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TEACHERS AS CIVIC ACTORS: NARRATIVES ON CIVIC ACTIVITY
EXPERIENCES

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Abstract			
<p>This thesis researches teachers as civic actors. The thesis begins with defining civic activity with the help of related terms. Next civic education is discussed first from a historical perspective and then in today's context. The roles of socialization and schools in civic education will be contemplated in order to situate the teacher as a civic actor to a surrounding context. Teachers as civic actors are then studied from the critical pedagogy point of view and lastly from a practical perspective. In the end of the theoretical part civic activity's role in teacher education is discussed and two examples of previous studies on teachers as civic actors are presented.</p> <p>The aim of the research is to study the characteristics of teachers as civic actors both from the theoretical point of view and through empirical research. The methodological choice is analysis of narratives and as data there are narratives written by teachers who have been active during their studies. It can be concluded that teachers who are civic actors promote civic activity through being a role model to their students and other people around them. These teachers are, as Giroux would define, transformative intellectuals, who are critical thinkers and active agents of change. They believe in themselves, want to influence decision-making and voice their opinions in wide societal debate.</p> <p>Teachers as civic actors emphasize action through their example, and encourage their students to participate as well. In practice they accomplish this by creating opportunities for being active by introducing or generating arenas for influencing. Open discussion is another important tool; these teachers inspire their students to think critically and use their voice by hosting debates and using real life references that the students can relate to.</p> <p>Both the theoretical and the empirical part demonstrate that civic activity is important for the growth of teachers as civic actors. The civic activity experiences of the participants have transformed them as people, but also as teachers and organizational experts. They narrate that they undeniably are better teachers today because of being active and argue that the skills they acquired through organizational activities are in use every day as teachers as well.</p> <p>Today civic activity still has only a tiny role in teacher education even though it should prepare teachers that will raise children and youth to become future-oriented active citizens. Based on the theory and the findings of the research it can be concluded that teacher education should have a bigger effect on the future teachers in regards to being active. Teacher education should provide for the needs of future generations by ensuring that future teachers are well equipped civic actors. Teacher students need to be introduced to various arenas of influencing in and outside the faculty by their teacher educators. More importantly, they need to be encouraged to participate in action, think critically, and have belief in their ability to influence. Today's active teacher students are tomorrow's teachers as civic actors.</p>			
Keywords Civic activity, civic education, civic actor, analysis of narratives			



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Tiivistelmä <p>Tämän tutkielman aiheena ovat opettajat kansalaistoimijoina. Tutkimus alkaa kansalaisvaikuttamisen määrittelemisellä lähikäsitteiden avulla. Seuraavaksi tarkastellaan kasvatusta aktiiviseen kansalaisuuteen ensin historiallisesta ja sen jälkeen nykypäivän näkökulmasta. Sosiaalistamisen ja koulujen roolia aktiiviseen kansalaisuuteen kasvattamisessa pohditaan, jotta saadaan käsitys siitä asiayhteydestä, missä opettaja kansalaistoimijana toimii. Sen jälkeen aiheeseen otetaan kriittisen pedagogiikan ja käytännön näkökulmat. Teoreettisen osan lopussa tarkastellaan kansalaisvaikuttamisen roolia opettajankoulutuksessa ja esitellään kaksi esimerkkiä aikaisemmista tutkimuksista.</p> <p>Tutkielman tavoitteena on tarkastella sekä teorian että empirian avulla, mitä ominaisuuksia on opettajilla, jotka ovat kansalaisvaikuttajia. Tutkimusmenetelmänä on narratiivinen analyysi ja aineistona sellaisten opettajien narratiiveja, jotka ovat olleet aktiivisia kansalaisvaikuttajia opintojensa aikana. Yhteenvetona voi sanoa, että opettajat, jotka ovat kansalaisvaikuttajia, innostavat esimerkkinsä kautta oppilaitaan ja muita ihmisiä ympärillään kansalaisvaikuttamiseen. Nämä opettajat ovat, kuten Giroux kuvaa, transformatiivisia intellektuelleja, jotka ajattelevat kriittisesti ja ovat aktiivisia muutoksen edustajia.</p> <p>Opettajat, jotka ovat kansalaisvaikuttajia korostavat käytännön toiminnan merkitystä ja kannustavat oppilaitaan osallistumaan. Käytännössä he luovat mahdollisuuksia aktiivisuudelle esittelemällä ja järjestämällä erilaisia vaikuttamisen kanavia. Avoin keskustelu on myös tärkeä työkalu; nämä opettajat inspiroivat oppilaitaan järjestämiensä väittelyiden avulla ajattelemaan kriittisesti ja ilmaisemaan mielipiteitään.</p> <p>Sekä teoreettinen, että empiirinen osa tutkielmaa osoittavat, että kansalaisvaikuttaminen on tärkeä osa kasvussa aktiivisuutta kannustavaksi opettajaksi. Osallistujien kansalaisvaikuttamiskokemukset ovat muokanneet heitä ihmisinä, mutta myös opettajina ja järjestötoimijoina. He kertovat olevansa epäilemättä parempia opettajia nyt aktiivisuutensa takia. He perustelevat, että ne taidot mitä he oppivat kansalaisvaikuttamisen kautta ovat olleet hyödyksi opettajan ammatissa.</p> <p>Nykyään kansalaisvaikuttamiselle on vain pieni rooli opettajankoulutuksessa, vaikka sen kuuluisi kouluttaa opettajia, jotka kasvattavat tulevaisuuden aktiivisia kansalaisia. Teorian ja tutkielman tulosten perusteella voi todeta, että opettajankoulutuksella pitäisi olla suurempi osa tulevaisuuden kansalaisvaikuttajien valmentamisessa. Opettajankoulutuksen tulisi esitellä erilaisia vaikuttamisen mahdollisuuksia ja kanavia opiskelijoille tiedekunnan sisällä ja sen ulkopuolella. Tärkeintä olisi, että opettajaopiskelijoita kannustetaan osallistumiseen ja kriittiseen ajatteluun ja saadaan heidät uskomaan, että he pystyvät vaikuttamaan. Tämän hetken aktiiviset opettajaopiskelijat ovat tulevaisuuden kansalaisvaikuttajia.</p>			
Asiasanat	Kansalaistoiminta, osallistuminen, kansalaiskasvatus, narratiivien analyysi		

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1. INTRODUCTION

The school's methods and culture of learning must support the pupils' development as independent, initiative-taking, goal-conscious, cooperative, engaged citizens, and help the pupils form a realistic picture of their own possibilities for influence.

This quote is from the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education of Finland (2004, 38). It defines the meaning and importance of one of the cross-curricular themes: Participatory Citizenship and entrepreneurship. The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education is a legally binding document. Next to the constitution it is the most important document that guides the actions of teachers in Finland. In other words, teachers are expected to have the expertise to carry out everything stated in the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education. How can a teacher fulfill the demands of this theme? What kind of skills and attributes does the teacher need in order to fulfill the demand? How can the teacher acquire the characteristics needed? These are the questions that should be considered if the theme is expected to not only appear in the official document but also be implemented in schools.

This thesis consists of a theoretical part and an empirical part. There are three main areas of interest in the theoretical part. The first two, "Approaching civic activity" and "Civic education" shed light on the central phenomena of the thesis and provide background information for the third part, "Teachers as civic actors", which is the main bulk of the theory.

Today civic activity still has only a tiny role in teacher education even though it should prepare teachers that will raise children and youth to become future-oriented active citizens. Various studies as well as a project called Promoting Citizenship and Civic Activity in Teacher Education show that teacher education does not sufficiently cater for the needs of teachers to become active. In this thesis it is argued that one way to learn is to participate in action yourself; this means that teacher education programs should not just provide possibilities to influence but also encourage participation. Some students decide to take action in their own hands and learn civic activity by for instance taking part in

organizational activities during their studies. This is where my personal interest towards this topic comes from: I have participated and been active a lot especially during teacher education. The empirical part of this thesis studies the narration of civic activity experiences by teacher students, who have taken part in organizational activities.

The research questions of this thesis are:

1. What is civic activity and civic education?
2. What are the characteristics of teachers as civic actors?
3. What do teachers tell about themselves as civic actors?

The context in the empirical part of the thesis is Finland. The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (2004) of Finland is used in some of the parts and Finnish researchers are referred to throughout the thesis, especially in the part, “Assessing and developing civic activity in teacher education in the Finnish context: Promoting Citizenship and Civic Activity in Teacher Education-project”.

In addition to Finnish researchers, various other are referred to as well throughout the thesis though the majority of them and their examples are in the United States context. Since civic education is discussed in the theory part the U.S. context is both understandable and mandatory; the U.S. has a very strong history of promoting citizenship: “For more than 250 years, Americans have shared a vision of a democracy in which all citizens understand, appreciate, and engage actively in civic and political life - taking responsibility for building communities, contributing their diverse talents and energies to solve local and national problems, deliberating about public issues, influencing public policy, voting, and pursuing the common good. Americans know that it is a rare and precious gift to live in a society that permits and values such participation.” (The Civic Mission of Schools, 2003, 8)

Citizenship education has historically very deep roots in the school systems of The United States. One of the newer acts to promote it is the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (U.S. Department of Education, 2001) which demands that schools aim to “develop responsibility and civic competence” (Martin, 2010, 56). Martin (2010, 56) describes civic competence as “the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world”. This kind

of a definition is already quite complex and thorough, but what it lacks is the active approach to influencing. Just making good decisions is not enough if one does not come forward with them actively.

One important document that is referenced in multiple parts of the thesis is *The Civic Mission of Schools* (2003). The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) and Carnegie Corporation of New York, in consultation with the Corporation for National and Community Service, arranged meetings with the U.S.'s most accredited scholars and practitioners from fields like education, developmental psychology, political science and history to name a few. The aim of these meetings was to tackle the issue of civic education and how it could be improved especially in the schools to "...better preserve and enhance America's tradition of citizen involvement." (*The Civic Mission of Schools*, 2003, 8-9). The project's result is a report called *The Civic Mission of Schools* which states that "...the overall goal of civic education should be to help young people acquire and learn to use the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will prepare them to be competent and responsible citizens throughout their lives." (*The Civic Mission of Schools*, 2003, 10)

2. APPROACHING CIVIC ACTIVITY

Civic activity can be understood and defined in countless ways depending on for instance the research orientation and geographical location of the writer. There are various other terms related to civic activity that are either partly or entirely overlapping in their contents. In this part of the thesis a few of these related terms, mainly citizenship and its variations, are used to approach civic activity and thus better understand what it stands for.

Citizenship as a broad term and, for example, active citizenship are very popular terms in research all over the world. When learning about versatile notions of citizenship, one inevitably comes across civic activity as well. In international research the term citizenship is used the most, which is why this thesis uses it to define civic activity.

Active citizenship is quite close to civic activity and is at times used almost as a synonym even though differences do exist. Active citizenship underlines rights and responsibilities that a citizen has in his or her society and is all in all usually linked to a country or a nation-state. Both of them accent activeness, but civic activity is more neutral in terms of linkage to state. The term global citizenship is used when the emphasis is on being a responsible citizen of the world instead of the nation-state.

There are countless versions and definitions of citizenship that either are quite similar to one another or even total opposites. Westheimer and Kahne (2004, 240) have categorized citizenship into three groups: justice-oriented, participatory and the personally responsible citizen.

Justice-oriented	Participatory	Personally responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically assesses social, political, and economic structures beyond surface causes. • Seeks out and addresses areas of injustice. • Knows about democratic social movements and how to effect systemic change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizes community efforts to care for those in need. • Is an active member of community organizations. • Knows strategies for accomplishing collective tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts responsibly in the community. • Works and pays taxes. • Obeys laws. • Recycles. • Volunteers.

(Ponder & Lewis-Ferrell, 2009, 130)

Westheimer and Kahne (2004, 240) summarize that the personally responsible citizen thinks that problems are solved through sporting a good, proper behavior, the participatory one seeks actively to participate, even through a leading position to create change, and the justice-oriented citizen questions and critiques systems in order to make a difference. Westheimer and Kahne (2004, 240) portray a useful example: the first one donates food to a food drive, the second takes part in organizing the drive and the third investigates why there is hunger and what has caused it.

The responsibilities of a citizen are emphasized by some like Galston (2003, 30), who states that people cannot just expect that the society will automatically maintain its current state; it has to be kept up and remade continuously. This is why Galston (2003, 30) draws attention to a certain common liability to uphold the systems of the society together.

An active citizen does more than just votes, even though Lawy and Biesta (2006, 37) remark that it has been the common understanding, because it is easy to measure. Voting is considered a quality of a good citizen, but Biesta (2009) raises the question of what kind of a citizen all in all is the desired one by society. Biesta (2009) claims that when speaking of being responsible and good, people tend to mean obedient and not politically active. According to Biesta (2009) political actions and criticality should be encouraged as well; not only taking part in one's community through for example voting.

Citizenship is not a result in the end of a path of learning, but a by-product of participating in real life practices around them (Lawy & Biesta, 2006, 45). Lawy and Biesta (2006, 37) separate two different forms of citizenship: citizenship-as-achievement and citizenship-as-practice. The first one is the historical and rather old-fashioned take on citizenship that emphasizes one's obligations towards the society and is all in all quite narrow a description. It is simply a status one can acquire when following the right instructions. Lawy and Biesta (2006, 37) argue that the second term is much broader and all-inclusive; citizenship-as-practice is more like a lifelong learning experience and evolution of one's own citizenship through doing rather than studying. According to Lawy and Biesta (2006, 43) citizenship-as-practice is always in a state of change and reflection, but is also inevitably connected to the shifting state of society.

Banks (2008, 136) introduces four levels of citizenship. On the first level is a legal citizen, who is a member of a nation but does not participate in any way. The second level citizen

is almost like the legal one but participates in voting. The third one is the active citizen, who takes part and voices his opinions, but does not contest the mainstream vision. The last one is the transformative citizen, who does challenge the prevailing systems and advocates social justice by taking action. This is Banks's view; others might see active citizenship already as the level where critical thinking and questioning exist.

The Civic Mission of Schools (2003, 4), a U.S. report that defines good civic education describes an ideal citizen as being "competent and responsible". This kind of a citizen is both respectful of the past and "American democracy", but also aware, critical and willing to engage in discussions with people that challenge one's own views. The Civic Mission of Schools (2003, 4) urges to action; one should be active in versatile organizations, perform political acts such as voting and even protesting and petitioning. The competent and responsible citizen is "informed and thoughtful", virtuous and responsible with a belief in his or her abilities to influence change (The Civic Mission of Schools, 2003, 10).

The U.S. is famous for its multicultural values and even though this description of a citizen organizational work further discusses "...cultural, social, political, and religious interests and beliefs" (The Civic Mission of Schools, 2003, 4), it does not raise the notion of global citizenship or even global shared values. The sense of nationalism has been and still is strong in the U.S., which is also visible in this report.

Reimers (2006, 275, 285-286) argues that globalization has made the historical definition of citizenship according to national borders and patriotism invalid and created a demand for global citizenship. Global citizens have the awareness and willingness to interact cooperatively regardless of their various differences (Reimers, 2006, 275). Reimers (2006, 275) describes global citizenship as calling for "global values, including...universal rights and tolerance...to prevent the civilizational conflict..." Instead of global citizenship Osler uses the term cosmopolitan citizenship (2011, 3). It emphasizes global solidarity and embracing differences on a global scale, but also reminds that national identity varies a lot even between the people that share the same nation-borders. Osler (2011, 3) wants to make it clear that cosmopolitan citizenship does not exclude national identity, but rather expands it to a more critical one.

In Finnish research the most common terms used in this context are “kansalaisvaikuttaminen” and “kansalaisaktiivisuus”. The first one translates into civic influencing and the second one to civic activity or active citizenship. The Finnish researchers that are referred to in this thesis use the term civic activity in their articles in English. This is the reason why civic activity is used the most in this thesis even though citizenship is a more common term in international literature. Another reason for this preference is the fact that civic activity is a more neutral term; citizenship underlines the importance of nation-state unless it is expanded to global or cosmopolitan citizenship.

The Finnish research that this thesis refers to defines civic activity somewhere between Westheimer and Kahne’s (2004, 240) terms participatory and justice-oriented citizenship. Participation is emphasized a lot and even though critical thinking is seen as important it is not accentuated as much as influencing in general. Borg (2004, 8) defines civic activity as involvement in action that aims to influence decision-making on a societal level. Borg (2004, 7) elaborates that a citizen can either influence alone or as a member of a societal group. The citizen can be categorized into different groups based on for instance his or her gender, age, education, profession, family background, interests, place of residence or ideology.

As can be seen from above, there are several terms and perceptions linked to civic activity. In conclusion, it is safe to say that civic activity is voluntary participation in matters that one finds important. It can be taking part in or influencing decision-making, voicing one's opinions, taking initiative or almost anything that has to do with being active and aware about ongoing and current issues. Another way to describe it could be that one is willing and eager to do something that benefits the community, society or the world. The scale of activeness can range from influencing one's close proximity, for example neighborhood issues, to influencing global arenas.

3. CIVIC EDUCATION

In this chapter of the thesis civic education is studied as a concept. To begin, a brief historical perspective introduces the subject before civic education is discussed in today's context which is followed by a section on education for global or cosmopolitan citizenship. Lastly both the role of socialization and schools in civic education are contemplated.

3.1. Historical perspectives to civic education in Finland

Hansen (2007, 39) states that teachers have been seen as some sort of civil influencers through time. Hansen (2007, 39) explains that in Finland they have been called humorously "the light of the people" (*kansankynttilä*) meaning that teachers are the role models of civilized citizens for others around them.

It has been argued, for example by Kemppinen (2006, 43), that the history of civic activity in the Finnish school system started in the era of *Volkschule* (*kansakoulu*), which was a school reform in the 1850's to 1970's. During that time there was a school subject called civic education, which aimed at creating a peaceful society. Kemppinen (2006, 43) describes that it was also designed to integrate the youth to the "bourgeois dispensation".

Before the 1940s the emphasis of the subject was on law-obedience, austerity and the duties of a citizen (Kemppinen, 2006, 43). Kemppinen explains (2006, 43) that consensus was the only thing valued, so it was not for example allowed to debate about politics at all at that time. This strict rule was seen as appropriate, because some argued that the unanimity during both Finnish wars was due to this kind of citizenship education. A similar political climate existed outside Finland as well. Lawy and Biesta (2006, 37-38) explain that in the UK, somewhat passive citizens were preferred in the 1950s and 1960s; national mindset, obedience to the law and voting were required, but other than that they were allowed and had to stay under the radar. Lawy and Biesta (2006, 39) add that citizenship education has mostly been about factual civics knowledge and instructions on being a "good citizen" instead of encouraging criticality.

According to Kemppinen (2006, 43) the need for consensus started to evaporate in the 1970s; a newer model of the subject was constructed in unison by humanists, social scientists and educationalists. They came up with courses that combine their fields and bring up important matters of the society from different points of view. Kemppinen (2006, 44) explains that in practice this resulted in two courses in teacher training; one on the skills of a citizen and another on the structure and functions of a society. This type of training was carried out in the late 1970s until the late 1980s when it started gradually to die out. Kemppinen (2006, 45) proposes that this was a long-term result of the new school reform that was carried out in the 1970s.

In the 1990s some of the statements for new teacher education already left democracy and other civic activity topics completely out of the curriculum (Kemppinen, 2006, 46). During that time it was believed that the teacher needed to adjust to societal change instead of influence it.

In the 2000s and today the amount or emphasis on civic activity differs a lot between teacher education universities. Kemppinen (2006, 46) argues that despite a couple of exceptions, teacher education is still producing teachers with “engineer skills in education”. It means that the teachers are equipped with practical knowledge, but not a lot of emphasis is put on supporting their personal growth as teachers. Raivola (1993, 21) thinks that teacher education should ask: “What can you become?” instead of: “What can you do?” Raivola concludes (1993, 27) that teachers have to start finding their own voice in order to help the students do the same. Kemppinen (2006, 49) states that even though teachers are allowed to speak up and use their voice nowadays they should most preferably only address topics that do not go against the common sentiment.

The Teacher Student Union of Finland (2012) agrees with Kemppinen; they wrote a declaration called “Vaikuttaminen lähtee läheltä” (Influencing starts from nearby). In the declaration they state that current teacher education does not prepare future teachers with enough tools to support the next generation’s active citizenship. They note, concurring with Kemppinen, that the existing civic activity contents are too different nationally and should be made consistent all around. They also demand that active citizenship should be a pervasive theme in teacher education; this way it would truly inspire teacher students to be active. Teacher education has to provide opportunities for student activism, because one

can only learn civic activity by doing, they conclude. Teacher education will be further discussed in its separate part under “Teachers as civic actors”.

3.2. Civic education today

Civic education, whenever and however undertaken, prepares people of a country, especially the young, to carry out their roles as citizens.

This is how the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Crittenden, 2011) defines civic education. In this section of the thesis different perceptions of civic education are presented; some that agree with the definition above and some that see it as insufficient.

To begin, in this chapter civic education is looked at from the perspective of other related terms such as citizenship education, civics and social studies. Citizenship education is either used as a synonym for civic education or at least overlapping to a great extent, this is why it is also used in this part of the thesis. On a further note civic education should not be mixed up with civics or social studies. Civic education is naturally a major part of them both but it does not or should not be limited to subject boundaries. Parker (1989, 353) argues that civics and social studies are most commonly taught by subject teachers, but civic education means the communal educational responsibility of the whole school.

Several researchers claim that civic education should exist either as a cross-curricular theme or an underlying value basis. Virta (2006, 96) argues that civic activity education in schools should not have subject matter boundaries; the whole school can model democracy and show an example of taking part and the possibilities of activeness. Patrick (2003, 15) supports this notion: he argues that civic activity and civic education should not just be limited to its assigned slots in the curriculum but should indeed exist as a pervasive theme. This way the students will constructively build their understanding of citizenship from various perspectives.

In the Finnish context there is a cross-curricular theme called Participatory Citizenship and Entrepreneurship in the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (2004) as mentioned in the introduction. The theme stresses participation and the fact that everyone has a responsibility to be active in society and the common decision-making on shared concerns (2004, 38). The students need to learn about the structure and functions of the society and democracy on many levels; from their close community to the global perspective. They need to be introduced to different ways and arenas to participate and be helped to find innovative ways to think and act (2004, 38). Participation is not enough though; the ideal would be that the students would also learn how to create change by their actions and actually want to do so as well (2004, 39). The theme encourages critical thinking and forming of one's own opinions. Students need to be able to handle disputes and being uncertain; this is mandatory for challenging their opinions and reconstructing them (2004, 38). Banks (2001, 14) acknowledges that ongoing reconstruction of values is demanding and poses an important ethical problem in civic education: "...how to achieve the delicate balance of showing respect for my students while at the same time encouraging them to seriously challenge their deeply held beliefs, attitudes, values, and knowledge claims."

In the U.S. context The Civic Mission of Schools (2003, 10) states that civic education "...should help young people acquire and learn to use the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will prepare them to be competent and responsible citizens throughout their lives." Milligan, Moretti and Oreopoulos (2003, 1667-1668) agree that education should link to being more active in regard to political behavior. Milligan et al. (2003, 1668) clarify that, at best, education can give skills to navigate through politics, help to understand the issues at hand and to evaluate decision-makers.

If the contents of The Civic Mission of Schools (2003, 10) are compared with the Finnish cross-curricular theme a couple of similarities arise. They both mention educating on democracy and societal structures; in the U.S. much more emphasis is put on knowledge of their government and law, while the Finnish cross-curricular theme accentuates both local and global contexts. Conversations and forming opinions are on view in both; students are encouraged to think critically and bravely discuss about even controversial issues. Another similarity between them is participation which is widely encouraged in both. The American document specifies that students should be encouraged to join clubs and other

groups but also school governance. What is distinct in the American document is that it proposes that the students would participate in “simulations of democratic procedures” (2003, 6) and community service. (The Civic Mission of Schools, 2003, 6; the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education, 2004, 38)

Patrick (2003, 19) thinks that the main goal for civic education is “...to develop each person’s capacity to make informed and reasonable decisions about public policy and constitutional issues.” Patrick argues that if this goal is not met it can have devastating results on the national level. Reimers (2006, 288) agrees; he remarks that civic education should not just be about factual knowledge, but also about how that knowledge links to one’s actions and responsibility to the society. The question remains that should the desired actions and responsibility just perpetuate the current societal structures? Biesta (2009) argues that civic education should not produce “obedient citizens” but active political agents that both promote and challenge the existing structures of the society.

Citizenship-as-practice is a term theorized by Lawy and Biesta (2006, 37); it was first introduced in the Approaching civic activity part of this thesis. Lawy and Biesta (2006, 43) determine civic education from the same perspective by arguing that its role is not to prepare citizens in the hopes of creating an end result, “good citizen”, because everyone already is a citizen. Lawy and Biesta (2006, 44) promote a lifelong process of developing one’s citizenship, which should be seen in education as a continuous discussion on society that keeps on challenging both the views of the students’- and the teachers’-. Lawy and Biesta (2006, 44-45) conclude that in addition to debating, citizenship should be molded through practical experience, such as participation in organizations in and outside schools.

3.3. Education for global or cosmopolitan citizenship

According to Osler (2011, 2) historically the main purpose of civic or citizenship education has been nation-building. At present this still exists as a view on citizenship opposed to “global solidarity” (Osler, 2011, 2). Reimers (2006, 285-286) notes as well that some people think that civic education should be about reinforcing the national feeling and even patriotism. Osler’s (2011, 19) study confirms the notion that most of the civic education is

focusing on the local level and near proximity influencing. This of course is a natural starting point and an important one for that matter, but it should not be left there. It is important when educating future generations to move towards cosmopolitan or global citizenship, because of the inevitability of globalization. Like Osler (2011, 2) argues, cosmopolitan citizenship "...is a status, a feeling and a practice at all levels, from the local to the global".

As it is not enough in multicultural or global education to introduce foreign celebrations and national foods, it is not enough in civic education to remind students to recycle, vote and give blood. Reimers (2006, 286) explains that this is a very limited definition of citizenship and stays on the level of advocating the existing power structures. Reimers (2006, 285-286) defends a more cosmopolitan view on civic education that does not concentrate on national borders, but considers global values and the rights of everyone in the world.

Globalization and the internationalization of rights through the Universal Declaration of Human rights (1948) blur the meaning of nation-borders and raise a need for a new, more global version of civic education. Banks (2008, 135) calls this transformative citizenship education. It portrays the cultural, national, regional and global levels of citizenship in a way that explains also the relations between them. According to Banks (2008, 135), transformative citizenship includes critical citizenship and cosmopolitan values as well. Banks (2001, 8; 2008, 129) argues that in practice civic education of this kind improves equality and helps students to develop their identity as a citizen to a more global direction. In conclusion, Banks (2001, 8) remarks that civic education has to assist students in developing "...a deep understanding of the need to take action as citizens of the global community to help solve the world's difficult global problems."

3.4. The role of socialization in civic education

Unfortunately it is easy to dodge the problem of "young people not participating" by blaming them of being passive instead of going deeper into the reasons of why this is and

what could be done. As Lawy and Biesta (2006, 38) also point out, this kind of a mindset frees the state from taking responsibility for the situation. It is an inevitable fact that in the growth towards civic activity and active citizenship, society does play a big role. In this part of the thesis the effect of society will be contemplated before the next part narrows the focus from this wider context to schools and their possible effect.

Colby and Damon (1995, 342) studied the development of moral commitment and note that the surrounding society, culture and people affect the individual; a kind of a “transformation of goals” can happen through their influence. The individuals’ own beliefs mixed with social influence can lead to caring about shared interests such as “the common good”, helping others or improving the conditions of their community and the society (Colby and Damon, 1995, 343).

In a study conducted by Zaff, Malanchuk and Eccles (2008, 40, 48) the results support the allegation that “...a civic context comprised of parents, peers, and the culture and society in which youth develop, influence subsequent civic behaviors.” They continue that this civic context has to be consistent; it needs to be present during the most important times of identity development: middle childhood or early adolescence, later adolescence and early adulthood.

Zaff et al. (2008, 38) support the vision that citizenship is a process and connect the development of one’s identity to it. Zaff et al. particularly emphasize the importance of the beginning of the process and stress that civic learning should start young. The process moves little by little from easier civic content to more complex by building up skills and identity constructively. Zaff et al. (2008, 38-39) continue that being introduced to a vast civic context is not only crucial for young people’s personal identity construction but also to the society. The old phrase “a chain is only as strong as its weakest link” applies here in reverse; if the young generations are committed and active, the society will thrive.

Zaff et al. (2008, 39) state that the youth in the U.S. are active when talking about different clubs related to studies, arts or sports. The problem lies within activeness towards civic issues. If we do get students engaged in civic activity at their young age they are more like-

ly to continue down that path throughout their adult lives as well. Zaff et al. (2008, 48, 51) conclude that activeness during one's youth promises further civic engagement in adulthood.

According to Macedo (2004, 12) the first and the most influential socializers in society are families, but then comes mass media. Macedo (2004, 12) argues that the effects of media are so profound that schools cannot survive by themselves in transforming "... apathetic, self-absorbed consumers into active and engaged citizens." Even though Macedo (2004, 12) paints this daunting picture he continues that schools can of course contribute their share to the cause, which is similar to Parker's (1989, 353) notion that even though schools cannot alone fulfill the task, they certainly can help. According to Macedo (2004, 15), what could be done in practice is to educate students on the structures and processes of the society and to encourage them to participate in civic activities. Macedo (2004, 15) thinks that civic education in schools is not up to par yet, but it is slowly improving; even the poorer demonstrations of it seem to still make a positive impact on making students more active in the civic context.

Criticism towards civic education in the US stems from the fact that it is, as the whole school, paid for by the government. Critics argue according to Macedo (2004, 10-12) that civic education cannot stay unbiased and free because of the government's preference to certain values above others. Critics continue that schools should not even teach civic education but leave it for the other aspects of society. However Macedo (2004, 14) does not agree with the critics: "It is quixotic and misguided to think we should, or even can, get civic education out of the schools. Civic education is not only legitimate; it is inescapable. All education, properly undertaken, has a civic element."

3.5. The role of schools in civic education

It appears that when students witnessed concern for the community and current events in their home, school, or neighborhood, they were more likely to be committed to civic participation. (Kahne & Sporte, 2008, 756)

As discussed above society does have a substantial effect on one's personal growth as an active citizen. As a part of the society schools at least should play a big role in this development process. In this section the importance of schools as civic activity promoters is considered.

Reimers (2006, 276) remarks that schools are a public system, that can be monitored and mobilized in smaller or even nation-wide campaigns. Families and other more private levels of civic activity education can influence a part but not all of the masses. The Civic Mission of Schools (2003, 5) states alike that schools are significant for civic education, because they can at least in theory reach every single school-aged person.

Parker (1989, 353) argues that civic education is the most important mission of schools. If this is not noted the worst case scenario in Parker's (1989, 353) opinion includes either total dispense of civic education or one that limits itself to teaching facts on government and singing the national anthem. According to Parker (1989, 353), in the best case scenario school prepares students with historical and political knowledge, emphasizes its communal status and offers various opportunities for taking part in action or discussions on current and past issues.

Kahne and Sporte (2008, 754) argue that school environment is in a substantial role when it comes to engaging students to be civically active. School can also "...help lessen the participatory inequality that exists in our civic and political life." (Kahne & Sporte, 2008, 755). This means that even if one's parents and neighborhood do not encourage activeness school still can.

According to Galston (2001, 218), one does not have to be an expert in politics in order to take part in discussion and be an active citizen, but there is a set of certain basic skills that are required and school is the answer. Galston (2001, 223) compares this to sports; one has to know the rules before one can understand and evaluate what happens. Knowledge creates security as well; it is easier to oppose new proposals when one does not know a lot about the issue. According to Galston (2001, 224) people tend to even get scared about things they do not know enough about. If people have enough knowledge it is more likely that they take part in voicing their opinions and participating (Galston, 2001, 224).

The Civic Mission of Schools (2003, 5) argues that schools provide knowledge and also are a great place for the youth to practice interaction, debating and co-operation which are tools in the process of their citizenship now and in the future. As Aittola and Suoranta (2001, 22) concur, school is at the same time a place where students should learn the basic skills and attitudes to survive and thrive in society, but also an important venue for challenging these same things by debating and creating new ideas together for tomorrow.

4. TEACHERS AS CIVIC ACTORS

As a teacher you have a chance to make a difference. You are, and always will be, one of the most important influences in the lives of the children you teach. That's why teaching is so important, and so challenging. Do a good job and you've had a positive influence on the next generation.

This quote is from The International Primary Curriculum that is U.K. based but in use around the world, especially in international schools. It holds both a great possibility and responsibility for teachers; the question remains how teachers are going to act on it. In this part of the thesis the profession of teaching is looked at from a civic activity and active citizenship perspective; are teachers or should they be civic actors in their classrooms, schools and on the societal scale? To begin, teachers as civic actors are contemplated from the critical pedagogy point of view. Then the topic is studied from a practical perspective and lastly civic activity's role in teacher education is discussed.

Martin (2010, 58) describes "educating knowledgeable, thoughtful, committed and participatory citizens" as a responsibility of teachers. Aittola and Suoranta (2001, 15) state that being a teacher is not just a task or a duty, but a calling to educate the future generations to become critical citizens.

Patterson, Doppen and Misco (2012, 204) used Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) categorization of citizenship (personally responsible, participatory and justice-oriented; introduced in the part Approaching civic activity) in their study; they expanded it to include teachers and the execution of teaching civic activity. Their study showed that the teacher's own perception of citizenship has a big influence on the way they teach civic education.

According to Patterson et al. (2012, 204) personally responsible teachers mainly focus on teaching history and other content needed for the graduation test, meanwhile forgetting civic activity almost entirely. Participatory teachers teach history as well but by incorporating it with citizenship issues. They see social studies classes as a means to promote active citizenship and extend local issues further by introducing global aspects. These teachers use critical thinking and social action in their work (Patterson et al., 2012, 204). Justice-oriented teachers are like the participatory ones and advocate action to a great extent. The difference is that the aim for the action is more critical; to change things and question existing structures. These teachers also see civic activity as a pervasive theme throughout the

curriculum instead of being the responsibility of the history or social studies teacher. The opinion of Patterson et al. (2012, 204) is that if the last type of teachers is the one in demand then teacher education needs to be changed to cater for this.

4.1. The critical pedagogy view on teachers as civic actors

Critical pedagogy's essence is that the learning experience is an interactive negotiation between the teacher and the students, where the substance is contested by asking questions and redefining concepts together. Freire (1998, 94) argues that a teacher cannot just teach and transfer knowledge to the students, but has to work together with the students in mutual respect. The teacher as a civic actor influences his or her students and gets influenced by them in this interaction, but does not stop there; the teacher influences on a larger scale as well, like the society and its power structures. In this part of the thesis the teacher as a civic actor is defined through the writings of the famous critical pedagogy researchers Freire, Giroux and McLaren and a few others who follow in their footsteps.

Freire (1998, 23) claims that teacher education should not be about technical “training” of teachers, but more about internalizing universal ethics. Giroux agrees with Freire and criticizes the teacher education system in the U.S.; he describes it to be based on old-fashioned models of behaviorism and mechanical learning about teaching methods in order to become an executor that dishes out the substance given from outside (Aittola & Suoranta, 2001, 18). Raivola (1993, 21) argues that teacher education should ask: “What can you become?” instead of: “What can you do?” Teachers have to start finding their own voice in order to help the students do the same (Raivola, 1993, 27).

Giroux has defined (Aittola & Suoranta, 2001, 17) that teachers have to aim for change, in other words be transformative intellectuals. It means that a teacher is no longer a mere instrument who repeats the information decided and provided by the current, mostly outdated, society around the teacher. The transformative intellectual teacher wants to affect and apply the curriculum and is all in all an active thinker, who communicates with the societal levels of teaching (Aittola & Suoranta, 2001, 18). Raivola (1993, 21) supports Giroux’s definition of a teacher as a transformative intellectual who acts as a modern political dy-

namic. This teacher acknowledges that he or she is either an authenticator or an opponent of the current political, social and economic interests.

Raivola (1993, 15) states that the professional mission of a teacher is to know “when, why and how to act” and support learning and development. Raivola continues that a true professional can and has the courage to be critical and act against the systems and the authority when he or she sees it necessary. In order to change society human catalysts are needed and teachers should be among the very first ones, as agents of change (Raivola, 1993, 15). Raivola (1993, 19) argues that becoming an agent of change requires professional and personal growth, which needs to be supported by teacher education and in-service training.

Another one of Giroux's definitions is teacher as an intellectual of the resistance, which means being aware of the political interests and ideologies that underline teaching and schools. According to Aittola and Suoranta (2001, 19), it also means that pedagogy is understood as politics and vice versa; in education this would be implemented by equipping students with skills that help them understand and affect the flaws in the society on its all levels. Resistance requires the use of one's own voice.

Aittola and Suoranta (2001, 20) remark that the idea of teachers being intellectuals sounds a bit foreign in the Finnish context; they argue that teacher education is still mainly focusing on teacher-based knowledge transfer even though the authorities claim otherwise. Aittola and Suoranta (2001, 20) conclude that this model definitely needs to be changed.

Critical pedagogy invites teachers to join the larger scale discussion and critique of society as public intellectuals who can and will make a difference by their opinions and actions to social and political issues (Giroux, 1997, 207). Teachers should participate on a local but also on a global scale. Giroux (1997, 207) clarifies that teachers need self-criticism to question and evolve their professionalism and methods to enable awareness that leads to actions for change.

McLaren and Giroux (1995, 39) explain that when using critical pedagogy as cultural politics it assures teachers to explore, analyze and reshape practices. They can question how meanings are generated and how power is distributed and reinforced. According to Freire (1998, 95), teachers need to defend for instance democracy, freedom and anti-capitalism. Freire (1998, 95) emphasizes that the teacher is always in a state of struggle, but does not give up. McLaren and Giroux (1995, 66) remind that even though teachers have to be criti-

cal, they also have to emphasize hope and the possibility to make a change through one's actions. Freire (1998, 95) agrees and continues that teacher should be hopeful even when it seems futile.

Raivola (1993, 15) critiques the school by stating that it only perpetuates existing structures instead of being a dynamic developer of the society. A teacher can survive with a bare minimum of training that ensures his or her reliability as a part of this conservative institution that school, in Raivola's opinion, is. As Giroux (1997, 199) remarks critical pedagogy aims to give schools back its original purpose of being a public environment where students can learn to produce knowledge by themselves and altogether take power in their lives. It is not enough to be a good citizen, but one needs to be a critical citizen as well (Giroux, 1997, 200). To fulfill this, schools have to offer more opportunities for critique and challenging the current societal and political situation instead of solely learning about and adjusting to them. To become a critical citizen students require skills such as civil courage, risk taking and compassion in addition to finding their voice and place in history. Providing for these kinds of needs is not an easy task for schools, but quite necessary for critical pedagogy's purpose. Critical pedagogy can be used to help revive democracy on a larger scale and evolve from the basic "reciting Pledge of Allegiance" -level of citizenship (Giroux, 1997, 200).

As a concluding note on the critical pedagogy view on teachers as civic actors, here is an argument by Banks (2001, 15): teachers who are true transformative citizens are:

“...better able to interrogate the assumptions of official school knowledge, less likely to be victimized by knowledge that protects hegemony and inequality, and better able to help students acquire the knowledge and skills needed to take citizen action that will make the world more just and humane.”

4.2. Being a civic actor in practice

The classroom is a microcosm of society that gives students the opportunity to prepare for their role as global citizens. (Ponder & Lewis-Ferrell, 2009, 129)

How can teachers play their role as civic actors in practice? Ponder and Lewis-Ferrell (2009, 129) argue that even the smallest change can create big outcomes if teachers just put some effort and their minds into it. Ponder and Lewis-Ferrell (2009, 129) explain that teachers have to come up with interesting projects and exercises for their students as a means to activate them; taking part in real life situations is much more involving than reading about active citizenship. Another important means is to incorporate stories of real people that are active so that students can relate to them and find connections to their own lives (Ponder & Lewis-Ferrell, 2009, 129).

Torney-Purta and Klandl Richardson (2003, 40) follow on the same lines as Ponder and Lewis-Ferrell by proposing that teachers should move on from providing facts and reading textbooks to a more interpretation and skills based approach when teaching civic education. Like Ponder and Lewis-Ferrell, Torney-Purta and Klandl Richardson (2003, 40) also claim that relating matters into the lives of the students by local references is the key to making the issue meaningful. Reimers (2006, 279) agrees that teaching needs to be closer to “real life” or otherwise the students will lose their motivation for studying when they cannot see the connection between the substance and the world around them.

Kahne and Sporte (2008, 754) agree with Ponder and Lewis-Ferrell on the importance of real experiences of participation in order to engage students with civic activity. Kahne and Sporte (2008, 754) highlight that students need an environment that is open for all kinds of discussions on society and problems; even for the ones that are difficult to address. Vandenaabee, Vanassche and Wildemeersch (2011, 172) express the importance of discussions well; in their opinion citizenship is founded on the discussions and actions the individual is engaged in. All this has to be enabled by a teacher that is a “civic role model” (Kahne & Sporte, 2008, 754). Feldman, Pasek, Romer and Hall Jamieson (2007, 80) propose that teachers ask different role models like politicians and journalists to visit the school and discuss topical issues with the students.

Even though Kahne and Sporte among others stress the importance of conversations on controversial issues, many researchers like Galston and Holden bring up the concern of neutrality. Galston (2003, 32) remarks that teachers and other members of the school system may be scared to address political issues because they are often value-laden or equivocal. Thus it is safer for schools to remain neutral and not even provoke discussion on current affairs, which of course is a loss for civic education. Holden (2004, 248) agrees with Galston: teachers fear that the parents might not want their children discussing controversial issues such as war, because they might disagree with what is taught about values and ideals in school.

Holden (2004, 249) recognizes that moral education starts at home and that usually students duplicate their parents views; some for the rest of their lives but some at least until they make their own mind up. Parents might argue that some areas of moral education belong to them and others to the school; this is why it is important to discuss citizenship education together as a whole. Holden (2004, 249) concludes that through co-operation it will be possible to provide the students with an all-around picture and education on citizenship and participation. All in all as Hansen (2007, 42) argues political neutrality is naturally valued, but it should not stop teachers from promoting collective issues.

4.3. Civic activity in teacher education

Prediction of the future is a risk. Not to engage in it is a much bigger risk to children. (The International Primary Curriculum)

Schools and its teachers make up a significant part of the total amount of citizenship preparation students encounter (Martin, 2008, 54). This means that the education teachers receive has to rise up to par in assisting teacher students find, develop their own civic activeness and become worthy role models for tomorrow's generations. In this part teacher education is looked at from the perspective of civic education.

Torney-Purta and Klandl Richardson (2003, 42) emphasize that "...we need to make those preparing to be teachers into reflective observers of the ways in which their own classrooms can influence civic knowledge and communities of which students are members".

Teacher education programs should participate in the society around it more effectively, because nothing can replace actual actions among the local communities that the future teachers will later be a part of. Being active already during the studies is very important for the educational process of becoming an informed teacher (McLaren & Fischman, 1998, 242). According to McLaren and Fischman (1998, 244), teacher education programs should “commit to caring, compassion and ethics of solidarity but also to developing critical epistemology.”

Avery (2003, 57) proposes six important objectives for teacher educators to help produce good future teachers. The first and the most crucial one in Avery’s opinion is to teach how to host debates and conversations on a variety of issues, even the more difficult ones. Secondly future teachers need to be introduced to how children and the youth view social and political issues. The third point emphasizes that “the development of civic identity is a dynamic process that takes place in a social and cultural context.” The fourth objective is to critically research the materials used in citizenship education and the fifth is to be acquainted with teaching methods that help understand concepts. The last one is to remember to expand from local to global; the international view on issues is needed too in fully understanding activeness.

Syrjäläinen, Värri, Piattoeva and Eronen (2006, 61) argue that historically teacher education has aimed to produce obedient officials who focus on educating students instead of fuelling their curiosity and activeness. School has been the tool to building and sustaining national morals and obedience; it has been the patriotic duty of teachers to reproduce loyalty (Syrjäläinen et al., 2006, 61). As argued by Syrjäläinen et al. (2006, 62), the time is different now and teacher education needs to rethink itself and make changes towards a more critical pedagogy and teacher as an intellectual –based system. Syrjäläinen et al. (2006, 62) claim that teacher education has only reached the halfway point of the mission; there is a great selection of excellent versatile teacher candidates, but no real preparation for civic activity skills that they would need in today’s society.

The deciding question according to Syrjäläinen et al. (2006, 62) is whether teacher education values the practical technician –version of a teacher or the critical intellectual –version that wants to renew society. The future teacher requires skills that help them engage in active discussion on societal issues and influence development. The only way to meet this requirement is to change teacher education by adding more content on democracy, educa-

tional policy and ways to practice interpretation of current issues. Syrjäläinen et al. (2006, 64) conclude that the goal is a teacher, an intellectual, who is an active professional voice in the multiple issues of the community, society and the world, who will not forget to stand up for educational values.

Patrick (2003, 17) proposes that teacher students should also be taught by professors of history and social sciences in addition to their usual educators so that it is possible to get a wider, more complex understanding of active citizenship and democracy. This way future teachers would also be better equipped for their post as influencers of their community. Participating in the community should also be practiced already during the studies: perhaps some kind of community service could be connected to teacher education. Martin (2008, 61) explains that in the U.S. this is already happening: some classes and study-related organizations of the universities in the U.S. require teacher students to participate in community service projects.

The Teacher Student union of Finland's current target program, for the years 2010-2013, has "Students as active influencers" as one of its themes. This document highlights the most important developing points that the union sees for Finnish teacher education. It is used as a basis for argumentation and is introduced to all important partner co-operators and decision-makers. The program states that the activeness of students should be regarded as a strength in developing teacher education both in local and national contexts. All decisions that are linked to the studies should be done in respectful co-operation with students, the program continues. Another argument that the program makes is that teacher students should be encouraged to be active in their student organizations and other levels of decision-making and even rewarded with credits to show in practice the respect for activeness. If teacher students are encouraged to be active, they will most likely be active citizens (and educators) in the future as well, as the program implies. (Tavoitteet opettajankoulutukselle 2010-2013, 8)

4.4. Findings of the previous studies on teachers as civic actors

In this chapter, two examples of previous studies on teachers as civic actors are briefly presented. The first one is an American research on subject teachers' perceptions of citizenship and the second one is a Finnish project that assessed and aimed to develop civic activity in the Finnish teacher education.

4.4.1. An American study on subject teachers' perceptions of citizenship

Martin (2010, 57) notes that social studies teachers are mainly seen as the ones responsible for citizenship education. Martin did a study interviewing future middle and secondary teachers in the U.S. to gain knowledge on their views on the responsibility of teaching citizenship education.

Martin's study was conducted in the hopes of shedding light on how different subject teachers view their responsibility towards citizenship education (2010, 58). Martin chose the participants from a public university and they were all in their final year of studies of teacher education; 13 of them were science education students, 22 were mathematics education students, 21 were English education students and 21 were social studies education students. Martin explains (2010, 59) that these particular teacher groups were chosen because in public schools they teach the core subject areas. Martin continues that studying the opinions of students, future teachers, is mandatory for predicting the state of civic education in tomorrow's schools (2010, 58).

Martin (2010, 60) reports that 72 percent of the participants answered "yes" when asked if being an education major has affected their take on citizenship. The participants explained that being a teacher means being a role model; one has to be active in the community (Martin, 2010, 60). The 26 percent that answered "no" clarified their view by explaining that they already had an existing clear idea on citizenship before the studies and therefore it did not change during the years of studying (Martin, 2010, 60).

Martin (2010, 62) reports that 83 percent from all of the participants thought that citizenship education is a goal of their majors. The remaining 17 percent, who were mostly from the mathematics and English student groups, felt that citizenship education should not be listed as a goal of their major. They justified their answer for example by explaining that time is limited and the content is more important or that even though they see themselves as role models they feel that citizenship education is better suited to be dealt with within the social studies and history subjects (Martin, 2010, 63-64).

4.4.2. Promoting Citizenship and Civic Activity in Teacher Education

A project called Promoting Citizenship and Civic Activity in Teacher Education (PCCATE from now on) was carried through in 2004-2006 in connection with the government's civic activity policy program. The project was nationwide; participants being the teacher training units, the Finnish National Board of Education, the Ministry of Education, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, the Union of Finnish Upper Secondary School Students, the Finnish Youth Cooperation (Allianssi) and the Teacher Student Union of Finland (SOOL). The project's goals were to assess the current level of civic activity in teacher training and also to promote it further. (Hansen, 2007, 9, 158) In other words the project's aim was that teacher students could and would participate more in decision making concerning their education and being more active about political and social issues (Syrjäläinen et al., 2006, 40).

The results of the project were both good and bad. The good outcomes were that all participants agreed on these issues being important and found the themes of the project significant. They also agreed that schools do indeed do a lot of educational work and not just provide substance knowledge. The bad outcomes were that even though the project was welcomed and appreciated it did not succeed in producing unambiguous methods and guidelines for civic activity in teacher training. The cooperation networks formed during the project did not change the fact that civic activity still lies on the shoulders of individuals; certain teachers, students and subject groups that are passionate about it (Hansen, 2007, 9, 158).

The biggest problem that arose in the interviews was that the majority of students are not interested in lobbying for their rights and influencing decisions (Hansen, 2007, 88). The interviewees agree that some sort of a passive atmosphere is definitely the ruling one; everyone thinks that they do not have to participate, because someone else will (Hansen, 2007, 89). Students seem to want to complete their studies fast and fear that organizational activities would slow them down (Hansen, 2007, 89). In summary, only a few of the teacher students participate in organizational activities during their studies and most of them do it to get some sort of counterbalance for their studies. Only a tiny portion of them involve themselves with lobbying or department politics and try to join the decision-making of the faculty or the university (Hansen, 2007, 89).

The findings of the project highlight that even though students would like to change this passiveness, they do not have the means to do so (Hansen, 2007, 90). The participants point out that even though there are many options to influence in their faculties they do not have enough information about how to influence decision-making (Hansen, 2007, 88). Becoming active means that the students need to be more widely conscious, know how to influence and have trust in their possibilities to make a difference.

The project gives some credit to student activeness; it describes briefly that for example national organizations for teacher students have made alliances with other organizations to gain more leverage. They have also given statements about issues concerning teacher education and through that shown that teacher students still have some resources and readiness to actively take part in the political debate (Hansen, 2007, 90).

A lot of the interviewees point out that their activeness comes from outside schools and universities; from their hobbies and other interests. Even though this is a great thing, it is sad that school is not the biggest influencer in this matter, even though this role is both suitable and mandatory for it (Hansen, 2007, 120). Some interviewees mention that the problem with projects that try to encourage participation usually just succeed in making the already active people more active instead of recruiting new people to join in (Hansen, 2007, 120).

Rantala and Hansen (2006, 23) describe that it is possible to get caught in a cycle where lack of interest towards being active leads to shortage of information about things that are going on which further encourages passivity. Passivity can appear also when things seem

to be in order; people are more likely to take a stand when there are clear problems or injustices in sight.

In schools teachers are role models through their active operations and the official curriculum, but also through the hidden curriculum. Students are like sponges in the sense that they absorb attitudes and examples from the people around them, especially from their teachers. Hansen (2007, 39) argues that this is why the teachers need to be cautious and aware of their own active thoughts, but also underlying agendas. Syrjäläinen et al. (2006, 41) agree with Hansen by stating that if we strive for a school that activates its students to participate, the teachers need to reassess their own beliefs and activity first, even the hidden ones. After such self-reflection they can start re-arranging the school and its actions towards a more suitable fit for tomorrow's active citizens (Syrjäläinen et al., 2006, 41).

Critical pedagogy is something that emphasizes these same values; the teacher being an active influencer in the eyes of his or her students, but also in the society's. Being active requires curiosity and knowledge about the underlying meanings and structures of the society, which is to be practiced with students as well. According to Syrjäläinen et al. (2006, 42) critical thinking, belief about one's ability to make a difference and the will to do so are crucial building blocks of a teacher as an intellectual. Teachers and teacher educators are always models for influencing, but at their best they are mentors who activate their students to think and act (Hansen, 2007, 98).

Some of the interviewees of the research saw civic activity as an underlying theme that reconstructs the existing contents of teacher education (Hansen, 2007, 84). On the other hand some of them argued that even though civic activity is a part of the requirements of the degree in practice it is hard to pick out from the contents. There are also multiple other themes competing at the same time for the already limited resources of teacher education, which makes the situation for civic activity even harder (Hansen, 2007, 85). The interviewees pondered as well that the existing hierarchy and balance of subjects is so rigid, that there is no room for new subjects or areas of research. Civic activity has been and still is seen as a part of history and social studies without deserving to have its own permanent slot in the curriculum (Hansen, 2007, 85).

According to Syrjäläinen et al. (2006, 48), the interviewed teacher students saw the so called softer values like solidarity and humanity as the basis of their civic activity as teach-

ers. The current state of the world and economy dictates change away from these softer values towards accountability and efficiency. Syrjäläinen et al. (2006, 49) report that teacher students fear for the loss of these values, but are not willing to rise up against these changes. Quite the contrary, they feel that they should shy away from voicing any political opinions and stick to a “safer” role as an educator. Being neutral in one’s opinions is naturally an important thing to remember, but it should not lead to total abandonment of these issues.

Hansen (2007, 100) reports that changing teacher education is quite challenging, because the faculties and teacher educators are reluctant to give away their existing credit points and courses in order to create room for more civic education or active citizenship education. Hansen (2007, 100) proposes that more emphasis should be put on making use of existing outside resources such as local and national organizations for teacher students like SOOL; these actors have highlighted their interest in promoting civil influencing. According to Hansen (2007, 100) one of the interviewees remarked that SOOL has been a very noticeable actor promoting civic activity through seminars and articles in their magazine.

According to Rantala and Hansen (2006, 23), the outcomes of the project and civil activity in general is quite difficult to measure in schools and teacher education. They continue that even if civil activity classes or courses are added to curricula the outcome still lies in the hands of the teachers and trainers who implement them, whether or not they will generate interest. On a larger scale it is nearly everyone that has to be on board in order to fulfill the objective of creating an operational culture that encourages civil activity. This can only be achieved if we move beyond thinking that it is only the duty of the history or social studies teacher.

The concluding outcome of the project is that it proposes measures to further promote civic activity. The first proposal is that time has to be put aside for shared discussion and activities. The second is that the different ways for teachers and students to participate and influence should be made clear and advertised. The third proposal is that institutions need to add student unions and organizations to their policy making processes. The fourth is that even the entrance exams of teacher education should give credit to previous activeness of applicants. The fifth one demands that non-governmental organizations and other actors of the community should be more involved in the schools. The sixth point is that the active-

ness of the students' needs to be taken into consideration in assessing their studies. The seventh proposal states that social education should gain a role in teacher education with its own didactics as well. The eighth one reminds that teacher training should increasingly introduce discussions about educational policies and other social issues. The ninth and last one highlights cooperation between local, regional and national teacher training networks (Hansen, 2007, 9, 158).

5. METHODOLOGY AND EXECUTION OF THE RESEARCH

In this chapter the methodological premises and the execution of the research are displayed. To begin, narrative research in general and analysis of narratives are introduced. Then the execution of the research, data collection and description on the participants are presented. The chapter ends in a brief background information section on the Teacher Student Union of Finland.

5.1. Methodological choice: Narrative research

Eskola and Suoranta (1998, 218) argue that the whole world of human beings is based on telling and listening to stories. Connelly and Clandinin (2006, 477) underlay that people give meaning to themselves, others and their past experiences through stories. They define that narrative inquiry is studying experiences as stories: “Narrative inquiry as a methodology entails a view of the phenomenon. To use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular narrative view of experience as phenomena under study.”

Creswell (2007, 53-54) explains that narrative research has originally been a method used by researchers of social studies, humanities and education, but is currently employed by a wide variety of disciplines. Based on the amount of recent literature, narrative research is experiencing a period of growth (Creswell, 2007, 54).

Narrative data is sometimes hard to analyze, because it might feel like it could be processed and reprocessed forever, as Squire, Andrews and Tamboukou (2008, 1) describe. Narratives can nevertheless help researchers find hidden meanings and make them interact with the visible ones creating interesting comparisons (Squire et al., 2008, 1).

5.2. Analysis of narratives

As Bamberg (2012, 77) remarks, it can be confusing to navigate between different terms that are used: narrative research, narrative analysis and narrative inquiry. Bamberg (2012, 77) describes that the main distinctions are whether it is “...research *on* narratives, where

narratives are the object of study” or “research *with* narratives, where narratives are the tools to explore something else--typically aspects of human memory or experience.”

Polkinghorne recognizes the same dichotomy; Polkinghorne (1995, 12) differentiates analysis of narratives and narrative analysis on the basis of the deduction style used. In the first one the deduction is a paradigmatic process and in the second one it is a narrative one. The two are easily mixed up because of the similarities in the terms, but in the end their differences are explicit: “...analysis of narratives moves from stories to common elements, and narrative analysis moves from elements to stories.” (Polkinghorne, 1995, 12)

The story and the experiences it describes are usually in a chronological form that is based on the “personal, social, and historical context” of the individual (Creswell, 2007, 57). According to Polkinghorne (1995, 12), analysis of narratives uses stories as its data; the researcher analyses them to find overarching topics. In this thesis the research material consists of partly biographical narratives that concentrate on the events and experiences in participants’ lives that they see as meaningful concerning the topic. It is not important whether or not the stories are true; it is more interesting to find out how the participants perceive their past and what they choose to tell about it.

The stories may contain certain turning points, epiphanies that either change the course of events or give significant meaning to the story (Creswell, 2007, 57). In this thesis a turning point, even though it is in the beginning of the narrative is the first time the participants have been introduced to civic activity and become enthusiastic about it. The rest of their experiences afterwards portrays their lifelong path of civic activity so far. One could see their narrations about their time in SOOL as a turning point as well, because it is something that is shared. The majority of them highlight that on one level or another their SOOL experiences are the most significant ones of their civic activity “career”.

In practice in this thesis the narratives were first read and coded individually: sentences and expressions that seemed meaningful and relevant for the research were singled out and organized in categories. Next all of the narratives were combined by structuring under the same categories. As Creswell (2007, 215) suggests, researcher can “report themes that build from the story”. In this case themes that the categories were based on arose from the narratives; at first they were just short guiding titles which were later on changed to represent more the actual findings of the research. Inside the categories the different parts of

narratives were compared to each other by finding similarities and differences between them.

5.3. Data collection

The participants were asked to write biographical narratives (see Appendix 1), but only two of them wrote one in the end. It was difficult to get the participants to write a story-form narrative so it was considered how rest of the research would be carried out. The decision was to form a questionnaire.

When the exact same guiding questions of the story were transformed into five different groups of questions resembling a questionnaire (see Appendix 2), the participants responded quickly. It seems to be much easier to grasp a task of “a few questions” instead of writing a biographical story even though the questions were the same. The responses to the segmented questions were still mostly long; if added up they were close to the length of the original two story-form narratives.

The participants were asked to write in Finnish or English depending on what felt most comfortable for them. One of the participants chose English. The others were first analyzed in Finnish and then those parts that were chosen to be showcased in the results were translated into English. The direct quotes are translated mostly word for word, but at times modified a bit in order to get the point across regardless of the language exchange.

5.4. Participants

There are four female and two male participants from around Finland in this research. One of them is a subject teacher, two are early childhood educators, two class teachers and one is a former early childhood student, present student of educational sciences. They have all been a member or the chair of the board of the Teacher Student Union of Finland for one or more years.

This group of people was chosen because of their link to this organization; working for it is an unpaid position of trust that is demanding and time-consuming. The conclusion here is that because financial benefit cannot be the motive, there has to be some other reasoning for dedicating one's time to working for this shared cause.

5.5. The Teacher Student Union of Finland

The Teacher Student Union of Finland (Suomen Opettajaksi Opiskelijoiden Liitto ry, SOOL for now on) is a special-interest organization of all different teacher students in Finland. It is a national umbrella organization for regional student organizations with over 7,000 members. SOOL aims to promote the co-operation of future professionals of education in order to improve teacher training. SOOL also keeps its members informed on important issues and trains them on various topics. SOOL works together with multiple authorities and decision-makers. (<http://www.sool.fi/sool/in-english/>)

6. NARRATIVES ON CIVIC ACTIVITY EXPERIENCES

The participants come from all around Finland, have studied in various teacher education programs, are of different ages and genders but they do have at least one thing in common: civic activity. In the end, the narratives of the participants have a lot of similarities in them because they all have been actively participating in organizational activities for a big part of their lives. It is interesting that even though they do share some experiences, like their time in SOOL; their narratives have a lot of differences as well. Everyone perceives things in their own unique way and narrate using their own voice. In the following section the findings are portrayed using a somewhat chronological order starting from their earliest experiences, and finishing at their present situation and prospects of future. In between their time in SOOL, motivation, development as a person and a teacher are discussed as well.

6.1. Addictive civic activity

The participants begin their writings by describing what they perceive as the first times of being involved in some kind of civic activity. Some note that it is hard to pin point a certain time or an occasion when they first took part but they do remember and describe the first times that made a difference in their minds. Their depictions are similar forming two main categories; either they followed the lead of their relatives or got asked and persuaded to join a certain group.

The first half explained that they have been brought up being active, valuing their community and helping others. They have been taken to get to know various organizations like youth associations, sport clubs, the 4-H-club with their parents or siblings. Later on they have participated independently as well.

“A lot of people in my family have been active in municipal politics, trade union, student activities... I have followed my big brothers' footsteps and participated in the same activities that they have.” (Maria)

The other half of the participants were asked to join different organizations or nominated to a position of trust like being the “trusted student” of their class, the class representative, tutor or the leader of the student board in the army. Some of them tell that they were surprised by their nomination, because they did not see themselves as qualified enough to fill the post. Their nominators saw something in them that they did not even realize themselves. They did accept the post even though they still doubted their skills because they could not resist the temptation. Being nominated made them feel flattered and valued.

“People thought I was an extrovert, quick-witted and a mood generator even though I did not see these qualities in me so strongly.” (Mikael)

“I was often chosen as the spokesperson because of my so called courage, even though it was a cover-up for my insecurity, but because of the laid-upon responsibility my courage started to grow” (Anna)

One of them explained that even though the first experience was positive and he got a lot of support he decided to never again take this kind of a post, because in the end it naturally was a lot of work. This decision did not last very long because soon he got persuaded to take a chair position in the student board of early childhood education students at his university.

During their early experiences of civic activity the participants expressed that they were fuelled to continue mostly because of curiosity, wanting to know what is going on and wanting to make a difference. The majority of them tell that they have gradually moved on to more and more demanding tasks and describe a certain growing hunger for activeness and even power, as Anna narrates. Anna explains that in the beginning she was only interested in organizing events, but soon found herself excited about educational politics and voicing her opinions. Several of them even confess that civic activity is addictive; Maria remarks that first you give a little of yourself but then you get hooked and in the end you are fully in it.

The PCCATE project had similar findings about the captivating nature of civic activity. An interviewee of theirs commented as well that organizational activities are addictive. The interviewee elaborated that it is easy to get caught up in the activities, because there is always more to do and take on (Syrjäläinen et al., 2006, 56).

6.2. SOOL: a possibility to make a difference on a larger scale

“I learned so much through being active in SOOL; it is going to benefit me for the rest of my life.” (Maria)

The participants were asked to reflect on their years as a part of the SOOL board, because this is something that they all have in common. The majority of the participants describe that what drove them to SOOL was the “hunger for more”, the urge to be active and make a difference on a larger scale, on a national level.

“In the local board I felt capable of doing more and more demanding tasks as I learned more on the way. I started to yearn for more challenges and bigger arenas for doing so.” (Anna)

Two of the participants narrate their feelings when running for the SOOL board; they felt unsure of their chances to get in but got a lot of support from their local board and other people around them. They tell that it was a huge rush when they did get in; Anna describes that she was the underdog but got in anyway as the last one elected, which felt just amazing. Next year she got a landslide of votes that made her feel appreciated; it was straight feedback from the voters that her contribution was truly marked and valued. Anna continues that it boosted her confidence and made her more determined that this path she had chosen, of being active, was the right one for her.

“I have always been nervous and anxious in situations like the annual meeting, but the feeling I got when I was elected was the best ever.” (Maria)

Two of the participants accentuate that it was an honor to meet and discuss with the biggest influencers of the trade through SOOL and be a part of interesting events. Mikael explains that one really has to “step up one’s game when dealing with high-grade influencers”. When the tasks got more challenging it required a raise in one’s skill-level as well. This is a very effective way to develop oneself. Daniel explains that through SOOL he got a better understanding of different fields of teaching and teacher education. This helped him to figure out what his standing point in the Finnish educational system is.

“My time in SOOL has been among the best; SOOL trained me a lot especially to influence on a higher level.” (Mikael)

“It is rare to be able to grow and learn in an environment like SOOL; a lot is expected of you but also all the support you need is provided. Also the team spirit of SOOL that has always been and hopefully will be is unbelievable. It drives you forward when you feel that you are working together for shared goals.” (Mikael)

In the PCCATE project an interviewee highlighted that SOOL has been a very noticeable promoter of civic activity (Hansen, 2007, 100). SOOL is both an advocate of civic activity in general and one of the arenas for participation for teacher students. According to Hansen and Rantala (2009, 145) the activeness of teacher students, especially when they participate in organizational activities, should be encouraged forcefully, because it is unfortunately quite rare among them. Organizational activities build up “internal civic competence” and “social capital” (Hansen & Rantala, 2009, 146).

Teachers need to be politically active for instance by joining a party, taking an active role in societal discussions or making a stand for influencing change in their community and the world (Martin, 2008, 61-62). Martin (2008, 54) argues that already during their studies teachers have to start finding their own activity by reflecting over their beliefs and possibly engaging in organizational activities. Immediately after their studies they become role models whether they like it or not and start molding the following generation through their actions.

6.3. Developing as an individual and a member of a group

In their writings the participants reflected on what skills or attributes they feel they acquired through civic activity. They explain unanimously that their activeness has developed them as persons and their skills “both directly and indirectly” as described by Eva. They are certain that they have benefitted from it: “I know my skills and dare to use them.” Mikael

Syrjäläinen et al. (2006, 42) explain that being an active teacher requires curiosity and knowledge about the underlying meanings and structures of society. The participants explained that they have gained a lot of knowledge on things that they would not have learned through their studies, at least to this extent. They list that they now have a lot more knowledge on organizational activities, educational politics, meeting protocol, management of finances, societal structures, curricula, decision making processes and academic vocabulary of official documents.

Alongside the knowledge gained, a lot of practical expertise was described by the participants as well. They name for instance planning and organizing seminars, giving lectures, training others and writing statements and other factual texts.

Half of the participants emphasized that civic activity has developed their group working skills; they explained that they have learned to get along and work together with a variety of people. Other skills that they connect to group work are leadership skills, negotiation skills and delegation. They tell that being part of a group also requires the ability to listen to the opinions of others and to voice one's own. A sense of working together for a mutual goal and supervising shared interests can only be experienced through doing it as a group. Syrjäläinen et al. (2006, 58) reports as well that civic activity gives experiences of community and widens one's perspectives.

"My worldview has broadened and I have become less naïve." (Eva)

Counterbalancing the group work aspect, they described skills that have more to do with independent working and growth as a person. These include for example taking responsibility, time management, self-confidence and assurance in public appearance. They also stress how they learned to question things and think critically; one participant argued that this was not taught in teacher education at all. According to Syrjäläinen et al. (2006, 42) critical thinking and the ability and will to make a difference are crucial building blocks of a teacher as an intellectual.

They appreciated that they got a chance to develop their flaws, for instance to practice patience, work under pressure and expand their views. They learned that in conflict situations it is the things that argue, not people.

“Mental growth was colossal because I had to face huge setbacks and harder situations than I could have imagined but it absolutely did make me a stronger person and a better teacher.” (Lisa)

“The biggest thing I learned was that I cannot or do not have to please everyone, because if the chair tries to “save” everyone she is going to burn out quite quickly herself.” (Maria)

The list of skills and attributes that the participants connect to their path of activeness is long and impressive. As they remarked themselves, these are things that cannot be learned for example by reading books. Participating in action is the key in learning these kinds of skills and developing oneself as a civic actor. Avery (2003, 57) emphasizes that “the development of civic identity is a dynamic process that takes place in a social and cultural context.” For the participants the process was enforced by their versatile experiences through practicing civic activity in real life situations. As Anna summarizes, they all “learned by doing”. Lawy and Biesta (2006, 37) argue that practice is the key and agree that one’s citizenship should be developed through doing instead of just studying.

6.4. Motivation ranges from personal benefit to making a difference

The participants reflected on what motivates them to participate and be active. The answers vary from personal benefit to desire for communal effort to make a difference. For some the initial motivation has been more selfish but has evolved during their experiences to a more benevolent and beneficial one.

Professional gain through acquiring skills was one of the initial motivations described by the participants. Another, a more common one among the participants was meeting new people; several of them explain that they want to make friends and surround themselves with like-minded people who are also interested in volunteering for shared goals. When they have worked together with other active people it has sparked their interest and deepened their motivation for organizational activities. Mikael explains that you get inspired by other people and when they in turn trust and believe in your contribution it motivates a lot.

Mikael continues that then you want to live up to their trust which is an even stronger force onwards.

The participants describe that making a difference motivates. Eva describes that meaningful activities and target-orientation makes her participate; she wants to correct flaws and develop new models for action and strive for a better future. Daniel elaborates that his motivation comes from shared supervision of interests; he is simply passionate about it.

6.5. Feeling powerful and important

“I started to enjoy the “kick” it gives.” (Anna)

Ponder and Lewis-Ferrell (2009, 129) introduce these long-term goals for activeness for future teachers: see yourself as an agent of change and believe in your ability to make a difference. The majority of the participants narrate that accomplishment is rewarding and success in their actions has definitely felt good. It makes them feel like they have achieved and changed something. Lisa even confesses that succeeding makes her feel powerful and important. The participants feel that they have “done their share for the common good” (Eva), contributed to the society and made a difference through their actions; these accomplishment matter whether they are big and national or small and local.

“The feeling of success when you actually make a change happen is really powerful, pretty close to euphoria. It boosts your confidence and encourages you to take on even bigger challenges.” (Mikael)

“I get pleasure out of thinking that I at least have tried to improve and develop our society with my contribution. And will of course continue doing so!” (Eva)

Working as a part of or as the chair of a board generated a lot of positive emotions among the participants as well. Maria explains that it feels great to work in a group that is enthusiastic.

“We prepared a proclamation that we felt very proud of and even though it did not have a lasting effect on the matter I think that could have been the spark that ignited my passion for civic activity on the national level.” (Maria)

The participants tell that people trusting and appreciating them has felt great. It is amazing when other active people notice one’s knowledge and skills; impressing others feels nice as Mikael remarks. Anna comments that she liked the fact that people agreed with her and even looked up to her, which made her recognize new feelings of authority in herself. Eva explains that she wants to leave a positive impression behind when interacting with for instance partners in co-operation.

“The biggest emotions are immense joy and happiness when people trust you.” (Mikael)

“It is pleasant to present oneself as an expert.” (Lisa)

“I took on a really challenging task, succeeded and felt incredible. I had managed to pull off a very difficult challenge, it boosted my confidence a lot!” (Mikael)

“I also felt good inside because I knew I was good in this sort of work...and felt at home.” (Anna)

6.6. Feeling exhausted and unsuccessful

According to Syrjäläinen et al. (2006, 56), the interviewees of the PCCATE project voiced that even though they value civic activity they just do not have enough time for it alongside their studies. Several of the participants agree that taking part in organizational activities is very time-consuming. Lisa explains that at times it was very exhausting to balance studies and meeting trips even though it was mostly fun, rewarding and educational.

Active students can get a lot of responsibilities pinned on them but in the end the choice is always the student’s (Syrjäläinen et al., 2006, 58). The accumulating pile of organizational work started to wear on Anna; she recalls that it was hard to recognize the symptoms of exhaustion, because the activities felt so meaningful and important to her. Mikael had the same kind of experience: he realized that he is close to burn out. He had to learn quickly

how to reflect on and to change his actions to cope better. Mikael argues that through this hardship the results of his work improved as well.

“I would not change a thing, but if I would do it again, I would use my time more carefully and relax a bit more as well and be more patient.” (Maria)

When things have not worked out and there have been setbacks, it has been hard on the participants even though they realize that everything cannot always go as they would like. Mikael explains that even though not succeeding might make one doubt oneself, it is important to move forward persistently and get tougher. Maria explains that there have been failures, but she does not think it is just a bad thing, because one can always learn from them and act differently next time around.

“Decisions are always hard and sometimes your cause does not progress. If the justifications have been good I have settled for the decision or collected more reasons to make the cause better prepared.” (Daniel)

“Failure is never nice but it is important in order to grow. The worst failures I have experienced were in personal chemistry, not so much about things.” (Lisa)

“I am a perfectionist so I always put 100 per cent of myself on the line and when I fail I go through a wave of emotions but I can still act analytically. I contemplate on my actions and find out where I did wrong. Then I change my actions to avoid similar mistakes in the future.” (Mikael)

6.7. Civic activity forms teachers into civic actors

Two of the participants have chosen the organizational sector as their field of work mostly because of their civic activity experiences. They are using the skills acquired then in their work now and have a strong basis of knowledge to build on and further develop their know-how.

“I think that organizational activities and my time in SOOL have given me experience for work and life in general that teacher education could not have given me.” (Lisa)

“At present I am working in an organization so I have benefitted greatly from what I learned [through organizational activities]. I would not have this job if I would not have been active in numerous different organizations during my studies.” (Daniel)

The remaining four participants all narrate that they are different as teachers, because of their participation and activeness. Syrjäläinen et al. (2006, 58) report that all the interviewees in the project PCCATE, including the ones that were not active themselves, stated as well that civic activity is very important for one’s growth as a teacher. The participants tell for instance that it is much easier to encourage students to be active when one really has been active oneself and that teaching is just another way of influencing.

Maria argues that children need to be involved in planning, fulfilling and evaluating school activities because it is already a step towards active citizenship. Maria continues that children need to feel safe to voice their opinions. One of them describes how she emphasizes the importance of communality, helping others and taking part to her pupils but also to her co-workers. Hansen (2007, 98) argues that teachers are always models for influencing, but at their best they are mentors who activate their students to think and act.

“As a teacher I am definitely one that emphasizes taking part, being aware of things that happen around us and try to encourage children to questions things and be critical. I think it is important to discuss current issues with children and let them be actively involved in planning their studying. I think that my own activeness has transformed me and my values as a person so it is only logical that it has transformed me as a teacher as well.” (Anna)

Two of the participants explain that the skills they learned through organizational activities are definitely needed as a teacher as well. They exemplify that organizational skills will help with encountering parents and with being more patient, diplomatic and neutral with the students. When they faced setbacks in their civic activity times they grew stronger as teachers as well, as Lisa remarks.

“I think I need to voice my opinions, it is my duty as an active citizen and the only way to make change possible. The changes do not even have to be huge; but even the smallest changes cannot happen if everyone keeps their mouths shut.” (Maria)

One of the participants, Maria describes how knowledge on meeting protocol has helped at her current work place; she has given advice on how to make their staff meetings more fluent and efficient. She thinks this has helped her work community a lot. Maria is now the

deputy head of her work place; she really feels that she never would have wanted that post without first being the chair of SOOL. Maria remarks that she got to practice her leadership skills then which gives her confidence now in a similar post.

“It is delightful to see that people come to me with problems and that I get to help newer actives. I have also been asked to join the alumni group that gives advice for the sitting board of SOOL.” (Maria)

6.8. A lifelong process of civic activity

In the end the participants were asked to evaluate if their experiences of civic activity have affected their future aspirations and career plans. The two who have currently chosen a more organizational route instead of teaching tell that their time in SOOL and their all-around experience of civic activity has made such a deep impact on them that their career desires have even changed. Daniel currently works in an organization, but does not rule out working as a teacher later on in life. Even as a teacher he would not abandon civic activity; he would then do it alongside work. Mikael’s story is more drastic; he even changed his major subject from early childhood education to general education because he knows that he will not be working as a teacher but as an expert of some sort. Mikael explains that in the future he want to participate in making a difference and influence society’s flaws at their core.

“My time in SOOL has definitely influenced my future; the spark that turned into a flare during SOOL still burns... For sure I will be active in some sense all the way till the end. What and where, the future will show.” (Mikael)

The remaining four participants, whose careers are more teaching oriented, tell that being active in general has made them ponder what it is in the future that they really want to do career-wise. Some of them think they will alternate between teaching and organizations during their career. Lisa explains that because she got to develop her public performance skills through organizational activities she is interested in training and consulting work as well as teaching. For example Maria explains that even though she is not participating in

any organizational activities right now she wants to in the future; preferably on the national level.

“All these “extra” activities I have done have been an endorsement for my studies. My career desires have been on the more organizational side of the profession for the majority of my studies... at some point I will be working in some sort of an organization or a project” (Anna)

One topic that came up quite unanimously in all of their writings was networking. The participants elaborate that through SOOL and all the other organizations and co-operation partners they have created a wide network that is still in use and will continue to be in the future as well. According to the participants the wide network includes both friendships that will last a lifetime and possible future coworkers, contacts and employers. Half of the participants report that job hunting has been easier because of the network and because their civic activity experience has been seen as an asset.

“I have received job offers because of my time in SOOL and gladly accepted them.” (Lisa)

What is similar in all the narratives is that they either directly or indirectly describe a lifelong path of civic activity. Lawy and Biesta (2006, 37) argue that their term citizenship-as-practice describes the ongoing nature of one’s identity as a citizen. It is a lifelong learning experience and an evolution process. As discussed in the first section of this empirical part of the thesis, civic activity is addictive. This naturally can cause lifelong consequences. All of participants imagined some sort of civic activity in their thoughts on their future and explain for example that their earlier civic activity experiences are a great base for further learning.

6.9. Practicing civic activity outside teacher education

The participants narrate that they have been practicing civic activity rather despite than because of teacher education. They have been active for instance in their student organizations and SOOL, but usually there has not been strong support present from their teacher educators. Some explain that their teacher educators have acknowledged their contribution and even valued it, but they almost never are the ones who introduce different influencing

possibilities or encourage participation on a general level. The participants explain that the knowledge on how and where to influence comes mainly from fellow students or their relatives.

“One goal of the university education is to raise active and critical citizens but it does not work to meeting this goal. I think these skills can be acquired better by participating in influencing work.” (Mikael)

In the PCCATE project interviews teacher students reported that they do not get enough preparation for civic activity through their education, but they do get it from their friends and family (Syrjäläinen et al., 2006, 53). They also highlighted that being active is everyone’s own decision, but that it would help if the teacher education system had more substance linked to the matter. Teacher students should be encouraged to take a stand in educational politics through their studies as well, not just by other quarters (Syrjäläinen et al., 2006, 54). Syrjäläinen et al. (2006, 43) argue that: “Maybe one of the aims for teacher education could be, in addition to encouraging critical thinking and the will of being active, to actually provide for a space where being active is possible.”

The findings of the PCCATE project imply that civic activity in teacher education lies solely on the shoulders of the few eager people, who are spontaneous and usually have gained their knowledge on the matter from other fields of the society. Even though this is not the desired outcome it is better than nothing, because individual people can begin the change of structures (Hansen, 2007, 86). The participants agree; there are always some very supportive people among the teacher education, teachers or students that can act as the catalysts for change. Civic activity can be contagious and like several of the participants remarked it can start from little and evolve into a way of life.

One of the findings of the PCCATE project was that teacher students seem to value a quick graduation and feel that being active would slow their studies (Hansen, 2007, 89). The participants did suffer from time management issues when trying to balance their studies and organizational activities but they all conclude that the experience they gained were definitely worth the trouble.

“I respect the choice of studying quickly and graduating fast but in this case one is entering the working life with just a diploma. My understanding is that the employers are not as interested in your grades as your personality. This is why civic activity during studies

should be emphasized more in my opinion. Through it one learns necessary skills for work, to work with various people, to network and new things about oneself.” (Mikael)

Profitability is a term that has made its way from business to even teacher education. According to McLaren and Fischman (1998, 239) in the US this can be seen as intensification of teaching which can include things like lowering standards of the profession, increasing class sizes or increasing work load per payment. Maximizing results per costs is a reality in teacher education as well; teacher students are encouraged to graduate fast. In other words the product is focused on instead of the process.

7. RELIABILITY AND ETHICS

In this part of the thesis the reliability and ethical issues of the research are discussed. Reliability means that the interpretations of the researcher are equivalent with the reality of the conceptions that are researched. According to Eskola and Suoranta (1998, 211) the examination of reliability has to take the whole research process into consideration.

The research process started from compiling the theoretical framework for the thesis. It seemed challenging at first to find enough relevant literature, but various databases for journals helped to acquire recent research articles. This was a significant improvement, because the field of civic activity and especially civic education is changing constantly.

Qualitative research is always affected by the ambiguity and even contradictions of the data. The nature of the data is open to interpretations and it is the responsibility of the researcher to acknowledge this fact (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998, 218). Eskola and Suoranta (1998, 211) remark that in fact the researcher him or herself is the most central research medium in his or her research. Creswell (2007, 57) argues that the researcher has to reflect on his or her “personal and political background”. In this research’s case these arguments are undeniably valid because I have personal experience that is linked to a great extent to the research topics. During the research process I have systematically pursued a state of mind that is free from preconceptions or bias. The openness of the researcher is important (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998, 211).

The sufficiency of the data has to be evaluated as well (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998, 216). Creswell (2007, 214) recommends that a narrative research should concentrate on just one (or two to three) narratives. Nevertheless in this thesis there are six participants, because the stories they tell are written with a narrow perspective concentrating on civic activity, not their whole life stories.

In this thesis the number of participants was suitable although there would have been a lot more data if all of them would have written the biographical narrative and not just the questionnaire. In retrospect it could have been better to interview the remaining participants that did not want to write the narratives to get more data. On the other hand it is also interesting to observe what they chose to write about; in an interview they probably would not have edited themselves or emphasized certain experiences the same way.

One way to further increase reliability in this research could have been to show the findings to the participants before finalizing the thesis. Then again Eskola and Suoranta (1998, 212) claim that the participants reading the results does not necessarily increase plausibility because they can be “blind to their own situation”. They have not read the other narratives either which makes it difficult to evaluate their own narrative in relation to the other ones.

It is important to remember that the data is always a presentation of just a certain set of cases (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998, 216). In narrative research it means also that truth is not the subject of the research but the perceptions of the participants. A piece of narrative data, for instance a story, is always an interpretation by its narrator.

Confidentiality and anonymity of the participants is a significant ethical matter in research. In this thesis the names of the participants have naturally been changed but it is still possible to draw some conclusions from what they tell about themselves. If the original narratives would have been published the risk of recognition would have been greater because the participants describe in detail and even name organizations they have been working in. The direct quotes selected do not reveal too much information on the participants but potentially at least their friends and family could recognize them. All in all the topic of this research is fortunately not the most sensitive one; the participants were not reluctant to write about their experiences, on the contrary, they shared their narratives gladly.

Another ethical issue is that I know all of the participants personally. I have worked together with some of them but I have met them all through SOOL. During the research process I had to be conscious of my preconceptions of the participants and what I already knew about them in order to then set those aside. It was surprisingly easy to forget the real identities behind the pseudonyms, especially after the narratives were coded and taken apart. In retrospect many of my preconceptions did not even prove to be true and the narratives featured a lot of new information on the participants.

8. CONCLUSION

A teacher opens perspectives, provides tools for understanding the world, introduces old and new ideas, provides spaces for dialogue and intercultural learning, dares to say that there are things which are unethical. (Räsänen, 2011)

The purpose of this thesis was to research teachers as civic actors. The process began with defining civic activity with the help of related terms. Then civic education was discussed first from a historical perspective and then in today's context. The roles of socialization and schools in civic education were contemplated in order to situate the teacher as a civic actor to the surrounding context. Teachers as civic actors were then studied from the critical pedagogy point of view and lastly from a practical perspective. In the end of the theoretical part civic activity's role in teacher education is discussed and two examples of previous studies on teachers as civic actors were presented.

Galston (2001, 217) states that everyone needs to be made a citizen, because it is not an innate quality. It is the joint responsibility of the whole society to assist and support its people through a lifelong process of citizenship. Schools play a major role in society in educating the youth on matters concerning citizenship and encouraging them to voice their opinion and participate. Whether or not they desire this role, teachers are always civic role models, which opens up both a huge opportunity and a responsibility. They have to respond to the challenge and develop themselves as civic actors inside and outside the classroom.

The aim of the research was to study the characteristics of teachers as civic actors both from the theoretical point of view and through empirical research. It can be concluded that teachers who are civic actors promote civic activity through being a role model to their students and to the whole society. These teachers are, as Giroux would define, transformative intellectuals, who are critical thinkers and active agents of change. They believe in themselves, want to influence decision-making and voice their opinions in wide societal debate.

Teachers as civic actors emphasize action through their example, and encourage their students to participate as well. In practice they accomplish this by creating opportunities for

being active by introducing or generating arenas for influencing. Open discussion is another important tool; these teachers inspire their students to think critically and use their voice by hosting debates and using real life references that the students can relate to.

The empirical part of the thesis asked what teachers tell about themselves as civic actors. Based on the findings of the research, teachers' views on being a civic actor are affected at least by their families and friends, surrounding community, possible experiences in civic activity and teacher education to an extent. The participants argue that participation in organizational activities influenced them the most as civic actors.

The characteristics acquired through civic activity that the participants tell about are impressive. They narrate that they have developed and grown as people through their experiences significantly; both through success and difficulties. They have gained a lot of knowledge, and learned about communication and group work. The participants stress that they have learned how to voice their opinions and also gained confidence in their abilities to make a difference.

Both the theoretical and the empirical part demonstrate that civic activity is important for the growth of teachers as civic actors. The civic activity experiences of the participants have transformed them as people, but also as teachers and organizational experts. They narrate that they undeniably are better teachers today because of being active and argue that the skills they acquired through organizational activities are in use every day as teachers as well. The participants imply that civic activity is addictive and support their opinion by narrating about their lifelong connection to it that still stays strong today. They see civic activity as an undoubted part of their future and profession as a teacher or an organizational expert.

Based on the theory and the findings of the research it can be concluded that teacher education should have a more substantial role in the preparation of future teachers as civic actors. Teacher education should provide for the needs of generations to come by ensuring that future teachers are well equipped civic actors. Teacher students need to be introduced to various arenas of influencing in and outside the faculty by their teacher educators. More importantly, they need to be encouraged to participate in action, think critically, and have belief in their ability to influence. Today's active teacher students are tomorrow's teachers as civic actors.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: Description of the narrative and assisting questions

In Finnish

Elämäkerrallinen vapaamuotoinen kirjoitelma, jossa keskityt erityisesti niihin tapahtumiin ja hetkiin elämässäsi jotka ovat ohjanneet sinua tielläsi ”aktiiviseen kansalaisuuteen” ja ihmiseksi, joka haluaa ja valitsee vaikuttaa asioihin ympärillään. Sinun ei tarvitse kuvailla tarkasti niitä organisaatioita ja tahoja joissa olet vaikuttanut; keskity enemmän niihin tunteuksiin joita olet vaikuttamisen kautta kokenut.

Apukysymykset: Tunnetko tehneesi vaikutuksen panoksellasi? Jos vastasit kyllä, miltä se tuntuu? Entä miltä on tuntunut silloin kun et ole onnistunut? Mistä olet saanut motivaatiota käyttää aikaasi järjestötoimintaan? Mieti kokemuksiasi järjestötoiminnasta (myös aikaasi SOOL –aktiivina); opitko jotain uutta? Millaisia taitoja tai ominaisuuksia hankit? (Henkistä kasvua vai käytännön hyötyä?) Oletko hyötynyt oppimastasi myöhemmässä elämässäsi, esimerkiksi nykyisessä työssäsi? Miten olet hyötynyt näistä taidoista? Onko halusi vaikuttaa ja/tai aikasi SOOLissa vaikuttaneet ammatinvalintaasi tai tulevaisuuteesi muulla tavalla?

In English

An informal biographical narrative about your life path concentrating especially on the events and moments that you consider being significant on your growth towards active citizenship. You do not have to describe the organizations themselves that much; emphasize on the way civic activity has made you feel.

Assisting questions: Do you feel that you have made a difference? If so, how has it felt? And how has it felt when things have not worked out? What has been your motivation to use your time to be active? Think about your experiences of civic activity (your time in SOOL as well); did you learn something new? What kind of skills or attributes did you gain? (Mental growth or practical benefit?) Have you needed them later on in your life like at your current job? If you have, how have they benefitted you? Has your desire to influence and/or your time in SOOL affected your career choice or your future in some other way?

Appendix 2: Groups of questions

In Finnish

Aktiivinen kansalaisuus (halu ja valinta vaikuttaa asioihin)

Ohje: Sinun ei tarvitse kuvailla tarkasti niitä organisaatioita ja tahoja joissa olet vaikuttanut; keskity enemmän niihin tuntemuksiin ja tunteisiin joita olet vaikuttamisen kautta kokenut.

1. Mikä on ollut mielestäsi se hetki tai tapahtuma elämässäsi, kun olet ikään kuin lähtenyt mukaan ensimmäistä kertaa vaikuttamaan asioihin?
2. Tunnetko tehneesi vaikutuksen panoksellasi? Jos vastasit kyllä, miltä se tuntuu? Entä miltä on tuntunut silloin kun et ole onnistunut?
3. Mistä olet saanut motivaatiota käyttää aikaasi järjestötoimintaan? Haluaisin myös että mietit erityisesti aikaasi SOOL –aktiivina; opitko jotain uutta kyseisenä aikana? Millaisia taitoja tai ominaisuuksia? Henkistä kasvua vai käytännön hyötyä?
4. Oletko hyötynyt oppimastasi myöhemmässä elämässäsi, esimerkiksi nykyisessä työssäsi? Miten olet hyötynyt näistä taidoista?
5. Onko halusi vaikuttaa ja/tai aikasi SOOLissa vaikuttaneet ammatinvalintaasi tai tulevaisuuteesi muulla tavalla?

Kiitoksia suuresti vastauksistasi!

In English

Civic activity and active citizenship (the desire and choice to influence)

Instructions: You do not have to describe the organizations themselves that much; emphasize on the way civic activity has made you feel.

1. In your opinion what has been the moment or event in your life when you have engaged in civic activity and influencing the very first time?
2. Do you feel that you have made a difference? If so, how has it felt? And how has it felt when things have not worked out?
3. What has been your motivation to use your time to be active? Think about your experiences of civic activity (your time in SOOL as well); did you learn something new? What kind of skills or attributes did you gain? Mental growth or practical benefit?
4. Have you needed them later on in your life like at your current job? If you have, how have they benefitted you?
5. Has your desire to influence and/or your time in SOOL affected your career choice or your future in some other way?

Thank you very much for answering!