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Diverging discourses on multicultural education in Finnish teacher education programme policies: Implications for teaching

The necessity to include multicultural education policies and practices in schools and teacher education has been widely recognised both in Finland and internationally. However, terms such as 'multiculturalism' and 'multicultural education' have contested and vague meanings in educational discourse. This paper investigates discourses on multicultural education from critical multicultural education and postcolonial theoretical perspectives. The focus is on the teacher education policies of all the eight primary teacher education programmes in Finland. Discourse theory analysis revealed six diverging discourses within a framework of conservative, liberal and critical multicultural education. The results show that it should not be taken for granted that policies including multicultural education contribute to social justice in education and teacher education. Consequently, policy-makers need to question the rhetoric regarding multiculturalism and to focus on how inequality is reproduced and upheld in discourses in teacher education and schools, and how this can be challenged.

Key words: multicultural education, teacher education programme policy, discourse analysis

Introduction

This article examines the discourses on multiculturalism and multicultural education in Finnish teacher education programme policies. The aim is to analyse the premises given to Finnish teachers for working in multicultural education and at the same time contribute to the critical discussion on approaches of multicultural education taught in teacher education on an international level. The Finnish national curriculum supports equality and diversity, as well as the appreciation of diversity as inclusive of all (FNBE 2014). Its orientation towards multicultural education has changed during 1994-2014 from a perspective of 'us' tolerating 'them', to more critical perspectives and an emphasis on social justice for all (Zilliacus, Holm & Sahlström, 2017). However, the reality in Finnish society and education seems to be far from these ideals. From 2014 to 2015, hate crimes reported to the police in Finland increased by 52%. Of all 1079 reported hate crimes in 2016, racist motives made up 77% and religious motives 14% (Rauta, 2017). In the school health survey conducted by the National Institute for Health and Welfare during 2013–2017, around a third of the youths in grade eight and nine who were born abroad were victims of weekly bullying, and had been physically

attacked three (girls) or four (boys) times more often than youths with ethnically Finnish parents (Halme et al., 2017). In addition to the visible forms of racism such as hate speech and crimes, institutional and structural racism in schools also prevent equality from being realised (Jauhola & Vehviläinen, 2015; Rastas, 2009; Souto, 2011).

Earlier international research on multicultural and intercultural education shows that not all good intentions promote social justice and equality in the classroom. Many attempts may merely end up reinforcing stereotypes and 'othering' those who differ from the norm (Gorski, 2008, 2016; Nieto, 2018). Gorski (2016) and Grant (2016) both argue that multicultural education has become depoliticised and undercut in its original commitment to social justice. In OECD's report on teacher education for diversity (2010, p.34), 96% of student teachers and teacher educators believed that sensitivity to diversity issues was important, but only 47% of student teachers felt that teacher education prepared them for working with diversity in the classroom. In Mansikka and Holm's (2011) study, Finnish teachers were positive towards multicultural education on a general level, but were poorly prepared for how to challenge and work with sociocultural issues. In their study of an intercultural kindergarten teacher education programme in Finland, Layne and Dervin (2016) problematised the kind of interculturality that is constructed in the programme, because to some extent it still maintains the positions of 'us', the Finnish, and 'the others', the immigrants.

Discourses on multiculturalism, both in Finland (Tuori, 2009) and other Western countries (de los Reyes, Molina & Mulinari, 2006; Lentin, 2014), construct the multicultural Other as the constitutive outside, consequently maintaining western hegemony (Torfing, 1999). There are examples of an othering discourse on multicultural education also from the Finnish school context. Both Holm and Londen's (2010) policy study of national and municipal curricula and Riitaoja's (2013) ethnographical study showed that multicultural education in the Finnish setting easily becomes understood as education for immigrant pupils. This is similar to how Nieto (2018, p.38) critiques many educators for thinking about multicultural education as for the 'culturally different'. The myth of a monocultural and homogenous Finland until the recent immigration in the 1990s (Tervonen, 2014; Tuori, 2009) is also prevalent in discourses on the Finnish school. In a study of two Finnish secondary schools (Juva & Holm, 2016), normality was constructed as Finnishness and those categorised as immigrants represented the others. Teachers explained inappropriate behaviour as a

matter of culture when the student was defined as an immigrant, whereas Finnish students were treated as individuals. In Riitaoja's (2013) ethnographical study, 'multicultural' was used as a synonym for a non-white, non-Christian, non-European immigrant. Souto's (2011) ethnographic study in a Finnish secondary school showed how the fact that immigrant pupils are treated and talked about as different enables a discourse of fear and threat, which in turn feeds racism. Similarly, in her study of school textbooks in history and social sciences, Mikander (2016) found that westerners are pictured as civilised and allowed to travel around the world, while non-westerners are constructed as a threat when migrating to Europe.

Zilliacus, Holm and Sahlström (2017) show that the current national core curriculum implemented in 2016 does however, promote a change towards a view of multicultural education as something for all pupils, with equality and human rights in focus. A key issue for the successful implementation of this curriculum is the kind of discourses on multicultural education in teacher education policies. Thus, it is important to investigate what kind of multicultural education discourses are present in Finnish teacher education. Similarly to studies made e.g. in the U.S. on the multicultural advocacy in standards for teacher education (Vavrus, 2015) or multicultural teacher education course contents (Gorski, 2009), the aim of this study is to find out to what extent the multicultural education provided in teacher education can actually be called critical and advocating for social justice.

Multicultural and intercultural education: from conservative to critical approaches

In their review of the field, Holm and Zilliacus (2009) found no general differences between multicultural and intercultural education, apart from how the use of the terms vary geographically: intercultural education is more frequently used in Europe, and multicultural education in North America. However, different approaches to both multicultural and intercultural education do exist, ranging from conservative to critical (Holm & Zilliacus, 2009; McLaren & Ryoo, 2012; Wright, 2012). In Finland, 'multicultural education' is the commonly used term, also in the teacher education programmes studied, which is why we use this term in this study. In the following section, we briefly summarise some of the approaches of multicultural and intercultural education that are relevant for the current study. In his study of multicultural teacher

education course syllabi, Gorski (2009) uses the three theoretical frameworks of conservative, liberal and critical multiculturalism drawing on McLaren (1995) and Jenks, Lee and Kanpol (2001). These three frameworks of conservative, liberal and critical multiculturalism are also useful for our study, as most of the approaches of multicultural education can be organised under them.

The conservative approaches all derive from a simplistic use of the concept of culture, with an emphasis on the culture of others. In this view, people from non-dominant ethnic groups are categorised and ascribed certain attributes according to their supposed 'culture'. Cultural differences are essentialised and often seen as deficits. The focus in this approach of multicultural education is to educate the culturally different Other and assimilate them into the norm and the traditional curriculum. (Gorski, 2009; Gorski, 2016; McLaren & Ryoo, 2012)

The liberal approaches have in common a celebration of diversity and acceptance of difference. Despite their good intentions and humanistic ideals, these approaches build on a simplistic use of culture and often contribute to essentialising non-dominant groups by using cultural labels and celebrating cultural traditions in a stereotypical way. These approaches often take the perspective of the majority that needs to learn to know, accept and tolerate other cultures. This kind of well-meaning othering still maintains the hegemonic power relation between the dominant group who belong to the norm and other minority groups and fails to address or challenge issues of structural inequality (Gorski, 2008; Gorski, 2016; May & Sleeter, 2010).

The approaches of multicultural and intercultural education that can be called critical share a critical gaze on power relations and structural inequalities, addressing the process of othering as the problem instead of the Other (Gorski 2009; McLaren & Ryoo, 2012; Nieto & Bode, 2018; Vavrus, 2015). The critical approaches can be described as 'education for social justice' (Nieto, 2018, p.39-40), since the starting point for all these approaches is that teachers can work to change social inequalities together with their students. The concept of culture is not as central in the critical approaches, as many of them use an intersectional perspective that looks at race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, ability, and other aspects of identity together when analysing and working against oppression. However, when culture is used, it is seen as fluid and socially and discursively constructed, rather than as a fixed unit (May & Sleeter, 2010).

The aim of this study is to analyse discourses on multicultural education in Finnish teacher education programme policies. We use critical multicultural education theory and postcolonial theory to analyse these discourses to explore whether and how teachers are educated to promote social justice at school. As research shows that not all multicultural education actually has a social justice approach, we identified two research questions: 1) What kind of discourses on multicultural education can be identified in Finnish teacher education programme policies? and 2) How do these discourses on multicultural education in Finnish teacher education programme policies relate to education for social justice?

Method and data

This study draws on discourse theory (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001). According to discourse theory, all social phenomena obtain their meaning through discourse. Discourses, and the truths they produce, are always contingent, since meaning is constantly negotiated. However, discourses obtain partial fixity and stability through 'nodal points' (ibid.). These are privileged signifiers that hold together a discourse by 'constructing a knot of definite meanings' (Torfing, 1999, p. 98). Nodal points that are filled with different meanings in different contexts or discourses are called floating signifiers (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001; Torfing, 1999). Multiculturalism and multicultural education are examples of these, as different texts and actors continuously compete over their meanings (Wright, 2012). Discourses give and limit the agency of subjects (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001), and in the analysis we also tried to determine what kind of subject positions the discourses on multicultural education construct, especially in relation to othering.

A discourse, as all subjects, needs an outside to constitute itself and see its own limits. Torfing (1999, p. 125) exemplifies this using the discourse of western civilisation, which establishes itself by excluding non-western countries and construing them as 'barbaric'. At the same time, it is the presence of an outside, the antagonistic Other, that makes it impossible for a subject to fully constitute itself (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001; Torfing, 1999). All subjects and discourses do attempt to find a total constitution and closure. If the order in a discourse becomes naturalised and taken for granted, it has attained a hegemonic status. Voices that are not in line with the hegemonic order are

silenced, and resistance is sanctioned. Discourse theory analysis seeks to deconstruct the hegemonic order, fixities and power relations that are taken for granted in the present discourse (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001; Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).

The focus of this study was on the policies for all eight primary teacher education programmes in Finland. The data include all[1] faculty-specific documents from the primary teacher education programmes that govern the content of compulsory studies and which had open access on the website of the faculty at the time of the data collection (Autumn 2015 – Spring 2016). To a large extent the data consist of descriptions of obligatory or 'obligatory elective[2]' courses. In addition to the course descriptions, three of the universities had a faculty strategy; two of which were a curriculum for teacher education and one an activity programme for teaching and learning. Three had longer descriptions of the programme on their websites, one a description of the faculty on their website, and one in the study guide.

The present analysis was completed in two steps, one of reading through all the programme policy documents to identify articulations of multicultural education, and one of analysing the selected parts to find nodal points (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Marttila (2015), argues for the importance of stating one's epistemic bias as a researcher. In our case, this meant that we conducted the analysis from the point of view of critical multicultural education. To capture the field of multicultural and intercultural education in the policy documents, we used the following concepts as 'theoretical codes' (Marttila, 2015, p. 12) when we examined the material: multicultural(ism), intercultural(ity), social justice, equality, and equity. We compiled every articulation of these concepts in the programme policies into one separate document. Since we used a wide definition of the multicultural, including all the intersections of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, social class, religion and language, we also included articulations concerning one of these sections in the document. Closely related concepts, such as sustainable development, democracy, human rights and ethics, often mentioned in the same course aims as some of the above-mentioned concepts, were added as 'empirical codes' (Marttila, 2015, p. 12). In total we found 274 articulations, of which the most commonly included terms were multicultural and multiculturalism.

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[1] See Table 1 in Appendix for detailed information.
[2] In three of the teacher education programmes, students have to choose one or several courses from a number of courses offered, which makes them 'obligatory electives'.

Here we define articulations as pieces of texts, often limited to one course aim; sometimes consisting of one sentence, sometimes several sentences that belonged together.

The second step of the analysis was to read through the document with all the selected articulations and find nodal points – discursively similar articulations around closely related concepts that provide stability to a certain discourse. Since the emerging discourses had many similarities to Jenks et al.'s (2001) and McLaren's (1995) division of multicultural education into frameworks of conservative, liberal and critical multiculturalism, we structured our analysis in light of how the discourses conformed with or contested these frameworks. Very short articulations mentioning, for example, multicultural as a concept but otherwise being undefinable in terms of which approach they might take in multicultural education, were excluded. The 185 articulations that remained of the 274 (see Table 2 in Appendix) produced six discourses: two conformed with the conservative framework, two with the liberal framework, two with the critical framework, and each had several sub-discourses. Many times one course description included articulations of several different discourses. Also one course aim sometimes included articulations of several discourses. This means that what we counted as one articulation might have appeared two or three times in the different discursive frameworks.

Contrasting discourses on multicultural education

We identified several contradicting, but also partly overlapping discourses on multicultural education in the teacher education programme policies. We structured the discourses into the framework of conservative, liberal and critical multicultural education. The most dominating discourses were conservative, consisting of 96 articulations. The liberal discourses consisted of 75 articulations, and the critical discourses consisted of 60 articulations. Here, we describe each discourse and its sub-discourses, and present examples[3] of articulations that create their fixity.

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[3] Six of the eight teacher education programmes were in Finnish, one in Swedish and one in both Finnish and English. All quotes in this article, apart from the English ones, have been translated into English by the authors.

Table 3: Discourses on multicultural education in teacher education policies

Discursive frameworks	Discourses
Conservative discourses	*Multiculturalism as outside the norm*
	Multiculturalism as a challenge for schools and teachers ***Preparing teachers for the culturally different***
Liberal discourses	*Acknowledging and appreciating diversity* ***Taking diversity into account*** ***Appreciating diversity and seeing it as a resource***
	Developing intercultural and international competence
Critical discourses	*Critically examining unequal structures*
	Promoting social justice and striving for change in school and society ***Teachers as agents influencing society***

Conservative discourses

The conservative discourses included a total of 96 articulations, 26 of which were from University F, which had many courses that focused on the education of immigrant pupils. The discourses consisted of articulations on both a general level which concerned multicultural society, and a more teaching-specific level about how to teach in multicultural schools. At both levels, 'multiculturalism', the adjective 'multicultural' and 'culture' were nodal points. We identified one discourse in which multiculturalism was articulated as outside the norm, and another on the consequences of multiculturalism and how teachers should be prepared for it. Both discourses share the same hegemonic order which articulates multiculturalism and the culturally different Other as constitutive outsides of Finnish society and school.

Multiculturalism as outside the norm

In this discourse, *multiculturalism* is described as the outside both in the form of a synonym for immigration, and as another perspective to the normal, Finnish one. The articulations on the general level use the verb 'multiculturalisation' (fi. monikulttuuristuminen) as a synonym for immigration, the '-isation' form indicating

that it is a process in which society is becoming more multicultural. This maintains an understanding of Finnish society as originally homogenous and monocultural, and that immigrants are now bringing different cultures into it (Tervonen, 2014). For example, in a course on an inquiry approach to teaching in diverse environments, 'multiculturalisation' was used next to globalisation in the course description, explaining what is happening to Finland and its education: 'the course deals with education from the perspective of multiculturalisation and globalisation, lifelong learning and taking diversity into account' (University C).

Several universities, especially University F, tended to use multicultural as a synonym for immigrants. For example, the description of a course called 'Multiculturalism and multilingualism in teaching' actually ended up focusing on the integration of immigrants. 'Multiculturalism', and 'multicultural', as in, for example, the 'multicultural classroom' was mostly used as a label to indicate the presence of immigrants, similar to the findings of Riitaoja (2013) and Holm and Londen (2010). According to the aims of the 'Inclusive and global education' course (Uni. A), students would 'together with other students reflect on and analyse their experiences gained from multicultural learning environments'. Our reading suggests that the need to ascribe the adjective 'multicultural' to a practice, course content or identity indicates that a monocultural, homogenous reality is taken for granted. In addition, part of the content of this course was 'recognising regional and multicultural values as well as the strengthening of the cultural identity and prevention of marginalisation'. The separation into regional and multicultural values also articulates a dichotomy in which that which is multicultural is also outside the local in terms of values.

Multiculturalism as a challenge for the school and teachers

The second conservative discourse describes 'multiculturalisation' as a challenge to Finnish society and education. The articulations are on a general level in strategies, visions and overall descriptions of teacher education programmes, and are more teacher focused in the course descriptions. The 'Vision and values' of one teacher education programme (Uni. H) stated that: 'In the following activity period the teacher education department especially wants to promote sustainable development and answer to the challenge of multiculturalisation'. The curriculum for teacher education in University

B describes multiculturalism as creating both 'possibilities and challenges for learning and teaching' which the student teachers need to understand. That which constitutes multiculturalism in the examples above is vague and floating, and multiculturalism is constructed as an external factor outside that teacher education needs to respond to. However, in addition, a course on multiculturalism and the politics of education in University D 'examines the challenges for education brought by ethnic and cultural diversity in both a Finnish and international context'. Here ethnic and cultural differences are explicitly articulated as challenges for education. This articulation reproduces both the myth of an originally ethnically and culturally homogenous Finland and a hegemonic understanding that ethnic and cultural difference is a problem in Finnish schools. It is a typical example of how the concepts 'ethnic' and 'cultural' are intertwined, and sometimes used as synonyms, especially when the focus is on immigrants. The parallel use of both ethnic and culture indicates an essentialising understanding of culture that primarily refers to ethnicity or to assumed predictable features of a group of people (Gorski, 2016).

Preparing teachers for the culturally different. In this sub-discourse of the 'multiculturalism as a challenge for schools and teachers' discourse, we focus on the articulations in the course descriptions that concern teacher work. These articulations construct an understanding that the teacher should understand the consequences of multiculturalism and have different skills to encounter the culturally different Other, meaning both the pupil and sometimes the parents. The description of the programme for primary school teachers in University F claimed that the future teacher educated there would obtain 'the skills to face pupils from different cultural backgrounds and with different capabilities'. The articulation implies that a certain knowledge or skill is needed to teach children from another background than the majority which may reproduce a notion of the Other. It may also reproduce an essentialising understanding of culture as something that affects learning and behaviour. Another course called 'Multiculturalism in school' divides the readiness that the teacher needs to work in a multicultural school into 'informational, functional and attitudinal skills' (University D). This creates an image of multiculturalism as a rather demanding phenomenon for teachers, but fails to describe what kinds of facts, attitudes and skills the teachers

actually need. This kind of vagueness about what the skills actually contain leaves room for essentialising and stereotyping.

Most of the articulations related to multiculturalism construct the multicultural Other as something that comes from the outside, which poses a possible challenge. For instance, one aim for a student on a course called 'Inclusive and global education' was to be 'able to meet the challenge of multiculturalism, and learn the civic competences and central concepts related to it, including the "individuality in diversity", "third culture" and "global citizenship"' (Uni. A). Discourses are always contingent (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001), and the articulation above is an example of how different discourses, from conservative to critical, are sometimes intertwined in the course descriptions. For instance, the concept of 'global citizenship' in this example constructs an understanding that is more in accordance with liberal or critical discourses on multiculturalism, which will be discussed in the following sections, whereas the 'challenges of multiculturalism' conform to a conservative discourse.

Two courses in two different teacher education programmes followed a similar structure of including everything that differs from the norm in one course: one was 'Inclusive and global education' (Uni. A) and the other 'Meeting uniqueness and diversity' (Uni. H). The course's name 'Meeting uniqueness and diversity', as well as one of its aims to enable the teacher education student to 'understand the influence of students' unique features and diversity on the teacher's work, pedagogical choices and communication', indicated that these phenomena were different to those which teachers normally meet in their work (Gorski, 2009; Nieto, 2018). The two courses also, to some extent, divided the content into issues of special education and multicultural education, even if the concepts in the course names were broader: 'uniqueness', 'diversity', 'inclusion' and 'global', and may possibly have referred to all students. The course literature in 'Meeting uniqueness and diversity' was divided into sections of 'Special education' and 'Multicultural education', which indicated that the term 'uniqueness' actually referred to students with special needs, and 'diversity' to students with immigrant backgrounds or students from ethnic minorities. An overly naturalised separation into different themes such as special needs and immigration might contribute to the 'homogenising of non-dominant groups' (Gorski, 2009), meaning that different groups of others are considered homogenous in a way that dominant groups are not.

As with 'Multicultural as outside the norm', the synonymous use of 'multiculturalism' and 'immigrants' was particularly clear in the 'Multiculturalism and multilingualism in teaching' course (Uni. F). The course focused on how to teach, support and grade an 'immigrant pupil', or 'pupils with immigrant backgrounds'. One aim was for the student teacher to become 'familiar with a variety of immigrant cultures and to understand the influence of their own cultural background on encounters with representatives of other cultures'. This implies that the student teacher could learn to better educate pupils representing static and homogeneous 'immigrant cultures'. There was a dimension of self-reflection for the student: 'understand the influence of their own cultural background', but immediately after this, the concept of culture was still used in an essentialising way, as a category that one can represent, and as an explanatory frame for behaviour (Gorski, 2016; de los Reyes et al., 2006). The issue of different cultures and languages was only related to immigrants (Tuori, 2009); other linguistic and ethnic minorities were not taken into account. This course did not include discriminating structures that an immigrant may encounter in the perspective on immigrant pupils.

The articulations on pupils with immigrant backgrounds in the teacher education programme policies constructed a rather static understanding of identity and offered no clear definition of when one stopped being a pupil with an immigrant background in need of special teaching. This makes it difficult for a pupil to advance once he or she is categorised as an immigrant (de los Reyes et al., 2006). However, some articulations of other similar kinds of subject positions to that of the immigrant pupil which represent cultural or linguistic differences also exist: 'pupils from another culture', L2 (Finnish as second language)-pupil and 'multilingual learner'. These categories form a 'chain of equivalence' (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, p. 127; Torfing 1999, p. 124-125), in which they all become the others compared to the 'normal pupil'-category, and thus contribute to the construction of an outside. This kind of differentiating categorisations can also contribute to a structure in which only certain, 'normal' pupils can have a full sense of belonging and be active agents in school and society, whereas other pupils need to be included. In sum, the conservative discourses in the teacher education policies conformed with earlier Finnish (Holm & Londen, 2010; Riitaoja, 2013) and international research (Nieto, 2018, p. 38) in which multicultural education becomes something intended only for those categorised as

immigrant students or 'culturally different'. The articulations mostly put teacher educators and student teachers in the position of the Finnish, who meet the multicultural others at school.

Liberal discourses

We identified two discourses within the liberal framework on multicultural education: one on acknowledging and appreciating diversity and one on developing students' intercultural and international competence. They share the liberal and positive view on diversity and international activity. To a large extent, these liberal discourses also do what Gorski (2016, p.224) calls 'overemphasising culture': culture becomes the dominant focus, leaving other important dimensions of a person's identity and preconditions aside. These 75 articulations in the liberal discourses were the most equally distributed between the different universities, even if University F again had the most of them (see Appendix 2).

Acknowledging and appreciating diversity

This discourse revolves around taking diversity into account and seeing it as a resource. The nodal points are *diversity* and *cultural diversity*. The articulations almost exclusively consisted of course aims written on a teaching-specific level, which claimed that the teacher should pay attention to, protect and promote diversity and cultural diversity among pupils. Ignorance and intolerance of diversity are the constitutive outside of this discourse (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001; Torfing, 1999), the problem that needs to be eliminated through positive articulations of diversity. The term 'diversity' is often used to include different sections of diversity (Tuori, 2009) and has therefore become popular in Finnish educational discourse in recent years, as a broader and more 'all inclusive' word than multiculturalism. Many of the articulations, including terms such as 'pupils from different cultural backgrounds' or 'cultural diversity' can be read as including all pupils. However, some of the articulations constructed an image of some pupils being more diverse – or different – than others, or of diversity as something that is outside the norm and something to be either appreciated or not. Dervin (2016) finds the use of 'diversity' very problematic,

as it is supposed to contain all kinds of diversities, but is mostly used to define the others, when it comes to race and religion, rather than recognising oneself in the diversity.

Taking diversity into account. We found different articulations of what student teachers should acknowledge as diversity. The aim of the 'Education in cultures of diversity' course was for the student to be 'able to detect and take into account the cultural diversity of the learners from different perspectives' (University C). The fact that 'cultural' was often used next to 'diversity', shows that the cultural dimension of diversity was still the focus. Gorski (2016) argues that the use of culture masks the real inequity concerns such as racism, sexism and heterosexism, and makes the discourse more comforting for the privileged, since it does not challenge any power issues. Another aim of the same 'Education in cultures of diversity' course was that:

> The student recognises the importance of creative activity in developing collaboration and mutual understanding between persons from different cultural backgrounds. The student knows how to support the development of ways of expression and dialogical activity while taking the diversity of the learners into account.

In this articulation, 'diversity' stands alone and could therefore imply a broader understanding of it. However, the first sentence uses the expression of 'persons from different cultural backgrounds', which hints that diversity may also in this case refer to cultural diversity. The way in which the diversity of the learners should be taken into account was not specified. A specification would more clearly articulate what kind of multicultural education approach is intended.

In the articulations of taking diversity into account it was not always easy to define who was included in the 'diversity'. However, one example of when some are constructed as more different than others, was the aim that the teacher education student 'knows how to work with children and parents living in diverse families' (Uni. A). This implies that diverse families are somehow different or more difficult than normal families, since some specific knowledge is needed to work with them.

Here the reference was not to cultural diversity, but clearly to gender and sexual diversity, since the course name was 'The gendered practices of education'.

Appreciating diversity and seeing it as a resource. In addition to the aims of taking diversity into account are the aims of creating a certain, positive attitude towards diversity among students, using words as 'respecting', 'appreciating' and 'promoting' diversity. In one teaching geography course, the student should, for example, 'learn about the environment, active citizenship and valuing cultural diversity in teaching' (Uni. H).

A few aims also explicitly stated that diversity should be appreciated and used as a resource, like that in the 'Inclusive and global education' course: 'The active harnessing of cultural diversity and using it as a resource for the construction of community' (Uni. A). These examples indicate how it is not self-evident that a diverse classroom is appreciated, and therefore the students' attitudes towards diversity become something that need to be pointed out. Since it creates positions of those who appreciate and those who are appreciated, one could address the same critique to the use of appreciation and using diversity as a resource, as to the concept of tolerance. 'Tolerance' has been criticised for reproducing an unequal hierarchy between the person belonging to the norm and the Other who is to be tolerated (Gorski, 2009; Willinsky, 2012). These articulations on appreciating diversity imply that the student teachers belong to the norm, and that diversity is outside the norm, something towards which they can choose their attitude.

Developing intercultural and international competence

The nodal points around which this second discourse within the liberal framework revolved were 'intercultural competence', and 'international competence and activity'. The articulations had a dominantly individual perspective, focusing on improving the teacher's intercultural competence and readiness to engage in international work.

Intercultural competence is a floating signifier that is not clearly defined, but it is often related to having the skills to communicate with people from different

cultures or developing a cultural understanding. This is similar to the 'multicultural competence' approach that Gorski (2009) found, which emphasised practical skills instead of self-reflection. One aim of the Multicultural education course (Uni. G) was to 'develop one's ability to communicate with individuals with another cultural background than one's own'. Potential communication problems and culture clashes were constructed as the constitutive outside in this discourse, which needs to be worked against – in this case by gaining intercultural competence (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001; Torfing, 1999). Both the previous articulation and the name of the 'When cultures meet' course, are examples of culture being placed in a central position. The articulation that cultures meet also implies a rather static understanding of culture as something with fixed borders and its own agency (Dervin, 2016). However, one aim of the course is that the student 'understands the many meanings of the concept of culture and can examine culture from many perspectives. In addition, the student knows the central ways in which to understand culture', which articulates a more nuanced understanding of culture. Focusing on dialogue and understanding between cultures has been popular among practitioners of multicultural education, since it seems to provide a concrete solution to multifaceted problems of inequity, but avoids actually confronting these uncomfortable problems (Gorski, 2016; May & Sleeter, 2010).

The discourse on intercultural competence and activity in the teacher education programme policies assumes that everybody has the same starting point and that the important aim is to learn the skills to be able to navigate in the global world. There is no reflection on inequalities or privileges. In their study of European education, culture and youth policy texts, Hoskins and Sallah (2011) concluded that by focusing on individual interpersonal skills in intercultural education, it is difficult to challenge unequal structures, as they are not taken into account. Asking those who do not have the same access to power to show mutual empathy with those who are privileged, can result in what Gorski (2008, p. 521) describes as 'the powerful gaining cultural capital on the backs of the oppressed'.

'Internationalisation' was used a few times in the same way as 'multiculturalisation' (see Conservative discourses) to describe new challenges for society. Otherwise the word 'international' was used to describe the activity of the Finnish student, and the development of the faculty. The nodal point 'international competence and activity'

referred mostly to how Finnish students should be prepared to engage themselves internationally. International activity can imply working both abroad and in international environments, as in the description of the primary teacher programme in University F in which 'the student is guided to develop his/her readiness for an independent and multi-professional activity as a teacher and educator in an environment with diverse values which is also becoming more international'.

In the following example from the faculty strategy of University A, international activity was articulated from the perspective of both the Finnish students and the 'student with a foreign language'. Their aims were, however, quite different: the Finnish student should gain international skills and the 'student with a foreign language' should choose courses in a suitable language:

> As a new field of competence, global education is under development, and aims to respond to the challenges of internationalisation and the educational goals of sustainable development. The aim is to develop the readiness of the students to work internationally and to reinforce the international teaching and research of the faculty. The studies in Global education promote international activity, give the Finnish students a possibility to strengthen their international skills, and expand the study possibilities for students with a foreign language at University A.

Here, the subject position provided for the Finnish student is articulated with agency to become an international actor.

In general, all the liberal discourses differed from the conservative ones in that the Other was not seen as a problem with deficits. However, both discourses leave space for essentialising differences and constructing cultures as predictable entities, which maintains the hegemony of 'us and them', the culturally different (Gorski, 2009; de los Reyes et al., 2006). Since problems of inequality are about the distribution of power, they cannot be solved by mere 'cultural solutions' (Gorski, 2016, p. 224). The focus of these discourses on acknowledging cultural diversity, and cultures

getting along, leave the existing problems of structural inequality unaddressed (May & Sleeter, 2010; Nieto & Bode, 2018). In Gorski's (2008, p.524) words, this kind of multicultural education is therefore still 'colonising instead of decolonising'.

Critical discourses

Whereas the focus in the earlier discourses has been on either educating the Other or seeking to take diversity into account in education, the nodal points in the critical discourses were 'examining inequalities in society' and 'teachers' responsibilities to change them' (Gorski, 2009; May & Sleeter, 2010; Vavrus, 2015). The critical discourses saw inequalities in society as the constitutive outside, the problem that needs to be fixed (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001; Torfing, 1999). Some articulations focused on critically examining inequalities, while others were more change-oriented, explicitly telling the teacher to be an agent of social justice. Some of the articulations focused on the teacher's important role in society and a few were about global responsibility. The courses that contained the critical discourses were more obligatory electives than obligatory ones, meaning that not all students took these courses. These 60 articulations were the most unequally distributed among the eight universities. University H had the most, with 22.

Critically examining unequal structures

Several articulations were about how student teachers should learn to critically examine the societal structures that produce inequalities. This resembles what Gorski (2009) calls 'teaching sociopolitical context'. These articulations explicitly stated that society has structures that create unequal opportunities, and this differs from articulations that focus on the Other as the problem or individual competences as a solution. Moreover, unlike in the conservative and liberal discourses, the issue of access to power was visible in this discourse (Gorski, 2016; Nieto & Bode, 2018). For example, 'the relation between education and power relations, cultures and ideologies' was a subject of study in the 'Education, society and change' course (Uni. B). Some of these articulations on examining injustice also included taking action to promote social justice (Nieto, 2018), which forms the next critical discourse. One aim of the 'Educaton and social justice' course in University H was that: 'The student

becomes acquainted with different dimensions of societal equality and inequality and strives to promote social justice'.

Promoting social justice in school and society

The articulations in this discourse resemble what Gorski (2009) called 'teaching as counter-hegemonic practice', as they focused not only on critical examination, but on how the student should learn to work in class as an agent of change. A combination of both critical thinking and action can be seen in this example from a Participatory pedagogy course in University D:

> This course examines structures and practices that produce inequality related to social background, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and other differences at different stages of lifelong learning and in the different institutional contexts of education. The aim is to become familiar with the principles of participatory pedagogy and other practices that enhance equality and their application in the work of teaching and guidance.

As can be seen in the previous example, culture is no longer the focus as the dimension to study, as in the conservative and partly in the liberal discourses. Many of the course aims had an intersectional perspective, which looked at social class, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality when studying inequality, like the aim of the 'Education and Social Justice' course, in which the student will be 'able to promote equality and gender equality culturally, philosophically and linguistically in a diverse school community' (Uni. H). Culture is not over-emphasised, but included as one of several dimensions, and the focus is on promoting equality.

Teachers as agents influencing society. Most of the articulations in this discourse focused on how the student should be able to promote equality as a teacher. However, a few articulations explicitly addressed the role of the teacher as a societal actor, as in the aim of the Master's level teacher education students in the 'Education, teaching and learning environments' programme in University D: the student 'understands his or her impact and responsibility as an educator, actor with societal influence and user

of pedagogical power'. Responsibility was used next to impact, which articulates that the teacher should reflect on how to use his or her role with power over others and as an agent influencing society.

Some articulations emphasise the global dimension when talking about the teacher's responsibility in working for a more just society. These articulations about the teacher's global responsibility often also included sustainable development as an attitude to take towards the world. The articulations were on both a general level concerning the aim of education, and a teacher level regarding what the teacher should do in class. This example is from the overall aims of the curriculum for the teacher education programme in University B: 'The mission of the Finnish school is to raise citizens who take the responsibility to construct a more equitable world that is based on sustainable development'.

Discussion and implications

This study has investigated what kind of discourses on multicultural education that can be identified in Finnish teacher education policies, and how these relate to education for social justice. We refined the three general frameworks of conservative, liberal and critical multiculturalism and identified six main discourses in the context of Finnish teacher education. The discourses identified included mostly conservative approaches and the critical approaches were a minority. This differs from Gorski's (2009) study of multicultural teacher education course syllabi in the U.S. where the majority of the courses had liberal approaches and the conservative approaches were fewer than the critical approaches. The results from our study show that only a minority of the discourses on multicultural education in the teacher education programme policies relate to education for social justice, which was the aim of multicultural education formulated already in the 1960s and 1970s (Grant, 2016). There was also a great variation between the universities especially among the critical articulations where one university had only one critical articulation and another had 22. This means that student teachers from different teacher education programmes become unequally competent in teaching for social justice. In the Finnish policies the use of the concept multiculturalism, is mostly related to how to teach immigrants, and not much to fighting inequalities. As Dervin (2016) and Gorski (2016) have argued, when culture is

emphasised too much or given too fixed meanings, it does not serve the aim of analysing inequalities to be able to promote equality. The critical discourses about changing the unequal society that were present in the programme policies included different categories and intersections, and did not emphasise culture or multiculturalism.. Multicultural educational policies have been developed in many countries, but these results from the Finnish context are an example of that it should not be taken for granted that policies including formulations about multicultural education contribute to social justice.

In order to find the implications for teaching we looked at the problems focused on in each discourse. The conservative discourses on multiculturalism constructed the Other as a problem, which maintains a hegemony of the Finnish, western us, over the multicultural, immigrant others. The implication of the conservative discourse therefore becomes that teachers should be able to educate the Other (Gorski, 2009). In the first liberal discourse on diversity, the problem seems to be that if there is no explicit positive articulations of diversity, there is a risk of ignorance and intolerance of diversity. However, this discourse still contains essentialising and othering to some extent. Teachers are educated so that they can acknowledge and make use of diversity. The second liberal discourse on intercultural and international competence sees students as individuals with equal starting points, and structural inequalities are made invisible. The problems are constructed as communicational challenges, cultural differences, and global competition. Teachers should therefore be able to educate interculturally competent and internationally competitive individuals (Gorski, 2016). The critical discourses on awareness of inequality, responsibility and action for social justice see the structural inequalities in society as the problem. This discourse can therefore be seen as counter-hegemonic practice (Gorski, 2009) in relation to the other discourses, since the articulations create an understanding in which the problem is not the Other, but the structures that other and oppress. Teachers should therefore be able to unfold the unequal structures and norms in society and challenge them (Gorski, 2016; May & Sleeter, 2010). These results and implications lead to the question: what kind of problems do we want teachers to address in their work and consequently, what needs to be changed in teacher education to make them do that?

The conservative discourses in the teacher education programme policies depict multiculturalism as coming from the outside, which is comparable to the two decades

old 1994 Finnish national core curriculum (Zilliacus, Holm & Sahlström 2017). We are concerned with the continuing frequent use of multicultural education as a synonym for education on integrating immigrants. In line with Nieto and Bode (2018) and Vavrus (2015), we would like to call attention to the other aims of multicultural education, such as seeing everybody as part of diversity, taking diversity into account, analysing structures and our own privileges critically, and changing society towards equality. We also suggest that categories such as 'pupils with immigrant backgrounds' and 'second language learners' ought to be problematised by teacher educators and teachers, and not essentialised as different and normalised as a hierarchy between 'normal' pupils and others. Instead, culture could be seen as something fluid and changing with pupils given the possibility to construct and define their own cultural identities and belongings. The linguistic and cultural diversity in which pupils navigate today would benefit from being acknowledged and explored in teaching. The limits between immigrants and natives need to be blurred, and the image of an originally homogenous Finland deconstructed. These understandings of cultural identity as dynamic and intersectional, as well as seeing diversity as something we are all a part of, are present in the 2014 national core curriculum (Zilliacus, Holm & Sahlström, 2017). Since teacher education should prepare student teachers for teaching according to the current core curriculum, the teacher education programme policies need to be updated to be in line with the current core curriculum.

The presence of critical discourses in the programme policies provide some hope that criticising structural inequalities and promoting social justice are at least a part of Finnish teacher education programmes. The critical discourses and approaches ought to be given more space and emphasis, and the concepts of culture and multiculturalism need to be problematised, in order to prevent future teachers from contributing to othering and discrimination in the name of multicultural education. More collaboration between teacher education programmes regarding multicultural education could also serve to reduce the differences in the discourses between the programmes and make use of those who already have more of a social justice approach. These issues in the Finnish teacher education policies contribute to the international discussion of what should be done and reflected upon concerning multicultural education.

To get a deeper insight in the discourses on multicultural education in teacher education as a whole, further research on the discourses among student teachers and teacher educators is needed, as well as studies from the field where teachers engage in multicultural education in practice.

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Appendix

Table 1: Teacher education programme documents analysed in this study

University	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Faculty strategy	x					x	x	

Curriculum for teacher education		x	x				
TE programme descriptions on website				x		x		x
Descriptions of obligatory courses	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Descriptions of obligatory elective courses			x	x		x		
Other faculty-specific policy documents					Description of faculty in study guide	Activity programme for teaching and learning		Faculty description on website

Table 2: Articulations of multicultural education according to university

University	Total amount of articulations	Articulations included in the six discourses	Articulations in the conservative discourses	Articulations in the liberal discourses	Articulations in the critical discourses
A	32	23	17	7	3
B	14	11	2	5	4
C	19	13	9	6	5
D	43	29	14	9	10
E	37	17	6	9	3
F	63	41	26	20	12
G	19	13	6	8	1
H	47	38	16	10	22
Total	274	185	96	75	60

Table 3: Discourses on multicultural education in teacher education policies

Discursive frameworks	**Discourses**
Conservative discourses	*Multiculturalism as outside the norm*

	Multiculturalism as a challenge for schools and teachers **Preparing teachers for the culturally different**
Liberal discourses	*Acknowledging and appreciating diversity* **Taking diversity into account** **Appreciating diversity and seeing it as a resource**
	Developing intercultural and international competence
Critical discourses	*Critically examining unequal structures*
	Promoting social justice and striving for change in school and society **Teachers as agents influencing society**