow up (ibid:55-56). To bridge this gap Osler & Starkey suggest that the education is formed in a way that make the pupils participants as citizens before they become adults. If the pupils are seen as a resource in contributing to society today they are likely to be more engaged pupils and citizens now as well as in their adult future (ibid). Thus we can see a conflict between the purpose of education for democracy in Nepal and the view on the pupils as immature citizens-to-be that could become problems in creating a supportive political culture in the country.

8.3 The nation state in need of loyal citizens

In the results from observations, interviews and reviewing of textbooks I found a clear element of nationalism in the school education in Nepal. Indeed, to “develop citizens who are [...] nationalistic” (National Curriculum Framework, 2005:19) is a part of the vision for school education in Nepal. This seems to be closely connected with the above mentioned emphasis on citizenship as the foundation of democracy. The rights and duties of the citizen can be said to be connected to the aspect of citizenship described by Osler & Starkey as citizenship as a state, which is to say the relation between the state and the individual (Osler & Starkey, 2005:10) whilst the emphasis on nationalistic citizens are closely connected to the aspect of citizenship as a feeling. Citizenship as a feeling means that the citizens of a nation identify with the nation and the people of the nation, feeling included in the community (ibid:11). Citizenship as a feeling does not necessarily relate to the nation state, it could be to a smaller and more local community.

As described by Anderson the nation state is an imagined community where the citizens could have less in common than with citizens of another nation. But the feeling of a community within the nation provides a sense of security, of belonging that is important for the citizens as well as for the nation state (Anderson, 1992:20-22). The sense of belonging to the community of a nation state creates a respect for the laws, rules and practices of the country. For a country as Nepal, where the political situation is unstable and several of the teachers point out that a great problem for the country is that there is no rule of law it would be important for the government to make the citizens identify with the nation, thus being more anxious to respect the rules and participate and contribute to the stabilization of the country, even to confirm the legitimacy of the new form of government. The strengthening of a national identity can be seen for example in the textbooks passage about national celebrities where emphasis is put on those historical characters that unified Nepal in some way. This is a way to create what Anderson mentions as important for the imagined community – heroes (Anderson, 1992:20-22).

Dewey expresses one of the dilemmas with democracy that democracy in itself is today organized in nation states (this differs from e.g. the ancient Greek democracy which was based on small city states) thus making the identification with the nation necessary to have a functional democracy where the citizens have the interest to participate. This can however come in conflict with the values promoted by democracy which are more universal and reach out much wider than the nation (Dewey in Lauder, Brawn, Dillabough & Halsey, 2006:100). In the context of Nepal the emphasis on the nation state in educating for democracy might be a necessary step in the democratization process. The country consists of several different ethnic groups and castes which could possibly divide the nation and drive it into a new kind conflict. Creating a national unity is according to Rustow the first phase in a democratization process (Rustow in Fredholm, 2007:29) and a crucial point in developing a long lasting democracy. However, a high level of nationalism can also create huge problems.

One risk is that those who live in the country but does not feel included in the imagined community are very excluded and might rise against the new form of government seeking recognition, another risk that has been seen in several countries where nationalism has grown is that everything outside the own community represents something foreign and hostile (Anderson, 1992:22). Too much emphasis on nationalism could be the breeding ground for values incompatible with the democratic values such as racism and discrimination against other countries or against those in the own country who are excluded from the community. I

see this risk in Nepal since there is such diversity of ethnical groups and since the caste system is still deeply rooted in the minds of many Nepalese people. It is a great challenge to unify those diverse groups into one imagined community, but a challenge the schools are trying to face when teaching social studies.

8.4 The stories we tell ourselves about ourselves

When asking the teachers to describe how they understand democracy they explain the concept as a set of rights and duties. Dahl differs between democracy as an ideal, which means a set of values which explain why we have democracy and democracy as practice as a set of institutions, rights and duties that is necessary for a democracy in practice (Dahl, 1998:26-31). As can be seen the teachers choose to speak of democracy as a practice rather than an ideal. However, their explanation of democracy as a practice is *the practice as an ideal*, by this I mean that they describe the practice that should be for a good democracy, not the practice they see in Nepal. *The practice of democracy in reality* in the context of Nepal is described as a democracy on paper but not in real life. The rights that should be given are not given and the duties are not fulfilled by the citizens. Thus the four interviewed teachers claim that Nepal is no democracy in reality, most of the aspects they highlight in explaining why can be found in the criteria for democracy made by Dahl, especially exercising control over the agenda (Dahl, 1998:12) but there is also the aspect of what one teacher describe as “mobocracy”. This is in line with Weales interpretation of democracy where the public opinion should be expressed in a formal and regular way, not by demonstrations or other actions outside the political system (Weale, 2007:18-19). It is a democracy on paper though, and according to the National Curriculum the school education in Nepal has an important mission and responsibility to make the pupils promote the democratic process and become citizens that supports and take part in democracy (National Curriculum Framework, 2005:19). This means that the teachers are telling the pupils the story about Nepal as a democracy and the set of rights and duties that includes along with how to practice or utilize those rights and duties but at the same time the teachers see a completely different reality full of what they call bad politics; corruption amongst the political leaders, an increase in the political violence, the increasing influence from the unorganized mob to set the political agenda and the lack of a rule of law. Culture is the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves (Geertz, 1975:448). But what kind of culture do we create when the stories we are telling are just that – stories, not necessary to closely connected with reality?

Dahl states that it is important to have a democratic ideal as a measure against the democratic practice to see what in the practice must develop and also to remember why democracy is important and maintain the support for the democratic form of government even if it has its flaws in practice. He warns however that if the gap between ideal and practice becomes too wide the meaning of the ideal will fail to stay connected to the practice and will therefore become meaningless (Dahl, 1998:26-31).

In Nepal it is not the question of the relation between the ideal values and the practice but the practice as an ideal that is conveyed to the pupils and the practice as reality which faces the pupils in their everyday life in the form of demonstrations, violence, strikes and political rallies. There is according to my understanding an apparent risk that the gap between the practices as it is taught in school and the pupils (and teachers) own experience of the practice in reality becomes too wide and loses relevance to each other. In that case the word democracy loses its meaning and the support for democracy is likely to decrease. On the other hand if the teachers should teach democracy as the practice in Nepal today the pupils would

get no frame of reference to be able to compare the reality in Nepal with any form of ideal democracy. The crucial question seems to be how to educate citizens who support democracy when the country has no consolidated democracy without creating too wide a gap between ideal and reality? One of the teachers express the need to educate the pupils to think for themselves, an approach also described by Sundgren as the need to use the dynamic approach in teaching in order to make each pupil create their own understanding of democracy in interaction with others and with the surroundings (Sundgren 1996:17-19).

8.5 Conclusions

I believe that my study has given me an example of the teaching in social studies in Nepal, although the conclusions I draw must be seen in relation to the limitations of the study. The aim of my study was to explore how the subject of social studies is taught in Nepali schools, in relation to the political situation of the country. What values in form of views on democracy and citizenship do Nepali schools want to convey? My focus has been to study the role and purpose of social science in Nepali schools, in relation to its approach on democracy and citizenship.

I have based my study upon the following questions;

- What is the role and purpose of social studies in Nepali schools, in relation to the political changes in the country?
- What do the textbooks in social studies used on a secondary level say about democracy and citizenship?
- How is the subject of social studies, related to democracy and citizenship, taught in Nepali schools on a secondary level? How is the subject conveyed?
- How is democracy and citizenship understood and interpreted by Nepali teachers in social studies on a secondary level?

When analyzing the data I have found some crucial points related to the aim of my study and to my research questions.

My first conclusion, concerning the role and purpose of social studies in Nepal is that *the subject has a crucial role in creating support for the government and for democracy as the desirable form of government or, as Dahl puts it, to create a supportive political culture*. This means to make the pupils promote democratic values and practices and by that creating citizens who will take responsibility for maintaining and developing the somewhat instable democracy in the country. This vision can be found in the curriculum as well as among the teachers and in the textbooks used in the classes. My second conclusion is that *the way of creating this support for democracy is to create a strong national identity, a feeling of belonging to and being proud of the nation, as well as emphasizing the importance of the citizens and their responsibility to be responsible and fulfill their duties*. This is taught along with the rights belonging to a citizen in a democracy.

The purpose of social studies might be obvious to the government and to the teachers, but the reality I have seen suggests it to be more complicated. The situation in the country is chaotic and it is questionable if the country can claim to be a democracy in practice. The teachers I have interviewed don't think Nepal to be a democracy more than on paper. This makes teaching social studies difficult and the subject is full of inconsistencies. There is a huge gap between the democratic practice as an ideal and as practice in reality in Nepal, but there is

also a gap between the ideal approach to education described in the curriculum as being child-centered and aim to create citizens who have the ability of critical thinking and the practice where the pupils are seen as recipients of the teachers knowledge with not much space for critical opinions or active participation. My third conclusion, understood in relation to my aim to study what values the Nepali schools want to convey, and how the subject is taught is that *the gap between what is taught in social studies about democracy and citizenship and what is the reality in the classroom as well as in the politics is wide. The gap between those might be inevitable and necessary to try and stabilize the political situation but the risk is that the pupils lose faith both in democracy and the democratic process but also in their own role as citizens with opportunity to affect their own situation as well as the situation in the country.*

9 Discussion

9.1 Nepal in the future – a democracy?

The struggles, contradictions and inconsistencies is not isolated to the subject of social studies, but can be seen in the entire country as the political situation is instable and bears the stamps of conflict. The political situation affects the schools and the education in Nepal but also other aspects of life. The people in Nepal live with the uncertainty of what will happen in the future. Will Nepal continue to develop into a democracy in practice as well as on paper or will the political struggles get worse, will the demonstrations and strikes lead to a renewal of the internal conflicts? One could wonder what role the schools can play in the current development. Is it possible that the schools are struggling with finding a balance between teaching about the society as it ought to be and the society as it is? If the political struggle decreases and a constitution can be presented by the political parties the gap between ideal and practice might be bridged and the pupils can relate to both the ideal and the practice. I believe that it is crucial to educate the pupils according to the dynamic approach on education, meaning that knowledge is a process and something we construct in interaction with others and in relation to our surroundings (Sundgren, 1996:13-16). This will give the pupils the possibility to find their own opinions and to find wider frames of reference in the interaction with others that could help them in exercising their rights as citizens and members of a community. To reach out and teach and discuss about the form of government in other countries might also be a way to help the pupils create a wider frame of reference and thus see that democracy can be many different things but that the democracies in the world share some values and ideals.

Another aspect I can see as important is to take away some of the nationalistic aspects in education. I believe it to be necessary to create an imagined community for a nation to become a functioning democracy, but too much emphasis on national identity will become excluding. Dewey writes about this dilemma of education the democratic values for nationalistic or wider purposes (Dewey in Lauder, Brown, Dillabough & Halsey, 2006:99). Osler & Starkey makes the same point but suggest that there is a possibility to educate for a cosmopolitan citizenship that keep the connection to the nation state and the desire to take part in the democratic practice there at the same time as it unifies people around universal values. Those universal values would then be the same values as the citizens of each nation state initiate in their national community (Osler & Starkey, 2005:20-21). In the context of Nepal this could be a way to make sure that the pupils can see the relevance of the democratic ideal on a more universal level and thus keep the support for democracy in Nepal even when the country doesn't meet the democratic requirements.

9.2 Nepal, Sweden and the dream of democracy

My interest for this study has originated from my experiences of teaching democracy in Swedish schools, and I believe this study to be of interest not only in Nepal but also in a Swedish context. The Swedish and Nepalese curriculums have one mission in common; to promote democratic values to its pupils. This is however made in completely different contexts; In Sweden we teach about democracy in a country that has been a consolidated democracy for many years while in Nepal they teach about democracy in a country that is on the verge of democracy. What has surprised me the most is how similar approach we take on the subject in Sweden and Nepal. In my experience from watching classes about democracy and reading the Swedish textbooks in social studies we also tend to explain democracy in terms of rights, duties and practices rather than the ideal described by Dahl, where the emphasis is put on the values behind democracy and the discussion about why those values are important (Dahl, 1998:29-30). I thought that the education in Sweden put emphasis on the rights, duties, institutions and practice of democracy because we believe that the values are so obvious that it goes without saying. But in Nepal, where democracy is far from a conventional matter the rights, duties and practice are also in focus.

Englund as well as Sundgren promote a democratic education rather than an education for democracy, meaning an education where the pupils have real influence over what is being taught and how and where the education is built upon social interaction, deliberative dialogue and the opportunity for the pupils to form and voice their own opinion (Englund in Jonsson, 2003:61, Sundgren 1996:21-22).

I believe that this functionalistic approach in teaching about democracy (Englund in Jonsson, 2003:50) is often used in schools in different countries independent of how long they have been a democracy because this is the easiest approach. To teach a well defined subject with specific facts is easily combined with the static approach to knowledge, an approach that is common not only in Nepal but can also be found in many classrooms in Sweden. When democracy is a clear defined set of rules and practices, the pupils are citizens-to-be who needs to be taught this rules and practices by the teacher it is easy and manageable. However, as I have experienced in Sweden as well as in Nepal, democracy is not easy. It is not an objectively defined concept obvious to all. Democracy is a struggle, an ongoing process of developing values, ideas, different practices and above all I believe that democracy is defined and decided by the participation of all citizens. In order to teach this approach to democracy we must see the pupils as worthy citizens with a real influence.

In my opinion teachers has an important role in creating a real supportive political culture, whose supporters are aware of the weaknesses of democracy as well as the strengths and because of that recognize the value of democracy as a complicated process which we all can influence rather than a set of already made, clearly defined rules. This is equally important for teachers in Nepal and teachers in Sweden. The challenge I see is for every teacher to find a way to give a democratic education based on the assumption that democracy is a complex process where the pupils are of utmost importance.

9.3 Further research on the matter

Doing this study has been most interesting and it has given me experiences valuable for my future profession as a teacher. However, despite being in Nepal for more than two months I feel as if I have only scratched the surface of this contradictory country and of a field of

study that could be of interest for several disciplines. To use ethnographic methods for my research has given me some kind of understanding for the country but in order to gain a deeper understanding of the country with its inconsistencies and its diversity would require much longer time on the field. During this process I have gained an understanding for anthropologists who spend years researching a small community in order to really understand the field. When it comes to further research I can see several areas of interest for anthropologists when it comes to understanding the different small communities within the country in relation to a national identity. For a political scientist the democratization process and the ongoing political struggle would be of utmost interest to study in a broader perspective than I have done with consideration taken to the diversity of the country and its population.

For someone working in the field of pedagogy and education suggestions for further research can be to make a comparative study of education for democracy in different democratic countries, new democracies, old and consolidated democracies, rich countries, developing countries etc. In the context of Nepal there are many challenges for the educational system that would be interesting to investigate further; the difference in education between rural and urban areas and its relation to the feeling of belonging to the community or the sense of inclusion would be a fascinating field of study; another would be to explore the difference between private and government schools in terms of teaching methods but also in relation to the research questions I have worked with. Is the view of democracy or citizenship different in private schools compared to government schools? Are there any differences in the approach to knowledge? Finally it would be interesting to make a study that is centered on the pupils themselves. What views do they have on their education, their possibilities in the future and the future for the Nepal?

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Appendix

Appendix 1

Topics for interviews

Appendix 1 shows a mind-map over the topics I wanted to cover during my interviews. The words in bold typing signify the main topics I wanted to discuss while the other topics are related to the main topics without having the same importance.

