Pushing a thesis or seeking an answer. On law students' approaches to seeking and working with sources.

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"Skepticism towards the sources /…/ is what is normally understood by critical faculty. But the most important form of critical faculty is that one applies to oneself," writes Sebastian Olden-Jörgensen.[1] We at the Gothenburg University Library took this as our starting point when we worked with the Department of Law to improve the source critical skills – or perhaps we should say the "self critical" skills of law students.

Undeniably, the didactic work of libraries is changing. Helping users locate sources is not enough: to meet users' needs in the information society, they need help formulating problems and interpreting the information they find, which requires support in the effort to design meaningful information search processes.

How then should the information that users find be evaluated, or perhaps more accurately: how can users improve their skills at independently evaluating the results of their searches? From the source critical perspective, they can of course begin by asking themselves whether all potentially relevant sources have been found – after all, what people find with the help of technology is not random, and one cannot conclude that something does not exist (at all) simply because it did not show up in a search. In a second step, they can go on to ask themselves whether the sources they have generated are representative: has the search process helped bring to the fore a variety of perspectives in a field of knowledge/research? And what can the sources (reasonably) be used for?

These questions are relatively uncomplicated – or at least concrete. The third step is that much harder, for it seems reasonable that people who seek and evaluate sources should also engage in independent, critical reflection about their predispositions as they select or discard sources. Should not all users think about why they have drawn the conclusions they have, based on their choice of sources?

It is these source-critical considerations that could be characterized as "self-criticism." In other words, self-criticism here refers to the insight that what we, as users of sources, see and understand is limited not only by the relevance and representativity of the sources, but also by us personally, that is, by the shortfalls in our knowledge and deductive skills, in our imaginations and human experience. A key question then becomes, in the words of historian Maria Ågren: "What am I seeing – and what am I not seeing?"[2]

Thoughts on information search processes and working with sources

While we at the library are working to motivate students to improve their information search processes and think about why they search as they do, staff in the university departments – including the Department of Law – have expressed concerns that students need more practice at source criticism. But this is not just a student problem – it is part of a context. In all empirical sciences, scholars would be wise to ask themselves whether the questions they ask can provide an answer to the main question, and to investigate whether the findings of their studies truly constitute relevant answers to the questions asked. This is especially true when it comes to handling data whose nature is more that of statements, as in law, than a series of measurement values. The ability to assess the context, based on self-critical reflection, can then be presumed very important.

Retrieval and use of information in the field of law has been addressed within library and information science by Carol C. Kuhlthau and Stephanie L. Tama. In their paper,

"Information search process of lawyers: a call for 'just for me' information services" Kuhlthau and Tama report a study in which eight practicing lawyers – four women and four men – were interviewed about how they seek information and evaluate sources. The study shows that the lawyers search the literature primarily to gain an overview and acquire background information when they are working with individual cases. One of the questions, how the lawyers know when they have enough information, is particularly relevant here.[3] The answers indicate that the work with sources is finished when the legal argument the lawyer is working with for the moment is (sufficiently) persuasive.

According to Kuhlthau and Tama, the interviews reveal a need for new technical solutions in libraries. The lawyers perceive keyword searches in databases as limiting – they lack confidence in the ability to find the information they need via keywords, especially early in the search process. (Kuhlthau writes that for one lawyer, keyword searches prevented him from "finding Kevin while looking for George.").[4] The lawyers think it is difficult to use databases to find complex information.

Kuhlthau has explored the information search process in other contexts as well. In *Seeking Meaning. A Process Approach to Library and Information Services,* she argues for a process approach to learning in libraries, wherein students are encouraged to ask questions and seek a wide variety of sources that in turn generate new questions. What students need, writes Kuhlthau, is to practice identifying what they need to know more about, summarizing what they have found, and presenting to others (fellow students) what they have learned by searching for sources.[5]

Kuhlthau believes supporting students in the effort to *interpret* the information they find is a central tasks for libraries – as important a task as helping students locate sources.[6] In an information society like ours, Kuhlthau believes, it is essential to discuss that different sources exist, side by side, and that (personal) interest governs the work with sources. Kuhlthau sees didactic advantages to the fact that personal interest controls the choice of sources: by starting with the students' feelings and the personal interests that affect them, the students can, via libraries, be encouraged and motivated to maintain their search processes. Kuhlthau thus sees potential from a didactic perspective in the personally colored selection of sources and is not (primarily) interested in source criticism. (However, it cannot be precluded that source-critical aspects could constitute part of the response-oriented work with information search processes.)

Didactic perspectives on source criticism are, however, found to a much higher degree in the discipline of history. Source criticism is central to the personal selection of sources (when "new" history is to be written) in literature such as *Forma historia. Metodövningar* [*Shaping History. Methodological Exercises*] by Gabriela Bjarne Larsson (ed).[7] The significance of social context is also put in concrete terms: researchers including Maria Ågren and Lennart Torstendahl approach source criticism as a set of methodological rules that the historian is expected to (mechanically) follow.[8] Focus should be on the usefulness of sources relative to the historian's question – but not without reflection over personal preferences (self-criticism). Ågren in particular emphasizes the social aspects of the selection process; source selection does not take place in a vacuum, unaffected by the surrounding society, and the existence of social power relationships means we do not live in a society in which sources are made manifest on equal terms.

Scholars in journalism, media, and communications studies are (of course) also interested in working with sources; inquiries are focused on the fact that information, news reporting, and pictures may contain errors, misunderstandings, or deliberate lies. In this respect, Torsten Thurén's *Sant eller falskt? Metoder i källkritik* [*True or False? Methods in Source Criticism*] was a useful premise in our work with the law students – perhaps not so much in terms of methodology but because he (like Ågren) sees source criticism as "criticism

of oneself, of one's own preconceived notions and prejudices."[9] In the chapter *"Sannolikhet, tunnelseende och önsketänkande"* ["Probability, tunnel vision, and wishful thinking"], Thurén describes how journalists fall victim to tunnel vision when they step into the trap of seeing only that they already know, and indulge in wishful thinking when they allow their interpretations of reality to be shaped by the values that appeal to them personally. Preunderstanding is another concept Thurén explores; in his version, it comes to mean the preconceived notions that characterize all individuals and affect their interpretations as they describe the world.[10]

One might suspect that Thurén, like Ågren, would like to be able to claim that source criticism is "seen as a hallmark" of the scholar's own profession.[11] Ågren further elaborates her thoughts: "But is source criticism exclusively the mark of historians (and perhaps lawyers) or does it represent something more generally applicable?" Her answer to this question is that there are doubtless common denominators for source critical problems in various disciplines. But we are inclined to emphasize that the problem is still specific in its context dependency. As an example, we can try starting with the discipline of law – for how well does self-criticism fare if the rhetorically persuasive argument is seen as a "hallmark" of lawyers as a professional group?[6] What does it mean if the work with sources can be considered done when a legal argument is perceived as rhetorically persuasive (and the self-critical process has not necessarily been observed)?

We will discuss this, like the library's role in working with sources, after we have presented the pilot study performed at the law school in the autumn 2007 term. But in order to do that, we must first (briefly) present the law program at Gothenburg University, as well as the course the students were taking when they participated in the study.

The law program at University of Gothenburg

The law program (LL.M, Master of Law, 270 ECTS) was modernized prior to the autumn 2004 term. Compared to the old program, it is more oriented towards the practice of law; during their education, students are given the opportunity to try out various professional roles and establish contacts with practicing lawyers.

In its information for prospective students, the Department of Law writes that the objective of the program is to "give students a strong grasp of the law that can be applied with a sense of ethics and context."[7] In the fifth-term course "Private Law II" (30 ECTS), students are also meant to gain "insight into and training in the various rhetorical methods and approaches typical of various legal roles and the social responsibility embraced in these insights." In other words, the students are asked to consider their own professional responsibility (something in which self-criticism may be included) *in parallel* with practice in rhetorical argumentation based on various legal premises.[8]

The search for arguments and facts to develop a legal stance is a central component of Private Law II. The course ends with a "reflective assignment" in which the students form an opinion on various aspects of the professional roles they have tried (in a role play, or "simulated practical application exercise").[9] We connected our pilot study to this final course assignment. The reflective assignment, including our study, was preceded by a lecture on source criticism given by librarians Gunnar Oxelqvist and Annica Rydholm. The lecture dealt with three concepts we have already mentioned: "preunderstanding," "tunnel vision," and "wishful thinking."

Design of the pilot study

When we planned our pilot study, we wanted to know what law students base their decisions on when they select sources for tasks similar to the tasks they will face in their future profession. To arrive at an answer, we believed we needed to find out what law students do and how they reason when they select sources, and what they perceive as credible sources when they make their choices. Accordingly, in connection with the reflective assignment in Private Law II, the students were asked to provide written answers to three questions from the University Library. First, they were asked how they go about getting information and selecting sources, in practical terms. (Do they use the library's resources? If not, why not?) Secondly, the students were asked to reflect on their own preunderstandings when they select sources. (Did the students believe they personally engage in tunnel vision or wishful thinking?) Finally, in answering the third question the students were asked to explain why they believe the authors of the texts they select are credible.

Forty-one students chose to participate in the study. The students gave written consent to use the answers we report below. However, all students who took the course (149) answered our questions, individually.[10] We read all these answers at the library and responded to them with written remarks on the students' texts.

What did the law students say?

Answers to the three main questions are reported below:

1 a. How do students get information and select sources, in practical terms?

The majority, 29 students, said that they base their practical approach to acquiring sources on the course literature. Using textbook bibliographies to find material is a common method: 16 students report that they perform literature searches this way. Otherwise, students mention that they use journal articles (11) and newspaper articles (5).[11]

Seventeen students write that they use "Gunda," the library catalog, when searching for literature.[12] Another two say they use the discussion forum on the online course portal to find sources that may be useful to completing assignments. (The course portal is a web page where course information, schedules, etc. are posted and which also functions as a discussion forum for the students.)

All students (41) report that they use legal databases. More than half (22) specify "Karnov" as their preferred database for finding *travaux préparatoires* (drafting history), laws, cases, and literature. [13, 14] Other databases the students use are *Rättsbanken* (3), the international Westlaw database (3), and Zeteo (1).[15] More than half the students (23) report that they follow the "doctrine of legal sources" when searching for sources.[16]

Two students report that they begin with the Gothenburg University Library website and its search formula when searching for sources, while another two write that they use the library's article databases to retrieve journal articles. [17, 18]

Using the Internet is also common, as confirmed by 31 students. Twelve students also specify which search engines they use, and Google is mentioned in five answers. It is also clear that a fair number of students (16) start with websites on which student papers are posted when they search for sources, as well as the websites of public agencies (3).

1b. Do the students use the library's resources? If not, why not?

One student answered no and another did not answer the question. All of the other students (39), answered yes to the question and report that they use the library's resources in a broad sense of the word (primarily referring to the use of databases).

Eight students expand their answers by emphasizing that library resources are easily accessible; 12 students note that they appreciate being able to use the databases through the library. (The students can access the legal databases from home.) Three students also like that resources are available "in one place," meaning they can be accessed via the University Library website and via the legal collections in the library (reference literature). One student emphasizes the usefulness of being able to get hold of books at the library that are otherwise out on loan (reference copies).

Only one student stated that he/she does not use the library's resources, citing lack of time as the reason.

2 a. Do students believe they are aware of their preunderstandings when they select sources?

The answers can be divided into three groups. The students in the first group equate preunderstanding with knowledge of the practical approach to following the doctrine of legal sources (8). Students in the second group report that they are "critical" when they read text, but do not mention the significance of personal experience/preconceived notions when they select sources (13). Finally, the students in the third group report that source selection is dependent their own and others' values (with respect to gender, nationality, age, etc.; twelve answers).[19] We have chosen not to further explore the answers in which students discuss preunderstanding based on knowledge of the doctrine of legal sources; while these students answered the question, they did not state whether personal values might influence their selection of sources.

The following quotation is typical of the second group: "During my time as a law student, I feel that I have slowly but surely learned to be critical when it comes to selecting sources. I have learned to handle the different types of sources lawyers deal with." All students in this group believe they are "critical" in how their work with sources in that they have in the course of their education practiced presenting evidence, examining counter arguments, and reading texts from various angles. It could thus be claimed that while they do not demonstrate awareness of their preferences (and prejudices) they do to some extent possess text evaluation skills in which there is potential for sophisticated self-criticism.

The third group includes a number of answers demonstrate insightfulness with respect to the factors that influence personal preferences in connection with source selection. Three quotations serve to illustrate this self-critical approach:

> It seems too unlikely to me that anything created by the human intellect could be completely objective and absent of any intersections with the outside world.

> Preunderstanding constantly evolves as our lives proceed and we are shaped and influenced by our experiences. My preunderstandings thus influence my choice of sources.

> Despite my intentions to be objective, I recognize that it is hard not to be influence by my personal ideas and previous experience. There is nothing wrong with having a preunderstanding because we can never be completely unbiased; the important thing is to be open and accepting of things that contradict our preunderstandings.

2b. Do the students believe they engage in tunnel vision or wishful thinking?

Nineteen students remarked on the concept of tunnel vision and elaborated their thoughts (to a varying degree) surrounding critical thinking in source selection. Six students explicitly state that they engage in tunnel vision and emphasize the risk of falling prey to seeing only what they already know. Lack of time is cited as the cause of the problem.

Thirteen students cite the legal work process as the reason for tunnel vision. The following quotation is typical of this group's opinion: "Something else that indicates that I do not engage in tunnel vision is that I use a variety of sources, such as drafting histories, case law, legal journals, and literature." Here as well, we are reminded of the constraints of the legal work process imposed by compliance with the doctrine of legal sources in that the students express no personal responsibility for *how* they select sources and *why* they make the choices they do.

Four students report that they engage in wishful thinking, that is, interpretations of reality shaped by the values that appeal to them (personally). One expands on the subject: "The thing is, I have more than once been forced to admit that wishful thinking has led me down the wrong track and some of my work has had to be corrected or, in exceptional cases, scrapped. Like I said, sometimes I realize that I am pushing a thesis instead of seeking an answer."

Twelve students do not discuss the concepts of tunnel vision or wishful thinking at all, or only to a very limited extent (that is, they mention the concepts but do not interpret them). A tendency among these answers, like the answers that specifically deal with tunnel vision, is that the students describe the legal work process from a rhetorical, pragmatic perspective (with no elements of self-criticism). For instance, one student writes: "Of course you have to present the counter arguments to your legal stance, but you also have to rebut those arguments. If I were to discover that the state of the law is to my disadvantage in a certain action, I would acknowledge that in writing, of course, but still argue for the opposite, if that is my job."

Among those who mention the concepts but do not develop interpretations, there may still be an interest in critical thinking that borders on self-criticism. One student writes: "My sister used to tell me that I have to remember that everyone wears their own glasses and that those glasses determine how they look at the world." The student also provides examples of how the process of source criticism could be improved through personal effort: "I think the best way to put together good source information is to widen the selection of sources and make an effort to look at the contents from various angles when interpreting the material."

Only one person sees any point in visiting the library when working with sources. The student writes: "When I look for books at the library, I scan the books that happen to be on the same shelf as the ones I am looking for, since they are usually arranged by subject, so are related to a certain extent."

3 a. Why do the students believe the authors of the texts they select are credible?

Twenty-three students write that an advanced academic degree lends credibility to an author. "The higher the academic title, the more reliable they are," writes one. Another 18 students say that a combination of long professional experience and academic qualifications provide credibility, while 12 state that an author's credibility increases with the number of works written. Eighteen students report that citations make a difference as to whether or not an author can be considered credible. Here the students state that they prefer to use sources others have appraised as credible, since those particular sources legitimize their own presentation. Texts cited in Supreme Court opinions are considered eminently trustworthy, according to seven students. "The safest bet is to use the same authors used by the Supreme Court to support their ruling," one writes. Another four write that the publisher is significant

to assessing credibility, while three believe credibility can be traced in how well the authors express themselves and argue in their texts.

None of the students question the credibility of texts published by public agencies, but eight consider the social context in which the source originated (although the meaning of social context is not further explored). Importance is ascribed to the age of the source: "The older something is, the most important it is that you put the text in its context. Laws may have been amended and case law may have changed direction since the book was written," writes one student (of seven who mention the significance of the age of the source).

Textbook authors are considered highly reliable, as is textbook content: 18 students write that the literature that has been evaluated by instructors and to which instructors is reliable. Another three students mention that they trust the university library – they believe literature and databases that have been selected and purchased by the library are highly reliable.[20]

The appearance of the book is also mentioned as a selection criterion, but by only one student: "The more boring a book looks, the more important it is. The best example are titles published by *Institutet för rättsvetenskaplig forskning* [The Legal Research Institute]. Even though the books all look dry as dust, most of their titles are among the standard works found in a Swedish legal bookcase."

Conclusions

Even though only 41 out of 149 students actively chose to participate in the pilot study, we feel relatively comfortable claiming that the 41 student responses we studied in detail are representative.[21] (We have read all student responses, of course.) In general, the law students use the library's resources in the form of legal databases. However, they also use the Internet and references in textbooks as a starting point when looking for sources. One explanation for the latter is the high level of trust in teacher authority in the law program; a common belief among students is that the higher the academic degree, the more reliable the text.

All 41 students use legal databases to search for sources, which is understandable considering the independent tasks the students are expected to accomplish within the confines of their education. However, it is more remarkable that about equal numbers of students base their literature searches on textbooks (16) versus the Gunda library catalog (17). If the use of textbooks is not based only on trust in (teacher) authority, is it due to lack of awareness about how the library catalog can be used, to the design of Gunda, or to lack of interest in searching for literature via the library (other than through the legal databases)? One thing became utterly clear: the students rarely use the library's resources in the form of librarian skills. Of the 41 students, only two say that they get help from library staff when they are seeking information. In other words, the students make extensive use of the library's physical resources, but almost never its human resources; of that which the library has to offer, what the students perceive as positive is the actual *access* to the sources via the library.[22]

Most of the students (31) report using the Internet in addition to database searches, which must be regarded as a sign of the times. What is remarkable is that as many as 16 students write that they use websites on which student papers are posted when they are seeking information. Beyond the convenience of seeking information via the Internet, and the appeal of using passing papers as examples of how to write a paper (and finish it!), could the reason for this be that academic papers are perceived as having been "sanctioned" by scholarly representatives in whom the students feel a great deal of trust? The students' trust in instructors with "academic degrees" is high, as we have shown. (In particular, students

mention an "advanced academic degree" as a guarantor of reliability – as reported by 23 students.)

Otherwise, we noted that relatively few say anything about whether their preconceived notions might influence their choice of sources. Only 12 students mention the term "preunderstanding" and discuss it in relation to how they personally work with sources – even though the students were asked to do precisely that (and were invited to/attended a lecture on source criticism, which covered "preunderstanding"). If one takes as a whole the answers in which students either state that preunderstanding does not constitute a problem because they follow the doctrine of legal sources (8) or that they are generally "critical" (13) when they select and use sources, a remarkably large percentage of the students demonstrate an absence of interest in the significance of their personal evaluations. The lack of interest in the self-critical aspects of working with sources may depend on several factors. For instance, the students may not understand the meaning of the word "preunderstanding," or perhaps associate it with a subjective approach that they do not find compatible with their own future professional roles.[23]

That the students express being constrained by the (rhetorical) legal work process is significant in the context. For instance, a relatively large percentage of the students (13) cite the legal work process as the reason they engage in "tunnel vision"; this may be seen as an expression of a belief that they are expected to relatively quickly adopt a stance and then argue for it – and thus do not perceive that reflective self-criticism is part of the legal work process and the assumption of a role. Thus, that "wishful thinking" might influence their selection processes when working with sources seems – logically enough – insignificant in the context; only four students report that they engage in "wishful thinking" when they select sources.

In other words, the students differentiate between self-criticism and the legal work process and do not speculate that reflection about their own preconceived notions might be an *asset* in the work process (rhetorically, if nothing else, to make the rhetorical presentation even more carefully considered). This is open to several interpretations. As readers of the answers, we would like to know, for instance, whether the law students are given any practice in asking themselves "What am I seeing – and what am I not seeing?" or any help in designing search strategies when seeking sources via the library – before they start drafting the legal argument. Likewise, the question arises as to whether the students are taught to evaluate their information search strategies. Based on the students' answers, which indicate a certain paucity of interest in self-criticism and less than optimal interaction with librarians in connection with working with sources, one might suspect that the students are at risk of overlooking material that is both relevant and representative in the legal drafting process.

That academic qualifications and professional experience – preferably together – indicate credibility when students select the authors of sources is also interesting. What part does socialization (in the professional role) play in an academic program with a strong professional connection when sources are selected or discarded? What the students "see" and "do not see" when they select sources is, after all, dependent on the values that they perceive as characteristic of the legal profession.

Also noteworthy is that the law students' responses are consistent with Kuhlthau and Tama's findings; as professionals, lawyers are primarily oriented towards developing powerful ways to present their cases when they seek information. However, Kuhlthau's arguments in *Seeking Meaning. A Process Approach to Library and Information Services* on the importance of a process approach to learning, oriented towards asking questions and searching for a wide variety of sources (which in turn generate new questions) are also relevant. If the law students had been given the opportunity, via the library, to practice identifying what they need to know more about and summarizing their findings, and had

practiced giving each other feedback in connection with working with sources, the answers would presumably have been different (and perhaps also the students' future practice of their profession). Kuhlthau's notion that collaboration between librarians and students is most rewarding in the initiation phase of working with sources is also worth repeating –it is of course in the initiation stage that the work with self-criticism can serve a purpose and have impact on future work.

For is it not of the utmost importance that graduates of an academic education are able to assess contexts, based on self-critical reflection? After all – to elaborate on the ideas of the historian Torstendahl – no one becomes a skilled user of library resources solely through methodological skills.[12]

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[1] See Sebastian Olden-Jørgensen, *Til kilderne! Introduktion til historisk kildekritik*, Gad, 2003, p 33.

[2] Maria Ågren concludes her paper with this question in "Synlighet, vikt, trovärdighet – och självkritik," pp 249-262 in *Historisk tidskrift*, 2005:2. We have also taken the concept of self-criticism from Ågren's text and developed our definition of the term (in this paragraph).

[3] In their answers to the other seven questions, the law students were asked to describe their tasks and needs for information and tell how they use the library's resources (including any associated difficulties).

[4] See Carol C. Kuhlthau and Stephanie L. Tama, "Information Search Process of Lawyers: A Call for 'Just for Me' Information Services," *Journal of Documentation*, vol 57, 2001:1, pp 41-42 (translated to Swedish by Anna Lyngfelt).

[5] See Carol C Kuhlthau, *Seeking Meaning. A Process Approach to Library and Information Services*, Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited 2004, p 163.

[6] Kuhlthau refers consistently to "students" in English, which may refer to both primary/secondary school pupils and university students in Sweden. We have chosen to use the word "students" in Swedish – even though Kuhlthau does not write specifically about college/university students.

[7] See Gabriela Bjarne Larsson (ed), *Forma historia. Metodövningar*, Studentlitteratur, 2002.

 See also Stellan Dahlgren and Anders Florén, *Fråga det förflutna. En introduktion till den moderna historieforskningen*, Studentlitteratur, 1996.

[8] See Ågren, op. cit., and Rolf Torstendahl, "Källkritik, metod och vetenskap," pp 209-217 in *Historisk tidskrift*, op. cit., and Torstendahl, *Introduktion till historieforskningen. Historia som vetenskap*, Natur och kultur, 1971.

[9] See Torsten Thurén, *Sant eller falskt? Metoder i källkritik,* Swedish Emergency Management Agency, 2003, p 16.

[10] Thurén's definition of preunderstanding is broad and does not deliberately relate to humanist theories on the concept (Hans-Georg Gadamer et al).

[6] That the rhetorical tradition has been prominent in law since antiquity becomes apparent through reading of (among others) Kurt Johannesson, *Svensk retorik. Från Stockholms blodbad till Almedalen,* Norstedt, 1983, pp 25 and 41-48.

[7] See the description of the law program on the Department of Law website: http://www.hgu.gu.se/item.aspx?id=4249. It has not changed since the autumn 2007 term.

[8] We have taken the quotation here from the syllabus for Private Law II, autumn 2007. (It does not differ appreciably from the current syllabus.) the syllabus is available at the Student Services Office, Department of Law, School of Economics and Law, Gothenburg University.

[9] See study instructions for Private Law II, autumn 2997. The document is available at the Department of Law, School of Economics and Law, Gothenburg University. The course coordinators were Mats Glavå and Jens Andreasson.

[10] However, there were 157 students on the list of those registered for the course. It should be mentioned that the questions were formulated for discussion in groups, but ended up being answered individually (because the other parts of the reflective assignment were answered individually and were part of the final exam).

[11] However, the students do not specify what they mean by "journal articles" and "newspaper articles."

[12] Gunda is the Gothenburg University Library database for books and periodicals.

[13] Karnov is a legal database that contains all Swedish laws and ordinances, as well as cases in the Supreme Court, the Courts of Appeal, the Supreme Administrative Court, Administrative Courts of Appeal, and the Labour Court. Karnov also includes a selection of commentaries on laws and ordinances with references to drafting history, cases, and legal literature, as well as government agency statutes and a selection of legislative bills dating back to 1915. Articles published in *Svensk juristtidning* since 1990 are also found here.

[14] Drafting history, or *travaux préparatoires*, refers to the documents produced during the process of drafting legislation, such as *Swedish Government Reports*, bills, and committee reports.

[15] Nine students report that they search "legal databases" but specify none by name.

[16] Working according to the doctrine of legal sources means to work in the order prescribed by that doctrine. The doctrine of legal courses refers to legal source criticism – or source evaluation – according to a ranking by which constitutional law and other laws have highest authority, followed by drafting history, case law, and finally, legal doctrine. Doctrine refers to jurisprudential literature (legal commentaries, etc.)

[17] There used to be a search function called "Quick Search" in a prominent position on the Gothenburg University Library website, in which users searched only among book, periodical, and database titles, but not in the databases or among journal articles.

[18] They do not specify which databases they use.

[19] Three students do not answer the question at all, while five noted "answer" which can with some difficulty be interpreted as the answer to the question we asked.

[20] However, six students, when answering question 1b, write that they regard sources available through the library as credible (and these different students to those who answer the same thing to question 3).

[21] It should be added that the student answers were reviewed anonymously. Since identifying information such as name, gender, ethnicity, age, etc. was removed from the answers, no specific attention was paid in this study to gender aspects (etc.).

[22] In addition to the lecture on source criticism, the students were offered two teaching sessions by librarians. The first involved a basic introduction to the library's resources and the second instruction in computer-based information searching based on a specific legislative matter (in the Private Law I course).

[23] Causes may perhaps also be sought in poor attendance at the lecture presented by Annica Rydholm and Gunnar Oxelqvist. Only 72 students attended the lecture (and we do not know if the students who attended also participated in the study). Nor was *Sant eller falskt? Metoder i källkritik* included in the course literature for Private Law II.

[11] Ågren, op. cit., p 251.

[12] Torstendahl writes that "no one becomes a good researcher by method alone" – see "*Källkritik, metod och vetenskap,*" op.cit., p 216.