Chapter 4

The cultural and social foundations of ethical educational leadership in Finland

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Abstract This chapter provides the Finnish scope on cultural and social foundations of ethical educational leadership. Finland is often seen as an outlier. Predominant transnational trends are recognized but they tend to reach Finland with a delay and manifest themselves somewhat differently from the mainstream. There are contextual reasons for the deviance. We will present these focusing on how cultural and social aspects have been evolving in Finland. Furthermore, we will analyse the constituents, organisation and responsibilities embedded in the Finnish education system. This analysis makes use of contemporary education policy documents including legislation and other regulations, curricula, and trade union ethical recommendations for educational leaders as well as of research on them. In the analysis, we illustrate values and general ethical principles behind educational leadership practices in Finland. In addition, we describe recent empirical results on how educational leaders define moral professionalism as a part of their educational leadership competences and professional development plans. As a conclusion, we provide a characterization of the concept of educational leadership as it is understood in the culture of Finland and by Finnish educators. These are based on the analyses for the present study supported with other relevant contemporary research.

Key words: educational leadership, Finland, foundation, culture, society, ethical leadership

4.1. Overview of the historical, political and cultural embeddedness of the educational system in Finland

Finland is often seen as an outlier in international studies on education (Simola, Kauko, Varjo, Kalalahti & Sahlström, 2017; Risku & Tian, 2020). One can identify similar transnational trends as elsewhere, but they tend to reach Finland with a delay and to realise differently from the mainstream (Risku, Kanervio & Pulkkinen, 2016; Risku & Tian, 2020). This also affects Finnish ethical educational leadership.

According to Simola et al. (2017), the Finnish deviances derive from Finland being geo-politically peripheral and socially flat. One can simplify the historical development of independent Finland into three societal periods. The first one focused on nation building from 1917 to the 1960s (Risku, 2014). The second one strived for the Nordic welfare state model from the 1960s to the 1990s (Stenvall, Airaksinen, Nyholm, af Ursin & Tiihonen, 2016). Since the 1990s, Finland has been finalising its urbanisation and opening up economically and culturally (Risku et al., 2020; Simola et al., 2017).

We will begin our overview with Finland's efforts to attain the Nordic welfare state. According to Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) modern welfare states are products of the Second World War era. In general, the concept of welfare state refers to societies providing their citizens as a basic right sufficient standards of living and minimum levels of security to the risks of life (Pusa, 1997). How societies try to do this varies. What characterises Nordic welfare states is the inclusiveness and depth of the role of the state in the effort (Hilson, 2008).

Typical of Finland, its effort started later than in the other Nordic countries, but when it started, its essential reforms were implemented rapidly (Siltala, 2017). Due to the later start, the Nordic welfare state developments are more recent in Finland than in the other Nordic countries. (Simola, et al.,

2017). Hence, it may be that their effects also continue to be more intensively embedded in the Finnish culture and politics.

In relation to education, it is important to note that education policy was regarded as a vital part of social policy in the effort to reach the Nordic welfare state (Tian & Risku, 2019). Furthermore, within education policy the abolishment of the parallel education system and the implementation of the comprehensive education one were one of the most fundamental reforms for the Nordic welfare state (Ahonen, 2012).

The grounding principles of the Nordic welfare state model that have been steering developing Finnish society and education system particularly comprise of striving for equality (Risku, 2014), developing society with peaceful measures through legislation and policy-making (Katajala, 2002), and practicing trilateral collaboration amongst the state, employer and employee organisations (Pusa, 1997). These principles in several ways also construct the main principles for the Finnish educational ethical leadership.

According to Simola et al. (2017), the Finnish characteristics of the Nordic welfare state model have established a strong belief in societal institutions and in the ideology of corporatism. These can, in turn, be linked with the concept of trust often referred to, when discussing the Finnish education system.

The Finnish understanding of corporatism emphasises the state to include various societal actors in political decision-making, and to allow them autonomy in their own areas (Simola et al., 2017). However, as Simola et al. (2017) state, the transnational notion of corporatism stressing the role of corporate interest groups in public decision-making has not made Finland a strong civil society. Rather, Finland has been characterised by strong state governance. For example, the Nordic welfare state, and especially the comprehensive education system, were implemented with a predominantly centralised state-driven system-oriented governance (Risku, 2011; Risku, 2014).

At the turn of the 1980s to the 1990s, Finland began to meet with demographic, economic and ideological changes that dramatically altered the cultural and political embeddedness of the Finnish education system that existed when constructing the Finnish welfare state (Risku et al., 2016). As for the demographic changes, the aging and move of population to cities and particularly to southern Finland reached levels that began to endanger local authorities' capacities to provide public welfare services, including education (Risku, 2014). This challenge was stressed by the economic depression in the 1990s, and this stress has continued with the economic recession since 2008 (Simola et al., 2017).

The 1995 accession in the European Union signified Finland's cultural, economic and societal opening up in the international community. However, due to its historical development, Finland adopted the prevailing transnational trends, like neo-liberalism, somewhat later than most European countries, and due its demographic and economic challenges in a different manner. (Risku, 2014; Simola et al., 2017). Regarding the latter, neither neo-liberalism nor New Public Management, for example, were able to fundamentally alter the ethos of comprehensive education (Ahonen, 2001). Furthermore, instead of merely diminishing and making state administration more efficient, it centralised power to it and within its consistently streamlined governance (Yliaska, 2014).

One of the reasons for Finland adopting neo-liberalism later than most other countries was it attaining the Nordic welfare state later than the other Nordic countries (Risku et al., 2016). Another reason was that Finland had for a long time Left-Centre governments that were not inclined to Right-Wing ideologies. This changed in 1987, when Finland got its first Right-Centre government after the long recess. (Simola et al., 2017). The changes that the 1987 government and its successors have influenced school leaders' ethical leadership in several ways. We will describe this in more detail in part 4.3.

The governments of the last decade of the 1900s and of the first decade of the 2000s, typically of Finland, rapidly reformed the centralised state-driven and system-oriented governance into a decentralised information-based and result-oriented one (Risku, 2014). In this process, the labour

division between the state and local authorities was radically rearranged (Risku et al. 2016), as well as the system for educational governance, which today can be presented like in Figure 1 (Risku, 2018).

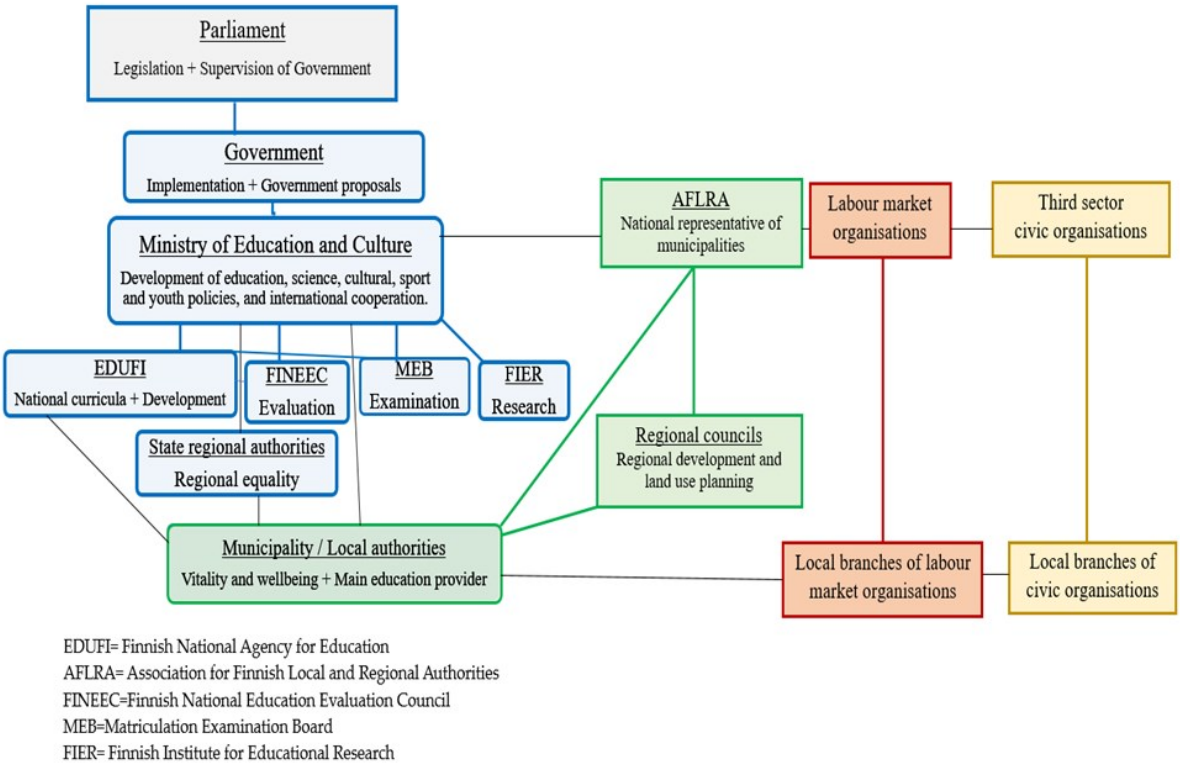

Figure 1. Governance structure for Finnish education system (Risku, 2018).

Due to the historical, cultural and political development, the present system for Finnish educational governance comprises four main lines. They represent the state, local authorities, labour market organisations, and civic organisations. All the four lines of governance typically but incoherently include the local, regional, national and transnational level.

There is a strong tendency for enacting principles of democratic individualism and corporatism in the overall educational decision-making (Risku, 2014; Ryynänen, 2004; Simola et al., 2017). All actors and institutions in all governance lines and on all their levels can interact and form alliances to advance their own agendas with whatever actor and institution in the system (Risku et al., 2020), as well as bypass hierarchy (Paulsen, Nihlfors, Brinkjar & Risku, 2016; Norris, Aspland, MacDonald, Schostak & Zamorski,1996). This also constantly takes place (Risku et al., 2016; Simola et al., 2017) making the system both dynamic and complex. This also creates constant challenges how to balance governance, as stakeholders' relationships alter all the time. (Risku et al., 2020). The state does not bear similar financial responsibility for providing educational services nor provide earmarked funding for education as it used to, but various education providers bear the responsibility for providing the mandated services (Aho, Pitkänen & Sahlberg, 2006; Risku, 2014). The transnational deregulation has discontinued various regulations, for example, for class sizes and inspections replacing them with national and local evaluation. (Kanervio & Risku, 2009; Lapiolahti, 2007; Laukkanen, 1998; Risku, 2014).

Finland has not followed the transnational strict accountability and quality assurance trend though (Risku et al., 2016; Simola et al., 2017). This is often rewarded to the notion of the Finnish trust. There may be other reasons, too, however. In the midst of the economic distresses and New Public Management streamlining of public services, the number of administrative people on all levels has been constantly decreased hampering how to follow up and especially document following-up educational services (Hirvi, 1996; Kanervio & Risku, 2009, Norris et al., 1996; Rajanen, 2000). Furthermore, administration, follow-up and its documentation have been delegated to all actors on

all levels to such a degree that there is perhaps no need for extensive external evaluation systems. A light national one may be sufficient. However, it may not be able to offer the detailed evaluation data as more rigorous evaluation systems in several countries. (Risku, 2014).

For school leaders, the autonomy and responsibility in the complex and dynamic governance system creates ample space for school leadership, and, hence, challenges for their ethical educational leadership. For example, the Finnish curriculum system comprises of the national and local level, extended usually to school and increasingly to regional level to allow decision-making on the various levels. The national core curricula demand education providers and schools to include various stakeholders and interest groups in their curriculum compilation, enactment and evaluation processes. The National Agency for Education, responsible for the core curricula, consistently does this, too, when reforming and developing national curricula. On all levels, there is a lot of space for decision-making. Alliances are formed, for example, to improve and increase services, and to save money. (Tian & Risku, 2019).

4.2. Brief characterization of the concept of education in Finland

Finnish education system has been famous for its good learning results, even if school contexts have become more challenging in recent years. The results of PISA (Program for International Students Assessment) have shown that Finland is a model country of basic education. Finnish students' reading and problem-solving skills, for example, were excellent in PISA (OECD, 2001; 2004; Finnish Institute for Educational Research, 2020).

Behind of this success are, for example, Finnish teachers and teacher education that have contributed to students' abilities to achieve these results. Finnish teacher education is research-based and has high standards. Finnish teacher education offers teachers tools for inquiry-oriented, reflective practice and the continuous development and innovation of their work. Thus, Finnish teachers and school leaders can be called reflective professionals and practitioners, and enjoy pedagogical autonomy, even if evaluation and national examinations somewhat limit it. (Estola, Lauriala, Nissilä & Syrjälä, 2007.) How ethical educational leadership is conducted in Finnish day-care centres and schools is something that school leaders and teachers try to do together.

As for the concept of *education,* it is a complex one in Finland, as in all countries. Increasingly complex it becomes, when trying to describe it in the English language. We will here describe *education* as corresponding to the Finnish concept of *koulutus*. Lehtisalo and Raivola (1992) regard it as the overarching concept when using education policy terminology.

How Finns conceive *education* is increasingly challenged by how they view *learning*. According to Heikkinen and Tynjälä (2012), *learning* comprises of formal, non-formal and informal learning. *Education* is often interpreted as confined to formal *learning* in Finland. Hence, Finns are trying to renew how they provide *education* to include in it also non-formal and informal *learning*. Heikkinen and Tynjälä (2012) refer to this tendency as informalisation. There are also efforts to formalise non-formal and informal learning so that their outcomes can be both recognised and accredited in the education system. The covid-19 pandemic explicitly has showed how extending the conception of education is also an ethical matter. Schools have to be able to increasingly both provide and recognise various kind of learning and support it.

In accordance with the Nordic welfare state model, *education* is very much about *socialisation* in Finland (Kivistö & Vaherva, 1972). After the nation-building period of 1917-1960s, the societal focus moved to establishing equality based on the Nordic welfare state model. As in other societal developments in Finland, education policy has had a significant role in attaining the overall societal goals. (Tian & Risku, 2019).

The general aim has been that all citizens can educate themselves. . The parallel education system was replaced with the comprehensive education one in 1972-1977 leading into a holistic unified education system with no dead ends. Despite of this, marginalisation is still a challenge for the Finnish education system. As one effort to diminish marginalisation, the present, prime minister Sanna

Marin's government, extended free compulsory education to upper secondary education starting in August 2021. In addition, the Finnish education system is free from pre-school to higher education, and supported with extensive student-care and financial aid. (Aho et al., 2006). These have all a significant role in Finnish ethical educational leadership how this system supports equality.

In addition to bringing all children and youth within the same education system and schools to grow and learn together, the Finnish education system attempts to advance equality by following the radical conception of equality. According to it, equality is not an empirical but a moral concept. The education system is to be able to rectify societal injustices with positive discrimination. This means that resources and support are directed to where they are needed most. The education system has to be able to identify people's needs and to meet them with corresponding support. In accordance, the Finnish conception of equality is not the same thing as uniformity. (Lehtisalo & Raivola, 1992.)

In fact, as the world is becoming increasingly diverse, how public services, like education, support people has to be able to take into consideration the growing diversity in people's needs and goals. This is challenging and transforming how public services, including education, have to be organised and enacted. As one result, rules and regulations no longer suffice to steer public administration, but values obtain a larger role in how governance functions (Ryynänen, 2004).

In a multi-layer educational conceptual context like this, it is necessary to define the main concepts of moral and professional dimensions in education because teaching is a moral profession (see, e.g., Sockett, 1993; Carr, 1996, 2000; Hansen, 2001a). The concepts of *ethics* and *morality* have been used with different emphases in many studies (Tirri, 1999a). According to Colnerud (2006, 367), ethics refers to "the theory of morality and the considered principles of conduct" while moral has come to stand for "every day, not often reflected, conduct".

In other words, ethics can be understood as a scientific discipline and a more abstract concept that investigates the moral practice of ethical premises. Hansen (2001b, 827) has investigated teaching practices and work as a moral activity. He prefers the term 'moral' to the term 'morality', when referring to the teaching context. According to him, morality refers to a particular set of values of a particular group, community or society, whereas "the idea of teaching as a moral endeavour" provides an opportunity to view both an orientation toward practice and the significance of work, as well as a specific family of values.

In addition, the moral dimension is evident in a larger sense in the educational context, not just in teaching. Zubay and Soltis (2005, 3) stated that the moral dimension is present in education because "education itself is a moral endeavour". The moral dimension is evident, for example, in classroom instruction, in the development of human beings and in discussions between students and teachers.

Moral interactions occur between school leaders and teachers, as well as amongst teachers, between teachers and their other cooperation partners, and in relation to students and parents. An open discussion between school leaders, teachers, students, parents and administrators is needed in moral education how to find common values in the teaching of ethics and in ways to enlist the cooperation of the whole school community in moral discussions, and in sensitive interactions. (Zubay & Soltis, 2005, 4.)

In this chapter, *moral* refers to the educational practice, such as moral leadership and moral roles, whereas *ethics* and *ethical* correspond to more philosophical and abstract concepts, such as professional ethics. When referring to previous research, we use the concepts of moral and ethical in the same way as the researchers used them in their studies.

4.3. Presentation of constituents and principles of school organisation and responsibilities of leaders from a social and cultural point of view

The Finnish education policy and governance system steer from the top and construct from the bottom, thus following the Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) Fourth Way Model. This establishes the essential social and cultural standpoint for Finnish schools and their staff.

In accordance with Figure 1, the state steers the education system in collaboration with the other actors. Legislation and other regulations mandate education providers, but they have autonomy to determine how they organise their provisions of education. Legislation and other regulations do not obligate local educational staff directly but via the local decision-making. Hence, school leaders and teachers do not serve the state but the education providers. These are mainly local authorities. (Risku et al., 2020).

According to legislation (e.g. Basic Education Act 1998/628), every school has to have a principal, and the principal is responsible for everything that takes place in the school. Regarding personnel, legislation merely states that there has to be sufficient staff. What this all means in practice is determined in local steering documents as obligated in legislation. These include, for example, the local ordinance, annual work, biannual equality and four-year security plan. In addition, the regulations obligate education providers to together with their staff agree and document how employees are involved in decision-making, and how to handle matters like discrimination, improving and maintaining employees' competence, occupational safety, and employees' privacy at work. (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland, n.d.).

The two-, and in practice three-tier, curriculum system (national-local-school) allows education providers and their schools a lot of autonomy how to interpret, translate and enact education. For example, the 2014 national core curriculum for comprehensive education includes 180 issues that have to be decided locally. (Tian & Risku, 2019). Similar to cooperation within educational organisations, legislation and other regulations require education providers and schools to agree and document plans how to cooperate and guarantee involvement with students and their parents.

Furthermore, the Administrative Procedure Act (434/2003) describes the foundations for good administration determining how educational staff is to conduct its work. The key principles (values) include following legislation, serving in an appropriate manner, providing advice, using appropriate language and cooperating. The leading principle is that public services are to function and treat people as they expect them to do based on legislation and other regulations. As Ryynänen (2004) states, it is no longer enough to master and follow legislation and other regulations; school leaders and teachers have to know and understand their spirit, and to act in accordance to their values.

Within this frame of the education system, members of school communities encounter moral dilemmas caused by, among others, diversity in everyday school life. Moral dilemmas concern what is the right and just thing to do, for example, when integrating multicultural families into the school communities or settling the differences between the staff (Hanhimäki, 2011). Moral issues are always complicated to solve because they handle our rights, duties and obligations to one another. In addition, moral principles affect solutions to moral dilemmas. Thus, it is important to clarify and justify one's own personal and professional moral principles because different moral principles can conflict in real life moral dilemmas, and people have to think about the priorities of such principles. (Strike, Haller & Soltis, 2005.) According to Nash (2002, 1), the idea of "real world" ethics describes this reality as "a complex admixture of personal, social, and professional morality". Moral and morality are very complicated and contextual concepts, and definitions of these concepts vary across cultures and contexts. However, moral always has something to do with values, with dilemmas and with right and wrong.

According to Sockett (1993, ix, 9), Hoyle (1980) stated that when the aim is in "the quality of a person's professional practice", which is judged by professional standards, it is a question of professionalism. According to previous Finnish studies, the basis for educational leaders' and teachers' moral professionalism and professional ethics is their values (Husu & Tirri, 2007; Tirri & Husu, 2006; Hanhimäki & Tirri, 2008; 2009). Hence, moral professionalism can be defined as the quality of educators' professional practices (Sockett, 1993), which are judged by professional standards and codes of ethics, and become evident in educators' moral practices and roles in the everyday life of schools (Hanhimäki, 2011).

However, teachers are unfamiliar with the moral form of discourse and do not possess the vocabulary of moral language (Sockett, 1993, 13-14; see also Lyons, 1990; Tirri, 1999b). The concept

of teaching as a moral profession is still in the midst of complexities and tensions, in spite of the research evidence. According to Campbell (2008, 4), “despite the ethical nature of teaching as a moral profession, the maintenance of a clear moral orientation to the practice of teaching is not a guaranteed characteristic that is naturally embedded in the role of teacher". In addition, there should be more ethics teaching in teacher education. Even ethically developed teachers can also have “blind spots”: teachers cannot always recognize the moral dimension of their practice because educational language concentrates on problems that can be solved technically (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2002, 25; Huebner, 1996, 268).

To support and guide their members in ethical matters, several trade union associations have established their own ethical guidelines that reflect common professional values and principles, which should be visible in their members’ work. In the field of education, Finnish teachers got their own codes in 1998 with an update in 2014, principals in 2018, municipal directors of education in 2019, and early childhood education professionals in 2020.

The Code of Ethics for Finnish Teachers (1998; 2014) is defined by the Trade Union of Education (OAJ). The beginning of the code emphasises that educational professionals must have both good professional skills and ethical principles, and that these cannot replace each other. Norms and legislation define via education providers’ steering documents teachers’ basic tasks and responsibilities, and the contents of teaching is specified in the curricula. Behind the ethics lies neither compulsion nor external control, but a foundation based on international agreements, as the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and on national ones, like the Administrative Procedure Act (434/2003), as agreed on the local level.

Four main values lie behind teachers’ professional ethics: human worth, honesty, justice and freedom. Teachers’ ethical principles concern both teachers’ relationships with themselves and with other people, like pupils and colleagues, as well as their relationships with work and in cooperation with homes, the surrounding communities, and with the larger society. (Code of Ethics for Finnish Teachers, 1998; 2014.)

The main contents of the Principal’s Ethical Code (2018) by the Finnish Association of Principals (SURE) state that schooling is at the core of principal’s work. In addition, the code emphasizes that the principal’s profession is caring in two main meanings: it is both communication between the school community and the society, and taking care of one’s own school community. Furthermore, the code underlines equality, respect, encouragement and hope.

The Code of Ethics for Finnish Municipal Directors of Education (2019) by the Finnish Association of Educational Experts describes what ethical duties the municipal directors have. These essentially include promoting and securing the fulfilment of citizens’ cultural rights. The main values are equality, respect, encouragement, trust, professional and sustainable development, and hope.

Finally, the Ethical Principles for the Professionals in Early Childhood Education (2020) by the Trade Union for the Public and Welfare Sectors have as their starting points children’s rights, respect for people and environment, and support for staff. The main values of these principles, in turn, are respect, equality, cooperation, encounter, professional development, responsibility, trust, and wellbeing.

4.4. Illustration of values and great principles of justice on which leadership practices are based within the educational community

In the educational context, the values of educators are always in a dialogue with parents’ and children’s values. Hence, educators must be aware of both their personal values and the ethical standards of the teaching profession. (see Tirri & Husu, 2002.) Educators can have different moral orientations towards moral dilemmas, such as orientations of justice, care and truthfulness. Equal respect and the ideal of reciprocity are essential for the justice orientation, ideal of attention and response to need in a care orientation (Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988), and for the aim of truth in

education in truthfulness (Oser, 1991). In mature moral thinking, justice and caring are connected (Juujärvi, 2003) and complementary.

Day's (2005) multi-perspective study on successful principals in challenging schools revealed that vision and distributed leadership are accompanied by strong core values and beliefs, an abiding sense of agency, identity, moral purpose, resilience, and trust. These characteristics could also be heard in educators' moral voices in Hanhimäki's (2011) study on challenging Finnish urban schools. Principals constantly mentioned values and moral purpose in their narration. Similarly, teachers and a deacon reflected these concepts in their experiences with their principals and in school life (Hanhimäki & Tirri, 2008; Hanhimäki, 2008b; Hanhimäki & Tirri, 2009; Hanhimäki, 2008a).

In the focus of ethical leadership, there is the creation of an ethical and educational community in which people "live well together and in which children learn how to live well together in the larger community" (Strike, 2007, 146). According to Strike (2007, xv), ethics concern the question "How shall we live well together?". Since "schools should be good educational communities", Strike (2007, xv) stated that school leaders should obtain information on the study of ethics from the viewpoint of "what makes a school a good educational community", and this way create good moral education (Strike, 2008). Hanhimäki (2011) used the concept of moral leadership more than that of ethical leadership, because the focus of moral leadership is on the practice of teaching and leadership. In other words, moral leadership describes how ethical norms are applied in everyday school life in principals' work, in their interactions with others, and in the creation of an ethical and educational community.

Hanhimäki (2011) investigated educators' moral professionalism in challenging urban Finnish schools. The main research themes in the original articles considered moral leadership, teachers' ethical sensitivity in critical incidents, and cooperation in moral education between school and church (Hanhimäki & Tirri, 2008; Hanhimäki, 2008b; Hanhimäki & Tirri, 2009; Hanhimäki, 2008a). The term educator refers to all educators working within the school: principals, teachers and a deacon in the context of four urban schools (Hanhimäki 2011).

Hanhimäki's (2011) study formed part of the international Socrates Comenius project (2005-2008), which aimed to investigate urban schools as challenging learning environments in nine European countries. The main purpose of the project was to explore principals and their successful leadership in challenging urban schools. Two of the four published articles were about principals, their moral roles and profiles in challenging urban Finnish schools (Hanhimäki & Tirri, 2008; Hanhimäki, 2008b). In addition, principals and their moral leadership were considered in other original articles (Hanhimäki & Tirri, 2009; Hanhimäki, 2008a).

The Finnish educators' moral voices in relation to themselves, to other people and their work, and to society emphasized nine main themes that described moral professionalism in interaction between educators and their urban school contexts. These themes were moral leadership, the development and evaluation of process, moral sensitivity, gender, values, student well-being, multi-professional cooperation, families and parental involvement, and moral school culture. The loudest moral voices heard and repeated most often in the educators' narration were caring, cooperation, respect, commitment and professionalism. (Hanhimäki, 2011.)

For the purposes of the present chapter, we analysed 11 portfolios of ethical leadership. The students in the intermediate studies of Educational Leadership at the Institute of Educational Leadership, University of Jyväskylä made the portfolios as their final assignments for their course on ethical leadership (5 ECTS credits) during the academic year of 2019-2020. The course aimed at supporting students to understand the meaning of ethical questions and values for the development of their own professional identities and educational leadership. In addition, the course was to assist them to recognize, analyze and interpret ethical phenomena in their own working environments, to specify the characteristics of the ethical atmosphere of their organizations, and to lead value discussions in their organizations.

The students, who were practicing educational leaders in various positions and levels of education, made two pre-assignments before writing their portfolios. The first one handled their career path to

leadership, self-knowledge, capabilities and humanity. The second one was about easy and challenging ethical dilemmas that they had encountered in their work as an educational leader or teacher.

In the portfolios, the students were asked to use both their pre-assignments and literature, when they were describing and considering their work as ethical leaders and the ethical leadership of their organizations. In addition, the students could choose their own points of view on ethical leadership: what was interesting for them and for their professional development.

At the Institute of Educational Leadership, one of the main learning theories used is integrative pedagogy, which is a model for expertise development. In this model, expertise is constituted by four basic elements: theoretical and conceptual knowledge; practical and experiential knowledge; self-regulative knowledge; and socio-cultural knowledge. These forms of knowledge are closely integrated with one another in high-level expertise. (Heikkinen, Jokinen & Tynjälä, 2012.) Integrative pedagogy combines these forms of knowledge in learning situations, and this model of pedagogy was also the lens for these final assignments.

The portfolios were at least 15 pages long each, and the students emphasized different personal themes of ethical leadership in their texts. Altogether, the data were about 170 pages. All these students, except for one, worked as educational leaders in their schools or municipalities, and the one who did not work as a leader had a long teaching experience.

The students' definitions of ethical leadership were both very positive and unanimous: every one of them included a definite meaning of ethics in their leadership. Their descriptions of ethical leadership were multidimensional and personal such as "Ethical leadership is like a glue that makes leadership consistent and streamlined and creates trust and well-being at the same time." (female vice-principal), "Ethical leadership helps to build the best possible working community where everyone can do together and in a constructive way work for the basic task." (male teacher), " Ethical leadership affects behind everything in my leadership. It is one of the cornerstones in good leadership but personally the most important one for me." (male principal).

Some of the students told that they had already put the Principal's Ethical Code (2018) on their wall, and all of them defined their own codes of ethics in their portfolios. One student wrote: "The Code of Ethics for Finnish Principals will go with me throughout my leadership career. I will rewrite it in the future so that it will look like me with examples and nuances." (male principal). All the students described how they have to develop their ethical leadership during their whole careers, for example, "I hope that I could develop my ethical leadership, so that all members in our school community both the staff and students could feel safety and learn and grow as human beings. "(female principal).

The students positively described their assignments that combined different forms of knowledge. During their studies, they had made their own professional development plans and each of them thanked for the portfolios commenting that they were a great finalization for their studies, for instance, "With the help of this portfolio, I have analyzed my ethical leadership and increased my self-knowledge and maybe my self-confidence as a leader a little, too. I believe that it is easier to justify my own ethical point of view with the help of the thinking work of this course." (female principal), "My aim in this portfolio was to clarify for myself what kind of an ethical leader I am. This assignment was a great possibility for that. Making this portfolio brightened things that have been important ones in my leadership work. At the same time, ethical leadership became a more casual concept and tool for me. Theories melted into practices and helped me to describe what is important and inalienable in leadership for me." (female principal).

4.5. Characterization of the concept of ethical educational leadership as it is understood in the culture of Finland and by Finnish educators

When we describe the concept of educational leadership from the Finnish point of view, we simply refer to the phenomenon of leadership in the field of education (Risku, 2020). In relation to ethical educational leadership, we can see certain main values and ethical principles throughout the educational system.

First, striving for equality based on the Nordic welfare state ideology constitutes the fundamental ethical principle on all levels of our educational and societal system. Second, taking care of all individuals in their individual educational and life paths in accordance to their own needs and goals characterises our system in addition to equality. Third, multi-professional collaboration to support the well-being and development of people of all ages has a long tradition in the Finnish educational system.

As the rearranged labour division between the state and local authorities provides a lot of space for ethical educational leadership, it also challenges every educational professional's agency and autonomy. This demands sophisticated abilities for ethical consideration and for moral practices. This, in turn, creates challenges for our educational system how to support educators and educational leaders in their professional development.

In previous research as well as in our empirical findings, we can see the growing role of value-based leadership at the same time when complexity, unexpected changes, diversity and different individual needs increase. When we think about our current and future society and citizens, we can influence our students' ethical, intercultural and inter-religious skills by emphasizing citizenship education in the curriculum and implementing it at the practical level in schools (Holm, 2012). There is a need for education for future educators and educational leaders to prepare them to face this cultural and religious pluralism (Hanhimäki, 2012).

Overall, we have to develop our educational leadership and teacher education so that it can better respond to the needs of professional development, in order to make it flexible and to be able to cope with the consistent challenges and continuous changes. As our Institute of Educational Leadership case study showed when students have possibilities to make reflective ethical studying as part of their professional development closely connected with their moral practices, the results can be very promising. Reflection on moral virtues and the moral dimension of leadership should be an integral part of educators' and educational leaders' education to support their value-based leadership work (Eisenschmidt, Kuusisto, Poom-Valickis & Tirri, 2019). Citing Institute of Educational Leadership, University of Jyväskylä students, ethical leadership can modify the cornerstone for educational leadership that carries and supports individuals and communities during both good and bad days.

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