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GROWING UP RADICAL? SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S WORLDVIEW CONSTRUCTION IN SOCIETAL EDUCATION

This presentation addresses the role of societal education in the supporting of worldview development along pupils' life trajectories. The framing derives from the Academy of Finland funded project 'Growing up radical? The role of educational institutions in guiding young people's worldview construction' (2018-2022). In the current societal situation where national, political and secular identities often seem vying with cultural ethnic and religious identities in a contested "public sphere" (Habermas, 2006), the examination of children's and young people's worldview development is particularly timely. It is particularly important to pay attention to the role of educational institutions as value transmitting contexts, as the schools' curricula, ethos and the peer communities therein are important elements outlining young people's worldviews and everyday lives (Benjamin 2017). In addition to the social aspects of schools, our presently on-going research project is interested in the role of worldview education as a disciplinary context for discussing and developing both individual and group worldviews (e.g. Finnish National Board of Education, 2014; Kaupp, 2017.) By *worldview* we refer to individual's ontological, epistemological and ethical orientation to the world (Riitaoja, Poulter & Kuusisto 2010); their holistic entity of values, beliefs, and knowledge, together constructing the ontological foundation for meaning-making and making choices (Poulter 2013). It functions for giving satisfying meanings to immanent reality (Poulter, Riitaoja & Kuusisto 2016, 68), and a mental framework within which individuals interpret the nature of reality and the nature and purpose of human life, evaluate what is good and what is evil, and how one should live (Vidal 2008). It is shaped by and intertwined in one's lived experiences, self-understandings and sense of belonging. With societal polarisation, the role of societal educational arenas as spaces for negotiating public and private identities (e.g. Kuusisto 2011; Poulter 2013; Kuusisto et al 2016) is growing in importance. This presentation will address this topic through empirical examples from pupils in different age groups, reflected with a theoretical framing of the classroom space as the "safe space" (Weisse 2016) or "third space" (Blabha 1994; 2004).