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Globalisation and Cultural Diversity in the Finnish School Curriculum: Ethical and Critical Perspectives

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The purpose of this article is to explore and analyse how globalisation and cultural diversity are addressed in the Finnish national curriculum for comprehensive school. The study focuses on both the broad considerations of globalisation and cultural diversity as well as the unique challenges of various school subjects in addressing these topics. The analysis is particularly concerned with the ethical ramifications associated with critical perspectives on globalisation. The curriculum does not provide a direct answer to these concerns. Instead, it emphasises cultural diversity when presenting the many issues encountered by pupils. The primary finding of the analysis is that the conceptualization of globalisation in the Finnish curriculum lacks depth and substance. As an indication of this, the curriculum places a greater focus on cultural diversity than globalisation. Moreover, the Finnish curriculum perceives globalisation and cultural diversity as prospects rather than challenges. In terms of ethical considerations, the curriculum represents a kind of mixed model in which utilitarian considerations are emphasised but refined with duty-ethical considerations arising from universal human rights.

Key words: cultural diversity, curriculum, ethics, globalisation

1 Introduction

The purpose of this article is to explore and analyse how globalisation and cultural diversity are addressed in the Finnish national curriculum for comprehensive school (Finnish National Agency for Education 2014). The study focuses on the findings of text analysis, supported by pertinent commentary based on ethics and globalisation literature. The Finnish comprehensive school provides education in grades 1–9 for children aged 7–15 years. This study is particularly concerned with how the curriculum addresses the challenges of globalization, as raised by critical study, and how effectively it does so. A key issue is the question of how one should interpret and implement the ethical framework provided the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights as reflected in the Finnish curriculum. In order to examine this topic, the article will focus on the following questions: What does the Finnish curriculum say about globalisation and cultures? How and from what perspective are diverse cultures and multiculturalism portrayed in the Finnish school curriculum? What challenges and opportunities are associated with globalisation? Finally, how and to what extent does the curriculum frame these challenges and opportunities in terms of ethical concepts such as rights, duties and moral consequences?

2 Getting the Analysis Started: Conceptual Tools and Background

Globalisation is not explicitly defined or explained in the Finnish core curriculum. To set the stage for the analysis, let us consider the following as a working definition for globalisation: Globalisation refers to the processes by which the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services, including knowledge and education, become increasingly uniform all over the world (Adetunji et al. 2013; Anderson-Levitt 2003; Creanza & et al. 2017). Besides its economic orientation, globalisation is often blamed for cultural homogenisation and the “watering down” of local traditions. This is referred to as the westernisation of culture and is frequently considered a potential source of cultural conflicts (Ritzer 2004; 2007: 95). Homogenisation and the westernisation of cultures are frequently viewed unfavourably (Hynes 2021).

A critical perspective on globalisation provides many opportunities for ethical evaluation of the topic. Insofar as a critical perspective focuses on the unequal economic benefits of globalisation, the ethical orientation can be aligned with the discussion of universal human rights, such as the right to life, equality, and freedom from discrimination, while simultaneously including consequential ethical considerations with regard to social sustainability (Ďurčík 2015). Thus, different ethical models provide useful distinctions and

tools for an analysis of a school curriculum. In what follows, I concentrate on the utilitarian and deontological frameworks.

Despite the fact that the media frequently focuses on the economic effects of globalisation, teachers and curriculum planners can be expected to take additional effects such as social and cultural transformations—such as the rise of living standards, the widening of income gaps, and a range of inequality issues—into account in order to provide pupils with a comprehensive understanding of what globalisation entails—perhaps also to prevent and mitigate possible culture-related conflicts among pupils (Lehtonen 2015, 47, 52–54). Thus, the discussion of globalisation has obvious and important ethical dimensions both at individual and at community level.

From 2014 to 2017, Finland reformed the national core curriculum at all levels of education: early childhood, pre-primary, primary and lower secondary, and upper secondary. As a result, the core curriculum now forms a more or less coherent progression throughout the entire education system (Halinen 2018: 79). Without delving into the pedagogical theory debate, the current Finnish curriculum can be said to be based on socio-constructivist educational theory, despite the fact that the term is not mentioned in the curriculum. The term socio-constructivist refers to the recognition of cultural and contextual issues in learning situations, as opposed to generic and non-contextualised knowledge construction (Hall 2007: 95). It is anticipated that such recognition will help pupils develop in a way that is responsive to their local cultural environment, to unique local characteristics, and to societal shifts such as globalisation and digitalization. Thus, socio-constructivism emphasises the construction of knowledge based on pupils' prior knowledge and interaction with the changing social environment.

In the introductory chapter, the Finnish core curriculum (2014: 9) declares that its purpose is to support and guide the organisation of teaching and schoolwork, as well as to encourage the uniform implementation of basic education. Although the core curriculum provides general guidelines at the national level, the curriculum is further expanded at the local level in municipalities. Eventually, the local curriculum is what establishes the authoritative basis for education and provides direction for daily schoolwork. However, it is still up to each teacher to decide how, and to what extent, they cover particular topics, such as globalisation and cultural diversity, in class. Teachers, at the individual level, are thus the ultimate gatekeepers of curriculum. And curriculum is not the only thing that affects teachers. For example, teacher education, school principals, and the parents of the students all play a role (Hannon and O'Donnell 2022).

The national school curriculums of different countries have several overlapping goals; from promoting the intellectual, emotional and ethical development of children to the

formation of a country's citizens, preparing them to contribute to sustainable development and a quickly changing global economy. These objectives pull in different directions, which may alter the dynamics of who learns what from whom (Henrich & McElreath 2003). In addition to upbringing and school education, informal education by peer groups, as well as media and social media, exert a strong influence on schoolchildren (Callanan et al. 2011; Rogoff et al. 2016). Furthermore, the education system in any country is not an isolated phenomenon. Rather, it springs from the prevalent social, cultural, religious and historical backgrounds of each country (Wineburg et al. 2007). Developmentally, school age is the stage at which children in many societies begin to be held accountable for social norms and rules (Li et al. 2021). The curriculum of Finnish comprehensive schools is used as a sample in this study to learn more about these underlying forces and what they might mean for education.

3 The Impacts of Globalisation

Previous research has examined the impacts of globalisation on education from many perspectives, with sociologists and educationalists being the primary contributors. Numerous academic studies, focusing on curriculum and pedagogy, have examined the challenges and potential benefits of globalisation in education (Burbules and Torres 2000; Stromquist and Monkman 2000). There has also been study of the connection between education, social justice, and the state. Some of these studies are based on comparative education research, such as Zajda (2010). Globalisation has also been shown in studies to have a significant influence on the goals of the modern educational reform movement. According to Wells et al. (1998), globalisation affects students' lives through changing their cultural milieu, particularly through market dynamics and symbolic realms linked to identity and nationhood. Many studies, however, lack detail in their ethical assessments and criticisms of the national curriculum. By evaluating data from Finland, this study seeks to address that research gap.

In what follows, I review and critically evaluate the Finnish core curriculum's approach to globalisation. The Finnish curriculum (2014, 18) frames globalization by referring to (1) global education that must be in line with the United Nations' development goals (SDGs) and to (2) international cooperation. According to the curriculum, global education in comprehensive schools contributes to the creation of conditions that are conducive to fair and sustainable development. The curriculum states that this educational effort should be carried out, to the greatest extent possible, in cooperation with educational institutions and developers in other countries. Thus, in addition to the primary national requirements for education, the Finnish core curriculum also recognises the importance of an international perspective. The core curriculum holds that nationally and internationally, basic education is a positive, society-building force for change. In

this way, the Finnish school curriculum takes a broadly positive view of globalisation as a process of internationalisation and cooperation.

It is worth noting that the curriculum (2014: 16) links cultural diversity to the goal of community building. In this regard, the curriculum is optimistic about the ability of people from diverse backgrounds to effectively collaborate, which represents a constructive ideal of the coexistence of different cultures. The various components of globalisation, including its economic, social, and cultural aspects, are not problematised or debated in the curriculum. This is, in a way, understandable, given that the curriculum's purpose is to provide schools and teachers with clear and achievable learning objectives. Those in charge of developing the curriculum may believe that critically evaluating different aspects of globalisation would cause teachers to be hesitant and confused about which path to take and how to present globalisation to pupils (cf. Rogers 1999: 31–34, 37–40). In light of this, the Finnish curriculum's streamlined approach to globalisation is understandable, albeit restricted.

The Finnish curriculum places the greatest emphasis on the social and cultural aspects of globalisation, which is demonstrated by the fact that cultural diversity is a topic covered throughout the curriculum. This might be considered peculiar, given how frequently the economic consequences of globalisation are discussed in the media (Ritzer 2004; 2007). The economic aspect of globalisation becomes most apparent when the curriculum discusses work and professions. The curriculum (2014: 23) emphasises how work and professions are changing as a result of technological advancement and economic globalisation. In light of this, the curriculum approaches globalisation in a practical and utilitarian manner. Globalisation is acknowledged as a social fact that is essentially irreversible, and schoolchildren are regarded as being in need of knowledge and skills to help them navigate the globalised world and labour market. However, in order to encourage more nuanced globalisation teaching and help students learn more about globalisation issues, school education must go beyond the economic dimension of globalisation. In a sense, this appears to be the case with the Finnish curriculum, in which cultural diversity is viewed favourably.

4 Cultural Diversity

The Finnish curriculum (2014: 15–16) considers cultural diversity a source of wealth and well-being. According to the curriculum, comprehensive education in Finland is built on a diverse cultural heritage that has been and continues to be shaped by the interaction of different cultures. This assertion can be interpreted in two ways: descriptively or normatively, stating a fact or proposing a norm. Despite Finland's long history of having a relatively homogeneous cultural milieu, the curriculum emphasises cultural exchange.

There are obvious reasons for this. Over the last fifty years, an increasing number of immigrants with refugee, student, or professional status from various countries and continents have moved to Finland. Some of these immigrants were repatriating Finnish natives, who had moved to neighbouring Sweden several decades previously (Potinkara 2022). Nonetheless, as a result of this overall increase in immigration, Finland has become more international than ever before.

Despite its generally positive outlook on cultural diversity, the Finnish curriculum makes relatively few mentions of cultural interaction, such as the spread of artistic influences or cultural currents. These mentions appear in the contexts of arts, music, needlework and handicraft education. The three major areas where the positive effects of school education are assumed to be fulfilled in relation to cultural diversity are (1) pupils' cultural identity, (2) active participation in their culture and community, and (3) interest in other cultures (Finnish Core Curriculum 2014: 15–16, 18, 21). Furthermore, the curriculum assumes that education can foster respect for cultural diversity, foster interaction within and between cultures, and lay the foundation for culturally sustainable development. As a result, the curriculum strongly supports the widely acknowledged goal of social and cultural sustainability, which refers to meeting basic human needs such as social justice and human rights while also ensuring the well-being of future generations (WCED 1987: 8).

The Finnish curriculum (2014: 21) points out that pupils from different cultural and language backgrounds meet each other in comprehensive education and come in contact with a wide variety of customs, community practices and viewpoints. The curriculum optimistically states that pupils learn to see things from the perspective of the life situations and circumstances of others. This ability to change one's perspective and to truly understand and empathise with the values and experiences of another is not necessarily inherent but requires training (Riess 2017). Furthermore, the curriculum (2014: 16) assumes that language, culture, religion and worldview boundaries can be crossed in school education, provided that teaching is tailored to the interests and skill level appropriate to pupils' age. Without giving any specific examples of how such crossing is possible, the curriculum says that learning together across various boundaries creates the conditions for genuine interaction and community. Thus, the curriculum appears to assume that when pupils from different cultural backgrounds gather in a classroom, they will automatically cross cultural boundaries (Leask and Carroll 2013; Yang et al. 2010). Even if this is true to some extent, one would expect the possibility of cultural conflicts to be considered as well, which is not the case in the Finnish curriculum.

According to the curriculum, basic education lays the foundation for global citizenship that respects human rights and encourages action for positive social changes. Thus, the

Finnish curriculum has a highly positive outlook on the enrichment and cultural exchanges that education in schools can foster. According to the curriculum (2014: 155), pupils will learn, first, about the culture of their school community and home region, as well as their cultural environment and changes and diversity within it. Second, pupils are said to have opportunities for international collaboration and the comparison of different cultures, customs and traditions. The curriculum concludes that cultural diversity is fundamentally a positive asset (2014: 21).

The curriculum emphasises that teaching promotes knowledge and understanding of cultures and ideologies, worldviews and religious traditions such as Christianity and the tradition of Western humanism. In the same context, no other cultural, religious or philosophical tradition is mentioned. The curriculum also states that along with respect for life, other people and nature, the inviolability of human dignity, respect for human rights and the democratic values of Finnish society, such as fairness and equality, should be emphasised. Cooperation and responsibility, the promotion of health and well-being, the growth of good habits, and the promotion of sustainable development are viewed as the building blocks of civilization (2014: 19). These can be viewed as important and demanding goals in a globalising world confronted with climate change and other environmental and social problems. As a result, the curriculum approaches global issues from a solution-oriented perspective.

The Finnish curriculum points out that pupils grow up in a world that is culturally, linguistically, religiously and ideologically diverse. Against this background, the curriculum says that cultural competence is necessary for living and working in a way that is culturally sustainable. Respect for human rights, interaction skills, and the ability to express oneself and one's views are said to underpin such competence (2014: 21).

Especially regarding grades 7–9, or the upper level of comprehensive school (that is, students in the age bracket of 13–15), the curriculum (2014: 282) says that schoolwork aims to support the formation of students' cultural identity and a culturally sustainable lifestyle based on respect for human rights. As stated, students are guided to see cultural diversity as a fundamentally positive asset. At the same time, they are guided to recognize how cultures, religions and worldviews affect society and daily life, and to consider what actions are unacceptable on the basis that they violate human rights. This last, easily unnoticed, remark is significant because it implies the importance of critically evaluating cultural beliefs and practises (such as female genital mutilation and forced marriage of girls) (Dixon-Declève et al. 2022: 106). Thus, cultural diversity and respect are not interpreted as justification for thinking that "anything goes". According to the curriculum, school systematically promotes respect and trust towards other nationalities and people groups. Moreover, pupils need to become acquainted with the key human

rights treaties and their interpretation and implementation. Thus, both practical and theoretical knowledge of human rights are emphasised in the Finnish core curriculum. Despite this emphasis, the curriculum fails to address the complex issue of how cultural recognition and cultural criticism may conflict. Accordingly, it fails to address the challenge of dealing with cultural differences when those differences are related to ethical values and inalienable rights.

5 Globalisation and Cultural Diversity in Different School Subjects

This chapter will examine various school subjects through the lens of how the Finnish core curriculum addresses globalisation and cultural diversity. Globalisation and cultural diversity are significantly more prominent in the curricula of languages, religion, and life stance education, than in the curricula of other school subjects. As indicated previously, the curriculum places considerably greater emphasis on cultural diversity than on globalisation. There can be several reasons for this, including culture being a more commonly used and well-known term than globalisation. Furthermore, from the schoolchildren's point of view, cultural differences and similarities may be more visible and tangible than the effects of globalisation on economic and social development. Notwithstanding, it is certain that globalisation has altered the way education programmes are delivered, with the increased emphasis on the importance of learning about and appreciating different cultures (Yang et al. 2010; Li 2013; McGrath-Champ et al. 2013). Globalisation has also led to increased connectivity and cross-border collaboration, enabling the delivery of education programmes online and through partnerships between educational institutions from different countries (Morris et al. 2020). This has expanded access to education, allowing students to study from anywhere in the world and pursue degrees from leading institutions. This is particularly true for university students. Additionally, globalisation has led to a greater emphasis on internationalisation within education programmes, including exposure to diverse cultures and perspectives (Leask 2015).

Languages

According to the Finnish core curriculum, the main goal of language education is to help pupils learn more about different languages and cultures. This goal is written into the curriculum with the aim to promote a greater awareness of linguistic and cultural distinctions, which are believed to go hand in hand (Finnish Core Curriculum 2014: 28, 197–200, 205–206, 211, 219–220, 224, 226, 228, 230, 325, 326–328, 333–334, 349–353, 355, 357, 359–361, 363–364, 367–368, 371, 373). Therefore, according to the curriculum, learning a language involves more than just being able to communicate with others. Language acquisition requires cultural knowledge, which necessitates the development of sociocultural metaskills like collaboration, curiosity, and tolerance for diversity.

Furthermore, the curriculum calls for the development of pupils' abilities to articulate the similarities and contrasts between various languages and cultures (Finnish Core Curriculum 2014: 166). Language awareness is an important concept in this context. It refers to being aware of how attitudes toward languages and language communities manifest themselves in learning, interacting, building identities, and assimilating into society. This level of awareness, one could argue, requires the ability to think abstractly and self-reflectively, if not self-critically.

According to the Finnish curriculum (2014: 198, 200, 213, 219, 222, 226, 231, 233, 325, 348), one of the beneficial outcomes of language awareness is that it encourages children to have an initial interest in the cultural diversity of their environment. This can be a bit of a chicken-or-egg situation. It is possible that language awareness leads to an interest in cultural diversity, but an interest in different cultures can also be a stimulus for language awareness. Furthermore, the educational goal, according to the curriculum, is for pupils to value their language and cultural heritage, as well as the world's linguistic and cultural diversity, and to meet people without forming or upholding harmful stereotypes. Language education is also said to increase pupils' cultural awareness by focusing on various assumptions associated with different linguistic groups, such as the fact that members of a linguistic minority have customs and traditions that the majority does not (Finnish Core Curriculum 2014: 325–326, 333, 348–349, 356, 360, 363, 367, 371). The curriculum (2014: 315, 318, 325) motivates this by stating that the goal is for pupils to gain the skills necessary to work in an international context as they learn more about different cultures and languages.

Religion

The primary objective of the religious education that pupils receive in Finland is to acquaint them with the fundamental tenets of the world's major religions and non-religious ideologies, as outlined in the national curriculum. Accordingly, pupils need to develop the ability to articulate the core beliefs and practises of a variety of religious traditions (Finnish Core Curriculum 2014: 407). Furthermore, religious education aims to foster appreciation and respect for various religions and worldviews (Finnish Core Curriculum 2014: 248, 406). Thus, the goal of religious education, in the spirit of human and cultural rights, is to increase recognition of different cultures, traditions, and ways of thinking. In light of this, religious education aims to foster both the cognitive and moral development of pupils, by encouraging them to think about the values that underpin a society like that of Finland, which is both multicultural and multi-religious (Finnish Core Curriculum 2014: 410).

More specifically, the Finnish curriculum (2014: 134) states that religious education helps pupils understand and appreciate their religious and ideological background, as well as preparing them to accept the diversity of religions and worldviews in their classroom, school, and community. To achieve this goal, religious education is said to provide information, skills, and tools for thinking. Pupils are encouraged to recognise and express their feelings and opinions, and to practise recognising the feelings of others and taking their opinions into account. Therefore, according to the curriculum, pupils should be encouraged to wonder, ask questions, and participate in the discussion on religions and worldviews. Furthermore, pupils should be guided to act fairly and responsibly. Thus, religious education is thought to provide pupils with more than just information about religions and worldviews.

Life Stance Education

In the Finnish school system, there is non-denominational life stance education for pupils who do not belong to any religious denomination and/or do not participate in religious education. These pupils should also be able to identify key features and developments in major worldviews and cultures, particularly the historical, cultural, and social phases of Semitic monotheism and secular humanism (Finnish Core Curriculum 2014: 411–414). The Finnish core curriculum (2014: 139, 253, 411) states that the goal of non-denominational life stance education is to enhance pupils' opportunities to full democratic citizenship in a globalising and rapidly changing world. This requires that the teaching promotes the development of pupils' ethical and critical thinking and learning skills. Here, critical thinking is defined as looking for grounds, grasping contexts, being situationally aware, and being self-correcting. Thus, the idea of life stance education is to strengthen an open and reflective attitude in pupils. These meta-skills and tools for thinking are useful not only in understanding the impacts of globalisation and cultural diversity, but also for argumentation and active participation in discussions on a variety of topics. Based on the Finnish curriculum, non-denominational life stance education places more of an emphasis on pupils' general argumentation capabilities, while religious education focuses more on understanding the interactions of religions and other worldview traditions.

Environmental Studies

According to the Finnish core curriculum (2014: 131, 133, 239), environmental studies education takes into account the ecological, cultural, social, and economic aspects of sustainable development. The natural environment and human activities in Finland, the Nordic countries, Europe, and other continents are outlined in environmental studies

education through diverse regional examples and current news topics (Finnish Core Curriculum 2014: 241). Fostering global understanding and appreciating diversity in nature and culture are important perspectives in this context. When selecting content for environmental studies, the preservation of biodiversity, mitigation of climate change, sustainable use of natural resources, promotion of health, preservation of pupils' cultural heritage, living in a multicultural world, and the global well-being of humanity, now and in the future, should all be considered. Thus, environmental studies seeks to discuss not only material and biological facts, but also social and ethical concerns.

Geography

Attitude and value goals for geography education include encouraging students to become active, responsible citizens committed to a sustainable lifestyle (Finnish Core Curriculum 2014: 385, 388). Geography education also aims to help pupils appreciate their regional identity as well as the diversity of nature, human activities, and cultures. Additionally, the goal of geography education is to foster a more universal appreciation for human rights. Accordingly, the learner should be able to understand cultural differences and see current society through the lens of human rights (Finnish Core Curriculum 2014: 388). In view of these goals, geography education attempts to combine appreciation of regional identity with respect for universal human rights, including cultural rights. According to the curriculum (2014: 386), geography classes use real-world examples from all over the world to help students think about how globalisation and regional development issues affect people's lives and the places where they live. Given this, geography education seeks to critically examine the ways in which globalisation is influencing people and environment. Additionally, it is important for pupils to learn how to define the differences in cultural landscapes, features, and ways of life in Finland and around the world (Finnish Core Curriculum 2014: 387).

History

According to the Finnish curriculum, the goal of history education is to increase pupils' historical awareness and knowledge of various cultures. Pupils are guided to understand the developments that led to the present and to consider future scenarios by using historical information (Finnish Core Curriculum 2014: 257, 415). Furthermore, the goal of history education is to raise pupils' historical and cultural awareness, while also encouraging them to practise responsible citizenship. As a separate goal, the curriculum (2014: 257, 415) stipulates that students must be taught the value of both intellectual and manual labour. This once again exemplifies the practical and utilitarian orientation of the Finnish national curriculum.

According to the curriculum, history education is designed to help pupils develop their identities and become acquainted with the effects of culture on individuals and societies (Finnish Core Curriculum 2014: 257, 415). These descriptions of intended learning outcomes are all rather vague, and they do not tell us much about what is required in order to achieve these objectives. The same issue of vagueness arises in other school subjects.

Visual Arts

The curriculum (2014: 143, 297, 426) says that the task of teaching visual arts is to guide pupils to explore and express a culturally diverse reality through the means of art. The construction of pupils' identities, cultural competence and sense of community are said to be strengthened by producing and interpreting images. According to the curriculum, the pupils' experiences, imagination and experimentation create the basis for teaching visual arts. In this way, the curriculum presupposes that teaching pupils to comprehend cultural diversity and developing pupils' identities are not just verbal and linguistic endeavours, but may also be greatly enhanced by learning to produce and analyse images.

Needlework and Handicrafts

The Finnish core curriculum bases needlework and handicraft education on a thorough examination of a number of broad themes that cross subject lines. According to the curriculum (2014: 146, 270, 431), knowledge of the surrounding material world provides the foundation for a sustainable lifestyle and sustainable development. This also includes the pupils' personal experience, local cultural heritage and the cultural diversity of the neighbourhood. Furthermore, it is claimed that needlework and handicraft education teaches pupils how to be moral, knowledgeable, capable, engaged, and enterprising citizens who respect themselves as creators, have a talent for craft expression, and a desire to preserve and advance craft culture (Finnish Core Curriculum 2014: 430). In light of these claims, the needlework and handicrafts curriculum includes ambitious objectives that are not only technical, but also social and ethical in nature. The curriculum planners have recognised that school education must be comprehensive and integrated, which means that technical skills and theoretical knowledge must be combined with ethical and aesthetic goals.

Music

According to the Finnish core curriculum, a well-rounded music education includes not only children's music but also music from other cultures, art music, popular music, and folk music. The primary objective of music education is to encourage pupils to reflect on their musical experiences and the vast aesthetic, cultural, and historical wealth of the world of music (Finnish Core Curriculum 2014: 264, 266). Examples of music of various

ages and from various regions frame cultural diversity in music education (Finnish Core Curriculum 2014: 423). This can help pupils see globalisation and cultural diversity from a new, more concrete perspective, where the emphasis is on experiences they can relate to, rather than on abstract ideas.

Sports

The sports curriculum, like the visual arts curricula and the needlework and handicrafts curricula, states that the goal is to promote equality in school and society, a sense of community among pupils, and cultural diversity (Finnish Core Curriculum 2014: 148, 273, 433). Sports education is thus much more than just teaching the techniques and rules of various sports. And it is about more than just instilling a positive attitude toward physical exercise. Sports education is also about how pupils interact with one another and how they treat one another. Thus, morality and social cohesion are used to frame how cultural diversity is, or should be, perceived in sports education. This way of thinking is applicable to basically every school subject, meaning that globalisation and cultural diversity in the classroom setting are concerns that transcend disciplinary boundaries.

The above descriptions provide an overview of how globalisation and cultural diversity are addressed in the curricula of different school subjects. The findings can be summarised as follows: In religion and history education, reflections on globalisation and cultural pluralism are linked to historic events and current encounters between different traditions and ideologies. In the context of language education, globalisation and cultural diversity relate to the linguistic and communicative requirements for meeting and understanding people from all over the world. Globalisation is seen as a universal goal of ecological sustainability in environmental studies, with the premise that safeguarding nature and the environment is critical for our future. In art, craft and music education, cultural pluralism is related with the chance to become aware of and engaged in the creative and musical styles and traditions of different origins. In the teaching of sport, globalisation is linked to larger ethical and pedagogical aims of school education, such as respect for others and tolerance of diversity. As a result, the Finnish curriculum takes into account the cognitive, aesthetic, and ethical aspects of globalisation and diversity in different ways in the context of different school subjects. The curriculum addresses globalization and cultural diversity in the framework of the humanities and arts and crafts, but not mathematics and science, despite the fact that the curriculum's basic educational and ethical objectives apply to the instruction of all disciplines.

6 Discussion: The Finnish Curriculum Emphasises Cultural Diversity Over Globalisation

So far, this article has described the Finnish comprehensive school's curriculum and provided some brief commentary of different school subjects. In this chapter, I expand on the study's findings, focusing on the ethical implications that arise from critical perspectives on globalisation. The aim is to juxtapose the curriculum's portrayal of globalisation as cultural diversity with a more intricate comprehension of the potential conflicts and challenges that are intertwined with the process of globalisation.

This study is particularly concerned with how the curriculum addresses the challenges of globalization, as raised by critical study, and how effectively it does so. It mainly addresses globalization in terms of cultural diversity and does not sufficiently attend to how cultural recognition and cultural criticism may conflict, both in the large globalized context and in the specific cultural context offered by education. The focus on cultural diversity and not on other detrimental effects of globalization present in critical research perspectives on globalization, leads the curricula to mainly focus on cultural diversity as an ideal to promote through education. The lack of consideration of more detrimental effects of globalisation does not aid teachers in addressing conflicts and challenges coming with globalization in the classroom.

The Finnish core curriculum takes for granted that pupils grow up in a culturally, linguistically, religiously, and ideologically diverse world. Against this backdrop, the curriculum states that cultural competence is necessary for culturally sustainable living and working. Respect for human rights, interpersonal skills, and the ability to express oneself and one's opinions are said to be prerequisites for such competence. The curriculum emphasises expressive capacity as an important dimension of cultural competence, including language proficiency and argumentation skills. More broadly, the curriculum fosters an ideal of education as something that encourages students to become active participants in their culture and community, and also promotes an interest in other cultures. In this regard, one may question whether the curriculum fosters ambitions without providing sufficient guidance on how to achieve them.

The emphasis on the need for students to develop a coherent identity and healthy self-esteem in a multicultural setting is part of the normative educational goals provided by the Finnish curriculum. Although the curriculum makes no mention of it, in a multicultural environment, representatives of minorities may face harmonising pressure from the dominant culture, while representatives of the majority may perceive new cultural currents as a threat to their traditions and values (Akande 2002). Nevertheless, one might think that when globalisation and cultural diversity are discussed, the curriculum does an adequate job of focusing on the pupils' points of view and personal growth. On

the other hand, as a result of this emphasis on internal development, the external effects of globalisation and critical discussion of them are underrepresented in the Finnish curriculum. Furthermore, the globalisation-induced barriers to pupils' personal development, such as harmonising pressure, remain unaddressed.

As a result, the concept of globalisation is presented rather thinly in the Finnish curriculum, and the concept is not challenged, let alone problematised. As indication of this "thinness", social issues such as widening income disparities and persistent gender inequalities, which are frequently supported by traditional paternalistic values, as well as issues of cultural homogenisation and assimilation, go unaddressed. Rather than delving into these issues, globalisation is accepted as a fact to which societies must adapt because they have no choice. In the curriculum, many aspects of globalisation are considered inherently positive and worth of highlighting, such as the spread of cultural influences, increased intercultural communication, and opportunities to meet people from different cultures. The curriculum keeps silent about the violent aspects of globalisation, in which one culture's traditions, practices, and customs are gradually and inadvertently replaced by those of another. This gives the impression that globalisation and cultural diversity are primarily viewed from a utilitarian standpoint in the Finnish curriculum. Eventually, the benefits of globalisation are emphasised, while the problems and disadvantages are downplayed. From an ethical standpoint, this is significant shortcoming because providing a one-sided, if not misrepresentative, view of globalisation does not foster the development of students into responsible, honest, and critical citizens and consumers. A similar issue impedes the discussion of different cultural traditions and their potential drawbacks. Yet, culture can be a barrier to progress in a variety of spheres, including social advancement and ethical advancement (Dixson-Declève et al. 2022: 106). In the Finnish curriculum, there is no discussion of the difference between ethics as universal moral principles (independent from social and cultural contingencies) and cultural habits such as cuisines, greeting styles, and ways of dressing. Rather, the fact of cultural pluralism is accepted as a given, with no discussion of various dimensions or potential problems and solutions related to cultural pluralism.

Despite the lack of explicit discussion on various ethical frameworks, the UN Declaration of Human Rights appears several times in the Finnish core curriculum (2014: 21, 130, 282, 446). Hence, the curriculum makes an implicit assumption of global ethics in the form of universal human rights. This demonstrates that the curriculum, at least indirectly, assumes that the main point of ethics is to provide rules that are right and good for everyone, regardless of where they come from. When this result is combined with the obvious utilitarian emphasis in the curriculum's ethical considerations, the result is an ethical understanding that emphasises the maximisation of economic and other ben-

efits related to globalisation, and the minimisation of social harms so that as many people as possible, if not all people, can feel that their basic rights have been respected. This represents a kind of mixed model of ethics in which utilitarian considerations are emphasised but refined with duty-ethical considerations arising from universal human rights. It is noteworthy that virtue ethics, as the third main ethical framework, is at least implicitly assumed throughout all educational curricula since education has the power to mould an individual's character. Nonetheless, the Finnish curriculum does not place a premium on virtues and character traits. The term 'virtue' is only mentioned without a more detailed discussion (Finnish Core Curriculum 2014: 282, 410).

One could see the mixed model of ethics in the Finnish curriculum as representing a kind of rule-consequentialism. In moral philosophy, rule-consequentialism refers to the ethical view that the rightness or wrongness of an action depends not on the overall goodness or badness of its consequences (as act-consequentialists believe), but on whether the action conforms to the set of moral rules that would have the best outcomes if everyone accepted or followed them (Lehtonen 2021: 467–468). Universal human rights appear to be viewed as such a set of rules in the Finnish core curriculum.

Furthermore, globalisation and cultural diversity are framed as competitive advantages in the Finnish curriculum. This may be partly due to international evaluation frames like PISA and related country comparisons (Sahlberg 2012). Even though competition between pupils, companies, countries, cultures or any other agents is not explicitly mentioned in the curriculum, the discussion of cultural diversity and how to respond to it is framed as something that requires the appropriate responses to support and strengthen social cohesion and goodwill, as well as to make pupils better equipped for international job markets.

When people try to comprehend the problems and issues that come with globalisation and cultural diversity, they often concentrate on potential or assumed conflicts between cultures and the barriers, if not walls, that separate them (Matare 2009). The Finnish comprehensive school curriculum takes a different approach. It does not look at globalisation and cultural diversity through the lens of conflict or barriers. Instead, it regards globalisation and cultural diversity as facts that, for those who are well prepared and competent, can provide great opportunities on job markets and in other facets of life.

Despite its generally positive attitude toward globalisation and cultural diversity, the Finnish comprehensive school curriculum reflects the concept of cultural barriers through a contraposition, with two underlying assumptions: first, cultures diverge in many ways, including beliefs, values, customs, and languages, and second, proficiency in cultural diversity requires good language and communication skills. By emphasising

proficiency in cultural diversity, the Finnish curriculum evades discussion on cultural conflicts and barriers.

However, there are numerous historical and present examples of various nations and cultures clashing, if not fighting, with one another (Küng 1998; Huntington 2011). The issue of how to avoid cultural conflicts is perhaps more relevant today than ever before. According to one view, cultural conflicts can be prevented, first, by blending, reinterpreting and harmonising cultural norms and, second, by appropriately limiting and confining the extent of competing norms (for example, by restricting the manifestations of cultural identity to private life only) (Ritzer 2004; Lehtonen 2015: 47). As a result, harmonic blending and precautionary restriction can be seen as the main routes to a peaceful cohabitation of cultures—a goal that is also pursued in school education (Lehtonen 2015: 52–53).

Both of the above routes are visible in what Julian Baggini has dubbed the “Poppadom Paradox” (Kennedy 2012). The paradox is that people’s enjoyment of feeling multicultural (“blending”) is contingent on other people remaining, at least fictionally, monocultural (“restriction”). Accordingly, people enjoying poppadom—thin, crispy Indian bread—in an ethnic restaurant in a western capital may mistakenly believe that the staff represents authentic Indian, monocultural, culture. The Finnish national curriculum adopts, in a sense, the “Poppadom Paradox” by placing an emphasis on cultural specificity to the point where students are expected to be curious about cultural differences and appreciate the distinctive qualities of different cultures, whether those qualities are intellectual or aesthetic. This positive interest in cultural diversity exemplifies the blending route, whereas the restricting route is exemplified by principles and norms such as “human rights must not be violated” and “in religious education, pupils must be streamed according to their affiliation”.

7 Globalisation and Cultural Diversity Are Viewed as Opportunities Rather Than Problems in the Finnish curriculum

This article has investigated and analysed how globalisation and cultural diversity are addressed in the Finnish national curriculum for comprehensive school. The curriculum establishes a connection between globalisation and the educational goal of community building. This broad goal is interpreted in the curriculum in a variety of ways, including bolstering communities in the face of global challenges like climate change, environmental degradation, and income inequality.

The curriculum optimistically assumes that education can strengthen creativity and respect for cultural diversity, promote interaction within and between cultures, and create

the basis for culturally sustainable development. Given these ideas, the curriculum strongly supports the popular goal of social and cultural sustainability, but without explicitly distinguishing between different aspects of sustainability (viz. ecological, social, cultural, political, and economic aspects). This makes sense, given that the curriculum's goal is to provide schools and teachers with clear and achievable learning objectives. On the other hand, the learning objectives related to globalisation and cultural diversity are vague in the Finnish national curriculum, and the curriculum does not propose ways of achieving those goals in practice or in different situations. Furthermore, the curriculum assumes that boundaries between languages, cultures, religions, and worldviews can be crossed in schools and classrooms, without giving much thought to whether this is a realistic expectation and under what conditions this can be achieved.

In a rights-based framework represented by the Finnish curriculum, the state and, by extension, the educational system have the obligation to guarantee that everyone learns to respect and, at the very least, not violate human rights and care for human dignity. This approach is understandable considering that the curriculum provides a way of understanding and implementing the United Nations' human rights agreements, and its main objective is to acquaint students with this framework for international cooperation. As a result, the rights-based and, to a lesser degree, duty-based framework is not just an unstated presupposition, but also a declared goal of the curriculum.

Furthermore, the preceding study shows how the curriculum, in conjunction with the criteria set by the UN's programme for global ethical education, tends to promote an ideal that is not tied to utilitarian or duty-based concerns, but rather to a virtue-based framework. The emphasis on cultivating virtues or the ideal of cultural variety may be ineffectual, but neither of the other two frameworks described is inherently better adapted to dealing with the possibility of cultural disputes. This illustrates that none of the three primary normative frameworks can handle globalisation's difficulties on their own.

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