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**“Contact Zones” in Finnish (intercultural) education**

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## “Contact Zones” in Finnish (intercultural) education

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### Abstract

This study consists of four individual case studies on interculturality in Finnish education (Dervin, 2011; Dervin, Gajardo, & Lavanchy, 2011). Central to this study are the different forms, experiences, discourses and conceptualizations of interculturality in education and, how they asymmetrically participate in constructing and re-constructing intercultural education as a contact zone (Pratt, 1991, 1992). Pratt’s (1991) contact zone theory applied to education sees the intercultural classroom as a social space where people meet, clash, and struggle with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power (Pratt, 1991, p. 6). In this study the theory of contact zones (Pratt, 1991, 1992) is used as a *social and political space* (problematizing the presence of otherness considered as a “disruptive” force in Finnish education), and as an ideological framework to study interculturality at different levels of education in Finland, namely higher education, teacher education and basic education. By *ideological* I refer to a postcolonial and feminist approach that guides my study on investigating the experiences and discourses taking place and (re)producing intercultural education in this context.

The aim of this study is to apply a *postcolonial* theoretical approach to intercultural education in Finland. I use postcolonial theories as an umbrella field, and problematize how the colonial history of Finland relates to and introduces the idea of intercultural education. The notion of intersectionality also helps me to understand how different dimensions (social class, race, language hierarchies, equality vs. justice, gender etc.) interact in the contact zones of interculturality and education. The four separate but interrelated studies included in this dissertation are: *discussing hospitality in higher education; contact zones in teacher education; the presentation of binary opposites in learning material and, in the last article, the theory of contact zone is studied in practice through a ‘good’ case of successful contact zone in basic education.*

This study is qualitative in nature, concentrating on an understanding and problematizing of different aspects and layers of interculturality in education such as internationalization and intercultural education and contact zones. Different methods for data collection and analysis were applied. My PhD study also makes explicit the researcher’s personal position in the field of study as well as professional development as a researcher in the choice of methods. The results discuss 1. the different dimensions of contact zones in relation to intercultural education; 2. the “new” idea of Finnishness, where race is central; 3. the methods to unpack whiteness as a social construct (i.e. de-colonizing methods for

intercultural education in the Finnish context). These dimensions can be used as means to analyze intercultural education.

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*Keywords:* Contact zone theory, intercultural education, interculturality, internationalization, post-colonial theory, qualitative methods

## Tiivistelmä

Tutkimukseni koostuu neljästä erillisestä interkulttuurisuuteen liittyvästä tapaustutkimuksesta, joiden kontesktina on suomalaisen koulutus ja kasvatustutkimuksesta (Dervin, 2011; Dervin, Gajardo, & Lavanchy, 2011) Tutkimuksessani tarkastelen, miten epäsymmetriset valtasuhteet vaikuttavat interkulttuurisuuden ja interkulttuurisen kasvatuksen rakentumiseen Suomessa. Keskeistä on se, millaisia tapoja, kokemuksia, keskusteluja ja käsitteitä interkulttuurisuuteen liitetään korkeakoulutuksessa, yliopiston opettajankoulutuksessa ja peruskoulussa.

Tutkimukseni teoreettinen viitekehys nousee Mary Louise Prattin (1991) kontaktivyyöhyketeoriasta, jonka mukaan kontaktivyyöhyke syntyy erilaisten historiallisten, sukupuolisten, etnisten ja uskonnollisten/hengellisten elämänkaarien sekä valta- ja tietoasetelmien kohdatessa. Pratt kuvaa oppimisympäristöä sosiaalisen ja poliittisen tilana, jossa ihmiset kohtaavat ja kamppailevat toistensa kanssa omasta tilastaan ja asemastaan haastaen samalla jo olemassa olevia valtarakenteita. Samalla on kyse myös vallitsevista diskursseista, jotka liittyvät esimerkiksi normaaliuteen, rotuun, suomalaisuuteen tai ulkomaalaisuuteen.

Tässä tutkimuksessa kontaktivyyöhyketeorialla tarkoitetaan ja haastetaan niitä *poliittisia ja sosiaalisia tilanteita ja tiloja*, joissa erilaisuus ja toiseus rakentuvat häiriötekijöiksi. Tutkimukseni tavoitteena on soveltaa jälkikolonialistista teoreettista lähestymistapaa interkulttuurisuuskasvatuksen ja -koulutuksen sekä kansainvälistymisen tulkinnassa. Tällä ideologisella tutkimustauksella tarkoitan sitä, miten kolonialismi on vaikuttanut erojen rakentumiseen interkulttuurisuuskasvatuksen kentällä ja miten koulutus jatkuvasti toistaa sekä tuottaa vastakkainasetteluja suomalaisuudesta ja vieraudesta. Intersektionaalisuuskäsitteen avulla analysoin sitä, miten eri dimensiot kuten yhteiskuntaluokka, rotu, kieli (hierarkiat), tasa-arvo, epäoikeudenmukaisuus, ja sukupuoli rakentuvat eri tilanteissa ja rakentavat näin kontaktivyyöhykkeitä.

Väitöskirjatyöni on artikkelikokoelma, jonka ensimmäinen artikkeli käsittelee ”hostipitality”-käsitettä korkeakoulujen kansainvälistymispuheessa, toisessa artikkelissa tutkitaan interkulttuurisia kontaktivyyöhykkeitä lastentarhanopettajakoulutuksessa, kolmannessa artikkelissa tarkastellaan interkulttuurista oppimateriaalia opettajankoulutuksen kontekstissa ja neljäs artikkeli käsittelee sitä, miten kontaktivyyöhyke -teoria toteutuu käytännössä suomalaisessa peruskoulussa.

Tutkimusotteeni on laadullinen ja kussakin yksittäisessä tutkimuksessa on sovellettu erilaisia aineistonkeruumenetelmiä ja aineiston analysointimenetelmiä, joiden avulla kriittisesti tarkastellaan kansainvälistymisen, interkulttuurisen oppimisen ja kontaktivyyöhykkeiden rakenteita. Aineistonkeruun ja analysointiin liittyviä valintoja ohjasi halu ymmärtää paremmin, miten tutkijan rooli vaikuttaa tutkimuksen laatuun ja valtasuhteisiin tutkijan ja aineiston välillä. Tutkimuksen tulokset koostuvat 1. interkulttuurisiin kontaktivyyöhykkeisiin liittyvistä eri ulottuvuuksista 2. ideasta jäsentää ja uudistaa Suomalaisuuden – käsitettä koulutuk-

sessä, jossa tärkeä lähtökohta on ihonväri ja 3. menetelmistä, joiden avulla voidaan purkaa sekä käsitellä ”valkoisuuden”-käsitettä paitsi rodun myös sosiaalisten ja yhteiskunnallisten rakenteiden näkökulmasta. Näitä ulottuvuuksia voi käyttää apuna analysoidessa interkulttuurista kasvatusta ja koulutusta.

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*Keywords:* kontaktivöhyketeoria, interkulttuurinen koulutus, interkulttuurisuus, kansainvälistyminen, jälkikolonialistinen teoria, laadullinen tutkimus

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# List of original publications

This thesis consists of a summary and the following publications:

1. Dervin, F., & Layne, H. (2013). A guide to interculturality for international and exchange students in Finland: An example of hospitality? *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*, 8(1), 1–19.
2. Layne, H., & Lipponen, L. (2016). Student teachers in the contact zone: Developing critical intercultural “teacherhood” in kindergarten teacher education. *Globalisation, Societies and Education Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 14 (1), 110-126.
3. Layne, H., & Alemanji, A. A. (2015). “Zebra world”: The promotion of imperial stereotypes in a children’s book. *Power and Education*, 7(2), 181-195.
4. Layne, H., Óskarsdóttir, E. & Niittymäki, H. The subjective side of success: children’s stories of a good life. *International Journal of Bias, Identity and Diversities in Education*, 1 (1), 28-41.



# 1. Introduction

*How does it feel to be a problem? They say, I know an excellent colored man in my town... At these I smile, or am interested, or reduce the boiling to a simmer, as the occasion may require. To the real question, how does it feel to be a problem? I answer seldom a word. (W.E.B. Du Bois, 1903, 1994 p. 1)*

This study examines how interculturality and intercultural education as contact zones are negotiated, experienced, conceptualized and applied at different levels of education: in higher education, in teacher education and in compulsory education. In this thesis the term interculturality is used to describe the wider social and political aspects of internationalization and “intercultural”, where intercultural education refers to learning and pedagogies used to apply interculturality. Admittedly, the quest for intercultural education has increased for various reasons in Finland during the recent years. Since the European Union (EU) was formed in 1992, and Finland’s accession in 1995, it has greatly affected policies in Finland. It has especially influenced higher education through the Bologna Process (1999), which has resulted among other things in a new degree structure and more student mobility between countries and universities. In Finland it has also meant a strategic and systematic shift towards internationalization of higher education. The *Strategy for Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions in Finland* (2009-2015) was set by the Ministry of Education to foster the internationalization of higher education institutions. This quest for internationalization of higher education is the starting point for my study. The first article of this study reflects on the wider scope of the internationalization aspect while the rest of the dissertation is based more specifically on experiences of interculturality in education.

The notion of ‘hospitality’ (a portmanteau word proposed by Derrida (2000) referring to the fact that hospitality contains potential hostility) in higher education, which the first article of this dissertation problematizes, explores the need to renew the way in which the context of intercultural education is discussed in Finnish higher education. Derrida proposed the term *hostipitality* to rethink the meaning of immigration, democracy, and the nation state by opening up a discussion on what is meant by hospitality. Derrida challenged hospitality by saying that:

“We do not know what hospitality is.” It is a sentence which I address to you in French, in my language, in my home, in order to begin and to bid you welcome, when I begin to speak in my language, which seems to suppose that I am here <at home> master in my own home, that I am receiving, inviting, accepting or welcoming you, allowing you to come

across the threshold, by saying “bienvenu, welcome,” to you. I repeat: “We do not know what hospitality is.” (Derrida, 2000, p. 5).

To me hospitality is a powerful term to investigate interculturality.

For one thing, the way in which intercultural education is discussed needs some attention. In 2015, for instance, the University of Helsinki had around 40 different programs that provided teaching in English. Yet the teacher education programs of the same institution are run mainly in Finnish by (white) Finnish teacher educators, and require a high level of competence in the Finnish language. Of course, teacher education is also provided increasingly in Swedish (the other official language in Finland). One subject Teacher Education Program (STEP -program) at the University of Helsinki and the Intercultural Teacher Education Program at the University of Oulu, are both taught in English (Hahl, Järvinen, & Juuti, 2015). The students who graduate from these English degree programs face challenges in finding employment in Finland (Hahl & Paavola, 2015), as most of the teaching in schools take place in Finnish – a language that very few international student teachers speak. This is contrary to the mantra of the need to internationalize and the attractiveness of Finland as a business, work and living environment. These different environments are considered to be the core areas of improvement in the *Strategy for Internationalizations of Higher Education Institutions in Finland 2009-2015*.

Alongside the internationalization strategies, the number of immigrants has risen radically in Finland since the 1990s. In 2012 in the Helsinki region every fourth student in basic education came from a family with more than one languages and ethnicities and the number of foreign language speaking students in the schools in the whole country was 25,350, representing 4.8% of all students (see Helsinki city statistics, 2010; Kumpulainen, 2014). With the present asylum seeker and refugee situation in Europe in mind, the number will no doubt increase rapidly in Finland in the next few years. Thus one large immigrant group in Finland is represented by people, who have come as asylum seekers. Clearly, the current recurring global economic crises are affecting the gap between those who move between countries: immigrants vs. expatriates, the “global elite” vs. the “global poor,” the latter often also considered to be “ethnic” immigrants (Benjamin & Dervin, 2015; de Oliveira Andreotti, Biesta, & Ahenakew, 2014; Kosunen, 2013; Riitaoja et al. 2015).

The increase of immigration and refugee experiences in Finland is also to be found behind the quest for interculturality in education. Before the ethnic diversification of Finland there was neither strong representation of diversities nor a need for intercultural education research, except maybe in language education. Only after the number of immigrants increased did intercultural education become popular both in practice and in research (Riitaoja, 2013). Intercultural education and the internationalization of education intersect and produce the prob-

lematic categories of “international students,” “migrant students” and all the possible dimensions between these categories. But who is international? Who is a migrant? Who decides? Although there is a call for the internationalization of our universities, why is it that so few students from migrant backgrounds (well represented in Finnish schools) can enter teacher education while e.g. Erasmus exchange students are becoming more and more visible in the field?

As a qualitative study, my thesis consists of four different articles describing the construction (and re-construction) of certain variations and conceptions of interculturality as well as investigating conflicts in the contact zones of Finnish education (Pratt, 1991). Freire’s (1975) simple statement that “education is always political” is central in the way I personally interpret education. In the beginning of my doctoral studies I became inspired by phenomenology and set about a deeper philosophical investigation of interculturality in education. However, during the process I learnt that as a researcher my personal interest is more directed towards the practical and pedagogical aspects of education. Consequently, all my articles include empirical data and my thesis concludes with a section with a practical idea for unpacking and comparing the different dimensions constructing contact zones in intercultural education in Finland and elsewhere. To some extent my thesis relates to phenomenography, as it is an attempt to unpack the layers of interculturality in education, and problematize the mismatch of the different terms in the field (Marton & Svensson, 1982).

My PhD study consists of this introductory summary and a compilation of four articles. My introduction follows the following structure: *Firstly*, I locate the central contact zone theory in intercultural education and then in the Finnish context. Then I move on to discuss the question of what do we study when researching interculturality and justice in education. There are various ways to implement justice in intercultural education, and in this research the focus is on understanding what creates injustices, as well as the private and public dimensions within the injustices (Griffiths, 1998). *Secondly*, postcolonial theories – decolonial criticism, intersectionality theory, critical race theory and whiteness study perspectives – are introduced. I discuss further how they relate to intercultural education, why they have become important to me, and why they are important in the field of intercultural education. In my approach, the postcolonial aspects and contact zone theory are applied to education. This also requires me to defend my chosen theoretical framework against the charge that the relationship between postcolonial theory and intercultural education is artificial. Certainly, different types of distinctions and choices might be made by other researchers. My research methods are discussed in chapter 4, and the results of this study are compiled in chapter 5 by introducing the four different phenomena investigated in this PhD study. Methodological and ethical considerations follow (chapter 6), and discussions, conclusions and ideas for further research conclude the study.





## 2. Interculturality in education as a “contact zone”

My study follows a *postcolonial* theoretical approach applying Pratt’s notion of the contact zone to explore interculturality in Finnish education (Pratt 1991, 1992, 2008). In this postcolonial approach I also show how the colonial history of Finland relates to and reproduces the idea of intercultural education. This study consists of four separate but interrelated studies: *hospitality in higher education; contact zones in kindergarten teacher education; the presentation of binary opposites in learning material; and applying the contact zone theory to basic education in Finland*. Applying Pratt’s (1991, 1992) contact zone theory to the intercultural classroom sees it as a social space where people meet, clash, and struggle with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical power relations (Pratt, 1991, p. 6). This is also the key element for the idea of inclusive pedagogy (see article 4). Pratt’s contact zone theory provides a postcolonial approach, which highlights a specific local context, the physical and social construction of subjects (Phoenix, 2009), the representation of (colonial) history, and how all these elements affect education (Pratt, 1991, p. 6; Phoenix, 2009). These aspects have become increasingly important as Finland and the whole of Europe witness an increasing flow of refugees and asylum seekers. Thus, how we discuss and implement intercultural education becomes even more important in times of wars and displacements in the world.

Dervin, Gajardo & Lavancy (2011) point out that the term ‘*intercultural*’ is widespread in different disciplines and research areas such as education, communication, psychology, linguistics, philosophy, sociology, etc. According to them, the adjective ‘*intercultural*’ is generally used to qualify relations such as encounters with otherness, and meeting different cultures, whereas “*interculturality*” refers to encounters between multifaceted individuals in relation to historicity, intersubjectivity and interactional contexts (ibid, p. 12). Interculturality in this research refers to education policies, politics, histories, but also the consideration of social structure, the construction of normality vs. difference and practices that create gaps between the ‘hosts’ and ‘guests’ in a given society and education system (Andreotti, 2011; Derrida, 2000; Dervin, 2011). On the other hand Colby (2006) claims that education without interculturalism is not education at all, meaning that it is not a subject that can be taught separately but is an important approach to all sciences, at all levels, to end the essentialist perspective of intercultural (but also multicultural) education (Colby, 2006, p. 246).

In the political discourse in the Finnish context, multiculturalism is often used in reference to immigrants and how immigration has resulted in Finnish society becoming multicultural as opposed to its earlier “monocultural” roots. To

my understanding, interculturality (as well as multiculturalism) cannot be conceived without reference to the meaning of monoculturalism, in a similar manner that for Derrida hospitality cannot exist without hostility. Hostipitality is a condition of citizenship and nation – not philanthropy – and is primarily a question of right and law (Derrida, 2000). The host has the authority; therefore hospitality can be considered “the politics of friendship” in the same way as hostility is also based on the prevailing circumstances and on power. This is why the guest is always “under control,” as the host is the one who, for instance, can decide who enters, and what the guest is entitled to do and say (Derrida 2000, 4; Dervin & Layne, 2013). Guests are often compared to the hosts, and in these discourses the hosts have the power to determine the norms and normality within a given society (Mignolo, 2009). This applies to a great extent to the idea of contact zone in education aiming to make visible these hierarchies and learning materials that determine the “norm”.

## 2.1. The Finnish context

In this section the contact zone theory is problematized, as well as relevant *dimensions* of Finnish education. With Pratt (1991) in mind, educators in Finland today need to be critical of what they teach (i.e. the content of textbooks and learning materials in relation to the student body as a whole), so that students do not learn to fear – or even worse – hate “others”, but become aware that what is taught often reflects the “truth” of the dominant part of society. This also means becoming aware of how some subjects become “a *problem*” (as in the W.E.B. Du Bois epigraph quoted above) and how different power relations and structures are not static, but may be (re-)produced over and over again, even if they are not recognized as such (Tuori, 2009, p. 15). The original idea for Pratt’s contact zone (1991) emerged from the increasing number of international students in universities. Pratt’s concern was how education could be organized in a manner that all students and teachers felt that they belonged to the university and that the university could equally belong to them (Pratt, 1991; 1992). This also relates to *inclusive pedagogy* and inclusive practices in a way that Booth (2011) defines them as ongoing processes focusing on increased participation in education for everyone involved.

One important dimension in these discussions is *history*. Finland has experienced two waves of colonization. First Finland was under Swedish rule until Sweden lost Finland to Russia in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Finland then became a Grand Duchy of Russia until its independence in 1917. In this context it is an easy claim to say that Finland has no history of colonizing and to consider *colonialism* as something that does not relate to us. However, scholars like Edward Said (1995) have pointed out how colonialism is not something that has taken place somewhere “out there,” distant from us, but that it is also an ideology

about how (for example) European citizenship and Europeans are presented in contrast to people who arrive from outside European borders (Said 1995; cited also in Loftsdóttir & Jensen, 2012). To take this idea further, Leonardo (2004) discusses *whiteness* as an ideology and social construction of privileges and, to me; this is central to how we teach intercultural education in the Finnish context. In the 1990s Finland started to become more ethnically diverse although other “minority” groups like the Sámi, Roma and Swedish-speaking Finns as well as other diversities like social class, gender, sexuality, have always existed in this Nordic country. The plural form of the word diversity in what follows was introduced into the field of education by Dervin (2012) in order to present a wider variety of intersections than just religion, race and language. “Diversities” thus also includes gender, sexuality, language, social class, hobbies, interests, etc. when dealing with intercultural education.

One dimension affecting the current discourses on Finnish education is what has increasingly been considered to be the “*imaginary of the World’s best education system*” according to the OECD’s Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) (Dervin, 2012; Schatz, Dervin, & Popovic, 2015). However, when in December 2012 Finland dropped a few places some researchers tried to find a reason, and the blame started to be put on the lower scores of immigrant students, who were deemed unable to study properly in Finland because of the “high quality” of the education system and their lack of Finnish language skills (Harju-Luukkainen et al. 2014; see also *Helsingin Sanomat* 19.8.2015). The *category of the immigrant* is rarely properly defined: at times reference is made towards first-generation immigrants and sometimes to second-generation immigrants.

One of the articles included in this PhD study is part of a NordForsk-funded research project on Learning Spaces for Inclusion and Social Justice: Success Stories from Immigrant Students and School Communities in Four Nordic Countries. NordForsk is an organisation that facilitates and provides funding for Nordic research cooperation and research infrastructure. In this research project students with an immigrant background are defined as those whose home language is other than the language of the school (i.e. Finnish or Swedish).

Finland is often described as paying attention to and emphasizing equality, democracy and justice in education. These can be uncritically taken for granted in the Nordic countries and those who report about it from outside its borders. Pasi Sahlberg, for instance, describes how, since the 1970s, Finland has changed its traditional education into a publicly financed education system with extensive equity, good quality and wide participation (Sahlberg & Hargreaves, 2011). However, Rizvi & Engel (2009) have questioned preconceptions about the notion of equality, which is also important in the Finnish context, as they point out that neo-liberal talk about equal access to education may well ignore unjust structures within an education system (ibid., p. 529).

In public discussions immigrants are often discussed as problems, and immigrant children in the Finnish school system who might lack linguistic and cultural skills can be seen as a serious challenge (Layne & Lipponen, 2014; Tuori, 2009). Moreover, intercultural education in Finland is often viewed from the perspective of otherness, meaning that there is a political emphasis on creating categories for those who are considered immigrants, refugees, etc. Hage (2000) has stated that this type of discourse, which aims to construct the imaginaries of “others” can allow us to identify a specific society’s level of understanding towards difference. People who have the power are leading the conversation, and those who are merely tolerated are the topic of the conversation, and therefore viewed as others, strangers and guests (Hage, 2000, p. 90-91). The notion of the “intercultural” tends to be devoid of political substance, especially in education (Andreotti, 2011), and to my understanding, it needs to be critically viewed and renewed. Interculturality in practice must go beyond appreciating other cultures, and beyond acknowledging others’ race, racism, complicity, and privilege (Howard, 2006).

## **2.2. The polysemy of intercultural education**

In my personal experience in the field of intercultural education I have tried, like many other scholars, to think of a better term to describe it. Besides naming it, the most important issue is what it consists of. “Intercultural” seems to be a well-established term in practical use. Bhatti & Leeman (2011) state that intercultural education and multicultural education are sometimes used interchangeably and sometimes separately to describe the lives of individuals and groups who are subject to unequal distribution of power (Bhatti & Leeman, 2011, see also Bhatti, 1999). I have chosen to use the term intercultural education, and to my understanding, intercultural and multicultural both explain a similar type of learning in the Finnish context. Moreover, when researching the intercultural or multicultural in the Finnish context, the discourses often lead back to such aspects as different cultures, languages and religions. Thus, these three categories can be seen as heralding intercultural education (and/or multicultural) education in Finland, targeted for people who represent different ethnic or religious “cultures” than the majority. To my understanding the use of the terms “intercultural” and “multicultural” seem to be used interchangeably in research (cf. global citizenship education, social justice and peace education, etc.), although both of them can also be attached to different historical, political and pedagogical perspectives (Dervin, Layne & Trémion, 2015).

The term intercultural in education is not new in the European context and can be found in many European documents, books and school laws (Portera, 2008). In the sixteenth century Comenius proposed the idea of pedagogical universalism, or the belief that a multiplicity of perspectives was not only founda-

tional to knowledge acquisition but also encouraged mutual understanding between people from different backgrounds. According to Portera (2008), in the 1970s the European Council adopted the term “multicultural education” when referring to migrant workers’ children. The underlying aim was to assimilate these children into the new “host” society, and at the same time maintaining their own native language and culture in case of a possible return (ibid, 2008, p. 483). This is one of the rare occasions when “multicultural education” rather than “intercultural education” was used in the European Council. However, the European Council for Cultural Cooperation (1977-1983) was set to examine teacher education programs and strategies for implementing intercultural education, and later on intercultural communication skills were viewed as important for teachers educating immigrant children (Portera, 2008). Since the 1990s the European Commission has adopted the notion of intercultural education in formulating education policies and projects related to internationalization, human rights education and globalization (Portera, 2008, p. 484). “Intercultural education” refers more to learning on the individual level in interactions with others, whereas the term “multicultural education” is discussed more in reference to multicultural societies and diversities within a given society (see Council of Europe, White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue 2008). Scholarly works by Nieto, Gay, Giroux, and Banks, among others, who represent the US context of multicultural or critical multicultural education, are often referenced in the research in Finnish context (and also in the wider Nordic context). Multicultural education is often described as having its roots in the civil rights movements, and as also being adopted for use in the UK rather than intercultural education (Bhatti & Leeman, 2011). Kenan Malik (1996), however, claims that there is a dangerous ambiguity at the heart of multicultural thinking because the emphasis is on difference. Interestingly, Australian multicultural education seems to apply anti-racism education and the element of language acquisition for immigrant students (Leeman and Reid, 2006, cited in Harbon & Moloney, 2015). Harbon & Moloney (2015) add that the way in which multicultural education is applied in Australia, however, does not have its roots in the North American civil rights movement with its emphasis on social justice but derives more from an anti-racism and language perspective. This adds another interesting dimension to my theme: what then is the relationship between anti-racism education and education for social justice when race is socially constructed (Leonardo, 2004)? As much as multiculturalism has been claimed to have failed (Lentin & Titley, 2011), multicultural education still remains important in addressing diversities within any particular society both in politics and in classroom practices (Race, 2011). In a similar way I locate interculturality in the learning process (intercultural education), and in becoming aware of one’s own positions as well as unjust practices, both on public and personal levels. So based on the previous research in the field there are differences between multicultural and intercultural educa-

tion, but even this varies between/within countries and different histories. However, similar types of dimensions are present in both, namely language (hierarchies), race and social class. In Finland religion does seem to play quite a strong role compared to some other countries, and maybe because of the system of two national churches (the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Orthodox Church), and religion being also a subject taught in the school, and included into the national curriculum.

Harbon & Moloney (2015) write about the (end of) rivalries between intercultural and multicultural education in the Australian context. To them the term intercultural means “*an actively critical process of cultural reflection*” and they locate the student “between” cultures and the necessity of recognizing the important intersection of self and the “other” (Harbon & Moloney, 2015, p. 19). This is also an important aspect concerning how I locate interculturality in this study. However, rather than reflecting culture, to me the students negotiate contact zones and in contact zones. Intercultural education can be related to many different ideas and ideologies. Since Pratt’s contact zone theory is essential in this study it is important to mention her adaptation of the term transculturation (in relation to interculturality) from ethnography. To Pratt, transculturation is a reciprocal process of inventing, borrowing and transferring something from other “cultures” into one’s own culture (Pratt, 1991). This also adds to the polysemy of all the different terms existing in the field of interculturality in education. However, in this study, I have not focused on the term transculturation as it relates closely to the idea of contact zones.

Intercultural education is applied differently in different parts of the world. In the Latin American context it has been adopted since the 1970s to “recognize” indigenous people, and, as Cortina (2014) puts it, to make indigenous people more *intercultural* within a mainly Spanish-speaking education system (ibid, 2014, p. 3). Cortina (2014) also claims that intercultural education should not be confused with multicultural education or education for diversities in Latin America, as it is solely based on communication between people. Only at the beginning of the new century, did intercultural education in Latin America shift to strengthen the idea of language diversities. Intercultural bilingual education (EBI) focuses on more equal opportunities for indigenous people to maintain their languages within an education system dominated by the Spanish language (Lopez, 2009). During the PhD study process, I had the opportunity to travel to China and learn about how intercultural education is implemented in the Middle Kingdom. In the Chinese context the concept of “migrant students” and “migrant education” refers to immigration within the country while international schools are for children coming from abroad who study in English, and also where foreign students in China can study Chinese. Therefore, in the Chinese context, intercultural education often refers to language teaching: teaching English to Chinese students and/or teaching Chinese to international students (Dervin,

2011). In Finland multiculturalism is often used to describe the wider phenomena of policies around immigration, and multicultural or intercultural education as a way of practicing it (Riitaoja, 2013). However, in this study the term intercultural education is used to explain how it is practiced, who needs it and for what purpose(s).

The way intercultural education is used and applied in Finland has its roots in multicultural education, intercultural communication, sociolinguistics and speech communication. Many approaches from these fields have been popular in Finnish education. For example, from the fields of intercultural communication and speech communication, research done by researchers such as Edward T. Hall (1989, 1990) Geert Hofstede (2001, 2011), and Milton Bennett (1993) has been widely drawn from by educationalists although these studies were mostly meant for the business and expatriate world (Dervin & Keihäs, 2013). These researchers aimed at helping people to understand different communication patterns related to different cultures and values within these cultures. However, in the process of constructing, for example, the theory of high and low context cultures (Hall, 1989, 1990), one reformulates communication patterns that evoke many positive characteristics and values like honesty, hardwork, etc., where “problems” are often attributed to one individual (usually the other, the “guest”), who is labeled “incompetent” or “more charitably, the languages and cultures that they carry with them” (Shi-Xu 2001, p. 280). Overall, when “culture” is at the center of the intercultural the outcome of education is a type of knowledge where diversities and different languages are respected, appreciated, tolerated and accepted (Bennett & Lee-Treweek, 2014; see, for example, the documents by the Council of Europe Ministers of Foreign Affairs: White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, Living Together as Equals in Dignity, 2008). This is also why the term “culture” within interculturality needs constant attention and reshaping. Cultures do not communicate with each other; it is humans who do so in social interactions (Dervin, 2011).

Another set of theories adopted from intercultural communications studies is based on the idea of intercultural competency (see, for example, Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Ting-Toomey, 1999). In the context of Finnish education earlier research shows that teacher education should focus on training interculturally competent teachers (Goodwin, 2010, Talib, 2005; Paavola, 2007, Deardorf, 2006; Jokikokko, 2010). The idea of competencies has also become a politically important validator for schools and is applied to new the National Curriculum for Basic Education in Finland (2016). New curriculum reforms emphasize the idea of moving away from the teaching of different subjects to learning certain competencies stated as important for the future work life and society. One of them is cultural competency, meaning that students become aware of their own culture and other cultures around them (NCBE, 2016). Jokikokko (2010) calls for a holistic approach rather than not merely focusing on knowledge and com-

petencies. Goodwin (2010) takes the idea further providing five main areas of knowledge that the intercultural teacher educator must demonstrate, i.e. personal, contextual, pedagogical, sociological and social knowledge. However, this is important at all levels of education. I would like to emphasize that it is good to become aware of how we talk about knowledge and competencies so that the knowledge (and competencies) does not become a process of naturalizing categories (for example, language competency) and reconstructing politically correct and strategic categories (Sleeter, 2000, p.188). A critical perspective on intercultural education asserts that teachers should become active players in the given society (Freire 1970/1993; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997, p. 24; Wright, 2012, p. 60). In the Nordic context there has been little research on education relating to teaching and activism, and how education as an action or practice recognizes the social structures constructing and reconstructing normality and difference in society. The Nordic project entitled Learning Spaces for Inclusion and Social Justice: Success Stories from Immigrant Students and School Communities in Four Nordic Countries tries to tackle this issue, as demonstrated in the last article of this thesis. Mansilla and Jackson (2011) and Andreotti (2011) discuss intercultural competence as capacity and dispositions, since it is a complex political notion (Hoskins & Sallah, 2012). Many studies on interculturality have presented intercultural competence as a moral imperative, especially in relation to how the other should develop or act (see Piller, 2012 Holliday, 2011). Yet “the obligation of mainstream organizations and public bodies to address discrimination and oppression is often overlooked” (Hoskins and Sallah 2011, p. 121). Moreover, as Ahmed’s (2012) research findings show, sometimes actions towards more just practices merely remain on the admission level, meaning that they exist in the organization’s mission statements but are not acted upon. This study will focus and bring to attention some of these admissions.

### **2.3. The idea of justice in intercultural education – Is it the same for everyone?**

Discussion on discrimination and oppression leads us to an important movement towards justice in education, which is central in intercultural education (Bhatti & Leeman, 2011). Torres (2008) claims that the meaning of social justice in education can become an empty signifier “without the perspective of the philosophy of liberation, and presently without liberation education, the question of multiculturalism would be unthinkable” (Torres, 2008, p. 2). Regardless of the geographical location in the world, critical pedagogy is important. However, recently, the need for critical pedagogy and a critical approach to intercultural education has risen with the rise of the political right in Europe. The “birth” of critical pedagogy was in Latin America. This section reflects on what this *liberation* can mean in the Finnish (or Nordic) context. Earlier research shows that it can mean



the type of education where the focus would be on diverse voices, not only on dominant discourses, but recognizing the social construct of power and knowledge. Social justice in education extends the idea of intercultural education from the idea of (just) interaction between diverse languages and cultures to what is taught in education, by whom and to whom (Bhatti, 2007; Bhatti & Leeman, 2011). In a sense education is also a means to deliver justice and it is recently been challenged by neoliberal politics and its claim is to treat everyone equally, for the real focus is on gaining “politically” important merit and being a productive citizen (Apple, 2001).

Moreover, one way of defining interculturality in education can be to see it as a social space for recognizing injustice and the rationalization of othering, racism, and ethno/euro-centrism. This means that education should be about realizing and reacting to injustice and dealing with difficult topics. One important dimension in this is the way we define justice. For example Rawls’s (2001) theory of justice proposes that the fundamental basis of a democratic society is social cooperation guided by recognized rules, whereby the responsibility is on the individual to know and respect these rules (Rawls, 2001, p. 5). This is obviously the aim of education, which seeks to “socialize” children into certain societies. Besides socializing, allowing people to take part in education and decision making in learning is important. In reference to how I understand the contact zone theory, the kind of social cooperation that Rawls (2001) refers to takes place in a contact zone with asymmetrical power, and locates people with different accesses to wealth and justice. Finnish education with its tendency to maintain an equalitarian stance often lacks Rawls’s (1971) idea of alternatives to distributive justice. However, the Finnish welfare system and taxation has been said to place people on the same line, and to balance out at least social economic differences (but also many other differences like gender equality). Moreover, the way in which justice is understood and interpreted in different societies and within education involves also other dimensions such as social control and power. Commitment to diversities and intercultural education actually often invokes difference, but does not necessarily act on justice (Ahmed, 2006; Bhatti & Leeman, 2011). Bhatti and Leeman (2011) have written about the relationship between intercultural education and justice and the different ways justice intersects in education. The way they interpret their relationship relates to Pratt’s idea of contact zone. Similarly, I see the importance of applying the dimension of justice to interculturality. Furthermore, the two scholars claim that it is important that inside “cultural diversity” there is also a concern for other types of diversities, where, for example, race, racism and anti-racism become important under the umbrella of intercultural education and justice (Bhatti & Leeman, 2011). In my PhD study Pratt’s (1991; 1992) idea of a sense of belonging, as a contact zone is an essential dimension for intercultural education to include justice in education. This means that members of a given learning community will need to have equal

opportunities to act, and be active. Rawls's theory of justice (1971) concentrates on socioeconomic disposition and how after social relations and rules the most important factor is social economic equality. Contact zones in education mean that equal access to education is fundamental but not enough, and there are, moreover, many dimensions, which create positions and dispositions. One way of understanding the notion of contact zones is provided by an example from Pratt (1991). She introduces the story of Guaman Poma, an indigenous Andean, who in correspondence with the King of Spain in 1613 addressed the vision of the Inca world and how the Spanish monarch by understanding the Inca "culture" might rule the world in a more benevolent, respectful ways (Pratt, 1991, p. 34). This letter never reached the recipient. Metaphorically speaking, it is good example of how justice sometimes does not take place in education.

The idea of contact zones consists in making learning meaningful; fostering relationships between learners, families, teachers, so that each member of the learning community can feel that education belongs to them as much as to any other member in a given society (Pratt, 1992). Social cooperation and responsibility are sensitive topics in the asylum seeker and refugee crisis in Europe at the time of writing. The media are "bombarding" us today with news about possible violence, sexual assaults, diseases that "they" bring with them, and so on. To some extent this strengthens the importance of critical voices among educators (specifically teacher education) to discuss the power of the media and how easily false images are created if not problematized.

## **2.4. A personal approach to the research topic**

Adopting a critical perspective in the social sciences requires the understanding of personal ideology, including the philosophical grounding for one's work (Kakkuri-Knuuttila & Heinlahti, 2006). This is especially crucial in the field of understanding diversities in education as we need to ground our personal reasoning and argumentation otherwise discourses can easily repeat empty words.

To me a postcolonial critique is itself quite diverse and subtle yet an important addition to intercultural education. Butler (1992) explains that theories labeled poststructuralist, those of Derrida and Lyotard, for example, are just as diverse as those of humanism. I argue that this also applies to the theories listed above concerning intercultural encounters in education. The point is that the concepts contained within the categories we call *interculturality* or *intercultural education* or *critical race theory* or *postcolonial theory in education* are so diverse that close readings are required to understand the context and to locate myself in the field. For a decolonizing project like the one proposed in this study, I feel that a personal approach is also needed to explain the qualitative research process. To position a study, in this case within intercultural education, I follow Butler (1995) when she argues: "For the question of whether or not a

position is right or coherent, is in this case, less informative than why it is we come to occupy and defend the territory we do” (ibid, p. 128). Surely, this is the most challenging part of the research – to try to explain what is my “territory,” my personal positioning (and also contact zone) in the field. As a mother of children with “brown” skin who at times struggle for their Finnishness and who are, however, also Finns in a society where whiteness dominates, has been a bodily experience of construction of blackness, whiteness, Finnishness and something else – something somewhat mysterious. Through these experiences I relate my thoughts to the work of e.g. Patricia Hill Collins, Gail Lewis and Ann Phoenix, who have also a personal location in their writings. I have lived outside of Finland as an immigrant myself, and was made aware (when living in the USA) by a personal life coach that possibly my interest in the field is related to what she called my own “personal refugee experience.” My first reaction was confusion followed by a need to defend my position in the US as something else than being a refugee. I came to realize that the coach was referring to my mother, who was born at a time when her parents were evacuated from Finnish Karelia after the Second World War. Hence, the coach categorized me as a “second generation” refugee after the loss (or return) of Finnish Karelia to the Russians in 1945. I constantly struggle with my position in my own field of research. I also realize that all the categories such as postcolonial studies, critical race theory and whiteness studies are socially constructed through personal locations (Collins, 2009; Leonardo, 2004). Here I need to mention that part of this personal reflection also is becoming aware of my own privileges of being white, and also knowing that wherever I go, I am welcomed as a white person. However as race is socially constructed, in Finland, I sometimes feel as *politically black* (this is a term that my colleague Amin used in reference to my personal position).

My personal approach aims at fighting against injustices, at pointing out colorblind practices (Collins, 2009; Phoenix, 2009; Lewis, 2005) and explaining that as much as we want to believe that we have no racism or bullying in our schools, in our universities, faculties or departments – we do have them. I have experienced it through my own children in a society like Finland, where white skin, and white as a construction (Leonardo, 2004) dominate. By this I mean many things that are not visible to many – how “normal” and “strange” are constructed. This is not my most important motivation to research this topic but this certainly affects how I locate myself in the field. In what follows I wish to share a message that I received from the school that my children go to:

*Hei,*

*kävin tänään aika tiukan keskustelun ■■■ ja ■■■ kanssa, koska he olivat haukkuneet Pettoa neekeriksi ruokalassa. Asiasta keskusteltiin myös koko luokan kesken ja kerroin kaikille, miksi tämä kyseinen nimitys on erityisen paha ja miksi en halua kuulla sitä enää koskaan kenenkään suusta. Petrosta haukkumi-*

*nen tuntui todella pahalta, vaikka hän totesikin viisaasti itse, että mahtavatko-  
han pojat edes tietää mitä se tarkoittaa. Pojat pyysivät Petroilta anteeksi ja juttu  
sovittiin, mutta toivoisin silti keskustelua käytävän vielä kotona.*

*Terveisin,  
Opettaja*

*I had quite a serious conversation with ■ and ■ today because they had  
called Petro a negro in the dining hall. We discussed this with the whole class-  
room and I told each one of them why this type of naming is especially bad and I  
made it clear that I do not want to hear it from anyone's mouth. Petro felt really  
bad about this, though he said in a wise manner that he wonders if the boys even  
know what it means. The boys apologized and we solved the case but I am hop-  
ing that you would talk about it at home.*

*Best,  
Teacher*

This is a good example of good practices. In this message the “problem” represented by skin color is not swept under the rug, but brought to attention and discussed. Also in this case parents were involved. Childhood is about adjusting to this life; therefore there is so much to do in this field, which we call intercultural education. I would also like to discuss it in terms of a pedagogy to recognize color-blind systems, those blind spots that allow racism to take place. The example above is ultimately a positive one, and that is why I wished to bring it up. Families and the teacher cannot always see the fact that Finnish society consists of “white privilege” in a sense that being white is in a sense a “norm”, as much as being Christian can be in another sense a “norm”, and everything else outside of it may seem as “odd” (Riitaoja, 2013).

Du Bois’ (1994) and Mignolo’s (2000) work became personally important to me during the writing process. They have both worked extensively on the term “double consciousness” to describe the inside-outside positioning of the subordinate who identifies him/herself according to who s/he is as an individual, and how s/he is perceived through the systems of power and politics. For Du Bois “double consciousness” means racial positioning, being black in a society with “white dominance,” while for Mignolo it means more border thinking and a double critique of seeing both the colonial way of presenting history and understanding also the “local” stand and the other side of knowledge (Du Bois, 1994; Mignolo, 2000; 2009). In Finland children who look different may or may not be identified as “immigrant” children in a school system, and because of their skin color or other identification markers like language, they may develop these types of border identities. In the Nordic context we need to understand diverse children better and how similar or different the experiences of children growing up

in diverse family settings as gay/lesbian families, low-income families, single parents vs. two household families etc. are. Are there differences and/or similarities in the intersections of individual identifications and experiences? Thus, it should be central to create contact zones in today’s Finnish context to identify ways to utilize this type of border thinking and diverse knowledge and experiences.

A critical stance to education and pedagogy should not be a process of learning about the other but rather about understanding one’s own position in relation to the other, one’s own otherness and how it affects the dispositions that take place in education settings. Earlier studies show that Finnish teachers seem to agree with justice as a rule. The practical side of this, however, does not appear in the responses and actions of some teachers in the classroom (Talib 2005; 2010, Souto 2011).



### 3. New entries into intercultural education

#### 3.1. Postcolonial theory and criticism towards the “inter-cultural”

Postcolonial theory in my study means problematizing and unpacking intercultural education, which is fundamental to my work. I conceptualize it as: what is taught, how it is taught, to whom it is taught, and who has the right/the opportunity to access it (Grosfoguel, 2011)? Especially the last aspect is increasingly important to me while writing this summary as Finland and the rest of Europe were witnessing a flow of immigrants and asylum seekers. My interest is in the question: what is it that we talk about when we say *intercultural education* in Finland? I feel that for postcolonial thinkers intercultural education is something that they feel does not relate to postcolonialism. However, the term “intercultural” is quite well established in education at least in the European context and is therefore in need of a critical overview. Many imaginary binaries exist in the world to describe mainly the economic and power imbalance of the world, such as the Western world vs. the third world, industrial countries vs. developing countries, just to name a few. Similarly, there is power imbalance in the world in how people can access, for example, a safe life or education. In reference to the “refugee crisis” in Finland and other European countries today, the question of who can access education and academia becomes even more relevant. Who can actually access, study and teach in the academia? Often the conversation revolves around the deficit of certain skills of the “guests” and their lack of degrees compared to, for example, the Finnish academic situation. Binaries of “us” and “others”, “host” and “guests” are central in research on intercultural education as a contact zone, as one can find these binaries everywhere (Griffin & Braidotti, 2002).

In this study *postcolonial theory* is a tool to critique and/or problematize interculturality in education. The decolonizing approach in this research also means the process, the methods, the analytical tools for re-thinking the categories such as “culture” (or cultural systems) related to religion and language as used in the Finnish context. Bhabha (1994) explains that “cultural systems can be quite contradictory and ambivalent spaces of enunciation, constituting the enunciation’s discursive conditions of enunciation” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 37). The complexity of cultural systems can also be seen in how we discuss justice and equality. To whom is justice given, and from whose perspective? How are systems for justice shaped and re-shaped through laws? And what principles and educational policies should be applied within intercultural education? In that sense de-colonizing means the process of unpacking intercultural education.

A *decolonizing* perspective is also defined as a critique of postcolonial studies, for example criticism for studying about the other, but not with the other, meaning that postcolonial subjects are often studied by “powerful others” (Grosfoguel, 2011; Andreotti, 2011). Dervin (2015, p. 3) writes extensively about the process of othering, not as an innocent process, but as something socially constructed in different times and places. One example is Mary Louise Pratt’s work on travel documents and how Europeans have constructed the image of the other (Pratt, 1998). Imaginaries of others still exist and are reproduced in e.g. children’s books and school books (Layne & Alemanji, 2015; Dervin, Hahl, Härkönen & Layne, 2015). The third article of this study (*‘Zebra world’: The promotion of imperial stereotypes in a children’s book*) is an example of how these images that Western science created a long time ago still exist. One example of this is how Swedish scientist Carl Linnaeus created a *System of Nature* (1735), which is still in use today (with many changes though). His *system of nature* means naming, ranking and classifying living things, for example *homo sapiens* was divided into five different categories, two of which are represented in one children’s book used as research material for this study: “a) European. Fair, sanguine, brawny; hair yellow, brown, flowing; eyes blue; gentle, acute, inventive, b) African. Black, phlegmatic, relaxed.” (Pratt 2008, p. 32).

In education the (more powerful) “one” is often constructed as the norm and compared to the less powerful others (Dervin, Hahl, Härkönen & Layne, 2015). Thus to understand the social construction of the other we also need to look into discourses of normality, normativity and whiteness. All of these are relevant in my study under the umbrella of postcolonial perspectives in intercultural education. Spivak (1998) argues that the unequal distribution of wealth, education and labor in the world today are the results of past and present imperial processes rooted in social practices. They are also at the intersection of race, gender and geographical positioning of “others.” Therefore, one aim of this study is also to discuss the line between the “normal” and the “odd” in education, as well as the self and self-knowledge. My thesis also contributes to an understanding of injustices in the school and university domain. Santo de Sousa’s metaphor of *abyssal lines* (2007a), to give one example, is a system consisting of visible distinctions, which are based on invisible distinctions that are established through a logic that defines social reality as either on this side of the abyssal line or on the other side of the line. This is important in understanding how we often see the problems on the other side of the abyssal line and are blind to our own “oddness.”

In the context of intercultural education we also need to understand better the process of othering. According to Lewis (2000), using the term “the other” has become popular in recent social and cultural theories because of the convergence between poststructuralist and postcolonial criticisms (ibid, p. 56). She points out (ibid, 2000) three different arguments that should be taken into account when conceptualizing “the other”: 1) the self is constructed relationally, 2) the self



comprises internal sameness in opposition to external difference, which is achieved by the constant process of separation, denial and rejection, and 3) the physical process of the constitution of the self through the denial of ‘the other’ as a wide social system and support (ibid, p. 57). A close look at how these different presentations intersect is needed.

In implementing this into the education context in Finland, the power of determining the right “competencies” for intercultural education is given to those who do research and study the topic. One example of discussion of whose knowledge is important in education concerns PISA study results in mathematics in relation to immigrants. Innocently by reporting that Finland has not been successful in “integrating” immigrant students into education, the need to increase the status and number of hours of teaching the majority language in schools (Finnish as a second language teaching) is promoted. However, what is missing in this discussion is the how the cultural systems in schools (Bhabha, 1994) contribute to and construct social categories such as knowledge, race, religion, gender, and how the teachers, students and children are positioned within the systems (Bhabha, 1994; Phoenix, 2009). Furthermore, Grosfoguel’s (2011) claim that a decolonial epistemic perspective requires a broader view than only one perspective, is important in determining how we talk about intercultural education in relation to justice, immigrants and their success. In the de-colonizing processes we need to become aware of what is “official” knowledge taught and accepted in education (Apple, 2000). By decolonizing epistemic perspectives I also mean the process of challenging and making, for example, “common sense” type of knowledge visible or how we present some knowledge as universal truth (for example, the way we teach history), not understanding that it does not relate in the same way to all students. Intercultural education as a contact zone cannot be explained and founded based on one “*abstract universal*” model of knowing and existing. In Finnish education this means taking seriously the epistemic perspectives of knowledge outside the Finnish “lenses” but with ‘subalternized’ racial/ethnic/sexual/ability/disability categorizing places, spaces and bodies (Grosfoguel, 2011, p. 6). Education for diversities/intercultural learning is proposed widely in the world to answer these challenges, and to decrease inequality through education.

In this section my aim was to explain how postcolonial theories and the criticisms towards them can support what is missing from and what complicates the discourses of justice and intercultural education. The articles included in this study aim to demonstrate the way in which we can break existing categories concerning how we discuss and analyze intercultural education by relating it to the idea of the contact zone. By de-colonizing I mean in this research the shift from researching about immigrants, about “others,” “guests” and the problems they introduce in “our” education and society to looking into how whiteness as a social construct as well as “color blind” practices often take over the “good will”

of intercultural education (Leonardo, 2004; Lewis, 2000; Collins, 2009, Grosky, 2008). For that shift both postcolonial (to understand how power relates to history and the present) and decolonial perspectives are needed.

### 3.2. Intersectional perspectives in teacher education

Intersectionality can serve as a critical tool for intercultural education in analyzing the intersections of justices and injustices in education (Bredström, 2008). Taking as a warning the way in which feminism has been criticized for speaking “equally” for all women regardless of race, social class, sexual orientation, etc., intercultural education research can benefit from understanding how different marks of identification (race, gender, class etc.) are mutually (and socially, relationally, politically) constructed and reconstructed in different times and places (Bredström, 2008; Collins, 1998; Dervin, 2015; Phoenix, 2009). Thus, intersectionality in education can contribute to the debate on theorizing the (sometimes) disturbing discourses of differences (Lykke, 2007). Since intersectionality theory is both about recognizing existing categories and also realizing that simplistic presentations of categories produce inequalities, McCall (2005) presents three categories for intersectional analysis: *Anticategorical complexity* is based on the deconstruction of existing categories (or rejecting categories) and this approach has been applied in the article about intercultural contact zones (article 2) to move away from existing hierarchies that are explained between different cultures. *Intracategorical complexity* explains how intersectionality theory was in the beginning understood as a boundary-making example in researching immigrant women, as they were all considered to be the same. Collins (2009) describes how the collective experiences of Black women have created knowledge about the practice of injustices. This type of knowledge (and bodily experiences of oppression) has empowered these women and started social movements against Black women’s oppression. Similarly, the category of the immigrant student is often misused in education. Possibly the most challenging category for McCall’s (2005) intersectional analysis is *intercategorical complexity*, which involves recognizing different dimensions and understanding how multiple and conflicting dimensions (gender, family structure, sexual orientation etc.) shape and re-shape categories such as the immigrant (McCall, 2005, p.1773).

The notion of the intercultural tends to exclude any political substance, especially in education (Andreotti, 2011), and therefore needs to be critically viewed and renewed (Dervin & Layne, 2013). It is challenging to separate sexism, heterosexism, racism, classism and other politics of marginalization – after all, they are interconnected, and are part of world politics and the system that maintains hierarchies. Similarly, different theoretical positions like postmodernism, and postcolonialism as key academic trends may overlap in several ways. Despite the fact that they have different emphases and great diversity within various

schools of thought, in my understanding, they have one idea in common: they share a certain suspicion about the worst aspects of the dominant Western intellectual legacy, its dualism and its tendency to ground its truth claims and methods rather uncritically in ethnocentric biases and unified notions (Andreotti, 2011; Spivak, 1998).

Stuart Hall (1981) wonders if schooling, at the same time, maintains, selects for, apprentices to, corresponds with, prepares for, feeds into, replicates, reproduces and mirrors the dominant class relations and structures of class society (Hall, 1981). In this framework then the role for postcolonial theory and post-national theory is to make the different structures visible. This is important when looking into the Finnish education system. Still today, student teachers mainly represent the “white female Finnish student teacher body” educated by “white Finnish teacher educators.” Souto (2011) and Rastas (2007) have researched racism in Finnish schools, showing that racism is poorly recognized in schools, and the existence of racism is often denied. It is very difficult to tackle such issues as if “race” was viewed as too sensitive a term even to be used and discussed. Intersections rarely “function” alone but they mutually construct one another. Similar observations as in Mulinari’s study on Sweden could be made about the Finnish context. In her study on race, gender, and ethnicity in the Swedish context Mulinari (2008) points out that “over the last 10 years, because of cuts in the welfare system, an increase in visible racist articulations and a mobilization of radicalized citizens, the credo of “gender equality” has become a central ethnic signifier of national belonging and the most important boundary between us and them” (Mulinari, 2008, p.180).

### **3.3. Critical race theory and institutional whiteness**

A critical race theory in education starts from the premise that race and ethnicity are endemic, permanent and “a central, rather than marginal factor in defining and explaining individual experiences” (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 24). Leonardo (2009) argues that admitting to the existence of white privilege is not enough, but understanding the process of white domination is essential. Critical pedagogy, for example, has become important. However, one rarely considers who are the ones in charge of it (oppressors or those oppressed in the Finnish context, for example, Finns or teachers with an immigrant background) (Leonardo, 2009, p.261).

Ahmed (2006) analyzed institutional antiracism, and alongside of her study Leonardo (2009) also agrees that admissions: ongoing actions and inactions do not necessarily mean an end to domination. Leonardo (2009) talks about the challenges of racism seen as an individual act. He continues that whiteness as domination and a form of structural discrimination is rarely taught at school or universities (Leonardo, 2009, p. 268). Similarly, Ahmed (2006) states that often

the focus is on the attempt to explain what has already been done instead of being able to see the present processes of domination. This also applies to the different types of celebrations typical of schools, which emphasize diversity. However, the type of celebrations, where children are supposed to present their specific country of origin and its flag, food or specific culture can be perceived as humiliating and categorizing by those participants who are placed as “guests” in the event (Kromidas, 2009). Commitment to diversity or organizing multicultural education courses does not automatically mean reducing discrimination. Sometimes commitment actually may be used as a form of organizational pride. Furthermore, these commitments may start to serve as good practices (Ahmed, 2006, p. 110).

Related to good practices the last article (article 4) is actually an attempt to understand a good practice of interculturality as a contact zone, using stories written by children of Finnish backgrounds, immigrant backgrounds and those with mixed (Finnish-immigrant) backgrounds. This follows the methodology typical of critical race theory in paying attention to the racial/ethnic backgrounds and their voices. Despite the fact that the attention to racism and the fight against it is quite visible today (as well as racism itself), more voice needs to be given to those who are often silenced (Riitaoja et. Al, 2015; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). By silencing certain voices, we can maintain an image of an equal education, less successful students over more successful and good schools over not so highly appreciated schools. The last article of this study raises the question of what methodology can be applied to actually break the hierarchies of power between immigrant students and any other student. It also considers the role of the researcher collecting data in a classroom with students and teachers. The last article foregrounds the importance of critical race theory for this study.

Black feminist thought provides a means in this also to investigate interculturality and what goes on in education for those silenced voices. The lack of ethnically diverse teachers in Finnish education, for example, is an increasing problem. Collins’s (2009) epistemologies for Black feminist thought, knowledge, and wisdom are also useful in reflecting on what we consider the role of intercultural knowledge to be and, for example, what to study in order to become an “ethical intercultural teacher” (see the University of Helsinki, curriculum for multicultural teacher education program, 2009). Wisdom refers here to experiences in intercultural education of connecting the self with the other (Harbon & Moloney, 2015), and placing the self in one’s discourses. Lived life (and bodily) experiences constitute determinants distinguishing wisdom from knowledge. Knowledge without wisdom is adequate for the powerful, but wisdom is essential to the survival of the subordinate (Collins, p. 276). Is it enough that teachers gain cultural knowledge of the other? How much space is given to locating the silenced voices in education and not only locating them, but also

activating them? These questions emerged after writing my second article, and how to teach ‘wisdom’ to future teachers.



## 4. Methodological considerations

### 4.1. Research themes and positions

This study is a qualitative study, relating to some extent to phenomenography in the way it problematizes and explains how intercultural education is conceptualized, experienced and lived in relation to Finnish society at different levels of education. By this I mean that phenomenography allows questioning how interculturality is positioned in different levels of education without necessarily trying to link them, but rather explaining and problematizing the different dimensions within them. In particular, the focus is on the internationalization of higher education and on intercultural education as contact zone. This study relies on the discursive nature of research participants’ accounts (Richardson, 1999). By this I mean that my research is an attempt to make visible the way in which interculturality is discussed and constructed in education, and how people experience, conceptualize and understand it at different levels of education in relation to Finnish society (Marton, 1982). The idea of my research is to interpret how people experience and conceptualize interculturality, and the environment (society) in which it takes place, rather than understanding cognitive aspects of learning, or on developing certain type of analysis further like critical discourse analysis (see Richardson, 1999; Marton, 1981). The aim of this study is to make visible certain dimensions as contact zones in education, and therefore to help teachers and researchers to analyze and problematize intercultural education. Like in phenomenography, also in my research, those who are researched (the subjects of research) become important sources of knowledge (Marton, 1981). However, the nature of qualitative research is also to position the researcher in the study. What is also typical for qualitative research is the fact that it is impossible to completely separate the “self” from the “other.” Thus, qualitative research urges the researcher to position himself/herself in the study (Denzin, 2010). In the process of applying criticality in the field of intercultural education the question of power in the research process became important.

The starting point of my study was to understand what is the “talk talked” in intercultural education in the Finnish context and how power imbalances occur between hospitality and hostility. The aim of the study is to look into four different cases related to intercultural education in order to problematize interculturality, contact zones and how these take place in higher education, teacher education (kindergarten teacher education) and basic education. The results are classified in different dimensions and categories constructing intercultural education as contact zones, in relation to the social structures that are in place in Finnish society. This research is a compilation of the use of qualitative research methods using an array of research approaches to open up the analysis. In my study, I am

interested in the variations and changes in the use of terms and definitions in relation to specific phenomena of interculturality in education.

The following table presents the specific themes under review, and certain phenomena and experiences that became important during the research process. Research questions are drawn from the research themes and explained in more detail in relation to each article in the section on results (section 5). Earlier research shows that more understanding is needed to recognize the type of “knowledge” and the social processes produced in intercultural education, and what type of interculturality is behind such education.

**Table 1. Research themes, data and method for analysis for each article**

Article:	A Guide to Interculturality for International and Exchange Students in Finland: An Example of Hostipitality?	Student teachers in the contact zone: Developing critical intercultural ‘teacherhood’ in kindergarten teacher education	“Zebra world”: The promotion of imperial stereotypes in a children’s book	The subjective side of success: children’s stories of a good life
Research topic:	Internationalization of higher education through the lens of critical intercultural education.	Interculturality in teacher education – the intersection of theory, practice, personal experiences as intercultural contact zones.	Critical interculturality in learning materials, and how student teachers make sense of them.	Good practices in creating contact zones: looking into methods and ways of researching “silenced” voices.
Research data:	Booklet for international students guiding them to integrate into Finnish universities.	Student teachers’ portfolios collected during teaching practice.	<i>Bibi muuttaa Suomeen</i> (Bibi moves to Finland) – a children’s book: focus groups, interviews with student teachers, autobiographical notes.	Children’s stories of a good life.
Method for analysis:	Critical discourse analysis	Critical event narrative analysis	Critical event narratives, critical discourse analysis and autobiographical notes	Thematic analysis.



## 4.2. Research setting and data collection

This study concerns the need to create intercultural contact zones in education. The data for the first article is a booklet written by staff members at a Finnish university. The aim of the booklet, first named “OH BEHAVE!” later re-named “THEM FINNS!” is to “welcome” and introduce incoming international students to intercultural communication in Finnish universities. As mentioned earlier, the contact zones are relevant at different levels of education. These different aspects are important in how we also create categories for immigrants and who can become an international student. Therefore I decided to make the first article an introduction to the larger topic of internationalization.

The second and third articles are related to interculturality and contact zones in teacher education. The Department of Teacher Education at the University of Helsinki started a new multicultural teacher education program in 2009. The data collection for my thesis was conducted with student teachers in this program, and also with students specializing in multicultural education. The *first phase* of data collection consisted of collecting 25 portfolios from the student teachers. These portfolios contain study diaries from teaching practice, observation notes, and the students’ first essays about their teaching philosophy. The core values for multicultural teacher education are democracy, justice and equality in education, gender and society. This new teacher education program focuses on training ethical and intercultural teachers with the emphasis on lifelong learning. During the *second phase* of data collection a focus group interview was organized regarding a children’s book, which focused on immigration and intercultural education.

The *third phase* for data collection took place within a NordForsk funded Nordic project entitled Learning Spaces for Inclusion and Social Justice: Success Stories from Immigrant Students and School Communities in Four Nordic Countries. The data was collected in the form of stories from the children in a second grade classroom in one of the schools in the capital city, Helsinki, which took part in the research project. Somehow conducting participative observations was a natural choice for me. I visited the school on four occasions during fall 2013 and spent time in the second grade classroom. The data collection was not as intense as in traditional ethnographic study as in, for example, what Fine (2003) calls a “peopled ethnography” or what has been done in the field of anthropology, where data has been collected by long and intense participation in the “culture” that the researcher is researching. Since the aim of the Nordic research project was to study good practices in schools for immigrant students, it was a great opportunity for me to investigate how the contact zone theory takes place in practice. What I mean by participative observation in the study is that I took

part in the classroom activities by trying to help the teachers in situations where they needed assistance. I did not teach as such, but collected papers, handed out paints and helped children when they needed assistance when operating computers. During the data collection procedure one special needs teacher conducted a project in a classroom that I felt was an example of “good practice” in intercultural education as a contact zone. Since another doctoral student and I were collecting data at the same time we decided to write the paper together. The special needs education teacher also appeared to be what I would call “a teacher as activist,” so we felt that she also had ownership of the research and therefore invited her to write the paper with us. In the following section I will explain in more details how the data was handled.

### **4.3. Methods for analysis**

Each of the articles is treated as a separate – but interrelated – case study describing specific phenomena, an in-depth description and analysis of bounded systems. Different qualitative data analysis methods were used to analyze the data. Critical discourse analysis in my study pays attention to the role of discourse in constructing interculturality in education as used in the first and third articles. Critical discourse analysis allowed for the examination of possible stereotyping, and the co-construction of justice and the re-production of injustices, moving away from looking at the power between different groups to organizational power hierarchies (van Dijk 1997, 2011, p. 361). In the second and third articles I tested critical event narrative analysis as a tool for identifying intercultural “teacherhood.” A critical event is almost always an experience of change in people’s worldviews. This change experience can come about as a student teacher encounters some difficulties in integrating his/her idealized worldviews with the reality of experiences in their narratives (Webster & Mertova, 2008). Narratives have become a general trend in postmodern knowledge production in the social sciences and education (Heikkinen, 2002, p. 13). I chose to test this method to understand how, when student teachers come into contact with multiculturalism, it affects their intercultural learning and worldviews. In the fourth article I chose to use thematic analysis to organize the data. The aim of thematic analysis is to attain a condensed and broad description of a particular phenomenon (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008), in this study it means how children discuss success under the theme of good life.

## 5. Results: The articles

In this section I present the results from each of the four articles included in the study. All four articles are empirical research reports. Two of them were co-authored with my doctoral research supervisors. Two other articles were joint projects with other doctoral students, and one is also co-authored with the research participant, a special needs teacher whose classroom took part in our research. In the case of co-authorship, I consider the first article as the beginning of the learning process towards publishing in an academic journal. My responsibility was to “co-build” the article. We were interested in investigating the strategy for internationalization of higher education in Finland linking it to the discourses taking place in universities and intercultural education. As a second author my responsibility was to contribute to the introduction, to the conclusion, and comment and add to the theoretical framework. In order to learn from the process of building the methodological framework, analysis and conclusions, I also took responsibility for working on the data and eventually we divided the data analysis so that I could practice writing parts of the analysis independently.

The writing process for the second article was the longest. In the case of co-authorship, I carried the main responsibility for the research process and writing. The second author’s contribution was to help with the methodological framework. The third article process was part of the writing project initiated by my supervisor Prof. Fred Dervin, who is leading the Education for Diversities (E4D) research group at the University of Helsinki. Initially, we were three doctoral students who started analyzing a children’s book as a case study. Later only two authors conducted the focus group interview. I took the main responsibility in overviewing the writing process and analyzing the data. The theoretical framework was produced jointly, as well as the planning of the methodology. This paper went through major changes during the peer review process especially in clarifying methodology, and I as the first author carried out the process of revising the article. The fourth article was a joint writing process with another doctoral student and with a special needs teacher, whose classroom was observed. In the article the writing process becomes clear, as we wanted the teacher to have ownership on the practicalities of the project and the activities in the classroom. She wrote the part where she explains the school activities. Since the data was collected in Finnish, I conducted the process of analyzing the data and writing up the results. Introduction and theoretical framing was a collaborative effort with another doctoral student. Moreover, writing the PhD in the form of an article compilation, the process has taught me the skills required for publishing in academic peer-reviewed journals.

The onset of this PhD study was to understand what is the complex whole taking place in intercultural education both in the broader higher education context and in teacher education. The process of reviewing and integrating existing research on intercultural education with postcolonial research was central in my learning process and in positioning myself as a researcher in the field of interculturality, contact zones and education. My understanding of the phenomena of internationalization of higher education and intercultural education is reported through these four articles. The articles and their research questions are presented in what follows.

**Table 2. Overview of the articles and research questions related to each study**

<b>Article 1.</b> A Guide to Interculturality for International and Exchange Students in Finland: An Example of Hospitality?	<b>Research questions:</b> How are discourses on “us” and the “others” (hosts and guests) constructed and re-constructed in the framework of critical intercultural education?
<b>Article 2.</b> Student teachers in the contact zone: Developing critical intercultural “teacherhood” in kindergarten teacher education	<b>Research questions:</b> How do student teachers experience, observe and critically reflect on education through intercultural and multilingual perspectives in kindergarten teacher education? How do they make sense of their experiences?
<b>Article 3.</b> “Zebra world”: The promotion of imperial stereotypes in a children’s book	<b>Research questions:</b> How are discourses on “us” and the “others” (binary opposites) constructed and re-constructed in intercultural learning materials? Whose values are served in such education? How do student teachers interpret it?
<b>Article 4.</b> The subjective side of success: children’s stories of a good life	<b>Research questions:</b> What does the meaning of inclusion and justice look like (as a contact zone) in education in the Nordic context? What is the relationship between success and wellbeing for second grade students of diverse family backgrounds?

## 5.1. Summary of the articles

The main objective in what follows is to present each article included in this study in more detail.

### 5.1.1. Hospitality in higher education

The article *A Guide to Interculturality for International and Exchange Students in Finland: An Example of Hospitality?* investigates internationalization and interculturality in higher education. These terms are quite polysemic, yet they represent today’s key concepts in higher education. In higher education one way of applying intercultural education has been to “welcome” students to Finland by producing “survival” guides to support the integration to the new host country or in this case into study life in Finland. The internationalization process in higher education has been guided by the *Strategy for Internationalisation* first introduced by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2009, which has set a targeted increase in the number of international students studying in Finnish higher education institutions. The same strategy sees the internationalization of higher education also increasing the attractiveness of Finland as a business, work, and living environment and therefore serving as a political tool to “administer” international students (Dervin & Layne, 2013; Riitaoja, 2013). At the beginning of our work on the article we collected different booklets, brochures, and introductory material produced for international students. While the vast majority of guides are more “objective” and present basic information about Finnish society and life at a Finnish campus (state regulations, housing, taxation, etc.), very few of these guides say much about “intercultural” aspects or adaptation to Finnish “culture.”

One exception is a document produced by Tampere University of Technology. Two versions of the 50-page document were published with two different titles: “OH BEHAVE!” (2011) and “THEM FINNS!” (2012) (Lyly-Yrjänäinen et al. 2011, 2012). The main aim is to help international and exchange students to “integrate” and to learn how to “get things done” during their stay in the Finnish institution. The booklet blurb reads as follows (2012): “This booklet will open up some of the peculiarities explaining our culture, hopefully helping you understand and work together with us Finns at least a little better.” In this article we examine how the discourses on intercultural students vs. Finnish students are constructed and re-constructed in the booklet. The article triggered attention both internationally and locally. The National Broadcasting Company in Finland (Yle) published the results in their News in English and the *Journal for Multicultural Discourses*, where it was published, received two commentary responses to the article by renowned scholars (Coleman, 2013; O’Sullivan, 2013). We also received a few personal email contacts from “foreign” staff working in Finnish universities sharing similar experiences as described in the article.

The theoretical framework of Derrida's (2000) deconstruction of hospitality appeared to be useful in our research, and we took it further and investigated it within the framework of intercultural education in higher education. Hospitality has taken on different forms throughout history. Z. Bauman (1993, p. 164), who has written extensively on the figure of the stranger, points out that "they," the others, strangers, modify the familiar classificatory grids. The birth of "modernity" in the eighteenth century in Europe suggested order, fixed identity, and the closing down of national boundaries. It created a world system based on a set of social relations (today recognized as white, European, Christian) and sets of knowledge that emerged during the sixteenth century creating a sense of Eurocentrism, Europe versus other world systems, which governed the world. This background of supposed cultural superiority should be borne in mind when teaching intercultural education. Hospitality, or receiving and welcoming the other, has been dependent on this way of understanding the world for many centuries. Postmodernity, which Bauman (1993) identified as "liquid modernity," has been described as having brought about changes in the way national identity influenced people's lives. Postmodernity challenges the supposed differences between the "normal" and the "abnormal," civilized and tribal, the first world and the third world, developing and industrial countries, and West versus the rest. Moreover, the notions of "the familiar" and the strange, "us" and strangers are also questioned (Bauman, 1993; Dervin & Layne, 2013). Thus, Derrida argues that the idea of hospitality (genuine hospitality) means that the host has to give up security and authority and become "the hostage" (Derrida 2000, p. 16).

By discussing the notions of hosts, guests, foreigners, and differences in a Finnish university context, we critically related these concepts to Derrida's *hostipitality*. The notion of hostipitality became central in reflecting on the way in which international and exchange students are hosted in institutions of higher education through the example of a survival guide, whose aim is to welcome the other. We were interested to understand better how hospitality is translated in a document devised to help students to be "good guests." We were also interested in how the notion of the "intercultural" is instrumentalized to create a certain image of hospitality and deal with the contradictions noted above (hostipitality).

The analytical section of this article is devoted to the 2011 version of the booklet and is followed by a comparison of the 2011 and 2012 versions. The new version was published when this article was completed and could not thus be fully taken into account. The first edition of the booklet was entitled "OH BEHAVE!" and later, due to criticisms of the name by practitioners, was changed to "THEM FINNS! Towards understanding communication in Finnish Universities." The analysis was based on critical discourse analysis, more specifically on a French *énonciation* approach (often called French pragmatics) proposing different approaches to pragmatic issues in language use. This type of approach focuses on (1) how a person constructs her/his discourse and (2) how

she/he negotiates the discourse with others (intersubjectivity) (Johansson and Suomela-Salmi, 2011, p. 71).

The results are compiled in three analytical sections documenting how the image of the “intercultural” in the booklet emerged: (1) deresponsibilization: culture as an excuse, (2) imagined Finnishness, and (3) distrust of the Other and “infantilization,” meaning that in many instances the information was simple and therefore not very useful. The following table (Table 3) summarizes the results in these three sections. The following excerpts and analysis are limited to examples and, therefore, are not as comprehensive as in the article.

**Table 3. Analytical sections to explain the image of the “intercultural” in the booklet**

<b>1. Deresponsibilization - culture as an excuse?</b>			
<b>What does the booklet say about culture?</b>	<b>Criticism:</b>	<b>What does the booklet say about intercultural awareness?</b>	<b>Criticism:</b>
<p>- “Most cultures will have things foreigners will not like and they are entitled not to like them either.” (p. 3).</p> <p>- “Low-context culture means that there are less social rules defining how to behave in a certain situation. In practice it means that people are allowed more freedom to ‘define their own rules’ in different social situations”. (p.12)</p>	<p>- Culture as an ‘alibi’ (Abdallah-Pretceille 1986)</p> <p>- Culture as an agent (Wikan, 2002)</p> <p>- Methodological individualism (Gallagher 2011)</p> <p>- Culture expressing ‘truths’ (Le Querler, 1996)</p>	<p>- “However, one of the main outcomes of the time spent abroad is precisely the understanding of the importance of cultural differences in communication.” (p. 4)</p> <p>- “Understanding us Finns and our culture will help you understand also how to get things done in Finland.”. (p. 2)</p>	<p>- ‘Ontological feature of culture’ as characteristics in interaction with people from other countries (Abdallah-Pretceille, 1986)</p> <p>- Not just sensitivity to cultural differences, but how they are used, (co)constructed and misused when people interact (Abdallah-Pretceille, 1986)</p>

2. Imagined Finnishness:			
What does the booklet say about Finnish values?	Criticism:	What does the booklet say about student life in Finland?	Criticism:
<p>- <i>“Punctuality also displays the equality amongst the people; everyone is supposed to be on time regardless of their social status.”</i> (p. 8)</p> <p>- <i>“Handling issues with Finns, however is usually very easy; when a Finn promises to take care of something, consider it done. According to our values, people are expected to deliver what they have promised and this also applies to all the professors, teachers and other staff members.”</i> (p .22)</p>	<p>- The use of ‘our values’ as ‘natural-cultural gift’ ‘our’ referring to the imagined Finnish community (Anderson 1983).</p> <p>- Biased elements claiming that other peoples are not always punctual or do not hold punctuality as a ‘value’ (Holliday 2010)</p> <p>- Equality as a given ‘value’ in Finland, (Kuortti, Lehtonen, and Löytty 2007)</p> <p>- Mulinary (2008, 180) ‘gender equality’ as a central ethnic signifier of national belonging</p>	<p>- <i>“Whereas in many cultures people are supposed to follow instructions of teachers and supervisors, Finns are encouraged to solve problems independently and take initiative when needed. Thus while young people in many cultures live in a very protected and supervised life, students in Finland are very independent and take responsibility for their studies. This is another area where foreign students also get easily confused.”</i> (p. 23-4)</p>	<p>- International students constructed as something different in opposition to Finns (‘us’ vs. ‘them,’ Gillespie 2006)</p> <p>- ‘Cultural racism,’ (Anna Bredström, 2008)</p> <p>- Criticism towards cultural categorization to correspond precisely to autorepresentations that Finns have built up about themselves (Lehtonen 2006)</p> <p>- All Finns are presented as being similar</p>
3.Distrust of the other and infantilization?			
What does the booklet say about trust and distrust?	Criticism:	What are the expectations of guests?	Criticism:
<p>- <i>“written assignments are supposed to be written completely by the students themselves, not copy pasted from the internet”.</i> (27)</p>	<p>- Uncertainty and insecurity in front of the Other. Bauman (2003)</p> <p>- On several occasions, the authors seem to treat ‘trust in Finland’ as an important heritage</p>	<p><i>“First, in Finland it is common to answer to an unknown number with a full name instead of answering just ‘hello.’ This way the caller always knows if he has reached the right person or not.”</i> (p. 18)</p>	<p>- The authors share their assumptions about foreigners in the excerpt below and pretend, to help the students to adapt. In terms of hospitality, what they are saying here is: If you do not behave as ‘we’ do, you will have some problems (hostipitality).</p>

In studying the intercultural discourses in the “OH BEHAVE!” booklet, the results show that the students should adjust to specific Finnish manners. This type



of discourse actually explains well the phenomena Derrida (2000) describes about welcoming. As mentioned in the introduction of the article, the latest strategy for Internationalization of Higher Education in Finland states that institutions of higher education should contribute to making Finland a better place to live for foreigners. Moreover, the strategy puts an emphasis on the competitiveness of Finland but at the same time the expectations for international students are to be like “imagined” Finns. We also questioned in the article why foreigners should be presented with uncritical, ethnocentric, judgmental, and potentially negative facts about themselves. Our analysis of the first version of the document shows that it is rather judgmental towards international students.

### **5.1.2. Contact zones in kindergarten teacher education**

The second article entitled *Student teachers in the contact zone: Developing critical intercultural ‘teacherhood’ in kindergarten teacher education* concentrates on teacher education, especially on how multicultural teacher education prepares and responds to interculturality in education. Special attention is paid to intercultural contact zones – when student teachers need to reflect and act on interculturality. The data consist of the student teachers’ portfolios from their teaching practice focusing on multicultural education. This article is a conceptual paper on the kind of terms used in multicultural teacher education programs. The notion of “intercultural” is also discussed.

Many scholars and politicians claim that multiculturalism has failed or is in crisis (Lentin and Titley, 2011; Philipps, 2007). The theoretical framework for this article is based on Mary Louise Pratt’s theory of contact zones (1991), which is central for the whole study. Contact zones as mentioned before are about education as a space where different knowledge bases, subjects, locations and powers intersect and conflict with one another (Pratt, 1991; Layne & Lipponen, 2014).

The main objective of this study was to investigate how student teachers experience their teaching practice from the point of view of multiculturalism. Excerpts from ten portfolios were chosen out of 25 portfolios for this article. These ten portfolios represent the variety of the experiences and reflections in the data. Data analysis is based on a critical event narrative approach (Webster and Mertova, 2007). This method allows researchers to identify critical events in the professional practices of individuals. According to Mertova and Webster (2007, 2012), a critical event is something that is unplanned and unstructured and that significantly influences the professional’s practice. In addition, a critical event is a unique, illustrative, and confirmatory event in relation to the phenomenon to be studied (Mertova & Webster 2012). The criteria for selecting critical events were:

- Intercultural context

- Explanation of what happened
- Reflection on what was the reason behind the event
- The feeling or (learning) outcome of the event

Critical events written by student teachers were classified according to the following categories: 1) type of experience, the strategy in which the event happened, 2) type of event, meaning the student teachers' decision making, 3) category of event, the specific situation or behavior during the event and 4) affect concerning the event, meaning the feelings expressed about the event (Reighart and Loadman, 1984 in Webster and Mertova, 2007). The process of analysis took place as follows. The students were given written instructions to critically observe and reflect through multicultural and multilingual lenses. I took part in the lectures where they were introduced to observation and reflection about their teaching practice so the student teachers were introduced with the critical event narrative method presented earlier. I chose and determined the critical events from their learning diaries. This is one example of a critical event narrative:

*• The strongest in the development seem to be girls whose appearance fit to the majority population. The darkest skin color is connected to the restlessness and behavioral problems. To these children the adjustment seems to be most difficult. In the lunch table Sudanese and So-malian child were calling each other black monkeys. It seems that they have gotten their part of the racism. (Student Teacher #4)*

The critical event narratives were classified in the following manner: 1) the type of experience: observation, 2) the type of decision-making from the student: reflection (not action involved) 3) the specific situation is the critical event itself, the reflection that took place at that moment and then 4) the affect of the event is that the student teacher came to the conclusion that children's behavior or problems related to behavior are racialized and the reflection was classified as categorizing. As reflected also in the study itself, there was evidence of another type of deeper reflection as the student teacher was able to see racism and how it may also play a role in the children's lives.

Observation on multiculturalism	Reflection	“The strongest in the development seem to be girls whose appearance fit to the majority population. The darkest skin color is connected to the restlessness and behavioral problems. To these children the adjustment seems to be most difficult”.	Categorizing children and behavior CATEGORIZING
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Results: Three approaches to interculturality

In the analysis three approaches were identified based on the way student teachers discussed interculturality and the affect of the events:

- Categorizing
- Anti-categorizing
- Affective

Each of these categories were identified according to the type of event, meaning the student teachers’ decision-making processes and the level of reflection, as the following table (table 4.) demonstrates:

**Table 4. Summarizing the results for the study**

<b>Approach</b>	<b>Feature</b>	<b>Type of reflection</b>	<b>Feature</b>	<b>Concrete example</b>
<b>Categorizing</b>	Drawing the line between Finns and others; knowledge based on cultural categorization (high context-low context, feminine – masculine)	Conclusive reflection	Shallow, with emphasis on conclusions based on cultural observations and comparison	White majority girl's behavior vs. black boy's behavior
<b>Anti-categorizing</b>	Adapting skills to manage uncertainty and moving away from cultural characteristics, overcoming the challenges on a level of reflection but not yet action. Frustration towards the presentation of "Finnishness" in the learning environment	Critical reflection	Emphasis on events, reflecting injustices, being able to see behind the surface	Children should not be lumped together, stating that all Somalis are.... etc
<b>Affective</b>	Recognizes power, questioning injustices and acting towards social justice and connecting with otherness	Reverse reflection	Active participation in conversation, asking difficult questions and bringing difficult topics to the table, allowing contact zones	"Black baby doll story"

The approaches presented in the table can provide a model of becoming aware of the identification of diversities at the individual level, and within the larger context of teacher education. These three approaches can also provide a tool for self-reflection and discourse about diversities in the wider context of intercultural education. Teaching practice is an important experience for student teachers, through which they come into contact with children and families from diverse backgrounds, and learning diaries can serve as an important educational tool in teacher education. To conclude the study the contact zone theory be-

comes central in determining how education is organized to break the boundaries of, for example, normality and Finnishness in education. This becomes extremely important in teacher education, where student teachers reflect on their experiences in the field. Teacher educators play an important role in understanding how race, ethnicity, gender, social class and other dimensions affect the way people are positioned and how people position themselves in society.

### 5.1.3. The construction of binaries, whiteness and Finnishness

One idea relating Pratt’s (1991) notion of the contact zone to education is that diverse students start feeling that education belongs to them, that they belong and can own their share of education by fitting into the learning space. However, despite diversification of families and children in Finland, children’s literature, learning materials and media images are still today mainly white, middle-class, Eurocentric, and based on the idea of the nuclear family presentation constructing the “normality” of “Finnishness” for Finnish children (Oikarinen-Jabai, 2011; Souto, 2011; see also Bradford, 2009 and Botelho & Rudman, 2009). In the third article in this study, *“Zebra world”: The promotion of imperial stereotypes in a children’s book*, concepts such as ‘whiteness’, normality and sense of belonging are discussed within a critical approach to intercultural education. The aim of this study is to understand:

- 1) The diverse structures of the “us” and “other” binary
- 2) The construction of whiteness and normality
- 3) The trap of “good will” and “good intentions” in complex post-modern societies and education

The theoretical framing for this study intersects with the concept of power, which is an influential part of human interaction and intercultural education (Foucault, 1979, 1980a), colorblind practices vs. whiteness (Leonardo, 2009), binary opposites (Griffin and Braidotti, 2002) and Orientalism vs. Occidentalism (Said, 1999).

The methodological approach turned out to be most interesting and rewarding as a learning experience in doing research. We (the authors of the articles) started off this study with our own biases about one-sided representations in children’s books in Finnish kindergartens and schools. We experienced this through raising non-white children in Finland. Later we explored children’s literature focusing on intercultural education, and found *Bibi muuttaa Suomeen/ Bibi moves to Finland* – the book under review. There were some excerpts in the book that especially raised our concern, and we felt that we needed to discuss them in more detail. Because we were aware of our own biases we decided to test the book with a group of student teachers.

The data was collected using a focus group interview method to collect the student teachers' "voices." During the focus group interview the photo elicitation method was used. This means that the student teachers were asked to look at the pictures from the book and 1) to discuss what kind of images of Finland vs./and Africa the book represents, and also 2) to discuss the story behind the pictures. The data was analyzed using three different methods for analysis. A critical discourse analysis approach (van Dijk, 2001) was used to analyze the binaries the student teachers noticed in between the presentations of tribal Africa and civilized Finland in the book. A critical event narrative approach was used to analyze one moment from the focus group interview when the student teachers became concerned about one picture in the book. Autobiographical notes also became important in positioning ourselves as researchers in the study so the last section for the results discuss our own interpretations of two excerpts in the book.

Botelho & Rudman (2009) state in their research on critical multicultural analysis of children's literature that race, class and gender matter, and the aim of such an analysis should be to break the myth that we live in an egalitarian world (Botelho & Rudman, 2009, p. 14). The findings are presented according to the student teachers' perspectives in two sections:

- *Imagined immigration from exotic, colorful Africa to civilized Finland*
- *The danger of picture representations - African vs. Finnish violence*

The last section of the analysis is based on our analysis of two excerpts from the book. This section is named: *The power of words - "The world is like a zebra"?*

Our findings show that images of Africa are built upon a range of different representations: biology, the tribal, giraffes, tourist pictures of animals, people trying to live with these animals, children dressed as if they could be from Finland, but the mother looks very traditional, the children don't have toys but just like playing around and climbing on the trees, traditional women working. One of the student teachers (ST#2) commented that: "if we put them in a Finnish context, maybe there would be pictures of parents, quite busy going somewhere, like if it was a picture painted of Finnish parents then there would be a picture of a mother baking or a father cleaning or something like that." The image of Finland in the pictures, on the other hand, is built on characteristics familiar to upper middle class people, like owning sailing boats, Marimekko clothes (a famous Finnish design brand), people wearing shoes, and pets instead of wild animals. Also the excerpts analyzed build up an image of Finnish people with solely blond hair and blue or green eyes, thus people with different characteristics cannot be Finns. The main conclusions are central to the field of interculturality in teacher education, which has important role in recognizing:

1) how we construct binary opposites and images as well as how we teach about others, in this study for example civilized Finland vs. tribal Africa,

2) how we present diverse roles such as mother, father, educated man/woman, teacher and diverse intersections of gender, race, class, hobbies as tools to construct normality within the education system and society, and

3) how race, and racism can be, and should be discussed as well as ways to recognize whiteness as taken for granted by many students and teachers.

#### **5.1.4. The contact zone theory in practice - children's stories of a good life**

This final study links the contact zone theory and the idea of inclusion in relation to interculturality as good practice in basic education. The research was set up in a way that it challenges the hierarchy between the researcher and the ones being researched by bringing together a collaborative research initiative between us as members of a project entitled Learning Spaces for Social Justice, and a school where the data was collected. This collaboration meant conducting participatory observation and inviting the special needs teacher to be a co-author of the article. The theme of the study was to understand the meanings children give to success through stories of a “good life” written by second grade elementary school children living in Helsinki and attending a school there. This classroom was an inclusion classroom taught by both a classroom teacher and a special needs teacher. The key research questions were: What can we learn about a *good life* and *success* from children's stories through the lenses of justice and inclusive pedagogy? The study also discussed the links between inclusion and contact zones, as well as wellbeing and success. Often when discussing educational success or specifically school success, we refer to the OECD's International PISA studies, hence undermining children's voices and their own experiences of success. As this study is part of a Nordic funded research project on successful immigrant students, the original idea was to collect and analyze stories from children with an immigrant background. However, since I feel that an artificial distinction is often made between Finnish children and immigrant children, it became important to learn the positions the children take in their stories. Also, it felt natural to discuss the good life within the framework of (subjective) success for second grade children, since success is often related to the politics of educational success, namely objective success like results and grades, and academic achievements.

The special needs teacher and her classroom project were invited to participate in this research project. While conducting the participant observation in the classroom we identified this classroom and the practices taking place in it as a good example of implementing social justice in everyday schoolwork. The particular project studied started on the International day of Children's Rights (November 20th 2013). First a human figure was drawn on a large piece of paper.

Children suggested some names for the figure. There was no indication of gender of the figure, but the children decided that it should be a girl named Sofia Tammi. Children also decided that Sofia Tammi was seven years old, so a bit younger than them. Then the students were asked what Sofia would need that is fundamentally important for her survival. A brainstorming method was applied to discuss this question. Secondly, students were asked what Sofia Tammi needed for the future to have a good life. As a third phase of the project they decided that each student should write his/her own story on a computer. The title for the stories was: Sofia Tammi's good life. The special needs teacher wrote beside the picture of Sofia Tammi the ideas that the children came up with during the brainstorming session (see Figure 1.)

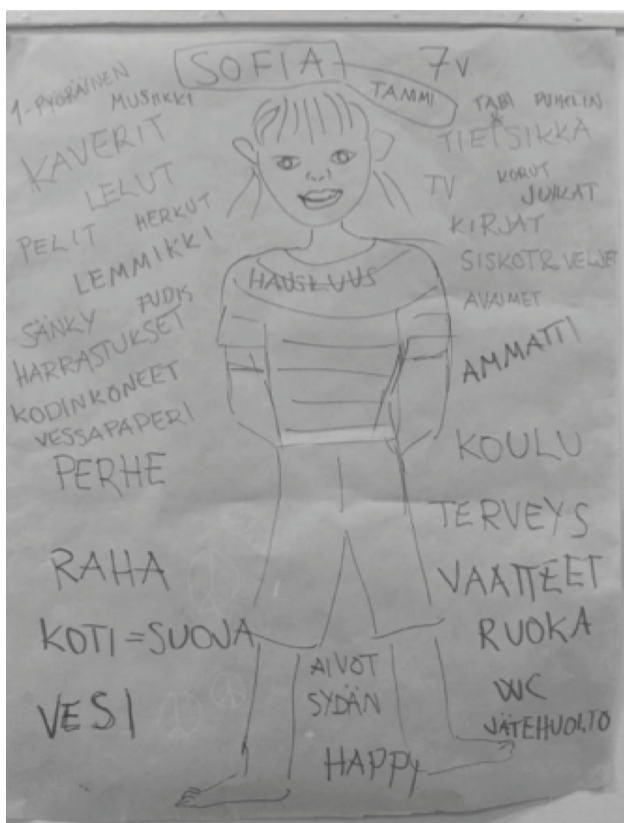


Figure 1. Brainstorming about Sofia Tammi

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was introduced by the special needs teacher through its main articles. The teacher shortened and clarified them to make understandable for the children. When the stories were ready the students chose some pictures from the computer clip art library to dec-



orate their work. These stories were analyzed further in this last study for my dissertation.

The children’s stories were categorized into three different groups according to the background of the children, see Table 3. This was the only dimension as a starting point for analysis.

**Table 3. Categorization of the stories**

Category of story	Number of stories
Group A: <i>Children whose parents have both migrated to Finland</i>	7
Group B: <i>Children with one parent of Finnish origin</i>	4
Group C: <i>Children whose parents are both Finnish by origin</i>	5

The analysis is divided into four analytical sections presenting the four main themes for Sofia Tammi’s good life:

1. Family – “The right to a good family”
2. Social Wellbeing – “Sofia Tammi is not allowed to do heavy work”
3. Material Wellbeing – “Sofia would like to become a model”
4. Sense of Belonging – “A child has the right to live a good life”

In this study, success was embedded in the stories of individual students with diverse backgrounds in contrast to the general discourse of *success* as *political* dimension that contributes something back to society. The aim of analyzing the stories was to identify and describe the children’s aspirations and experiences, and especially how they defined success through the theme of a “good life.” Based on these stories the descriptors for a good life and success can be contextualized as follows: In the inclusion classroom under review, students represented some kind of **authentic global citizenship** where they situated themselves regardless of family background. Children located Sofia Tammi in different countries sometimes related to her family background but also outside of her personal roots. Family, home, school and religion become **safe places** with good interaction with their siblings, friends, mother and father, nice teachers, hobbies, animals and friends who do not bully. **A sense of belonging** is determined within the interactions between all the descriptors on the local and global levels. The sense of belonging is challenged by the construction of Whiteness in a predominantly white society like Finland. Furthermore, some **material positionings** are

apparent in how children define success, such as owning their own bed, phone or a house with a specific address.

Lastly, the meaning of inclusion was explored in the Nordic context. The fact that the study took place in an inclusion classroom was important as it gave access to a diverse group of children outside the context of ethnic diversity and special needs. In this classroom each child is special and normal in his or her own way. This type of project connects and engages children in discussing and sharing ideas about a good life, and contributes to the collaborative atmosphere in the classroom. It is critical in a diverse society like Finland to define the meaning of inclusive education through activating and allowing children to participate instead of categorizing the differences. Contact zones are important in giving children a stronger participation in their learning, and in (in)forming educational policies. Furthermore, this type of inclusion classroom can break the invisible (and visible) gaps between the categories “us” and the “others,” special needs and “normal” children, which enables inclusiveness. To me this article proves that sometimes we may create or image artificial categories for students from different ethnic or religious backgrounds. Collecting data in the form of stories can reveal the children’s lives and positionings in the given society. It also felt like a more natural method for data collection in researching children rather than interviewing them. Writing stories is one way to allow diverse children’s voices to be heard, as well as, paradoxically, instances of silence and silenced children.

## 6. Methodological and ethical considerations

The way this research is constructed relies on the compilation of different case studies that investigate specific phenomena of interculturality in higher education, teacher education and in basic education. Each article has a specific focus and research data, answering specific questions for the studied phenomena (Shank, 2006). *Firstly* the idea of interculturality in education, pedagogy towards justices and contact zones in different levels of education relate to my personal interests. *Secondly*, during the construction of the theoretical framework, I also aimed to problematize the way interculturality is applied in practice, the internationalization processes taking place and their relationship to postcolonial theories. In this study it means investigating the terms and the phenomena of interculturality through critical, postcolonial literacy, using different sources of data: a booklet on internationalization, a children’s book, written documents such as student teachers’ portfolios from teaching practice and stories written by children. Diverse methods for data analysis were also applied: the critical event narrative method, critical discourse analysis, autobiographical notes and content analysis for analyzing children’s stories. Since different data are used for each article the analysis was conducted separately for each article.

Qualitative research is not just about the method or technique used. In this study it is a way to understand and interpret people’s experiences. The methodological choices in my study also report my personal growth as a researcher. The fact that I had an opportunity to be part of a research project allowed me to take the data collection further to test the type of data collection typical for critical race theory methodology, where children from diverse backgrounds had an equal opportunity to have a voice. Therefore the contact zone was also researched in practice.

Silverman (2011) refers to reliability, indicating the extent to which research findings are unconstrained by the circumstances of their production (Silverman, 2011). Inquiry is performative, moral and political (Scheurich & Clark, 2006 in Denzin, 2010). In an article compilation the presentation of methods and analysis becomes challenging as one can only fit so much into one study. I aimed at making the research process as transparent as possible by providing detailed descriptions of data construction and analytical stages both in the articles and the compilation. This is especially the case of the last article as the teacher in the classroom was a co-author of the article. I feel that this also strengthens the reliability of this particular study as testing the thinking and results was possible with the special needs teacher and with the other co-author in the study.

In relation to these aspects the criterion of validity describes the degree to which a research represents the social phenomena and practices that it investi-

gates (Silverman, 2011). The data used in each case study is rather small and I am aware of the fact that generalizations need to be avoided. In order to overcome the dangers of anecdotalism, I aimed at a deep literature review and diverse data collection methods and analyses (Silverman, 2011). Qualitative research should not aim at answering certain questions. It is not a means to deliver a message or to prove that something is right or wrong. Shank (2006) discusses the sentimentality of qualitative research, and the pitfall of conflating spiritual or emotional issues in a form that is close to manipulation (ibid, 2006, p. 208). Thus, I feel that locating the researcher into the study is in a sense inseparable from the topic of my study, and the critical theoretical framing. This is because my research also tackles ethical issues such as justice and how we can construct a truly intercultural contact zone in education, which discusses race and racism. The fundamental idea of this study is to move away from the misuse of the framework of “culture” within intercultural education. By this I mean the approach where culture is used to explain certain behavior (Dervin & Layne, 2013). Attention is needed for dimensions such as whiteness, Finnishness, race, gender, social class, language hierarchies and how these are discussed. These are also personal choices, which acted as guides through the theoretical positioning of the research. In addition, I would like to point out that behind sentimentality there may be what Collins (1998, 2009) calls “bodily experiences” that may even in some cases make the research result stronger.

Considering the ethical perspective of the study it is important to point out that the research permits were collected from each research participant taking part in the study. Ethicality became especially important while collecting data on children. The parents were informed about the research, and we asked for permission for their child’s participation in our research project. A morning coffee event was organized for parents where they had the opportunity to meet and talk to the researchers. After the first article about hospitality in higher education was published, we organized a one-day seminar on the theme of intercultural education in higher education. The authors of the *Oh behave/Them Finns* booklet were also invited to the event.

Another ethical issue is researching multilingually, which is not often considered in research on interculturality. Collecting data in one language (Finnish) and translating it into another (English) requires a large amount of work, and sometimes the message may get lost in the translation (Holmes et al. 2013). However acting as a researcher and interpreter may be a better solution than outsourcing translation services when the research data and the original version might be unfamiliar (Halai, 2007 in Holmes et al, 2013). In the focus group interviews we asked the students to use English to avoid the process of translating and misinterpreting the information in the translation process. This was a natural choice to us researchers, as one of the authors does not speak Finnish. However we asked the students their opinion and gave them the last choice in choosing

the language, which they chose to be English. For the second article about contact zones, I translated the student teachers’ texts from the portfolios; therefore I sent the draft of the article to student teachers to read before publishing it. I wanted to give them an opportunity to view my interpretations of their writings. The only feedback I received was a few emails wishing me good luck with the publishing process. The stories about Sofia Tammi’s good life were written in Finnish. That was also a reason why I took the responsibility of translating the stories and writing the analysis. Naturally, both co-authors provided feedback on it.

When translating and writing the article in English, a language check is required for non-native writers. This makes the process of maintaining a more authentic voice challenging. However, the research team that I am part of is multilingual so at all times my multilingual colleagues have checked translations and interpretations. In the research by Holmes et al. (2013) one of the research participants states that if researchers in a multilingual context only work monolingually, then the data would only tell “half the truth.” Also, the dimension of language hierarchies may play a role in how people position themselves in the interview situation, meaning that sometimes when researching, for example, language minorities it may help that the researcher is not a native speaker of a majority language (Holmes et al, 2013, p. 294).

For me this raises a question again about doing research in the field of intercultural education. Multicultural and multilingual lenses are promoted in education at different levels. At the same time, people with an immigrant background, for example, are “closed out” from the academic context because of Finnish (monolingual) language requirements. Teaching, researching and communicating in Finnish has a strong symbolic power in the language hierarchy in higher education, no matter how intercultural or international we aim to be.

Lastly, I would like to discuss the relation between the literature and the methods in this research. Denzin (2010) refers to critical theoretical framing as being linked to participatory methods and also provides platforms to allow silenced voices to be heard. The choices for data collection in my study were determined so that I could learn from multiple perspectives: student teachers, written documents, teacher and children. The article “*Zebra world*”: *The promotion of imperial stereotypes in a children’s book* is one example of how we tried to tackle the issue of power between researchers and those being researched. In that particular study student teachers were “used” as mediators in mirroring their views against what we personally thought the message in the book was. Besides, we started off with the idea that learning materials need to be critically viewed in that they may create a “false” idea of the world and of others whose voice is not heard. As Finnish education becomes more ethnically diverse, we need to include each and every student. The current situation with asylum seekers in Finland increases the need to understand structural discrimination. However, it feels

that before Finland became more diverse in terms of ethnicity, religion and language, we did not talk much about any type of diversity (Riitaoja, 2013). Therefore, making different intersections (men, women, minority, majority, white as a race and whiteness as social construction, language hierarchies, etc.) visible in education is important. Similarly, it is important to allow people to have a voice, and in this critical race theory methodology can offer a platform.

The student teachers and teacher educators were reported to be female or male in my study, and I as a researcher fell into my own trap of being critical of gender categorizations. They were of different ages, some of them had recently graduated; some had a family with their own children and previous careers in different fields. Their religious backgrounds were not reported, but in many cases, the role of religion and ethics came out in their reflections in their learning diaries. Their sexual orientation was not categorized either. Sometimes some of them mentioned their own children in their texts. Some student teachers seemed to be more aware of class differences than others. An awareness of these categories became relevant when it touched them personally, as reported in their diaries. As a researcher I became aware of some meaningful experiences of student teachers like childbirth; some had experienced the loss of a close family member, and some shared the idea of breaking free of “bodily memories” (Collins, 2009), meaning that in their learning diaries they discussed the silenced topics in their families, and how they wanted their children or the children they work with to be better prepared to deal with difficult topics in life.

## **7. Concluding the results and discussion – What are contact zones in education for?**

My PhD study examined interculturality as contact zones in diverse contexts of education, namely the wider horizon of internationalization of higher education, teacher education and basic education. Education plays a fundamental role in establishing a hegemonic national project (Freire, 1975). According to the Ministry of Education and Culture, one of the basic principles of Finnish education is that all people must have equal access to high-quality education and training and therefore they state that the key words in Finnish education policy are quality, efficiency, equity and internationalization. With the high tendency for internationalization, the way in which (intercultural) education is rehearsed is important. This study aims to make visible the different forms of education promoting some type of intercultural (multicultural) education. In applying interculturality in education the aim is to promote equality, which does not always recognize structural discrimination or the dimensions that are important for promoting justice. Furthermore Rawls’s idea of distributive justice proposes that justice is more than a right to attend (in this context to education), however these common rules that are fundamental for justice are also set and interpreted by someone who may have more power over the other. Distribution can also create the categories in between those “richer” and poorer”. Also Rawls’s idea of justice focuses on distribution of wealth, which is important, but education should equally promote access to participate and become active member of society. Contact zone in education can be interpreted as a space and place for participation and activism towards justice. However justice in education is not a permanent state, nor it is an aim that can be fully reached, but actually it is those processes and conflicts that take place in education as a contact zone.

In this section I would like to conclude with the diverse dimensions that take place in the contact zones discussed in this study either in the theoretical framing or in the individual studies or both. The idea of contact zones in education is crucial in shaping this national project, as it can provide a way to rework the idea of traditions and norms. Intercultural education in its current form does not always sufficiently incorporate principles of justice and cultural awareness in which marginal voices are brought to the center of attention (Biesta, 2010). Also, the misuse of language and culture is currently deterring the power imbalance in some intercultural education practices. To conclude this thesis, I wish to mention how the dimensions in the contact zone relate to one another by adapting a type of intercategory complexity (McCall, 2005), an analytical tool discussed in section 3.2. The following table shows how different dimensions take place in (intercultural) education take and construct one another in the contact zones.

One concrete example of this is, for example, different values that are often related to intercultural education and different “cultures” but actually, to my understanding, such values are about dispositions in the contact zones, and how people locate themselves within the systems. It is important to bear in mind that all the dimensions interrelate with hostipitality (Derrida, 2000) meaning that they are not stable but re-shaped by the forces that are both hostile and hospitable depending on how people are located in the system (Pratt, 1991, 1992; Phoenix, 2009).

**Table 4. Contact zones and asymmetries of (intercultural) education**

<b>Political (culture)</b>	<b>Personal and social (culture)</b>
Finnish narratives, knowledge	Locality vs. globalism, (wisdom)
Finnishness, whiteness, gender	Race, (institutional) racism
Immigrant, international	“guests” and “hosts”
Inclusion, exclusion	Sense of belonging
Language learning	Language hierarchies, language deficit
Politics of success	Personal experience of success
Social class	Hobbies, knowledge, experiences
Binaries	Histories, traditions
Values	Dispositions

When analyzing interculturality in the education context further I think it is important to identify and relate *contact zones* (in the plural from). Many of these dimensions take place simultaneously in the learning spaces not only on account of diverse learners and teachers, but also because of the national, social and political structures taking place in the society. Analyzing intercultural education as contact zones means that the different dimensions take place in parallel but also asymmetrically, meaning that education is attached to certain times, places, languages, histories, learning materials, objects, whiteness, and to the ways of discussing Finnishness and race vs. otherness.

Currently the *political agenda* for the internationalization of higher education in Finland is based on the competitiveness and attractiveness of Finland as a country and as a (inter)national economy. At the same time we want “them” (international students) to be like “us.” Another conflict is *who has the right to belong to academia?* and *how do we actually construct Finnishness, international students and immigrants?* Who will be the future international students when *privatization* is currently on the agenda to solve the harsh financial problems of Finnish higher education? The university reforms that took place in 2010 in Finland changed the university education system from a state-owned “traditional” institution towards partly privately-funded universities. At the same time with the demand to increase the number of international students a decision has been made to introduce fees for international students from outside the European Union.



Hostipitality is one concrete example of power hierarchy. In the way internationalization takes place the strategy is to list what the “host,” Finland as a country, can gain from the “guests,” the international students. However, language barriers to enter Finnish universities (for immigrants living in Finland) are rarely discussed as *institutional racism*, and similarly institutional racism or the structural barriers in academia are not widely targeted as a topic of research in Finland (Ahmed, 2006; Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2000b). We may have ‘discrimination free zone’ signs posted on the university walls, but at the same time the language of communication mainly takes place in Finnish, discriminating against those who cannot read Finnish in our so-called internationalized higher education system. Seeing, identifying and visualizing structural injustices, “blind spots,” help us to talk about justice (Collins, 2009). International students are desired and wanted (conditionally, as students coming from outside the EU countries will have to pay a fee in the future), but immigrant children and families seem to challenge Finnish education (Layne & Lipponen, 2014). Who can decide between the immigrant and the international individual? What is common to both internationalization strategies and the pursuit of intercultural education is that the “other,” the “guest” is (still) often the primary object of discourse (Collins, 2008; Layne & Lipponen, 2014). Justice is easy to talk about but somehow recognizing injustice and racism seems to be embedded in personal bodily experiences of discrimination (Collins, 2009; Phoenix, 2009). Therefore, I propose contact zones, rather than intercultural education to be a means to recognize injustices and the complexity of interculturality. However post-intercultural education applies many of the ideas of contact zones (Dervin, 2015). As with Freire’s idea of anti-oppressive practices in education, an anti-oppressive practice (AOP) is something that has also been developed in the field of social work in Canada and in the UK in the 1980s to serve socially excluded individuals better. From the anti-oppressive perspective the personal becomes public/political (Freire, 1975; Mullaly, 2010). This is also central for the idea of contact zones in education.

It is possible that the terms intercultural and multicultural education provoke this type of gap between people, where the different “cultures” are in the focus resulting in the *misuse of culture*. Also the engrams of such intercultural education seem to be deep. However, when concluding the results for this study the race and whiteness (as social and political construct) should be at the center of the contact zones in the Finnish (Nordic) context. The intersection between race and class is also something that becomes evident in the learning materials or learning environment or how we picture immigration and internationalization. *Bibi moves to Finland*, the children’s book analyzed in article 3 in my dissertation, is a good example of such a representation, where “Black” African life is pictured as exotic, colorful and tribal (clothing, wild animals, domesticated women) and where “White” people’s life in Finland is pictured as civilized (ed-

educated women, pets, and hobbies such as sailing). These (false) images of cultures, social class, race and immigration affect the way in which students from different origins are perceived in education (Phoenix, 2009; Riitaoja, 2013) and what kind of expectations are set for them. Finland will implement a new national curriculum starting in August 2016 in which plurilingualism and intercultural education is emphasized. Intercultural education is presented as part of national culture and of cultural diversities within Finnish schools. The FREPA (Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures) in the form of a project by the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) is used as a key reference to implement pluralistic approaches to culture and language within basic education. As part of this project a culture grid has been developed in Finland as a framework for intercultural education, and how it can be implemented in schools. It is presented in what follows:

*It is designed for teachers of all subject areas that have an interest in plurilingual and intercultural education, as well as teacher trainers, decision makers, and curriculum and programme designers. The framework itself presents a comprehensive list of descriptors covering knowledge, skills and attitudes, all of which are considered necessary within the perspective of plurilingual & intercultural education. (<https://frepafin.wordpress.com>).*

As a remnant of what many people think is already “past” in intercultural education, the grid starts from grade 0 (pre-school) to grade 2 listing competencies such as: “is aware that cultural differences/similarities exist,” “can observe these similarities and differences,” “is curious about other cultures and motivated to learn about them.” The grid ends with grades 7-9 listing competencies like: “appreciates the complexity of cultural systems,” “understands the differences in certain cultural practices and can recognize stereotypes” and “has proved willing to adapt to other cultures and in so doing understand their own identity to become a positive ambassador of one’s own culture” (<https://frepafin.wordpress.com/culture-grid-grade-0-9-maailmankansalaisen-kulttuuripolku/culture-grid-by-grade-english/>). Contact zones are critical in making one aware of (and in providing a platform for analyzing) the way in which Finnish scholars and culture are represented as being different from scholars from abroad, since Finnishness is often described through positive characteristics like honesty, hard work and equality (Sahlberg, 2009; see also Dervin & Layne, 2013). Researchers such as Piller (2012), Holliday (2011), Dervin (2011) from the field of critical intercultural communication education studies, are concerned about the presentation of nation- and ethnicity-based groupings as they are too large to provide finite cultural descriptions of their purported values, expected behaviors and communicative traits. In this type of discourse the trap is

in categorizing Finnish, Finland, and Finnish universities as one, and comparing them to the rest of the world, and to any international student or immigrant regardless of their country of origin, religion, gender, life history, social class, and how they are located in Finland.

Part of the contact zone is recognizing that educating ethical intercultural teachers does not necessarily mean anti-racist practices or balancing out, for example, racial or other types of hierarchy. Ahmed (2006, p. 110) argues that: “a university that commits to antiracism might also be one that does not recognize racism as an ongoing reality” (ibid, p. 110). Since the categories of ethnicity, language and religion are strong in the discourses of interculturality, we need a methodology to discuss the hierarchies within these intersections as well as the narratives and counter narratives within the language of interculturality (Leonardo, 2009; Collins, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). This also means that in teacher education the Finnish language should not only be discussed as a *language deficit* of immigrants without recognition of existing *language hierarchies*. Also, who is an immigrant, and how immigrant students are constructed in education needs to be made visible and shown that these representations are based on personal choices. Reporting lower success for immigrant students based on a Finnish language deficit is important when persuading the policy makers about the importance of teaching Finnish or Swedish as a second language. However, I am not sure if any more negative media representation is needed on the issue of immigrants in Finland, and if promoting majority language is a good practice of justice. Moreover, studies of Afro-Caribbean boys in the UK (Phoenix, 2009) show that the type of knowledge expected varies in different education systems, affecting the performance of those students with, for example, recent immigrant background. Finally, postcolonial theorists have used the term *epistemic violence* to critique the notion of the superiority of the specific type of knowledge tied to the certain national context. An example of this would be the self-congratulation with which Finnish authorities greeted the high PISA scores of native Finnish speaking students, particularly in mathematics instead of critical review on the methods and context of teaching.

However, education repeats certain traditions, which are often located in the learning environment, learning materials and schoolbooks. Recognizing contact zones support in *reshaping these traditions*. Contact zones are about intersectional lenses for examining learning materials, the environment, pointing out objects that contribute to othering, problematizing the racialization of visible minorities and reduction of Finnishness to whiteness. Since teacher education and internationalization “projects” are still mainly governed by the ideology of whiteness, some new entries are needed first to tackle the issue of whose voices are or are not heard in education and learning materials (Ahmed, 2006; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Phoenix, 2009). Leonardo (2009) claims that white people often maintain white dominance, and this is also visible in my studies, in differ-

ent levels of education, but also in learning materials. There is a strong “majoritarian voice in how immigrants are presented, they are often the ones with different type of name, color or language, which may make it hard for any other than white people with a Finnish name to take ownership in Finnishness. In policy terms diversity has come to mean inclusion of people who look different” (Puwar, 2004, 1). Yet, the positive result is that some student teachers critically reflected and reacted to the injustices they saw in the field during their teaching practice, and this should be an ongoing process in teacher education.

Many of the dimensions mentioned before are (re)constructing quite narrow sense of *Finnishness*. Role of contact zones is to unpack dominance of whiteness as Leonardo (2009) describes it. The location of intercultural education should be related to critical race theory (and critiques of binary opposites) as postcolonial trajectories, which teach about race. My study in the teacher education context shows that some student teachers are more aware of injustices than others. I am not sure what is the best method to help student teachers to recognize the forms that justice and injustice can take. What has mentioned already before in section 3.2. is that Collins (2009) makes a division between knowledge and wisdom, which I find useful for intercultural education and the type of “knowledge” that becomes important. Currently, teachers gain “cultural” knowledge of the other, but they need more support in understanding their own position in society and in educational contexts. This is also what the study on the student teachers’ portfolios shows. Ethical intercultural teaching to me is to recognize unjust structures and to connect with those who are affected by them. Moreover, in kindergarten teacher education one conflict also seems to be the way student teachers actually witnessed injustices quite often in their teaching practices, instead of experiencing learning from good practices, one of them being when the kindergarten teacher had demonstrated the big lips of a Sudanese child (Layne & Lipponen, 2014, p.12). One important theme for future research is some kind of action research on teacher education to prepare student teachers to react to what they see and experience in the field.

Lastly, the last article presents a good contact zone practice, namely the example of an inclusive classroom and its writing project. In that school the educational space was set out so that the inclusive class had two classrooms at their disposal and two teachers: a classroom teacher and a special needs teacher. The special needs teacher also acts as an activist in peace education outside the school context, and also in her school. In Finnish schools we have a long tradition of taking children to church for Christmas, and those children who do not belong to the Evangelical Lutheran church have other activities. These types of activities divide children to different categories according to members of majority religion and members of minority religion. The year that Nelson Mandela died the special needs teacher organized a Nelson Mandela memorial event in school, which replaced the church and gave an opportunity to all the children to take

part in the project together. The children in the inclusive classroom, whatever their family background, wrote “internationally located” stories of Sofia Tammi’s good life. Stories of Sofia’s life did not have any special characteristics that could be related to “immigrants” but she was located in different parts of the world, and at least in one story Sofia’s parents lived in different countries. The main distinctions between the stories were the level of writing, the amount of description, and the material possessions referred to. Moreover, this type of story telling method allowed the diverse voices to be heard irrespective of the language skills. However, the dominance of white society was still present in the stories. Most of the stories written by children whose parents had immigrated to Finland, the pictures used represented white people, except a story by a (white) Finnish child who wrote about Sofia Tammi living in Uganda, and Sofia was pictured as black.

Pratt’s contact zone theory, to some extent, requires more practical research, and the idea of contact zones need to be tested and researched in action. Critical race theory methodology would be important here. Studies on good practices are needed but need to be applied critically so that they do not become empty signifiers (Phillips, 2007). As we see in the picture of contact zones (see picture 2) the opportunities for conflict within contact zones are many (Pratt, 1991). Justice (or injustice) is not a stable or permanent state. Also, the situations in schools change and the type of classroom described in this study no longer exists in that school. Reflecting on Ahmed’s (2006) critique of supposedly good practices is therefore relevant from this perspective. Furthermore, this PhD touches upon the issue of the meaning of inclusive pedagogy in practice. This type of inclusion classroom breaks the hierarchies between immigrants, special needs children, and so-called “normal” children.

Du Bois has stated that racial discrimination continues to be a “problem” unless the different races and religions are not integrated into a democratic whole (Du Bois, 1978, p. 281). This study in its different locations of education aimed to point out some critical issues that are taking place in current intercultural education. The contact zones can offer one way of recognizing different dimensions that are taking place where some kind of discrimination takes place. In the Nordic context democracy, equality, justice and intercultural education may still be taken for granted and uncritiqued unless the conflicts in contact zones are taken into consideration.



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