

Revitalising the Ideals of Higher Education

Educating Students for Life as Professionals and Citizens
in a Complex World

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<p>The aims of higher education have always been subject to debate and opposing opinions. In an increasingly complex world with many global challenges, the aims of higher education are once more debated. Furthermore, a growing international student body is also challenging what students should be educated for. How does these factors affect the aims of higher education and how should the university prepare students for this complex world?</p> <p>This partly inductive, normative case study of the University of Helsinki consists of 11 qualitative interviews from across faculties with representatives from 11 different international master's programs. Through dialogical interviews these questions were explored. Martha Nussbaum's theory of cosmopolitan citizenship and the three abilities of critical thinking, world citizenship and narrative imagination alongside theory on political socialization and the broader scholarly debate on the aims of higher education provide the foundation for the thematic analysis.</p> <p>The findings indicate that the ideals of cosmopolitan citizenship are still prevalent in the interviewees' thinking about the skills and attitudes that students need. At the same time, many of the interviewees were not sure whether these skills and attitudes were being sufficiently developed, and many said that not enough was being done. This raises questions as to whether these skills, which are often not subject-area specific, can be brushed off as 'nice to have's' or whether there are real consequences if not ensuring that these skills and attitudes are approached in the same manner as subject-area knowledge. Based on the alignment between the interviews and Nussbaum's cosmopolitan citizenship, it can be argued that what makes students good professionals is also central to making them good citizens. This study argues that students need a strong ethical, moral and value-based foundation to make them both responsible professionals and citizens. It should be explicitly planned for. This might be challenged by external pressures pushing for optimization, effectiveness and seeing education as primarily fulfilling companies' HR needs alongside incentives structures that might not encourage teachers to prioritise teaching these skills.</p> <p>The findings of this study indicates that the skills of Nussbaum's cosmopolitan citizenship are valued in the program representatives' thinking, yet there seems to be a lack of awareness as to how these skills are being developed in practice. This study encourages a more active discussion to clearly articulate what the aims of higher education should be in the 21st century and how that should be put into practice.</p>			
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1

Introduction

What is the main aim of higher education? This is a question that has been at the centre of discussion through the years, both in the academic sphere (Boulton & Lucas, 2011) but equally so in media, government and international organisations, such as OECD and the EU. The demands and aims of higher education have always been pushed and pulled by many different interests, both inside and outside the university. Some would argue the main role of higher education is to ensure a highly skilled workforce; others claim that it is equally important to ensure the personal development of the students to support them finding their place in the world. Others again focus on education as a way to gain skills to help solve problems in the surrounding society or educating students to become good citizens.

The world is increasingly complex and full of ‘wicked problems’, referring to problems that are inherently ambiguous, hard to define, with no clear solution due to their changing nature (Raisio, Puustinen & Vartiainen, 2018). Such problems are becoming more prevalent, including the role of technology and AI in our lives (Frank et. Al. 2019); the threats of climate change and inequality (Lotz-Sistka, Wals, Kronlid & McGarry, 2015); misinformation, post-truth and fake news (Roozenbeek & van der Linden, 2019) and on top of that a global pandemic (Karalis & Raikou, 2020). All of this is being exacerbated by deepening globalization. These developments and how to address them are becoming increasingly central to defining the aim of institutions of higher education, especially in democratic societies (Harkavy, 2006; Gallagher, 2018; Pee & Vululleh, 2020). How does all these challenges influence the aims of higher education? What exactly should a university education prepare its graduates for in a world of wicked problems? And how might the way students are educated be connected with the health of democratic societies?

Universities have played a crucial societal role throughout history. They have been central in civilizing nations and educating populations and their leadership; they have been beacons of knowledge, intellectual curiosity, justice, progress and exploration (Hrubos, 2011). They are seen as a central part of a well-functioning democracy, providing reliable knowledge and

educating future citizens with critical minds not easily swayed and manipulated by populists. They have been the breeding ground for activism, social justice movements and have empowered future leaders within research, politics, business and much more (Connell, 2019; Altbach & Cohen, 1990). They have an inherently global outlook, due to the nature of scientific findings, which are not confined to one nation; they contribute to the advancement of all. At the same time, the knowledge, research and ability to make scientific arguments and convince the public have also been used to make the case for inequality, racism and superiority of certain groups in society (Bhopal, 2007). Furthermore, universities have historically been for a smaller, wealthy elite, and some would argue that we are seeing a new elitism (Kivistö & Tirronen, 2012). Universities are by many still seen as removed from the everyday life of the rest of society.

From being seen as an institution with a strong emphasis on a humanist worldview to a factory-like environment mass-producing skilled workers for employers; the university has gone through many phases and have been facing contrasting demands and criticisms. The research, education and knowledge creation, and contribution to public discourse that stem from the university community matter. Furthermore, the people who study in institutions of higher education are receiving a privilege and power that can have wide-ranging consequences and profoundly shape the future. The values, practices and mindsets students learn in the university, acquired, among other things, through how teaching is done, can shape students' minds and their thinking on issues such as inclusion, empathy, critical thinking or creativity, and inform their decision-making in their professional and personal life.

The University of Helsinki has in the relaunch of their values and their new strategy given explicit attention to these two factors: the ever-growing connection between the university and the world and education as also a moral project. This has been done through the emphasis of *Bildung*, as one of the four values of the university. The concept of *Bildung* comes from the German tradition of formation and self-cultivation, sometimes explained as a deeper more holistic and philosophical idea of what it means to be educated (Fuhr, 2017). Furthermore, the headline for the new strategy is “With the power of knowledge – for the world.” (University of Helsinki 2, 2021). Through these choices, the university seems to acknowledge at least two things, which are also at the basis of this thesis: They articulate knowledge as

powerful and with the value of Bildung the university underlines the importance of morality and humanity in the university and education.

Additionally, the University of Helsinki has a growing international student body and 35 international master's programs. This makes the vision and importance of having a global impact and looking beyond the border of Finland increasingly important. While the University of Helsinki is still emphasising Bildung and the inherent value of education and learning in their strategy, the world is changing. The Finnish institutions of higher education are not immune to the pressures of efficiency and neoliberal values, the growing emphasis on rankings, citations and numbers; increasingly competitive funding schemes, and the financial incentives to get students through the university as fast as possible (Kuoppala & Näppilä, 2012). Furthermore, there seems to be a global emphasis on the fields that are popularly abbreviated STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), which often comes with an implicit or even explicit devaluing of the humanities and the social sciences (Zeidler, 2016). There is a countermovement with people using the abbreviation STEAM (adding an 'A' for 'Arts') and arguing for the importance of humanities and social sciences in the natural sciences (Liao, 2016). This might indicate a trend towards a more interdisciplinary, holistic understanding of education, more aligned with the values of Bildung, though it often seems more like adding the humanities on top of the seemingly more important technical fields.

One of the most well-known advocates of the principles of liberal education and humanistic values is the American political philosopher, Martha Nussbaum. With a long-standing interest and research into the capabilities approach and advocacy for integrating principles of cosmopolitan citizenship in higher education, her theory of *cosmopolitan citizenship* and the three principles of critical thinking, world citizenship and narrative imagination (Nussbaum, 1997; 2002) will form the foundation of this thesis. It will be applied to explore new perspectives and ask new questions concerning the present-day role of the University of Helsinki and what kind of education is really needed to ensure responsible and knowledgeable experts and whether that is aligned with fostering cosmopolitan citizens.

The structure of the international master's programs at the University of Helsinki provides an opportunity for exploring if and what role these values of cosmopolitan citizenship and Bildung are playing in the planning of the teaching. There is a strong decentralization at the university and authority to make decisions for each specific master's program within each

degree program board. The program board have decision-making power over the most central matters in the program, from structure of the degree, to mandatory courses, elective courses, providing credits for internships and the program board is also widely responsible for creating and fostering the community, atmosphere and culture within the program. This gives a unique opportunity to understand the choices and thinking within each program.

To explore the different approaches within different programs, I interviewed 11 people from 11 different international master's programs across faculties at the University of Helsinki. The interviewees were program directors or in leading positions¹ in their program's board. The aim was to explore their thoughts on what are the most essential non-subject area skills and attitudes students should learn while in a master's program and if the university should play a role in preparing students to participate in democratic practice, including understanding their responsibility in society and the world. Additionally, the interviewees were asked what they perceived as the university's main contribution to the surrounding democratic society.

1.1. Research questions

This thesis will explore this through the following research questions:

1. What non-subject area skills and attitudes do the program representatives find most important for their graduates to develop and how do these align with Nussbaum's understanding of cosmopolitan citizenship?
2. How do the program representatives describe the culture within the University of Helsinki and how might that enable or hinder the inclusion of values such as those presented in Nussbaum's cosmopolitan citizenship and the students' opportunities to engage in democratic practice?
3. What do the program representatives see as the most important role of the university in democratic society?

¹ The interviewees were in their respective positions at the time of the interviews in November and December 2020, but due to the selection of new program directors taking their positions in January 2021, not everyone was continuing in their positions.

4. What are potential challenges and opportunities to emphasise the ideals of Bildung and cosmopolitan citizenship in practice in the international master's programs at the University of Helsinki?

1.2 Thesis structure

For this study, I chose to apply a partly inductive approach, due to the initial interest in exploring the interviewees' view of skills and attitude development and how that might be overlapping with abilities useful for engaging in democratic practice. I did not start with a specific hypothesis, neither had I selected my theoretical approach before the interviews. The aim of this study is not to build a new theory, but to make a qualitative exploration of the understanding of the concepts of citizenship and the aims of higher education in the context of the University of Helsinki in the interviewees' own words.

The theoretical framework is based on Martha Nussbaum's model of cosmopolitan citizenship and the three abilities of critical thinking, world citizenship and narrative imagination. Furthermore, to explore the process of how these qualities might be fostered in students at the university and how this might translate into their engagement outside the university, the concepts of political socialization, democratic culture and deliberative democratic principles has been included in the theoretical framework. The theory section will also contextualise the history and developments of the University of Helsinki and the current strategic priorities. Finally, a short outline of the current, scholarly debates regarding the aim and role of universities and higher education will be presented.

The first research question relating to the development of skills and attitudes will be structured on the basis of Nussbaum's model of cosmopolitan citizenship. The coding of the interview data was based on the three abilities: critical thinking, world citizenship and narrative imagination. That will be done in the first part of the analysis.

The second and third research question concerning the internal culture at the university and the role of the university in a societal, democratic context including the preparation for students to engage herein, will be answered in two parts. First, the internal environment of the university will shortly be explored by coding the data through the lens of indirect/direct and unintentional/intentional political socialization and looking at the democratic structures

and democratic culture within the university and its potential impact on students. Secondly, the larger question of the role of the university in a democratic society will be analysed through coding the interviews through the lens of the historically changing role of the university, including the different values and external developments influencing the changes in higher education.

The discussion will summarise the findings of the analysis and reflect on the practical implications. This will include drawing on the larger scholarly debates and questions related to the aims of higher education in the present and looking forward. Finally, some practical suggestions will be made based on the findings.

The conclusion will sum up the findings of the study and furthermore provide a critical look at the limitations of the study and the findings and present suggestions for further study and exploration.

2

Universities, Democratic Culture and Cosmopolitan Citizenship

In this section I will introduce the theoretical framework alongside relevant historical context of higher education in Finland and specifically of the University of Helsinki. The choice of theory has been defined by the interviews, which had two layers. The first layer asked the interviewees to reflect on what kind of skills, competencies and attitudes students with a master's degree should develop, in the interviewees' opinion. Additionally, the interviewees reflected on the role the university should play in preparing students to engage in democratic society. This informed the selection of Nussbaum's model of cosmopolitan citizenship and the further exploration of the concept of citizenship and political socialization.

The second layer of the interviews focused on the University of Helsinki's role in the larger context of Finland as a democratic society and in the world, which informed the exploration of the concept of democracy and deliberative democracy, alongside an overview of the history of higher education in Finland. The two layers are interconnected, which I will get back to in the analysis.

The larger aim of the theoretical framework is to look with a curious mind on how we can define democracy, including democratic values, democratic culture and citizenship, beyond a nation-state context. Due to the growing international student body at the University of Helsinki and the complexity and interconnected nature of the challenges we are facing, the aim of the theoretical framework is to transcend institutional and nation-based understandings of democracy and citizenship. The concepts will be applied through a normative and value-based lens.

The theoretical framework consists of several parts. First, I will contextualise the concept and understandings of democracy, including understandings of democratic culture, values and political socialization. Secondly, the concept of citizenship will be introduced and

contextualised, with an emphasis on Martha Nussbaum's model of cosmopolitan citizenship. Thirdly, the scholarly debates regarding the aims of higher education will be presented to situate this thesis in the current discussions. Fourthly, I will give a brief introduction to the history of higher education in Finland and present the history and current strategic priorities of the University of Helsinki. Finally, I will shortly summarise the theoretical framework and how it will be used in this study.

2.1 Understanding Democracy

Democracy is a well-known concept with a plethora of meanings. Most often it is used to describe a type of government, implying rule of the people, equality of citizens, rule of law and free and fair elections (Held, 2006, p. 1). In this thesis the concept of democracy will not refer to formalised politics and a political system but rather be used as a set of values and ideals, through the context of democratic culture and practices. Yet, in order to understand what values and attitudes might be valuable in a democratic context and how the university contributes to those, I will shortly introduce some key elements of democratic societies.

When trying to define characteristics of democratic models, David Held (2006) argues that, broadly speaking, there are two overarching types of democratic models; direct or participatory democratic models and liberal or representative democratic models (Held, 2006, p. 4). One central difference between these two types is the way in which citizens are involved; in direct models, citizens are directly involved in making decisions whereas in the representative models, citizens vote for officials to represent their interests. How citizens are allowed to participate or what kind of participatory possibilities a democratic society has, is important in terms of the strength of that democracy and the legitimacy of it.

An influential scholar on democracy, Robert Dahl (1998), argued for six main political institutions that need to be in place for large-scale democracy to work: 1) Elected officials; 2) Free, fair, and frequent elections; 3) Freedom of expression; 4) Alternative sources of information; 5) Associational autonomy; and 6) Inclusive citizenship (Dahl, 1998, p. 85). This summary is useful when diving further into the analysis and the discussion of the importance of universities in democratic societies. The values of freedom, knowledge, autonomy and inclusion are often embedded in the aims of universities. There are weaker or stronger democracies or what is often characterised as 'thinner' or 'thicker' understandings of

democracy (Diamond, 2008, pp. 21-22), which also means that democratic societies and cultures can be strengthened or weakened on a continual basis. This can happen on different levels, where one is the democratic culture and practice, due to the legitimacy of a democracy being dependent on the trust of the citizens and a commitment from everyone to compromise, respect pluralism and consider the common good (Hiley, 2006; Barber, 1984). Even though democracy is often discussed as institutions and a formalised, political system, which are important to create the necessary conditions for democracy to work, the structures and frameworks in themselves do not make democracy. Diamond (2008) argues that to really build a true democracy there needs to be a cultivation of ‘the spirit of democracy’ (Diamond, 2008, p. 79).

David Hiley (2006) argues that central to making democracy work is a specific set of values and attitudes, which includes an understanding of citizenship. According to Hiley, a strong democracy “requires a culture that respects the dignity of the individuals and the freedoms we associate with that respect; but it also requires citizens suited for participation in democratic decision-making” (Hiley, 2006, p. 2). This puts an emphasis on ensuring that citizens are capable and qualified to participate in the practice of democracy. A core tension of democratic culture is the relationship between the needs of the individual and goals and the needs of the collective. This can be approached from a liberal, communitarian or deliberative perspective, which will be expanded on in the section about citizenship.

I shortly want to touch upon what I mean by ‘political’ in this thesis. Like with the concept of democracy, I argue for the need to expand the concept of political. Politics are often associated with electoral politics, but politics can also be understood as a set of activities that groups use to make decisions together through debate, negotiation, persuasion and deliberation (Barber, 1984, pp. 118-119). Barber also argues that politics in a strong, participatory democracy, can be seen as a way of living, the way “individuals with variable but malleable natures and with competing but overlapping interests can contrive to live together.” (Barber, 1984, p. 118). I would argue that engaging in political activity does not have to be limited to party or formalised politics and can be understood as engaging with moral and ethical issues with no easy answers. Actions of individuals and groups might be seen as political due to them challenging existing structures of power, hierarchies and the status quo, which is also supported by Barber’s understanding of politics as having to choose when there is no clear or easy answer (Barber, 1984, p. 121). Barber also argues that

One can understand the realm of politics as being circumscribed by conditions that impose *a necessity for public action, and thus for reasonable public choice, in the presence of conflict and in the absence of private or independent grounds for judgment.* (Barber, 1984, p. 120) (italics by Barber)

Therefore, politics becomes a way of engaging in debate and discussion and a sort of tangible way of negotiating and deliberating on collective issues with not clear answers in a democratic society, which can happen beyond electoral politics.

2.1.1. Representative and participatory democracy

Representative democracy is a prevalent model of democracy globally. Voters elect representatives to be their voice in parliament. For many citizens living in a representative, parliamentary system, the key democratic action they exercise is probably voting, which can be defined as a thin version of democracy and potentially problematic for democratic culture (Barber, 1984; Hiley, 2006). Citizens have other tools in their toolbox, such as engaging in public discourse, contacting public officials or sending letters and opinion pieces to media outlets, engaging in civil society and increasingly engaging in the debate on social media or through blogging, vlogging and different forms of activism. Even if citizens delegate their direct political power to elected officials, participatory democratic practices can still exist within an overarching representative democratic system and deliberative democratic principles are gaining ground in many representative democracies.

Principles of deliberative democratic practice are often part of democratic innovations. Bächtiger et. Al. (2018) describe deliberative democracy as the act of citizens coming together to discuss political issues to come to an agreement of how to address these common issues (Bächtiger et. Al. 2018, p. 2). They furthermore define deliberation as “mutual communication that involves weighing and reflecting on the preferences, values, and interests regarding matters of common concern.” (ibid., p. 2). The rise of technology is providing citizens with new ways to communicate and engage in public discourse and has been part of the popularising of deliberative democratic innovations. These innovations include Citizen Assemblies, Participatory Budgeting, Citizen Councils, and other interactive, dialogical models of engaging citizens in discussions on common issues (Michels, 2011). Finland is also part of this trend, with initiatives such as the national Citizens’ Initiatives (Parliament of

Finland, n.d.) and in Helsinki experiments with participatory budgeting² and the Helsingin Ilmastovahti³. This is also an interesting development in the context of this thesis, since it expands the idea the role of the citizen and who counts as a citizen in what contexts, since it is mostly not dependent on national citizenship, but rather on residency. Participating and engaging in democracy is not only limited to the formalised, democratic processes, but includes civil society and activism, which are central parts of maintaining a strong democracy as well. Being part of associations, volunteering and engaging in communities of interest are all ways that members of a community are engaging in democratic practices and are able to strengthen democratic values and be active citizens, regardless of legal status.

These examples show how democracy can be practiced differently at different levels of society and in different contexts. Initiatives in civil society are also important for the health of a democratic society. As mentioned in the introduction, universities have often been the birthplace of activism and social movements, and also interest groups and advocacy for specific issues. These initiatives also allow students to discuss and debate and find their own views on societal challenges, while building a sense of agency to influence them. This shows the many facets of democracy and the importance of expanding the view of what democracy means and where the individual fits into it.

2.1.2. Democratic culture and political socialization

As mentioned above, democracy is not only institutions and formal structures, but also a spirit, a culture, a normative ideal and built on certain skills, attitudes and values. Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba (1963) conducted a study of civic culture in five different countries in the early 1960s. Almond and Verba foresaw that the future of democracy was going to require “a political culture of participation” (Almond & Verba, 1963, p. 4). They also argued that the existence of institutions was not enough, a civic culture is needed. They argued that the civic culture is a combination of the scientific and humanistic-traditional cultures. Democracy and science share in common an experimental attitude and both can be argued to originate in the humanistic culture (ibid., p. 7). Civic culture has no one clear definition, but Almond and Verba defined it as “a pluralistic culture based on communication and persuasion, a culture of consensus and diversity, a culture that permitted change but

² <https://omastadi.hel.fi/?locale=en>

³ <https://ilmastovahti.hel.fi/>

moderated it.” (ibid., p. 8). This is relevant when looking at the skills and attitudes required for strengthening democratic culture and whether the emphasised skills in the interviews might overlap with these.

There are different theories aiming to explain what shapes people’s political outlook or under what circumstances certain characteristics are fostered or suppressed. These theories include analysing characteristics and psychological dispositions and looking into how these potentialities are shaped into actual dispositions (Lasswell, 1960; Sniderman, 1975). These approaches include political psychology, aiming to understand how certain personality traits can be shaped into specific behaviours, beliefs and actions, and what kind of different contexts leads to different manifestations of the same character traits (Lasswell, 1960). Research has also been done on the conceptualisation of democratic and authoritarian personalities, which was a popular field of research especially after the Second World War, trying to make sense of the rise of fascist and communist regimes (Greenstein, 1965).

Another aspect is the process of socialization, which Brim (1966) defines as “the process by which persons acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that make them more or less effective members of their society” (Brim, 1966, p. 3). In this context, I am interested in how students are being shaped to engage in the world, and therefore, based on the above definition of politics, I will use the concept of political socialization, as presented by Dawson and Prewitt (1969). Even though it has been widely accepted that most fundamental socialization happens during the childhood years, people keep learning and re-socializing throughout adult life, particularly when exposed to new realities, contexts and people from different groups and backgrounds that might prompt a rethinking of beliefs and values (Dawson & Prewitt, 1969).

Dawson and Prewitt (1969) argue that political socialization after adolescence is increasingly incomplete, due to the rise of four different factors; 1) Geographical mobility due to people moving cities, regions or countries; 2) The rapidity of technological and social change – meaning that socialization in childhood might be rendered insufficient to the world one becomes an adult in, 3) An increasingly pluralistic world where individuals have to make increasingly complex decisions; and 4) The people in charge of training and educating children and youth are often specialized and have less general knowledge of the world (Dawson & Prewitt, 1969, p. 53).

This book was published in 1969, more than 50 years ago and it is clear that these changes and trends have only been accelerating, strengthening the argument of unfinished political socialization and the growing impact of experiences happening after adolescence. Extensive research is being conducted on the change in how youth engage in politics and democracy. The rise of technology and access to information are important factors in the changing political socialization process. It is fundamentally shaping how younger generations engage in and think about politics and the world, that were not in existence when their parents were young or even when they themselves were growing up (Hooghe, 2004; Sapiro 2004; Jenkins et. Al., 2016). I therefore argue that ongoing political and democratic socialization are even more prevalent throughout adulthood in today's world, especially while people are still enrolled in higher education, often throughout their 20s.

Dawson and Prewitt (1969) argue that changes in political outlook can be initiated from involvement with new social groups, moving to a new place, changing social status and engagement in new work and other experiences (Dawson & Prewitt, 1969, p. 57). In the context of this thesis the prolonged process of political socialization is relevant, due to the socializing potential of new geographical contexts and intercultural encounters in the international master's programs. Furthermore, this means that the experiences that people have in the master's programs might have a substantial impact on the worldview and outlook of the students and therefore that the studies might be more influential than previously.

It is also important to emphasise that political socialization happens both directly and indirectly, intentionally and unintentionally. In this context the aspects of indirect and unintentional socialization are particularly interesting. Indirect political socialization happens throughout life and in a number of situations: "Indirect political learning is not restricted to transference of expectations from nonpolitical role models to political persons. It includes also the acquisition of skills, habits, behaviors, and practices appropriate for political activities." (Dawson & Prewitt, 1969, pp. 70-71). Indirect learning can for example be interpersonal transference, which happens in relationship with others. This can be through experiences of participating in decision-making processes and being allowed to voice one's opinion and challenge authority (ibid., p. 68). Unintentional political socialization is when students take a specific learning from a situation that was not meant to influence the student in the way (Dawson & Prewitt, 1969, p. 64). There is a connection between the ability to

influence decisions at the workplace (I would argue this is the same for students in their master's program) and one's sense of political efficacy; these experiences can spill over into other parts of one's life (*ibid.*, p. 58).

Finally, Dawson and Prewitt emphasise the importance of understanding how these different experiences are influential throughout an individual's life: "The transfer relationship may proceed in both directions. Democratic norms and opportunities for participation in the political world may generate pressure for democratic arrangements and the right to participate in non-political situations, as well as the other way around." (Dawson & Prewitt, 1969, p. 71). Thus, what happens in the university can influence the students and shape the citizens that graduate from there. The students are not only gaining knowledge within their field, but likely being shaped by the opportunities to participate within the classroom or in the decision-making in their program or on a broader scale. I argue that the university is potentially a central space of political socialization, which might also impact the kind of professional students become.

2.2 Understandings of Citizenship

Citizenship is in many ways at the core of democracy, due to the central role of citizens in democratic theories. It is often used as a classification tool. In traditional theories of citizenship, it is used to signal who belongs as members of the nation state (Klusmeyer, 2001, p. 1). It can be thought of as a language of rights, duties and obligations. In terms of what is included in the concept of citizenship, it can both be seen "as legal status and political membership; as rights and obligations; as identity and belonging; as civic virtues and practices of engagement; and as a discourse of political and social equality or responsibility for a common good." (Shachar et. al., 2017, p. 5). The modern history of citizenship theory is often seen through the lens of the British sociologist T. H. Marshall. He presented the development of citizenship through three linear, historical stages based on the British context, from civil citizenship to political citizenship to social citizenship (Bottomore & Marshall, 1987, p. 8). This is a rights- and status-based lens of citizenship, based on the context of the nation state, which is still prevalent in theories of citizenship.

There are different philosophical approaches to citizenship and two of the most central ones are liberalism and communitarianism. Citizenship seen from a liberal perspective places

individual freedom at the centre. The emphasis is the rights of the individual citizen, ensured through the law to protect from the tyranny of the many. On the other hand, the communitarian understanding frames citizenship through the collective and an orientation towards the common good (Hiley, 2006, p. 10). The key is shared, collective values, which are the primary lens through which the individual is looking at their own interests. These two understandings are at opposite ends and theoretical ideals. As a third and different understanding of citizenship, there is deliberative models of democracy and citizenship. Habermas (1994) argues that deliberative democracy is taking elements from both the liberal and the communitarian models. Individuals come to deliberations with certain individual wants and needs, but they are willing through discourse and deliberation to find consensus benefitting the whole (Habermas, 1994, p. 6). Deliberative models are striving for a more ideal process of decision-making, seeing individuals as having their own interests but willing to find common ground and consensus through deliberation and discussion. These skills are central to a strong democratic culture.

In an increasingly globalised world, the concept of citizenship is shifting, but rather than losing its relevance, it is at the centre of new debates about belonging and membership. There has been a surge in new approaches to citizenship, alongside a growing number of people, feeling a sense of belonging to a range of communities beyond their national citizenship. This is related to discussions about the potential disintegration of the nation state's monopoly on citizenship and new understandings of community, global civil society, and social justice movements. The debate includes the idea of pluralization of understandings of citizenship, that makes the national affiliation one affiliation among many (Bosniak, 2001, p. 249). New understandings of citizenship are increasingly normative and value-based, and they integrate ideas of justice and fairness and striving for a more "collective identity and solidarity." (Bosniak, 2001, p. 246). Fundamentally, it is a process of reimagining what political life should look like now and in the future (ibid.).

2.2.1 Cosmopolitan Citizenship

Cosmopolitanism dates back to the Stoics with the aspiration of shifting the individual's primary connection from being to the polis, to a larger connection to humanity and the ideal of universal belonging (Held, 2010, p. 15). Inherent in cosmopolitanism is often the tension between the local and the global. This can be seen in the debate between cosmopolitanism

and patriotism and the conflict between ethical universalism or particularism. Should nationality be the central affiliation, or should we have a more inclusive and global idea of citizenship? (Bosniak, 2001, p. 247). Expanding the understanding of citizenship can be seen as a political act, by challenging the status quo and the often-accepted monopoly of the nation state to decide who is included or not.

Kok-Chor Tan (2017) introduces three ways to understand cosmopolitan citizenship, as; 1) membership of a world government, 2) entitlement and responsibility to engage in global decision-making, and 3) a normative and moral perspective seeing the claim to justice as equal for every person, regardless of national ties (Tan, 2017, pp. 695-696). In this thesis, the third category will be the lens through which cosmopolitan citizenship is used. This is also where Nussbaum's model is placed.

Understanding citizenship as a normative, moral idea can also be connected to the concept of *Bildung* and additionally the Humboldtian ideal of higher education as striving for a holistic integration of studies and research and a more general education cultivating the minds and character of the students (Davidson, 2017, p. 28).

The American philosopher Martha Nussbaum⁴ has been a key advocate for the education of cosmopolitan citizens in higher education since her article *Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism* on the topic in 1994 (Nussbaum, 1994). Through her teaching she has presented different iterations of her model of cosmopolitan citizenship and has done extensive research on the importance of liberal arts education and the importance of the humanities in education, especially in the American context. She has researched Ancient philosophy, feminist philosophy, the capabilities approach and international development. She argues that the university plays a central role in shaping future citizens; today more than ever in societies that are increasingly pluralistic (Nussbaum, 2002, p. 291). According to Nussbaum, higher education should not just be a step to a professional career “but a general enrichment of and cultivation of reasonable, deliberative democratic citizenship.” (Nussbaum, 2002, p. 291). A more global way of thinking should be cultivated to solve the problems of today and the future. Nussbaum's point being:

⁴ <https://www.law.uchicago.edu/faculty/nussbaum>

If our institutions of higher education do not build a richer network of human connections, it is likely that our dealings with one another will be mediated by the defective norms of market exchange. A rich network of human connections, however, will not arise magically out of our good intentions: we need to think about how our educational institutions contribute to that goal (Nussbaum, 2002, pp. 291-292).

This underlines the need for active and explicit intentionality in integrating these values in the education to avoid being shaped by external pressures.

Nussbaum is suggesting three different abilities, which makes a cosmopolitan citizen. Her approach is based on the capabilities approach, which implies a learning process and something that can be practiced and improved upon by active engagement.

The first ability is Socratic self-examination or *critical thinking*. This is tied to the quote attributed to Socrates arguing that an unexamined life is not worth living. In Socrates' time, and often still today, education was mostly about integrating students into the existing traditions and beliefs (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 15). Especially when growing up in a homogenous community, many traditions and habits are taken for granted. Nussbaum argues that students need to learn to challenge and question what appears to be the objective reality of things (ibid., p. 29). Traditions should not be taken for granted, instead students should practice critical examination by learning to reason logically and see what claims are clear and consistent after examination (Nussbaum, 2002, p. 293). This questioning might still be seen as "dangerous" or inappropriate by some and can be labelled as disruptive, and not in a good way. The point that Nussbaum makes is that "democracy needs citizens who can think for themselves rather than simply deferring to authority, who can reason together about their choices rather than just trading claims and counter-claims." (Nussbaum, 2002, p. 293). It is important to remember that critical reasoning should be exercised with respect for the other and focus on the substance of the argument, not the person. The essential thing is being able to differentiate between valid and invalid reasoning and assess the quality of ideas and arguments. This is something that the university should support the students in developing. Nussbaum emphasises that it requires the students' active participation. They need to try it out themselves, have debates and formulate their own arguments and opinions (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 45).

The second ability is *world citizenship*. If students are to truly cultivate their humanity, they need to be able to transcend their own group, whether based on their city, nationality or a specific group identity. Students should see themselves as connected to humanity as a whole (Nussbaum, 2002, p. 295). Almost every issue confronting us today is of a global nature and cannot be solved without collaboration (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 53). This ability requires a sense of understanding, connection and shared humanity with people who are different from oneself, whether these people are on a different continent or part of a group in one's own society that one does not normally interact with. It is central to understand different perspectives and ways of making sense of the world and how an issue might appear from another perspective (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 58). How can students come to see themselves as citizens of a diverse and multicultural society in a world that is increasingly interdependent? Students need to question the naturalness of their own culture and beliefs and see it as one way out of many (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 55). This can be done through introducing readings, writings, and perspectives from marginalised viewpoints, including countries and groups that are often not visible in the teaching. In a European context, this is striving to transcend the euro-centric worldview. At the same time, it is also about understanding different lived experiences within the classroom and foster students' ability and interest in understanding these different viewpoints and taking them into account.

The final ability is *narrative imagination*. Nussbaum argues that factual knowledge and theories are not a sufficient foundation for citizens to think well (Nussbaum, 2002, p. 299). Narrative imagination is a deep sense of empathy, the ability to put oneself in someone else's shoes and be an intelligent reader of their story. This way, students can strive to understand where others are taking action from and what shapes their beliefs and worldview (Nussbaum, 2002, p. 299). Students should recognise their own assumptions and judgments, which shapes how they perceive others. The aim is to transcend one's own judgment and understand a person's actions from *their* reality, not one's own. It requires a strong imaginative ability to see the humanity in people different from oneself (Nussbaum, 2002, p. 300). Nussbaum also emphasises the essential shaping of students' minds that happen on the university campus:

Our campuses educate our citizens. This means learning a lot of facts, and mastering techniques of reasoning. But it means something more. It means learning how to be a human being capable of love and imagination. We may continue to produce narrow citizens who have difficulty understanding people different from themselves, whose

imaginings rarely venture beyond their local setting. It is all too easy for the moral imagination to become narrow in this way (Nussbaum, 2002, pp. 301-302).

Nussbaum argues that everyone should care about the whole of mankind, regardless of profession or faculty. This is a central claim of Nussbaum's theory of cosmopolitan citizenship, and it is a moral and normative vision. These three abilities cannot just be crossed off a list when accomplished but are rather a continuous practice throughout life ensuring empathic people, responsible leaders and engaged citizens.

2.2.2 Criticism of Nussbaum's conceptualisation of cosmopolitanism

Martha Nussbaum was central in putting cosmopolitanism back on the map in the social sciences in the 1990s with her 1994 article *Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism* (Nussbaum, 1994). This prompted a large debate, and her understanding received extensive criticism. The points of criticism presented here are mostly related to her more general writings of cosmopolitanism.

One criticism relates to the larger debate about the concept of citizenship, arguing that citizenship should not be removed from the context of the nation-state; that being a citizen of the world is incoherent in itself. Nussbaum does not really argue for a world state but rather presents cosmopolitanism as a moral or ethical obligation (Gasper, 2006). Furthermore, some critiques question whether her theory of cosmopolitan citizenship and its application in higher education is a "practical possibility or academic illusion?" (Naseem & Hyslop-Margison, 2006). Naseem & Hyslop-Margison (2006) goes on to further question the particular strength of the American system and liberal arts to integrate these three abilities, which is not particularly relevant for this study. Another central criticism is the inherent tension between wanting to transcend multiculturalism and reach a point of common humanity, but at the same time, Nussbaum's ideals are based on Enlightenment values, which seem inherently contradictory, due to the aim of going beyond the Western tradition (Gasper, 2006). This also raises another criticism based on the inherent inequality that exists in terms of access to higher education. Wallerstein (1996) argues that Nussbaum's understanding ignores social and class differences and question the practical possibility of moral equality among people. Finally, some main points of criticism are based on the operationalising of the theory and whether it really has any meaningful, practical implications. Amy Guttmann (1996) claims that at best it is an abstraction and a worst an ideal advancing the elite. There is

definitely a strong line of criticism that challenges the ability of higher education to be the right place to promote equality and connect to a common humanity due to the privilege position of students. Nussbaum also published a new book in 2019 named *The Cosmopolitan Tradition – A Noble but Flawed Ideal* (Nussbaum, 2019), where she argues that it is a beautiful, moral ideal, but that it does not provide practical help to the ones in poverty lacking real, material support.

This theory was found useful in this study, due to the alignment with the values and historical aims of the university. It represents, in a more concrete manner, some reflections on what these values might look like in practice. I am not claiming that this is a perfect model, but rather an ideal, a normative and value-based perspective, that I would argue can be used to question how the aims of higher education are being put into practice. Furthermore, it can shine a light on the negative impact of the current neoliberal turn in higher education and our societies in general. While the nation state and formalised politics and democratic structures are important concepts in terms of understanding the context within which the university work and educate students; the concept of cosmopolitan citizenship is found to be particularly useful in a context such as the international master's programs, due to their inherently global nature and the aims and goals of science and higher education. It is important to keep in mind the ideals, also presented in the University Law below, that students should be educated to serve their country and humanity at large. But what does that look like when you have a diverse student body in a global, interconnected world? Nussbaum's model might provide a framework to think about that.

2.3 The changing aims of higher education

As mentioned in the introduction, the differing views on the aims of higher education is a topic of large scholarly interest. There is both a push to strengthen the ties between the universities and society, while others argue worry about the autonomy and independence of institutions of higher education. Depending on the faculty and field of science, some have stronger connections to the private sector and external partners than others and some have a more pragmatic view on collaborating with external actors, while others emphasise a more, pure, academic ideal.

One of the key topics of scholarly interest is the growing influence of neoliberal pressures and values in higher education.

Countless writing has been done on the influence of compliance and quality-control measures (Watty, 2006), academic capitalist regimes, commercial values and profit making (Kauppinen & Kaidesoja, 2014), global competition and money-making (Patomäki, 2019) and criticism of the neoliberal university and a growing customer-based approach to students (Hohendahl, 2011). The approaches of New Public Management and Global Knowledge regimes are emphasising streamlining and a single approach to organising higher education and the international ranking system is also creating a set of incentives related to increasing number of publications, citations and quantity over quality (Patomäki, 2019). There are also questions of the influence of rankings and what incentives this gives for researchers in terms of how they prioritise teaching and research (Robinson, 2014). What are the potential impacts on the care and attention put on the teaching in higher education when it seems that current trends are not incentivizing a strong focus on teaching? The strong influence of the market and private sector is often seen to push the aims and resources towards the more technical fields and a focus to educate qualified experts that can contribute to the economy, rather than a deep humanistic approach to educating the whole person, and questions of moral, philosophical and ethical nature (Davidson, 2017). This criticism is strong in the academic community and there seems to be a tension between the appropriate relationship between the university and society.

A growing area of research, especially in the North American context, is the field of service learning, volunteerism, community engagement and other approaches to citizenship development and civic engagement (Kahne et. Al, 2000; Einfeld & Collins, 2008; Chovanec et. Al, 2012). While there is some research done on these topics in an European context, primarily in the United Kingdom, it appears less prevalent than in the North American context. While political socialization in higher education did not appear to be a largely popular research topic, there is some research done on this (Hooghe, 2004; Sapiro 2004). There is also a range of research done on teaching methods and pedagogy in higher education, especially when it comes to teacher- or student-centred learning and questioning the effectiveness of the still prevalent monological lecture approach (Ritchie, 2016; Weimer, 2013). Interestingly, there does not seem to be much research looking at the new aim and role of the university in a diverse and multicultural classroom, with a growing number of international students and how that affects the university's aims. Furthermore, there is much research done on active citizenship and political socialization in primary and secondary education, but less so in higher education. Some big questions and tensions relate to the

frequent criticism of universities as being ivory towers and being removed from the “real world”.

2.4 History and context of higher education in Finland

The mission of institutions of higher education in Finland are set out in the Universities Act. Under ‘Section 2. Mission’ it reads:

1. The mission of the universities is to promote independent academic research as well as academic and artistic education, to provide research-based higher education and to educate students to serve their country and humanity at large. In carrying out their mission, the universities shall promote lifelong learning, interact with the surrounding society and promote the social impact of university research findings and artistic activities. (Universities Act, 2009)

The mission statement makes clear what Finnish higher education should be about. There is an emphasis on the preparation of students to serve both their country and humanity at large and the importance of freedom, independence and creating social impact in society. This is the guiding task for the university.

Higher education has played a central role in the development of Finnish society. When looking at the historic changes in higher education in Finland, Risto Rinne (2004) introduces three different doctrines that have been prevalent in Finnish higher education in the 20th century. The following is based on a table from the book *Reforming higher education in the Nordic countries* (Rinne, 2004, p. 94).

Until the 1960s there was what Rinne calls the ‘traditional academic’ doctrine. The idea of the university was cultural and based around Bildung. Rinne also names this the elite university, with universities enjoying strong autonomy, no expectations of short-term economic benefit but rather an emphasis on long-term benefits, the importance of freedom of teaching and research and a sense that students should be trained for leading positions within society (Rinne, 2004, p. 94).

The second doctrine is the ‘state development’ doctrine, starting from the late 1960s to the late 1980s. The aim of the university shifts more according to labour market needs and

supplying qualified manpower, and science is increasingly becoming a factor of production. In this period the universities are also under state control and there is a focus on education as the great equalizer. Rinne also calls this the mass university (Rinne, 2004, p. 94).

Finally, there is the third doctrine, 'managing by results and competition', from the late 1980s onwards (this article is from early 2000s, so there is no clear doctrine for the present day). Rinne argues that this third doctrine emphasises productivity and that results are defining in how universities are steered. It becomes more market-driven and increasingly focused on international competitiveness and innovative services based on society's needs. This, Rinne, also names the universal enterprise university (Rinne, 2004, p. 94). Since 2010 universities in Finland have been independent from the state, and their own legal entities, but a large portion of their funding is still coming from the state.

Kauppinen and Kaidesoja (2014) argues that a shift in Finnish higher education happened during the 1990s and 2000s towards academic capitalism and the deepening ties with the knowledge-based economy. This means a growing emphasis on commercial values and profit making of knowledge, along with an expectation that higher education will contribute to global economic competitiveness. They are pointing out the growing number of ties between universities and external stakeholders, especially with the private sector.

In terms of understanding the history and meaning of the University of Helsinki in Finnish society, the university itself presents an interesting perspective on their own role and history. This will shortly be presented, keeping in mind that this is how the university itself is presenting its history and narrative.

The founding of the University of Helsinki goes back to 1640 when Finland was part of Sweden and the university was located in Turku. It since moved to Helsinki and was also under Russian rule before independence in 1917. In 1919 it was renamed the University of Helsinki (Helsinki University Museum, 2017). After independence the University of Helsinki played a central role in the building of the nation state and also developing the welfare society. The academic community was engaged in the public discourse, research and scholarship and also made an impact on the European level. The University has a long history of contributing to the improvement of society and increasing the welfare of the Finnish population. In more recent years the focus has extended globally. This also appears to be a

strong part of the narrative presented on the website; the journey from supporting building the national identity and expansion of the Finnish society, to now being in a position to share and contribute to the global community (University of Helsinki 1, 2021)

In 2016 large reforms also meant a restructuring and centralization of administrative staff at the University of Helsinki and this was when the current structure of the international master's programs was initiated. This means that most of the programs have worked in this format for a maximum of four years, and several of them even less.

The University of Helsinki recently adopted their new strategy for 2021-2030. This strategy has as its headline “With the Power of Knowledge – For the World” (University of Helsinki 2, 2021). This indicates a strong commitment to the global community and a wish to help better the world for all of humanity.

In the new strategy there has also been a re-emphasis on the values of the university, which are Truth, Inclusivity, Freedom and Bildung (University of Helsinki 2, 2021). These are all relevant within the scope of this thesis. For example, Inclusivity has among others, the following explanations: ‘Inclusivity supports and promotes openness and collaboration’ and ‘Inclusivity springs from democratic empowerment’. Bildung is explained as ‘Bildung serves as our moral conscience’ and ‘Bildung cultivates stability and openmindedness’. Freedom has this point among others ‘Freedom affirms the autonomy and responsibility of the University’. Finally, Truth includes ‘Truth requires critical thinking’ and ‘Truth leads us to pursue new knowledge’. These are all important and related to questions of democratic culture and cosmopolitan citizenship. The University is arguing that these values should be present in all their actions, which is an argument for identifying whether these values are in fact part of the interviewees’ thinking in the planning of their programs and teaching.

2.5 Summary: Towards Democratic Competencies

The role of education in developing democratic competencies and educating the whole person is not a new idea. The topic has been researched extensively even though it has often been done more deeply in primary and secondary education and less so in higher education. The American educator John Dewey has been an influential figure in this debate, among other things through his 1916 book *Democracy and Education* (Dewey, 1916). He clearly saw the connection between how education is central to shaping future citizens. Education

and schooling present and normalise a society's values and norms, which often are unquestionably adopted by the students (Hiley, 2006). This study and theoretical framework are striving to bring this debate to the setting of higher education, through introducing the model of cosmopolitan citizenship and the three abilities of critical thinking, world citizenship and narrative imagination. The debate of the role of education in shaping students to become responsible citizens, is often reduced to teaching directly for citizenship and global engagement, and less concerned with how the university environment and pedagogy might be fostering certain attitudes and values. This study aims to create a theoretical framework more in line with recent movements looking at citizenship and civic competence in a broader manner and beyond a strictly electoral political environment. There has been a growing emphasis on higher education's role in preparing students for engaging in democratic practice and with a growing mobility among young people and the awareness of the complexity of the problems confronting humanity today, this is also becoming of increasing importance. That is why in this section of theoretical approaches and contextual introductions I have focused on the broader idea of democracy and how democracy requires certain attitudes, beliefs and values. Furthermore, I wanted to consider how different experiences and processes are part of the political socialization process, especially when students find themselves in new circumstances and a new country such as is the case in the international master's programs at the University of Helsinki. Furthermore, a broader debate and expansion of the concept of citizenship was needed to justify and situate Nussbaum's concept of cosmopolitan citizenship and to show the connection to the broader relationship between the university and a democratic society. These different elements will be activated throughout the analysis as part of the thematic analysis of the interviews.

3

Methodology

This chapter will present the aims of this study and the methodological approaches. This includes the choices made regarding data collection and a review of the considerations and execution of the semi-structured, qualitative interviews and the thematic data analysis. Furthermore, the limitations of the study will be briefly presented.

3.1 Methodological approach

The aim and approach of this study is normative in nature. It seeks to gather new information that can contribute to the current debate about the aims of higher education and provide new perspectives and questions for further exploration. It is possible to read strategic documents and find the aims of the University of Helsinki on paper. It is a different matter talking to individuals, who are part of the program development, teaching and interacting with the students and asking them about their subjective understandings and view of these matters. Therefore, the normative case study was identified as the most suitable option, due to the emphasis it places on values and exploring the subjective worldview of the interviewees (Thacher, 2006, p. 1631).

This thesis is based on a personal interest to understand the role of the university in a democratic society and exploring that through the normative perspective of the interviewees. This is a partly inductive approach. Where an inductive approach starts from the data, without a strong hypothesis or the goal to disprove or prove a theory, a partly inductive study is based on identified interests or ideas informing the data collection, but no initial theoretical models. This study is based on an existing interest in the concepts of citizenship, democracy and the role of the universities in democratic society, but with no clear hypothesis or theoretical framework (Bryman, 2012, pp. 26-28). The goal was not to develop a new theory, but rather to see how the data could be interpreted through existing theories of citizenship. This also brings certain challenges to the study. While the aim was to have quite open-ended

questions, there was an initial interest and a more or less conscious value-judgment made from my side at the beginning of the study.

This also means that as a researcher, the study is rooted in and shaped by my personal interests and values and certain normative ideas about the connection between education of students and the health of democracies, which requires a strong reflexivity and self-reflective process on my side (Bryman, 2012, p. 39). This will be reflected upon in the section on data collection and data analysis. Furthermore, I am also somewhat part of the environment within which the interviewees work and therefore have my own experiences with teachers and different course experiences. This is hard to transcend completely, but I have been very conscious of basing my analysis on the basis of the interviews, not my own beliefs, which have been done by very clearly organising the analysis and discussion around the interviews and constantly referring back to them, to keep the findings grounded in the data.

3.2 Data collection

Based on the aims of the study, I identified qualitative research interviews as the most appropriate method, due to wanting to understand the interviewees' normative experience and understanding of the topics. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) explains the aims of qualitative interviews as "attempts to understand the world from the subjects' points of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations." (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 3). I decided to focus on the case of the University of Helsinki due to being a student at this institution and having previous understanding of the structure and context and a perceived easier access to interview subjects.

The interviews were semi-structured, due to the more flexible nature of this format. As mentioned earlier, I was interested in understanding the interviewees' normative understanding of the themes of citizenship, democracy and the university and allowing the conversation to move in different directions depending on the interviewee (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 150). I wanted to allow for openness and exploration. There was a planned set of questions (see appendix 2) and most of those questions were used for each interview, but follow up questions were used when relevant, and, in most interviews, different topics came up and were explored accordingly. I also noticed how certain ways of asking seemed to be clearer than others and therefore did some iterations between interviews. Therefore, while

the interview framework was the standard structure for all the interviews, the interviews were not static and one-sided but rather conducted with a dialogical approach and an awareness that the knowledge was being co-created. Brinkman and Kvale argues that dialogical interviewing indicates a more egalitarian relationship between interviewer and interviewee and the creation of a more empathic and personal space (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015, p. 263). I made a point of saying at the beginning of the interviews that I was interested in their personal thoughts, not as representatives for their program. I wanted to keep the initial questions fairly open-ended to allow the interviewees to answer more freely. I only started bringing up questions with the concepts of democracy and citizenship later in the interviews, though the concepts of democracy and citizenship were mentioned in the email when contacting people (see appendix 1 for the email template).

In most interviews, as an interviewer I engaged in a more dialogical approach, especially in the third part of the interview (see appendix 2) and in some interviews explained or contextualised the questions or sometimes even questioned the responses of interviewees a bit. That is also why, as a researcher, I decided to have a dialogical approach, instead of maintaining a strict structure and clear role as interviewer. This was especially relevant due to the interviewees being from different faculties, which meant that the interviewees had very different understandings of the concepts and in some interviews I had to explain my thinking and understanding of certain concepts more than in others.

Some interviewees found the language of democracy and citizenship more intuitive and clear than others, who were not used to thinking in those terms. This meant that some interviews required more explaining and justification from my side. This was also very eye-opening. I came into the interviews with certain assumptions as a student of social science and seeing an inherent importance in these topics. While my approach was the same to each interviewee, this gave me new insights in terms of understanding how important or central these topics are considered in different faculties and programs and people have different views on this. This observation might also be important to consider if initiating a conversation about these topics in different faculties going forward. Some interviews were more dialogical than others, since some interviewees had more articulated views on the questions, while for others this appeared to be possibly the first time these topics were framed in this way and they were asked to articulate their thoughts on this. This was also an interesting experience, underlining the differences in how people think of the topics of democracy or citizenship and how it

requires different framings and contextualisation for different people to justify its importance. Even the interviewees who had clear opinions on the topics discussed, acknowledged that it was rare that they articulated these things. This indicates the relevance for the dialogical approach; by not trying to uncover already articulated knowledge, but rather co-creating and co-constructing new knowledge and understanding together with the interviewees (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015, p. 57). This brings up the question of validity and reproduction of the findings. Since I am not trying to find objective answers, but rather explore a topic based on subjective experiences, the findings from the interviews are shaped by my presence and my approach to the topic. The point is not to point out a specific problem or conclusion, but rather to put words on some topics and questions that I have not been able to find a lot of research on and wanting to understand better the thinking within the University of Helsinki in this context.

The data for this study consists of 11 interviews conducted in November and December of 2020. The interviewees are members of their respective program boards across 11 different international master's programs. Most of them were in the position of program director and a few others were in other central positions within the board. The international master's programs were chosen due to their inherently interdisciplinary approach; several of the programs are cross-faculty or cross-disciplines and many do not have a specific bachelor program connected to them. The applicants are therefore from a broad range of backgrounds and many of the programs have a diverse student body in terms of backgrounds and nationalities. In total the University of Helsinki has 35 international master's programs out of which I contacted 15 and 11 agreed to participate. The choice of contacted programs was based on ensuring representation from different faculties. The participating programs are Agricultural, Environmental & Resource Economics; Changing Education; Contemporary Societies; Data Science; Ecology & Evolutionary Biology; Economics; English Studies; European and Nordic Studies; Intercultural Encounters, Life Science Informatics; and Urban Studies & Planning.

All interviews, apart from one, were conducted over video call on Zoom and most interviews took around one hour. Conducting interviews over video call creates a different set of challenges from face-to-face interviews. Some of which relates to technical difficulties, problems with connection and sound quality, and more human challenges in terms of building rapport with the interviewee and ensuring a good interview flow. This was also an

additional challenge when transcribing the interviews. Most interviews went fairly smoothly, but it arguably has an impact on the interview. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, people have probably gotten more comfortable with video calls, so the impact of doing the interviews this way might be minor. Another element is the potential language barrier, due to English being the second language for both myself and most of the interviewees, which can limit the interviewees' ability to express their thoughts clearly and precisely and potentially create misunderstandings when it comes to how they express themselves and how I interpret that. Yet, it did not appear to be an issue, which can also be attributed to the interviewees being used to working in English and in an international environment. It should also be mentioned that while the participating programs are listed here, the interviewees are not named, neither are the quotes attributed to specific programs or persons. This was to ensure a safe atmosphere allowing the interviewees to speak more freely. Furthermore, I was asking the interviewees to share their own thinking and opinions, and these interviews are not official representations of any of the programs.

3.3 Data analysis

The choice of a partly inductive methodology supported conducting a thematic analysis. A thematic analysis is based on looking for themes within the data, either based on theoretical frames, the researcher's own categories or simply based on the data (Bryman, 2015, pp. 578-580). Nussbaum's model of cosmopolitan citizenship and the three abilities of critical thinking, world citizenship and narrative imagination were the initial themes when analysing the data. The coding process happened in different phases. Since the theory was not chosen in advance, the theory of cosmopolitan citizenship was identified at the end of the data collection and became the first lens through which the interviews were coded. Nussbaum's theory was chosen due to its normative approach and how it applies a broader, yet tangible, concept of citizenship that was relevant in the context of the international master's programs. I analysed the data through the three abilities, noticing patterns, or lack thereof, overlapping with the model of cosmopolitan citizenship. This became a sort of hermeneutic circle, going between the initial theme of skills and attitude development and cosmopolitan citizenship and looking at the broader themes in the interviews and how these were connected. The hermeneutic circle is a circular process, going back and forth between the parts and the whole, and finding new meaning through each cycle (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, pp. 238-239). This process was an iterative learning process, due to reading the interviews and

finding patterns and outliers and trying to make sense of them through theoretical approaches. While the frame of cosmopolitan citizenship became the entry point to the data, I noticed some interviewees placing a strong emphasis on the role of teachers and the teaching environment, whereas they were absent in other interviews. This inspired me to look into the process of political socialization and how the university environment and culture might play a role in shaping the students, beyond the content being taught. Furthermore, when looking at the answers the interviewees gave as to the most important role of the university in democratic society, I noticed many placing high emphasis on students. While I was interested in the role of the university in democratic society initially, this became a connection with the model of cosmopolitan citizenship and the importance of what kind of citizens are being educated at the university. Using the hermeneutic spiral made the connection between students and the role of the university in democratic society clear to me.

3.4 Limitations of study

There are a number of limitations of this study. First of all, the study is based on just one university and 11 interviewees from 11 different programs, which is out of 35 international master's programs and just one perspective from that specific program. This gives certain limitations in terms of representativeness and it is by no means possible to argue that these views are representative of all teachers in that program or the other programs that did not participate. Again, it is important to emphasise that the goal was not to create representative, clear conclusions to the stated questions, but rather starting a reflective process together with the interviewees and putting words to issues that might not have been articulated in this way before. Due to the normative approach this study is shaped by me as the researcher, and the values, preconceptions and beliefs that I bring with me into this research process, which was particularly clear during the interviews. This study would probably have looked very differently if it had been any other person, but I still believe that the findings and reflections of this study, brings value to the broader discussion on the aim of higher education. The interviews reveal the normative perceptions and experiences of the interviewees, but whether the students experience it in the same way is impossible to assess in this study. Since the student perspective is completely absent from this study, this is rather aiming to start a conversation. This is beyond the scope of the study, which instead is aiming to approach the debate of the aims of higher education from a normative, subjective perspective, looking at the aims of higher education according to the teachers interviewed here.

4

Analysis

The analysis is structured around the first three research questions; 1) the students' skills and attitude development according to the interviewees; 2) the internal environment at the university and how that might impact the development of certain skills and attitudes; and 3) the interviewees' reflections on the relationship between the university and democratic society.

The analysis has two main parts. The first part will look at the interview data through the lens of Nussbaum's three abilities of the cosmopolitan citizen; critical thinking, world citizenship and narrative imagination to see whether the skills and attitudes the interviewees mention as important non-subject area skills are in alignment with Nussbaum's model.

The second part will first approach the interview data through the lens of the University of Helsinki as a democratic institution and the potential connection to the student's political socialization. This will also include the interviewees' reflections on the university's role in educating democratically minded citizens, especially through the teaching and the teachers. Secondly, the last part of the analysis will reflect on the interview data gathered from the answers to the university's most important contribution and role in a democratic society. This will also bring up the interviewees' reflections on current and potential future challenges in this regard.

4.1 Skills development and cosmopolitan citizenship

The first part of the analysis will look at the skills and attitude development seen as important in the master's programs. This part is based on the answers and reflections the interviewees had to questions regarding what non-subject area skills and attitudes they wanted students to gain who had completed a master's degree (see Appendix 2 for the full interview framework). Further questions were asked about how the program supports students in understanding their role in the world, their influence and responsibility.

4.1.1 Critical Thinking

The first ability of Nussbaum's model is developing critical thinking or living an examined life. Nussbaum emphasizes the ability to critically assess and question traditions and knowledge that is taken for granted and being able to question one's own beliefs (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 19). Some of the particular skills Nussbaum emphasizes are the ability to question, reason logically, and critical thinking in reading and assessing argumentation (Nussbaum, 1997; 2002). It is important to remember, that Nussbaum considers the learning of critical thinking an active process (Nussbaum, 2002, p. 295). Students need to be actively engaged and learn by doing.

Developing the skill of critical thinking is often presented as a central aim of higher education, which has been the subject of much research (Walker & Finney, 1999; Davies, 2015; Bahr, 2010). While there might be consensus regarding the importance of it, there are still different views as to what it means in practice. Based on Nussbaum's understanding, I would argue that critical thinking is both an attitude and a skill set. As an attitude it is a critical approach to knowledge and assessment of information and argumentation that one is being presented with. As a skillset it is a combination of communication skills, allowing one to write, debate, present and articulate opinions and arguments. This section will cover both layers.

Critical thinking was clearly articulated as an important attitude for students to develop by all interviewees. One interviewee emphasised the importance of critical thinking when teaching students models and theories, which the interviewee described as 'stories.' Models or theories give one perspective that can provide an insight, but they are not meant to provide ontological truths. These stories are powerful tools that students can use to create meaning and it is important to understand how to use them responsibly:

they take the stories as real descriptions of how things are, rather than use their own brain, their own mind to think, when the stories can be applied and when not. So, this is the sort of critical part of education that should be there, and it's too, there's too little of it at the very moment, in my opinion. We should teach critical thinking, independent thinking of how and when to apply different stories. (Interview 8)⁵

⁵ Citations from the interviews will not be attributed to a specific interviewee and will be presented in this manner from here on.

This is central in Nussbaum's understanding of critical thinking. She argues that students should not just acquire knowledge but learn to do something with that knowledge; critically apply what they have read (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 34). The students need to learn to think for themselves and dissect ideas and argumentation. They need to understand that the choice of theory and models have implications, which might change the outcome. It is an issue if students are uncritically applying theory and not questioning the limitations or context of that theory. It is interesting that this interviewee mentions that this form of critical thinking as a sort of mindset is not emphasised enough in their opinion. The issue of students uncritically applying theories could indicate a lack of explicit discussion around the critical and appropriate use of theories and models as providing insights but not universal truths. One could wonder whether the interviewee is actively teaching this importance in the classroom as well and explicitly having this conversation with the students.

Another interviewee also emphasised the importance of being able to assess different approaches and understand the scope of each approach. The central thing was the ability to keep an open and critical mind at the same time:

it's supposed to be right okay, there's this way of doing it, this way of doing it, this way of doing it, let's see what the pros and cons are and look at these things from above and not just exist within one of them, look at them from outside and then make an informed choice of which you think is the best or the least bad... (Interview 3)

This is also in line with Nussbaum's understanding of critical thinking. Nussbaum emphasises the need for students to question and critically assess knowledge they are presented with and argues that there is no substitute for the students' own active searching for answers (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 35). It underlines the importance of not taking knowledge for granted but critically review and making sure that one actually understands it and is able to apply it appropriately and in a reflective manner.

While most of the interviewees mentioned the importance of being able to consider different approaches and see an issue from different viewpoints, one interviewee mentioned how some students seemed to feel pressure to adopt the prevalent theoretical approach within the faculty, even if it was not explicitly articulated by teachers or faculty. This interviewee saw this as a challenge and was careful to emphasise different understandings and approaches in their own teaching. The interviewee underlined that it was important for students to find their

own standpoint. The importance of finding one's own standpoint was actively discussed with the students, which aligns very well with Nussbaum's understanding. At the same time, it also begs the question as to whether the teaching environment generally speaking is fostering critical questioning by students. This is important based on Dawson and Prewitt's understanding of intentional/unintentional political socialization, showing that students can be shaped by the environment, whether or not those specific beliefs were intended or not by the teacher (Dawson & Prewitt, 1969, p. 64).

Learning to think for oneself and to question the knowledge being taught also has to do with confidence and independence. This is a central part of critical thinking in terms of being comfortable articulating one's own opinions and questioning others. One interviewee argued that to get accepted to a master's program, students already had to have a certain level of independent thinking. The interviewee expected these skills to already be present in students, but also believed that they should be continuously fostered throughout the master's program:

I think a person who starts in a MA program, has developed, just in order to get through the BA, either have developed through the BA studies or they sort of developed earlier as well kind of attitude which means that they are able to.. work independently, think independently, think critically, engage with the views of others in a constructive but critical fashion.. (Interview 6)

The interviewee underlined the importance of critical thinking in the master's programs, since students have to be more active and comfortable sharing their own interests and ideas, especially in the thesis writing process. This connects with Nussbaum's emphasis on active engagement and putting acquired knowledge into practice in one's own thinking (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 30). Another interviewee also argued that independence is essential, both in terms of how students think but also to help them identify and articulate their own values. Teachers can provide examples and lead by example but the students have to make their own decisions about values and beliefs that makes sense to them. The interviewee argued that:

what is, I feel, needed in the next generation of decision-makers is that they have independent attitudes, so that they stick to their values and that they are not easily manipulated, so I think that's more important than ever. (Interview 4)

Fostering an independent attitude is important for critical thinking and for being willing to question or challenge, which Nussbaum also emphasises. This is especially true when it comes to being able to state one's own view and beliefs and justify them (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 42). It also supports the importance of engaging in an active process, to articulate one's own

values and beliefs and be rooted in them so others cannot manipulate them. It indicates the importance of developing a moral compass and having values guiding one's decision-making.

When looking at critical thinking as a skillset, this was also important to all interviewees. Most interviewees found it important to engage and activate the students in different ways, through how they were teaching and planning their courses and having different assignment types such as learning diaries, essays, popular science writing, presentations, group work and debates in the classroom. While this seemed to be emphasised and most interviewees engaged with students in the classroom, there still seemed to be less explicit focus on supporting students in developing the skills to articulate their own views. By this is meant the ability to transcend the specific reading or example from their assignment and take their findings to a more abstract level. It is the ability to understand the bigger implications or putting it into a larger context, using more of their own thinking and going beyond the theoretical framework they are using. More than half the interviewees, when asked, thought there was too little emphasis on communicating one's own findings and research, engaging in critical debate, and for some a lack of sufficient academic writing and summarising skills. All of these things were considered important but there was a sense of not knowing how to more actively develop these skills or who should be responsible for it.

I noticed this tension in several of the interviews, between understanding the importance of communication and being able to articulate one's ideas, but at the same time not having a very clear approach in terms of how to teach it or feeling that not enough was being done.

The centrality of communication was made very succinctly by one interviewee:

...presenting information is always like, if you cannot present your work then it kind of doesn't exist. (Interview 9)

The ability to communicate, present, articulate and structure ideas and argumentation was seen as essential. It was also something that there were different approaches to. Several interviewees argued that it happened through the assignments, but they were still also wondering whether that was enough. Based on this it appeared to be an underprioritized area of many of the master's programs. According to Nussbaum, this is an issue in terms of strengthening students' critical thinking skills. A central part of critical thinking is taking knowledge and transforming it with one's own thinking. One thing is being able to read and

understand complicated matters and approach it with a critical mind, another aspect is being able to apply it with one's own thinking and argumentation (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 43).

Another aspect of the importance of communication was being able to engage in debate with others. One interviewee argued that students should learn to present their viewpoints, especially in their future careers:

... maybe they are researchers and will then be debated so maybe it also, that should be helped, should maybe help them also how they can give a critical view in also sort of hostile environment if they are against. Our professors face that a lot, I've been as a researcher also in that situation that people who don't like my research can be quite hostile. So maybe we also could give some tools in the future how to go on with this kind of situation and how to be, not go into stupid debates and to do things like that, but how you can do that in style... (Interview 5)

The ability to productively engage in debates is central to critical thinking, especially in hostile environments where the other side might not understand your side of the argument. Even in a less hostile environment, it is still important for students to understand how to communicate and engage with non-experts. One interviewee articulated it as students being translators between science and practice and between experts and non-academics:

I also think that they must learn to be, like translators between science and practice, so that they are interested in practice, they are interested in how their field is, is working and what are the practical things, what to do and so on but then at the same time they would also be interested in the science and there is a gap between those and there needs to be people who speak both languages and I think that people who have these master's degrees they should be the ones, so that they should really be both capable of reading the sciences like I said but then also translating it into practical action in their own work. (Interview 7)

The interviewees are finding it important that students gain skills in critical thinking, both as a general mindset and approach to information but also as a very tangible skill, by being able to question and engage in debate constructively and also being able to communicate and articulate one's own opinions and beliefs. This was clearly articulated in all interviews as a central part of the skillset and attitude that graduates from a master's program should gain.

4.1.2. Becoming a world citizen

The second ability of Nussbaum's model is becoming a world citizen. Nussbaum presents this as not just identifying as a citizen of a particular group or nation but feeling connected to

humanity as a whole, including groups within one's own society that are different from oneself. It is about being able to interpret and understand cultural differences and be able to question the naturalness of one's own culture (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 52). Students need to understand problems as human problems, not just local, national or European ones (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 53). Nussbaum argues that this can be achieved by introducing different cultural perspectives, such as including minority perspectives in courses through readings (Nussbaum, 2002, p. 297). Since the interviews were not based on Nussbaum's theory, I did not ask directly about world citizenship and understanding minority perspectives, but I did ask about the diversity of the student body and the perceived importance of diversity.

Many of the new international master's programs are not natural extensions of bachelor programs and therefore have a diverse student body in terms of backgrounds and nationalities. This entails non-Finnish citizens arriving in Finland specifically for their studies, but also many international students that have lived in Finland for years and are therefore quite integrated in Finnish society. At the same time, the students who are Finnish citizens, might be returning to Finland after studying abroad for years and might never have been enrolled in higher education in Finland. This challenges perceptions of nationality and identity and blurs the line between who is "international" or not. This could tie into Nussbaum's argument about students learning to go beyond a specific group identity and feeling a stronger connection to humanity as a whole, or at least a broader understanding of group belonging (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 52). Furthermore, many young people today are spending time abroad, especially when enrolled in higher education, which can make the distinction between national and global identity increasingly blurred. This in itself becomes an argument for a stronger sense of cosmopolitan identity and a sense of world citizenship. This can also be argued through the lens of the politically socialising potential of moving to a new place and encountering new groups of people (Dawson & Prewitt, 1969).

Most of the programs participating in this study have a quite international student body, and all interviewees argued that the diversity, whether in terms of nationality, academic backgrounds, age, or gender, was a strength to their program. The international environment was seen by some interviewees as central to the teaching environment and creating new learning opportunities for students. This directly considered in how group work was planned or in the more indirect ways of students being exposed to different perspectives. One

interviewee mentioned how the diversity of nationalities and backgrounds were a central part of how teaching was being planned:

... they have really different background and they also have very different pedagogical backgrounds and then they came to studying in our program, so we are not going to tell them that this is the truth, instead of that we are offering them very different approaches to the studies (editing for anonymity), so it's very challenging for them to understand that there, there is so many different approaches and they all are as important (...) we are working in small groups and, it's really important that the groups are from different, that there are different backgrounds in the groups and also different countries and so on, so that is the whole idea so they get to understand the multidisciplinary from the first day basically... (Interview 11)

The interviewee makes clear that it is an active goal in their program to mix the students both according to backgrounds and cultures, to get a variety of perspectives. According to Nussbaum's model, this is definitely one way to challenge the naturalness of one's own point of view, whether that is in terms of academic background or national culture. Furthermore, the point about pedagogy and not presenting the truth is also an interesting element that ties into the idea of opening students' eyes to other forms of understanding and seeing other possibilities. It was interesting to see how some interviewees were actively using the international environment and seeing it as a strength to support the development of the students' thinking and learning. Many of the programs also have a strong emphasis on using examples from real life and using case studies when discussing particular models, methods and approaches. Furthermore, several of the programs also have strong ties to research and provides opportunities for students to do work with research groups and put their knowledge into practice that way. Several interviewees mentioned study trips, excursions and project work in the program where methods and approaches were applied to real cases, to also showcase the complexity of how things work in real life with different stakeholders and the global impact of the issues. This aligns with Nussbaum's emphasis on seeing problems as human problems and acknowledging the interconnectedness of things (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 59).

It was also mentioned that the international environment could be part of the learning experience itself, even though it did appear that many of the interviewees might not always realise how much of an opportunity for learning it might be:

Well, I think we don't think about it too much and one reason is probably that as a university employee, it's, we are working in a pretty international company all the time so that's kind of natural for us, but from the students'

perspective, I would say that it's a strength, because the students they will be exposed to different cultures and different ways of thinking compared to that they would only be studying with Finns for example. (Interview 2)

This interviewee directly argue that the diverse student body gives the students other, valuable perspectives than if they had been in a program with only Finnish students. This diversity can also build a certain empathy and sensitivity to understanding the different ways an issue can be interpreted (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 63). This is also an important point in terms of the political socialization potential of the program environment. Students might gain an understanding of other cultures and lived experiences by being directly exposed to how something is understood from a different cultural perspective. Not in a theoretical manner or from the academic papers but from a fellow student. By the interviewees recognising this potential and fostering that in the program, this can become part of the indirect political socialization (Dawson & Prewitt, 1969, p. 70). It seems that the international and diverse environment of the master's programs could be supporting the development of world citizens, even though this did not seem be an explicit goal. On the other hand, there is also a need to be careful and maybe more intentional about these matters, since cross-cultural environments can also be cause for conflict or negative experiences that might exacerbate potential negative stereotypes if not facilitated carefully.

How the international and diverse environment is being fostered and made explicit is also very much up to the leadership in the program. One of the questions I asked every interviewee was how they would explain their role in the program. Often this would include building community, connecting students, staff and faculty, and supporting the students. One interviewee explained it as being a bridge builder or facilitator:

... what I see as my role is also bringing together somehow these different disciplines and these different views on what the program offers as substance like contents and how, what is the pedagogy offering the different worldview or different sort of disciplinary approaches. So.. this is a sort of bridge building practice in a way, and it requires one to kind of look beyond just these quite specific disciplinary boundaries. Yeah.. so I think that's important to be able to somehow facilitate this sort of discussion or sort of communication between the different parties involved. (Interview 4)

The interviewee articulated doing the active work of bringing people together, bringing these different perspectives forward and facilitating the dialogue and interaction. This interviewee articulates the importance of fostering the connections and as something that needs explicit

attention. This also ties into intentional political socialization; actively fostering a certain environment, wishing for connections to be made (Dawson & Prewitt, 1969, p. 77). Some interviewees argued that being in an interdisciplinary and multicultural environment already fosters that understanding to some extent. Nussbaum argues that this sort of interdisciplinary and strong engagement of different perspectives requires collaboration among faculty and a deep, intentional commitment to truly work (Nussbaum, 2002, pp. 297-298).

One interviewee mentioned the importance of having an explicit conversation about how the environment in the program should be, especially with a diverse student body. They had direct conversations together, both students alone and with faculty, to discuss how to create a comfortable environment for everyone and how to engage in conversations that could be sensitive or ground for misunderstandings, for example when it comes to cultural differences. This interviewee was the only one that mentioned a sort of very explicit and direct process of this kind of conversation taking place, even though others indicated that this happened on a less formalised level. Thus, it could seem that a strong deliberate collaboration among the faculty to actively foster world citizenship is not particularly pronounced.

Some of the skills that align with Nussbaum's definition of world citizenship were mentioned by many interviewees (Nussbaum, 2002, pp. 297-298). These skills included students having an open mind, being able to collaborate, fostering the ability to listen and understand other people's perspectives, especially across academic disciplines. Even though the need for collaboration was often framed in an academic, disciplinary context, when applying political socialization theory, I would argue that it can also have an impact on how students engage in different contexts (Dawson & Prewitt, 1969, pp. 70-71). In the words of one interviewee:

... I think they need to have an open mind for collaboration, and they need to have an open mind to learn beyond their specific profession so that, because it's a really integral element in our program that they would work with people from other fields, so I think that those are really important. (Interview 2)

Most of the programs are educating experts or researchers that will need to work with other disciplines and experts in other fields. Several of the interviewees also mentioned gaining an understanding of both national and global issues and how these are interconnected. One interviewee mentioned that even though the students were studying in Finland and often seeing Finnish examples in class, it was crucial for them to also learn to extract the broader learnings of the specific, local case. What can be generalised from a specific case in Finland

that is relevant in Canada, Spain or elsewhere? This ties into the importance of communication and being able to articulate own ideas and research and being understood by others who might not share the same way of thinking:

I think they need to understand that the problems in our current society are not easy at all so we are, they're supposed to be some kind of generalist, just, to understand and they should have skills to communicate with different disciplines, to understand how to communicate their own skills and also to, they're supposed to understand and be a good listener (Interview 11)

This ties into Nussbaum's emphasis on understanding the complexity and global scale of the challenges that humanity is facing and that it requires a broad, holistic approach to solve them and the attitude of a world citizen (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 67). This is a central idea of science as well, which one interviewee brought up, by mentioning the importance of cosmopolitan citizenship without the concept being brought up in the interview:

Well, I mean I suppose at a really general level, that any kind of scientist is cosmopolitan if they are doing it properly, because they are supposed to be operating according to high-level accepted international standards of how to do stuff. (Interview 3)

This is an interesting point and underlines the inherently global nature of the scientific and academic community, which can also shape the students' thinking:

... in that sense you are a citizen of the world, a citizen of the world of science. And the, if the teaching is working, then that's being passed on to students. (Interview 3)

The importance of the teaching is being emphasised and how the teaching is done can influence the kind of mindsets and understandings passed on to the students. This is essential for shaping world citizens.

Many interviewees mentioned the global problems humanity is facing today, which makes it necessary to think beyond borders. Students need to understand the big picture and see themselves as part of a larger whole, as part of humanity. Through the diverse study environment, it seems that students are being exposed to different realities and perspectives, which might be supporting developing the ability of world citizenship.

4.1.3 Developing Narrative Imagination

The third ability in Nussbaum's model of cosmopolitan citizenship is narrative imagination. Nussbaum argues that factual knowledge alone is not enough for good thinking, one also

needs narrative imagination (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 85). It is not enough to just learn information, one needs to transform it into understanding. Part of this is being able to imagine oneself in someone else's shoes and trying to understand why others act the way they do and see the situation from their point of view. The goal is to cultivate a deep sense of empathy and imagination to understand where someone else is coming from. This is also tied to the Humboldtian ideal of education and Bildung, the importance of educating the whole person and including questions of ethical and moral character. With certain trends favouring effectiveness, optimisation and streamlining, this is something that has been challenged in recent years (Kauppinen & Kaidesoja, 2014; Hohendahl, 2011).

This could also be seen in the interviews. Narrative imagination was much less apparent in the interviews. Some interviewees were quite aware and comfortable with the "human" aspect of their teaching and mentioned the importance of students also growing as human beings, cultivating empathy and that professional and personal growth are often overlapping, but it was not the majority. This is clearly also one of the abilities that has a much more central role in certain master's programs than others, based on the subject-area.

One interviewee was very clear about the role of understanding and trying to emphasise with others and for students to learn to approach others from a place of wanting to understand:

that it's firstly about understanding, sort of.. not judging but understanding what people are doing and sort of uhm.. trying to understand the other's perspectives and then... yeah? Maybe, aim for a change, but through understanding what is going on and why the situation is what it is...
(Interview 10)

This ties into narrative imagination and the sense of fostering understanding, trying to suspend one's own beliefs and judgment and meet someone where they are with the explicit aim of wanting to understand. Before change or action should happen, it is necessary to understand what is going on.

Several other interviewees touched upon themes that could be connected with narrative imagination. One interviewee emphasised, what is often seen as a more traditional understanding of the aims of the university:

I think that from my perspective, I'm the old one so to say, so I really want to underline those values and the, and the old humanistic way to understand the role of the university because people who graduate from the universities in general should have understanding about also their own duties and they should

have a responsibility to understand that they are, they also have responsibilities to the society in general, so it's not only about their own career, it's also about what they can give to society as well. (Interview 11)

Bringing up the concept of humanistic tradition has strong ties to cosmopolitan citizenship. Nussbaum is arguing for the cultivation of humanity and narrative imagination is a central part of that (Nussbaum, 1997). The humanist approach is often tied to the concept of Bildung, in terms of a holistic approach to education, meaning educating the whole person (Nordenbo, 2002). It is interesting to notice that the interviewee articulates this as somehow old-fashioned, the idea of emphasising the value-based and humanistic views of higher education and believing students should have a broader sense of responsibility and awareness of the world. Nussbaum would argue that this should still be a central part of higher education and that in an increasingly complex and interconnected world narrative imagination and humanistic values are central to developing responsible citizens, capable of reflective decision-making (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 99-100). How this interviewee articulates the humanistic approach, and a importance of feeling a broader responsibility, brings up the question of whether this is really still seen as a central aim within the university community.

Another interviewee mentioned the importance of not only learning to think with the mind and from facts but also cultivating more intuitive, humane and heart-based learning. Students should understand the relevance of emotions and feelings in how human beings act and function. The interviewee used an example from their own teaching, where the students were asked to first read an assigned text from a rational, factual perspective and afterwards approach the text with their heart:

Some of them were agitated and were sort of, felt uncomfortable and were not prepared for something like this and others were inspired and encouraged to kind of, to keep... to kind of.. keep this perspective with them, this heart perspective. And of course, then there were those for whom it was difficult to understand why do we have to do this, why do we have to, what does this have to do with our studies? And uhm, like kind of, it didn't, it was such a completely new paradigm for them, that you know, it's not fact- or theory-based, it's not... and here is kind of the trick for me also, how much should I engage in justifying this approach with scientific research, because there is a lot of research on that and how much should I kind of just try to facilitate the experience for them, because that's not, we're in the mind all the time if I keep on talking about the theory, so how do we get out of there. (Interview 4)

This clearly ties into Nussbaum's idea of narrative imagination. It includes fostering the use of imagination and an emotional understanding, cultivating a sense of wonder (Nussbaum,

1997, p. 89). It is interesting that the interviewee is grappling with the question of whether to present the scientific background for the exercise. The interviewee could explain the science to the students behind this approach, but that would make it theory-based and rationalising it rather than focusing on the human and emotional experience, the interviewee was striving for. The students' discomfort with having to do something that was not based on the theoretical level is an interesting reaction and also something that Nussbaum mentions. She argues that this stimulation of the imagination and having to do something leading from an emotional place can be "unsettling and disturbing" for students (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 100). The fact that many students want an explanation or a reasoning for this exercise could also be an indicator that this third ability of cosmopolitan citizenship is not very prevalent within the university. To go even further, it might even be seen as inappropriate by some. Nussbaum writes how there seems to be a preference for detachment in higher education, a view that the neutral and objective are more serious and part of a high tradition within academia (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 102). This could also be connected to the larger conversation around higher education and the focus on educating people to be good professionals and less focus on the more value-based and moral aspect of education. This also ties back to the question of where the humanistic tradition and Bildung fits into higher education today. No other interviewee mentioned heart-based learning, even though others did talk about the humanistic approach, empathy and other more emotionally based perspectives.

When asked about the role of higher education in fostering personal development and helping the students understand their role in the larger society, one interviewee replied:

I think that's a very important part of the education. It's not only about the issues or subjects or disciplines, it's also about how to be a human. (Interview 11)

The interview continued with the role of personal and professional development and whether the interviewee saw those as overlapping or separate:

in some cases, they are separate but, in many cases, they are overlapping, but the problem in the current situation is there is a risk they will be more separate because of the pressures we have outside the university, because of the effectiveness and so on, that is the risk at the moment. (Interview 11)

Nussbaum clearly argues for the education of the whole person and cultivating humanity in the students (Nussbaum, 1997, 2002) and allowing for a moral education, preparing students to grapple with ethical and complex issues. This interviewee connects the external

developments; the pressure to make sure students graduate on time and the increasing optimization of the educational system, with the decreasing ability to foster students' personal development. This is a concern that many interviewees mentioned, mostly in regard to the changing role and perception of science and higher education and experts in society, but also in terms of how external factors and demands are changing the relationship between students and faculty and students' ability to immerse themselves in learning and discovery.

One interviewee was worried about how often the personal was left outside. When it comes to research, the ideal is often reaching objectivity, but the interviewee argued that it's hard to completely leave the persona out of it. When conducting good and high-quality science, there is still an element of the personal and the approach, interests and experiences the researcher brings to their job. This, of course, can be seen differently according to the faculty or field of science. This is not really something that any other interviewee brought up, but it is something that seems important. Even if there are professional and academic standards that are incredibly important, in the end researchers are also human beings with certain perspectives, lived experiences and understandings of the world. Even if this is not something that should be central in the research, I would argue that it should still be central in the teaching. Many students will not choose an academic path and will need to understand their own motivations and the motivations of others, which is central to Nussbaum's definition of narrative imagination (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 104).

4.2 Democracy at the University of Helsinki

The University of Helsinki is a big institution that can foster a certain culture both explicitly and implicitly by how faculty and staff behave and engage, how students feel they are able to influence matters of importance to them and engage in dialogue with their teachers.

Additionally, there is also the formalised democratic structure within the university, which includes student representatives in the boards to ensure the mutual flow of information and inclusion of the voice of the student body.

4.2.1 Fostering a democratic culture

This section will explore how the culture within the university might be shaping the students, based on the argument by Dawson and Prewitt that political socialization and learning can happen in many situations indirectly or unintentionally (Dawson & Prewitt, 1969).

Many interviewees mentioned the diversity of thought and opinion and the openness and discussion. One interviewee expressed appreciation of how the values of the university has been emphasised in the new strategy and how these are central to the mission of the university. The interviewee emphasised a culture of debate and the ability to discuss ideas:

You are allowed to say what you think, if you disagree you are allowed to say that and if you disagree you are invited to tell, express your opinion and, and... and give a background to it, and have a debate! Debate in a sort of liberal sense of the word, that everyone is entitled to an opinion, but if you have an opinion then we are, uhm, it's your responsibility also to debate about that, there are no intellectual authorities, like an authoritarian society.
(Interview 8)

This last part is particularly relevant in terms of political socialization, in the sense that the university, ideally, models freedom of opinion and speech, without censoring or having an authority decide what can or cannot be said. It is an important aspect of a democratic society as well and something that students could learn in the university if the teachers are creating that kind of environment and modelling it. Dawson and Prewitt argue that imitation is a big part of how political socialization happens (Dawson & Prewitt, 1969, pp. 74-75). This can both be positive and negative and is not necessarily a conscious effort, but it is part of creating the expectations students have of how people with authority behave or how active or inactive one should be in sharing one's thoughts and opinions. Several interviewees mentioned the diverse and pluralistic environment of the university community and how it was fostering a culture of discussion and debate.

While most of the interviewees seemed to perceive the environment within the university as open for debate and discussion, it was not exactly clear whether this was how they perceived the environment with their colleagues or if this also included the students. Either way, based on Dawson and Prewitt's concept of political socialization, if the environment is open to debate and discussion between teachers, it can also be visible to the students and it might encourage them to also engage in debate (Dawson & Prewitt, 1969, p. 99). A majority of the interviewees also mentioned, that while they believed that it was important for students to gain an understanding of their own influence, more could be done to encourage it. Many of them were very positive about the way student organisations could support students in gaining these skills and get actively involved. At the same time, for many of the interviewees,

understanding and supporting students in developing agency and getting involved seemed to be left more to the students themselves:

I think the answer is that we don't really actively, at least we don't actively think in those terms. And as a consequence, it is not something that we actively support. Obviously, we are extremely happy when we see that happening, that the students they sort of take charge of things and so on, are able to kind of fulfil themselves in a way. (Interview 1)

It was interesting that it was seen as something that was "obviously" good when it happened, but still not something that was actively promoted and not necessarily seen as something that should be proactively encouraged. This interviewee also mentioned that when students did show some interest, they (the teachers) were supportive, but they would rather react to the students that proactively encouraging it.

While most interviewees perceived the internal environment at the university as open to debate and discussion, at least one interviewee was a bit more sceptical. This interviewee felt that the scientific culture was not always that open:

I think that the traditional scientific kind of culture has a lot, there is something destructive there as well in the way that criticism is presented and I think that it's not necessary to do it in such a destructive way, but more in a cooperation and something like with an attitude that creates something new instead of just saying that 'well this doesn't work' or 'this is not valid', because that's not enough. (Interview 4)

This is an interesting point, that questions what kind of behaviour and mentality the academic culture might be fostering. Looking at Nussbaum's three abilities of cosmopolitan citizenship, it requires a certain openness, humanity and vulnerability for students to truly foster those skills (Nussbaum, 1997). Considering that many interviewees were not sure how they were fostering the skills of critical thinking, communication and active engagement, there might be some challenges within the university to ensure an environment that also encourages students to question and engage. I would argue that the atmosphere this interviewee presents could be counterproductive in terms of fostering Nussbaum's cosmopolitan citizenship. Rather than just argue against and challenge argumentation and thinking, which are of course central parts of critical thinking and scientific debate, it is still important to consider how it is done and how much there is space to bring in new ideas and wonder about other perspectives, which are central to both world citizen and narrative imagination.

4.2.2 Facilitating participation

Another aspect of the internal environment at the university that could impact students' political socialization is how the university is structured. The structure of the university can be seen as a space for democratic practice due to the structure of student representatives who have a place in most boards and councils. This is an important part of building a democratic culture and of course a central way for students to learn about active participation and fostering a strong democratic attitude. Many of the interviewees mentioned this structure and found student engagement important. One interviewee made a very interesting point about the role of the student representative and the perception of their influence:

So students have places in many places where decisions are made and my experience that they are also listened to quite well, and when I was student rep myself when I was younger and actually I was in the Council of the Student Union for one year (edited for anonymity) but when I think about that, from a student's perspective it seems often that the professors don't listen and they don't let students to impact things, but then now being on the other side of the table I think that the impression is in certain cases it is true but in most of the cases I would say that it's the opposite, we are actually listening a lot and then basically I think most of the teaching staff and professors think that it is really important to have students involved in many of the cases and I think so myself also. (Interview 2)

The interviewee places a high value on the student representatives and involving the students in the decision-making. According to Dawson and Prewitt (1969) this ideally gives students the experience of influence and agency (p. 78), but the comment that the interviewee makes about not understanding the value they gave as a student representative themselves is an interesting question of political socialization. Are the teachers and board members making clear that they appreciate the students' presence and input? Or do they not articulate that explicitly and risk students feeling the same as the interviewee themselves did when they were a student representative? If students do not feel a sense of accomplishment and ability to influence matters it might actually be more discouraging and give the idea that participating does not really matter, especially if there is not a sense that professors and teachers are listening. This is an important aspect of developing a sense of agency. It requires the experience of success, if not it might discourage participation in the future in other contexts, which the theory of political socialization supports (Dawson & Prewitt, 1969, p. 79).

One interviewee made a very relevant point about the potential impact of the democratic organisational structure and how it might influence students' thinking about organisational structures in the future:

... so then it means that when you have this kind of model in your head and then you are starting some kind of organization, then this would be the normal model for you to set it up. But it's also modelling the city, the democracy in the city and also the democracy in the state. (Interview 7)

Experiencing this model, might give students an idea of how to apply this structure themselves and understand the value and importance of having a democratic structure within an organisation. When students get used to a democratic organisational structure, they might more easily adopt the belief that different groups and voices should be represented if they are influenced by the decision-making in that body. How students learn about decision-making and participation matters and gives an example for future practice (Dawson & Prewitt, 1969, p. 78). The interviewee also argues that this structure mirrors the democracy outside the university, which implies that participating in the democratic structures within the university is supporting participating in democracy in other contexts as well. This once more ties into the theory of political socialization and how experiences in one context can spill over into other unrelated contexts. This is a great example of learning about democratic culture and inclusion from being in an organisation that is structured democratically and how this provides skills and values that can translate into other situations and contexts.

4.2.3 The power of the teacher

A big part of the atmosphere and environment that students experience at the university comes from the teachers and faculty. This can be a part of the political socialization of education because how things are presented and taught can shape how students think and behave. It is not just about *what* is being taught but also *how* it is being done. Most of the interviewees were very aware of their important role in shaping the environment and atmosphere in their program and did feel a large sense of responsibility to build the community of the program. They are a large part of creating the environment where certain values, beliefs, skills and attitudes can more easily be fostered. So how did the interviewees think about this?

One interviewee was very clear of their power to shape how students think. The interviewee mentioned the impact a teacher can have on their students and therefore also responsibility the teacher has in their teaching:

... my role as a teacher is to teach young adults to develop their thinking, and sort of to teach them to think, think differently or rethink or (edited for anonymity) teach them to think in a new way.. uhm.. to be aware of their thinking and how thinking is connected to their actions, and practices and observations and that eventually also has an effect, depends on the individual person, has an effect on democratic society. (Interview 10)

This is a central part of understanding the impact of higher education on students' political socialization. It is furthermore central for the teachers to have this awareness to be mindful of what kind of values or attitudes they might be passing on to the students. Even if they do not actively think they are passing anything on to the students or telling students how to think, they can still set a certain example or model specific behaviours. This is an important role for the teacher and a big responsibility. As the interviewee mentions, *how* students learn to think and how their thinking is shaped will have substantial consequences for how they think about the world and the actions they take, beyond the classroom and in their professional lives. This is also supported by Dawson and Prewitt (1969). The interviewee understood the responsibility that came with this power to shape and engage with the students and also made the connection to how that is related to democratic society:

I am really influencing young adults and their minds, and those things have consequences eventually. Uhm the kinds of jobs that they apply to or the kind of intolerance they will have on inequality or the way they treat or are trying to help people to understand the, how the everyday thinking is flawed sometimes. (Interview 10)

The interviewee is drawing a line from their own teaching and how they are shaping students' thinking to the students' choices and behaviours in the future, even their beliefs about how others should be treated or how they think of other groups. This is also connected with Nussbaum's model of cosmopolitan citizenship and understanding how education should prepare students to think deeply and critically about the world (Nussbaum, 1997). But as the interviewee also indicates, it requires a deep awareness and sense of responsibility from the teacher.

Another interviewee also made the connection between how students were being educated and their ability to engage productive and critically in a democratic society. This interviewee was articulating the kind of citizens the university helped foster:

... I think that, the strength that we provide for democracy and democratic society, we produce and we educate people who are able to read today's newspapers and put information in the context, but then also I think that's what important in universities is that they are quite heterogenous places so that the ideas exchanged from person to person and there are also kind of idea generators inside universities you have a lot of people from different backgrounds and different countries typically, then tend to also be people who think about the state of the world quite carefully. So that also kind of produces new ideas. (Interview 2)

The university produces people who are able to critically read and contextualise the news and other information and the environment and the people within the university is part of that. This is a central aspect of Nussbaum's model and also central to fostering democratic values and strengthening civic culture (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 55). Furthermore, the university as a space is a learning environment for the students, where they can be exposed to pluralism, both in cultures, thinking and backgrounds, which is also a central part of Nussbaum's cosmopolitan citizenship. Being part of a pluralistic, democratic space could be a positive political socialization factor for the students.

Another aspect of the role of the teacher was in terms of the learning environment and how students were being introduced to content and how the teacher could support student success, especially in an intercultural environment where students bring very different previous experiences:

I cannot give them stuff where I'm setting them up to fail. And that's my personal teaching philosophy but it kind of enters into my approach to being involved with an international program, because what I'm constantly thinking about is what are we doing that could go very wrong such that the students self-blames for not understanding and it demotivates them and scares them and so on, when you've been doing the subject matter for a long time it should be, it's your job to say, here it is. (Interview 3)

The interviewee is very clear on how the teacher is part of creating a constructive learning experience for the students, because the interviewee understands how that can have long term effects. The teaching environment is not just shaping the student in this specific moment, but beyond. It plays a role in how students perceive themselves and their ability to succeed in the subject, which again can translate beyond this specific situation. This ties into the political socialization process through the development of a sense of self-efficacy and self-confidence. The learning process is consciously facilitated by the teacher and the students are set up to succeed. This is even more important in the international master's programs where students

have diverse backgrounds and, to draw on Nussbaum's concept of world citizenship, the teacher cannot take the 'naturalness' of a certain approach for granted (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 52). There is less space for assuming that all the students have the same understanding of how things should be done or what is expected when starting a course. This also ties into setting clear and explicit expectations for how students can engage in the classroom, whether they are encouraged to ask questions and discuss, which might not be the case in other cultures and therefore needs to be said explicitly. This point was not made by most other interviewees, at least when it came to the learning environment and how the teaching or expectation setting might need to be different compared to teaching a class of only Finnish students.

When it came to how the interviewees thought about the kind of attitudes they wanted to foster in the students, there were different approaches. Around half the interviewees considered their approach more neutral and did not want to shape how students were thinking about which issues were important or playing a more active role in addressing these issues. The other half was a lot more comfortable with bringing up debates and discussions and having values and personal thinking in the classroom. I will not be making a value-judgment of which one is the right approach and both of them can foster cosmopolitan citizenship. One point that one interviewee did make, that I thought might be relevant to this particular topic is their answer to what mindset and approach the teacher should have:

just kind of keeping an open mind myself, I don't know how I'm succeeding in that but that's something you try to remind yourself, that there may be not just one right way of doing things, there might be easier and less easy ways of doing things, but yeah, that's the way to put it. (Interview 9)

So, while the teachers might have different approaches to how much of themselves, they bring into the classroom, there seemed to be a consensus around the importance of keeping an open mind as a teacher. This ties back to Nussbaum's model of cosmopolitan citizenship by trying to look critically and with an open mind on new perspectives and approaches (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 42). It seems that this interviewee also understands that the mindset the students develop can be influenced by the mindset of the teacher. This is also something Prewitt and Dawson emphasised in the influence of different role models and authority figures we encounter throughout our lives (Dawson & Prewitt, 1969, p. 67).

It is obviously not only the mindset of the teacher that is influential but also the way that the teacher teaches. One interviewee argued that the way the teacher presents knowledge and

information is influential on how students' think about the knowledge and whether it is presented as the truth or rather one perspective of many. The interviewee mentioned two different approaches, where the first one is based on the teacher telling students how things are, whereas the other approach is more open:

The alternative is, I'm not going to tell you what the reality is, I'm going to tell you how to think about the reality and this is a different question. I give you tools, mindset that you can exploit, when you think about the reality, so that you are able to form your own use in efficient and transparent manner and you are also able to communicate your ideas in an understandable way, to anyone who has the same sort of a toolbox or machinery in his or her mind. (Interview 8)

This is a point made by almost all interviewees, that the goal is to broaden the thinking of the students, not to make them think a certain way. This is clearly important in how information is introduced and taught and how the students perceive the authority of that knowledge or information. People in positions of authority, such as teachers in a classroom, has a particular position to convey some information as the right way or the truth. The teacher has a key role in creating an environment that supports students developing a questioning mindset.

How students are taught to think and are shaped by their teachers and institutions are not just important for their own lives but for society as well. In Finland, since university education is highly appreciated, and also keeping in mind that the University of Helsinki is the oldest institution of higher education in the country and has a certain symbolic weight and alumni base, there is definitely a certain status in being a graduate from the University of Helsinki. This also means, at least in the case of Finland and possibly increasingly in a global context, that there is a certain status and access that comes with having a degree from this particular institution. One interviewee argued that there is a strong connection between graduates from elite universities going into socially, influential positions, a least in a national context. This also means that what and how the students are learning at the University of Helsinki has a potentially large effect on society in the future:

Helsinki University definitely has a privileged position. And so, what you're teaching students and the overall mentality that the teaching is framed within, the overall atmosphere, intellectual, political and so on that you are giving them, shapes them. And it will shape them in their subsequent higher-level careers and that will shape the future of the society in one way or another. So, there's a responsibility, and that was answer one and answer two is that we're not doing enough to reflect that (Interview 3)

The influence and power teachers have seemed quite clear. Teachers are not only researchers and experts in their field passing on knowledge. They are influential in the values, attitudes, mindsets and beliefs that students are acquiring, which is embedded within Nussbaum's understanding of the importance of higher education in shaping the morals and values of students (Nussbaum, 2002, p. 292). The above interviewee underlines the importance of what is being taught, how it is being taught and what kind of values and beliefs are being conveyed to students, consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly. This can have substantial societal impact, even if it is not a clear, direct connection. It is interesting that the interviewee is clear that not enough is being done to reflect it, even though the interviewee understands the high stakes. Understanding how the teaching and atmosphere is cultivating certain citizens and potential future leaders seem important but possibly not sufficiently reflected upon.

4.3 The University in a democratic society

Finally, this short section will sum up some of the main themes that came up when asking the interviewees about what they perceived as the most important role of the university in society and how that relationship should ideally be. Two of the main words that came up when asked about the relationship between the university and the surrounding society were "freedom" and "independence". These are important aspects of that relationship if the aim is to have an independent, objective research and scientific community not steered by political interests. One interviewee argued that the relationship between the university and the surrounding society should function in a very particular way:

How things should be, university has to be connected to the wider society in a very specific way and it is, that it has to be as autonomous as possible in order that the connections to the wider society are not driven by the wider society's immediate dictates. So, you can only have a virtuous connection between universities and societies if the society is prepared to not censor the university, to fund it adequately and to let them get on with it, such that then the knowledge that is produced is not driven by any particular political agenda, it's not driven by any particular fashion, it's not driven by immediate needs, because otherwise the university just becomes a servant of the society.
(Interview 3)

This point says something about the complex relationship between the university and the society, which also connects to the long history and changing role of the university in society (Rinne, 2004). It is clear from this answer that the university contributes to a democratic

society and culture through fostering freedom of speech and open discussion. If the university would lose this freedom and independence, it would be dangerous not only for the scientific community, but also for democratic society. A clear example of this interference would be if the government is dictating what is happening in the university, but it can also happen in more implicit ways, such as how funding is allocated and to what research. Furthermore, how science, academia and higher education is talked about by people in power and in public discourse, is also influential for how this relationship is seen. Yet, while this interviewee argues that society should just let the university get on with it, is that the same for the educating, training and shaping of future professionals, experts, and citizens? That is not necessarily something that should be decided completely without societal involvement. Balancing this dialogue and openness with society while maintaining independence and autonomy seems to be only increasingly challenging. Should the university really be completely independent from the society?

It is clear that the university is contributing to democratic society in many ways, both directly and indirectly. One interviewee argued that the university is a representative for certain values, which can influence broader society:

The university represents that kind of freedom, that is absolutely essential and it's becoming more and more vital and important in the society because of this crazy conspiracy theories or other bullshit that is being seen there, so.. that is what the university represents, and I do think that that is the most important role of the university in contemporary society. (Interview 8)

By being a symbol of freedom and truth, the university can be an important actor and counterpart to issues, such as populism and fake news. Since free and open access to information, free speech and debate are central aspects of a strong democracy, this is a really crucial role (Dahl, 1998; Held, 2006; Diamond, 2008). This is especially relevant in the face of current challenges of misinformation. Most of the interviewees expressed some level of concern about the trends they are seeing around the world. The influence of government in higher education in some countries, the censorship of universities and research, the disregard for science and facts, which the COVID-19 pandemic and the presidency of Donald Trump has exacerbated. They were all happy that this was not yet the case in Finland, but most of them also expressed some concern about whether it will stay this way. The academic autonomy and independence in Finland cannot be taken for granted.

The interviewees also connected the questions about funding and the growing societal influence on the aims of the university, which ties into the neoliberal turn of higher education (Hohendahl, 2011; Patomäki, 2019). One interviewee directly saw the connection between the lack of funding and a sense of the devaluing of science and academia:

Obviously, I'm very biased, I see university as a very important, like an organ in the society, producing lots of knowledge that we might not otherwise have, educating experts, that can work in both private and public sectors. So, it's kind of depressing to see how society itself and some parts of the society look down on the university system, higher education. But I don't know where, how else could we fight against like global problems (edited for anonymity). So, I don't see how else we can fight that except that, having more knowledge on the topics. (Interview 9)

The interviewee is pointing out the unique role that the university has in society as a knowledge creator, providing knowledge that would not otherwise be available. The university has a deep expertise when it comes to the fundamental challenges helping us to understand how things are interconnected and how to find solutions. This is central to a well-informed public and fact-based policy-making and decision-making and important for a well-functioning democratic society (Nussbaum, 1997). The other point is the role that the university plays in addressing global challenges. The university is connecting and working with other institutions around the world and has high mobility of researchers and students, which shapes the research and knowledge production and is central to pushing research forward and solving global problems. This collaboration, connectedness and understanding of the global nature of the issues we are facing is central. This aligns with Nussbaum's emphasis on ensuring that students become cosmopolitan citizens, but also the university's crucial role in a strong democracy (Barber, 1984).

The economic pressures and changing perception of the aims of higher education and universities are not only impacting the research but also the kind of education and political socialization that students might experience. One interviewee clearly connected the external developments with worrying tendencies in the internal environment at the university:

I feel that the university is sort of, the last area in society that is being made run under this market logic and it has, education has been... is becoming a sellable product like anything else and I feel that it's a very detrimental development and, and as it is a slow process, it's not so easy to see what's going on but more and more I see that students are becoming customers instead of being members, younger members of the academic community, who have their own responsibilities but also their own sort of freedom of choice. (Interview 4)

How might these trends and changes in values and aims fundamentally shape the graduates and in extension the citizens and future professionals? This interviewee sees a clear connection. If students become consumers of education that might change the political socialization potential of education and instead of developing agency, efficacy and a sense of participation, they might instead feel more like observers, consumers and receivers of something that is outside of their influence. If looking at this through the lens of Dawson and Prewitt (1969), this could have substantial consequences on whether they develop into cosmopolitan citizens and become active contributors and participants in democratic practice in the future or not.

Finally, one of the central connections between the university and the surrounding society are the graduates. Throughout most of the interviews, the students were mentioned as one of the most important contributions of the university to the surrounding society. This is a point that is important to underline. One aspect was how the students were the most effective tool for the university to communicate and spread the knowledge from the research. One interviewee argued that the students understand the latest research in their field and when they start working, they are able to apply that knowledge in practice. In that sense, students are working as mediators, or translators as mentioned earlier, between the academic community and “the outside world”. According to one interviewee, graduates put the research into practice:

... to make that count you have to also have people who are applying this knowledge so it's not enough that scientists would know what to do, but nobody is doing it, and for this reason teaching is of course really, really important because when we are teaching students we have this two year period or if it's combined with the bachelors and masters it's a five year period, to help them dive into this thinking of, scientific thinking and applying the scientific information and they are, our alumni are the people who are actually doing the job for us, so we are equipped them with this abilities and also the will to do so, and then they go there, out there in the society and they do it.
(Interview 7)

This clearly connects the importance of how students are educated, and the experiences they have within the university with how they engage in society. Students are central to the aim of the university and play an essential role in fulfilling that purpose. This both connects the argument of the importance of developing cosmopolitan citizens with the fundamental purpose of the university in democratic society.

5

Discussion

The analysis focused on skills and attitude development in students, the impact of the internal environment within the university and the relationship between the university and democratic society. In this chapter I will first summarise the findings of the analysis, after which I will discuss the implications of the findings through the theoretical framework, Nussbaum's model of cosmopolitan citizenship (Nussbaum, 1997, 2002) and Dawson and Prewitt's writing on political socialization (1969). I will also include some of the current scholarly debates on the aims and challenges of higher education. Furthermore, I will discuss the fourth research question, looking at the potential challenges and opportunities to integrating the ideals of *Bildung* and cosmopolitan citizenship in practice in the international master's programs at the University of Helsinki.

5.1 Students, the university and democracy

The first part of the analysis was based on Nussbaum's model of cosmopolitan citizenship with the three abilities of critical thinking, world citizenship and narrative imagination.

Critical thinking, according to Nussbaum, is the ability to question tradition and knowledge that is taken for granted. It is an attitude of critical reasoning, an active engagement in reasoned debate and the ability to present coherent argumentation (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 19). According to Nussbaum this is a skill that requires active participation of the students. Critical thinking was mentioned directly by all the interviewees and articulated as a central skill and attitude for students to learn. This is not surprising since it is a widely accepted ideal of higher education (Davies, 2015). While critical thinking was seen as central for students to develop, it was a bit harder for many of the interviewees to explain how this was being done in practice. Interviewees gave examples of how they believed this was being done, but most of them also reflected on whether enough was being done. While the ability to engage in

critical thinking was clearly important, there seemed to be less active planning for it to happen.

World citizenship is the ability to feel connected to the whole of humanity, beyond one's own group. It is about being able to understand how everything is interconnected in the world and also realising that one's own culture is not the natural way of things in the world (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 52). This ability was also prevalent in the interviews but understood in a slightly different way than Nussbaum presents it. While Nussbaum focuses on bringing diverse perspectives into the teaching and having minority views represented, these were not the issues which were central in the interviews, due to the interview framework. Yet the strength of having a diverse student body were mentioned in all interviews. The interviewees argued that this brought diverse perspectives and understandings, which was seen as valuable for the students. Furthermore, there was a deep understanding by the interviewees that the university is part of a global, academic community. There was also a strong emphasis on students understanding and appreciating different fields and being able to communicate with and value different perspectives and viewpoints. While this was not articulated by most interviewees as world citizenship, there seemed to be an appreciation of the values of world citizenship.

Narrative imagination is the ability to deeply relate to others and imagine what it is like being in their shoes and seeing the world from their perspective, regardless of how different their life might be (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 89) This ability was the least prevalent one in the interviews and values such as empathy, emotional awareness and connecting to a deeper humanity came up in less than half the interviews. Several interviewees argued that empathy, heart-based learning, and a humanistic approach were important but also mentioned that they were not sure how many teachers felt this way. Furthermore, some of them also expressed the feeling that these elements were not as appreciated within the academic community, which for some were explained by the prevalence of certain academic beliefs, related to putting the hard sciences over the humanities and social sciences, and valuing the ideal of objectivity and striving to remove the human element as much as possible. Another concern affecting the ability to integrate narrative imagination seemed to arise from the perceived increase in commercialisation of higher education, especially abroad. This included the influence of neoliberal values, such as optimization, effectiveness and seeing students as customers or consumers rather than younger but equal members of the academic community. This was

seen as having a detrimental impact on being able to engage with students as members of the academic community and building a human connection.

It is important to remember, that the question about skills and attitude development was phrased as which non-subject area skills and attitudes the interviewees considered most important for students to develop to become good professionals in their field. The interviews were not based on Nussbaum's cosmopolitan citizenship. Looking at the findings, I would argue that the skills and attitudes that the interviewees emphasised as important for students to develop are quite overlapping with Nussbaum's abilities of cosmopolitan citizenship, especially the abilities of critical thinking and world citizenship and to a lesser extent narrative imagination. Based on this, I would argue that there is an overlap between the skills that makes students competent and responsible experts *and* also responsible and engaged citizens.

When the interviewees were asked how they cultivated these non-subject area skills and attitudes they considered important, many interviewees were not quite sure, or gave examples of how they *thought* it might happen. I did not get the impression that most of them had clear learning goals and strategies for how these skills were included in the courses, but this was not an explicit conversation, so I might be wrong. Many of the interviewees also said that they did not believe that enough was being done to develop these skills, and that it was something they thought needed more focus. At the same time, several of them were not sure how to do that.

Finally, for some faculties and specific degree programs, the three abilities of cosmopolitan citizenship were naturally more connected to the subject area of the program, which of course made them more prevalent in these programs. Even though this is to be expected, it could be argued that the skills and perspectives of cosmopolitan citizenship should be a central part of any program, regardless of faculty. I will return to this in the next section.

In the second part of the analysis, I looked at the internal environment of the University of Helsinki and the broader perspective of the role of the university in democratic society. Most of the interviewees seemed to feel that the environment within the university was guided by democratic values, be it through the perceived openness encouraging debate and discussion, disagreements and acceptance of different viewpoints or being able to engage in public

debate. The University of Helsinki's internal structure was also mentioned as giving students an example of a democratic organisation, for example by having the system of student representatives in the boards and a wide range of student organisations and unions. This furthermore gave students the opportunity to be actively involved and experience how they might influence matters themselves. As part of the internal environment of the university, the importance of the teacher and the teaching environment was mentioned several times. Many interviewees argued that the teacher was influential in the learning experience of the students. Several of them argued that the teacher was a big part of shaping the students' thinking and that a big responsibility came with that. Yet, there was also a concern that this was not something that was considered enough in practice and that there might be a lack of understanding as to how the teacher is shaping the students and their thinking.

The interviewees were quite clearly feeling a tension between universities and external pressures, often phrased as the pressure for effectiveness, optimization and other tendencies often associated with neoliberal values and commercialisation, which seem to be in many ways conflicting with the values of universities. A central aspect of this is the prevalence of global rankings and the pressure of universities to achieve a high ranking. In most of these rankings the quality of teaching does not factor in. Furthermore, on an individual level, researchers are often not rewarded for teaching, but primarily for their productivity in terms of papers and citations. This could have an impact on the emphasis and care that is put into the teaching and where it is on the individual teacher's priority list.

Finally, one key finding brings the analysis full circle: the students or graduates were mentioned as one of the most important contributions of the university to the surrounding, democratic society. This in itself should not be surprising, since education is one of the central roles of the university. What was interesting to me, was the depth and the range of ways that graduates were articulated as important, beyond being well-educated experts. The fact that several interviewees argued that the research itself was best communicated to society through the students was a surprising finding for me. Fundamentally, the students seemed to not only be a central aim of the university in terms of becoming educated experts that could contribute productively to society, but also as a part of communicating the research to society. I would also argue that students are part of supporting the university's social impact in society. Some interviewees mentioned how students were the translators of the research into practice; the students were somehow bridging the university with society in very

concrete and important ways. Several interviewees were also arguing how the university was educating people who can think critically, who can read the newspaper and engage in debate, which is also central to being a competent, democratic citizen. While students were articulated as very important, there was a majority of interviewees thinking that cultivating communication skills, encouraging students to engage in the public debate and share their own research were lacking. So, while the students were articulated as an essential contribution of the university to the society and a central part of representing the values of the university and translating the research into practice, there seemed to be a gap in terms of how students were being prepared to live up to those expectations. Are students given the necessary skills and abilities, developing confidence in their knowledge as experts and learning to understand the bigger role and responsibility they have in society?

5.2 Bridging the gap from ideal to practice

Looking at the findings above, there are a number of possible implications.

First of all, according to the interviewees it seems that the culture and goals of the University of Helsinki are still rooted in the ideals of *Bildung*, truth, free debate and the inherent value of education. To a large extent, many of the skills and attitudes the interviewees emphasized are overlapping with Nussbaum's cosmopolitan citizenship (Nussbaum, 1997; 2002), more so in regard to critical thinking and world citizenship than narrative imagination though. The interviewees appeared to see the importance of learning for the sake of learning, the relevance of openness, curiosity and engaging with the students as people. That is clearly a good indicator that the value of *Bildung* and cosmopolitan citizenship is present in how the interviewees think about the aim of higher education and the skills and attitudes they want students to develop. It also shows that Nussbaum's cosmopolitan citizenship is able to provide a potential framework for looking at these topics at the University of Helsinki. The interviewees mentioned the skills of critical thinking, open mindedness, ability to collaborate with others and considering other points of view as something that was essential for the success of students as professionals in their fields. This is important, since it was not only seen as skills that were nice to have, but actually essential to educating responsible and competent experts. So, these skills are both important for becoming good professionals *and* also part of preparing students to be engaged citizens.

I would argue that the skills of cosmopolitan citizenship are the skills that enable students to put their subject-area knowledge into meaningful and responsible practice. The skills of cosmopolitan citizenship are the skills that allow graduates to be responsible decision-makers, empathic managers and able to navigate an interconnected world where problems are complex and have an inherently global scope. Without these skills of cosmopolitan citizenship, can we really ensure that students use the tools and mindsets they learn in university in a responsible and reflective manner? Will they understand the impact of their decisions and consider all the different stakeholder groups that might be influenced by it?

While all interviewees to a large extent articulated the skills and attitudes of cosmopolitan citizenship as important for students to develop, it was less clear how they did it in practice. If something is considered central to educating responsible knowledge-creators, decision makers and citizens, it could be argued that it should also be central in how the education and teaching is planned. From the interviews it seemed that it might not be as prevalent as both the interviewees believed it should be - and what Nussbaum would argue it should be (Nussbaum, 1997, 2002).

When a certain set of skills, behaviours, attitudes or values are seen as important for students to gain but there seems to be a lack of clear learning goals and pedagogical practices, it is hard to tell whether it is actually happening. Most of the interviewees seemed to have a lot of assumptions about students learning certain skills automatically or gaining skills in critical thinking just by being in the program and in the classroom. One argument for this being the case is the level of maturity and sense of independence that should be present in students who have made it to their master's studies. Furthermore, the students are often working in interdisciplinary environments as part of a multicultural student body, which, according to the interviewees, probably supports collaboration, intercultural understanding and communication skills to some extent. This could be supported by Dawson and Prewitt's understanding of political socialization in terms of being in a new environment and having one's own norms challenged (Dawson & Prewitt, 1969, p. 152). While this is possible, when it comes to students developing communication skills, critical thinking, self-efficacy and finding their own voice, it is often assumed that it happens automatically by being part of the academic environment, while research has shown that many students struggle with this and there is a need to make it more explicit and provide more support to ensure student success (Gennrich & Dison, 2018). Assuming that the environment will automatically facilitate skills

development can also backfire. Students might have bad experiences with other students or teachers, giving them negative ideas of people in authority positions or working with people from other cultures and backgrounds, if this process is not facilitated. Crawford and Bethell (2012) argue for the need of facilitation to ensure a positive intercultural effect, since there is a tendency for students to group themselves and for international and “local” students not to mix. It requires institutional support and facilitation to ensure intercultural understanding. The lack of facilitation can exacerbate negative stereotypes or mean that negative experiences will shape the students’ view of each other (Crawford & Bethell, 2012, p. 195).

It can be argued that students can learn from many different situations and experiences, directly or indirectly, and these learnings can spill over into other parts of their lives (Dawson & Prewitt, 1969). In the university environment there is a constant flow of potential indirect and unintentional learning happening. If teachers argue that students expressing and arguing their opinion and engaging in scientific debate is important but might not explicitly create that space or actively plan for it in their courses, it is hard to tell whether these skills are being developed in students. If these skills are considered central for students to learn, attention and priority should be given to them when planning the outcomes of the courses and the programs; not just as goals but planning for how to actually achieve them.

Several of the interviewees, when asked how they were cultivating or actively fostering certain skills or mindsets answered that it was not something that was mentioned explicitly to the students but that the more reflective students probably got it. There might be a need to have a more explicit and active focus on helping students reflect and articulate these skills that are seen as important, whether it is critical thinking, world citizenship, narrative imagination or Bildung. This is even more important when looking at the multicultural classroom, where the teachers cannot assume that people have gone through the same educational system or are sharing the same thinking and understanding. I would argue that there could be a need for a more active focus and more facilitated reflection about learned skills and competencies together with the students. It appears that the technical or subject area knowledge is both easier to plan for and cover in the teaching. This makes sense, based on the area of expertise that the teachers have. Furthermore, there are a lot of different tasks and expectations put on teachers and a growing amount of administrative work, coordination and lack of resources. Are there enough incentives, resources and time put aside for teachers to also prioritise the skills of cosmopolitan citizenship and coming up with new initiatives,

also across faculties? It does not seem like it is actively discouraged, but maybe it should be more actively encouraged and ensured that sufficient resources, emphasis and incentives are provided from the university's side to ensure that the stated values and aims of the university is put into practice. Maybe there is a need for more continuous conversations and debate about the aims of higher education and what students need to be educated for.

I would argue that the skills of cosmopolitan citizenship are increasingly important in higher education. Higher education could be seen as less and less training of technical and subject area skills, since technology and information is changing rapidly, and the students' knowledge might be obsolete in just a few years (Frank et. Al. 2019). Furthermore, in the context of an internationalised higher education institution with a strategic goal of increasing internationalisation, there is a real question as to what the most relevant curricula really is. Is a discipline-specific curriculum the most relevant? Crawford and Bethell (2012) argue that a foundational knowledge of the subject area is clearly still needed, but it should be balanced with other essential skills "such as communication (intercultural, negotiation, conflict management), critical thinking, and learning-to-learn skills; observational, analytical and reflection development; and fostering a pluralistic worldview" (Crawford & Bethell, 2012, p. 196). What seems to be increasingly important to provide in higher education are these more abstract skills. They might need to play a more central role in how education is being planned.

The fact that narrative imagination seems to be less prevalent and even seen as somewhat discouraged in the academic culture is a challenge that I would argue needs to be solved. Leadership, decision-making, creating algorithms, looking at data, planning economic policies, teaching, translating, looking at societal issues and policies all require empathy. These issues will affect other people and groups that the student might not know or be part of themselves. Yet, students need to be able to consider these people in their work. Furthermore, this understanding is equally important for citizens, when they decide how to vote, engage in public discourse and remind themselves that there are many other experiences in society and in the world. This is also something that Nussbaum emphasises (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 86).

I am not claiming that these skills are not currently being developed in the students or that these discussions are not currently being had by faculty. What I will argue is that it seemed that these more value-based, ethical and moral discussions were not as central or clearly

prioritized. Based on the growing complexity and interconnectedness of the world, it will only get increasingly important for decision-makers and experts to understand the implications of their decisions and being able to consider the variety of stakeholder groups and ethical concerns that might be involved. This means that being a good technical or subject-area expert is not enough, there needs to be a strong moral, ethical, human foundation on which these technical abilities are applied. How students' technical and subject area knowledge is being put into practice matters, it is not arbitrary. Having this moral and critical foundation seems more urgent in these times of misinformation, populism, mistrust in science and fake news. This requires an even stronger emphasis on ensuring that students are not using theories, models, their knowledge in a haphazard manner but that they are, in the words of one interviewee, "responsible knowledge-creators." The knowledge students gain and the tools they acquire are powerful and influential and most likely, they will use them in important contexts in the future. These students will be part of shaping and creating the future. It could be argued that the university has a responsibility and should play a role in preparing students to be able to put themselves in other's shoes since there is a high chance that many of these students will be researching matters, making decisions on matters and talking and writing about matters that will impact other people. While not every student will necessarily end up in a high-level decision-making position, whether in politics, business, research, or the public sector, it is likely that many of them will end up in such a position, either in Finland or abroad. As a few of the interviewees did explicitly argue, the way students are taught, the atmosphere, and the university setting are shaping the thinking and values of the students and that will shape the decisions and the society of the future. Even if students do not end up in positions of power, all of them are still citizens. All of them have the possibility to vote, discuss issues, engaging in debate online, make decisions about where they work, the values on which they base their work and engage with others. How they think and how they are educated can influence all of this.

Francis Bacon is often attributed for the quote "Knowledge is power" (Rodríguez García, 2001). Education is a key example of that. Understanding the power and responsibility that students have when learning the tools, methods and mindsets of their field is important, but it was not clear to me whether this was reflected in the teaching. It makes me wonder, how students are educated or shaped to see problems, such as misinformation, climate change, inequality. Are they taught as if these problems are "out there" or as problems that are evolving and that they can and should be part of addressing. Especially since the reality is

that the university is educating the future decision-makers, leaders and knowledge creators. Might there be a disconnect between the nature of academia and the world that students will have to navigate outside the university? When going back to Dawson and Prewitt's writings from 1969, they argued that the people educating the youth are often specialised and also educating students for the world that they themselves know, but not necessarily the future (Dawson & Prewitt, 1969, p. 53). The world changes faster than ever before; a little more than a year ago few people could have imagined the world we live in today, with online teaching, learning and work. How are we able to better prepare students to navigate that reality? I would argue, part of that is having a stronger foundation in values, skills and attitudes such as those in Nussbaum's model. It is increasingly important to make sure that students are critical thinkers and able to navigate and function in this interconnected, hyper-complex world and able to continue learning. Most interviewees were clearly aware of the importance of students being critical thinkers and readers, able to debate and discuss and understand the complexity of the problems we are facing. Yet, there still seems to be a gap between those ideals and the practice in the classroom. The university's values and goals were directly or indirectly articulated as important by all interviewees, but I wonder whether it is sufficiently connected with how these values and goals are being operationalised in the practice of teaching and educating students. For skills and learning to really be transformed into knowledge, the students need to do more than listen and take notes, they need to engage with the knowledge, something needs to come from the student, it needs to be a personal experience where they feel a sense of agency (Ritchie, 2016, p. 3). There needs to be a literal space in the lecture or class, where the students need to respond and engage (ibid.).

This brings us to the impact of political socialization and the internal culture at the university. By applying the work of Dawson and Prewitt (1969), I argue that the environment and how teaching is being done is part of shaping the students, which was also echoed by many interviewees. If the teachers are not actively thinking about how they are developing these attitudes and skills in the students or creating an environment that fosters them, the skills might still be developed - but they might also not be. Even more importantly, when considering unintentional political socialization, teachers might unconsciously shape students in unintended ways (Dawson & Prewitt, 1969, p. 64). Whether that is by not creating space for questions and debates, not creating space for the students to question the teacher or the like, these situations might be missed opportunities for students to develop critical thinking skills and a sense of agency. If not actively considering the environment, atmosphere,

teaching and pedagogy, it is unclear what unintentional learning students might take away. It could be a neutral effect, which means no negative or positive change, but students might also learn from the classroom experience that they should not question authority, based on the teacher not leaving time for questions or not asking for students' thoughts, which might not be intentional from the teacher's side to discourage questioning, but might unintentionally send that signal to students.

Obviously, I cannot say what is happening in each classroom and I am sure that there are a range of different practices taking place. Through the interviews it was clear that many of the interviewees are not used to having to articulate how they do these things in practice. I am not arguing that these things are not happening, and I do believe that they can also be fostered implicitly, but I believe there is reason to be more conscious and practical about this. As was clear both through the interviews but also by looking at the state of the world, these skills matter more than ever. Questioning authority, assessing information and argumentation and daring to think for oneself and consider whether what is going on is really right and the best way are incredibly important. We should not just hope that the students get these skills and attitudes. We should plan for it.

The aim of higher education is as debatable as ever, but we are also facing unprecedented changes and challenges coming at us with accelerating speed.

Several interviewees mentioned the need to solve the global challenges we are facing, such as climate change, misinformation, post-truth, biodiversity and many other issues. There is a role for the university in solving these challenges but what role? While research and information are clear contributions that help decision-makers make better informed decisions, should there be a larger focus on educating students to be able to take on these challenges? This would require skills and attitudes like those in Nussbaum's model of cosmopolitan citizenship. While most of the interviewees expressed worries about these issues, it seemed a bit like some of them did not necessarily see themselves as capable of playing a role in turning the tide on these troubling tendencies. Furthermore, there is also a question as to whether they feel that it is their responsibility. Obviously, there are many different opinions on this within the university and some teachers and researchers will definitely be much more engaged in society and see that as important. Each individual researcher decides how they want to engage in the public debate, and use the practical implications of their research, but should that be the same for how teaching is being done?

The aim of the university is also being challenged by globalization and the growing number of international students. What does it mean to talk about democratic practice and citizenship, when the student body is literally from across the world with different nationalities and a range of cultural experiences and values? What does it mean to still strive to fulfil the mission of the universities as phrased in the University Act, that the universities should prepare students to serve their country and humanity? Suddenly that country is not necessarily Finland but has potential impact far beyond the Finnish borders. The university might be developing future leaders, citizens and decision-makers who will reside in other countries. How is the university approaching that responsibility and what values and beliefs is the university interested in spreading around the world through the alumni base?

Finally, it seems clear that the aim of the university is impacted by the tendencies fuelled by neoliberal values and the trends of optimisation and effectivization of education and universities (Watty, 2006). What will be the consequences of commercialisation and competition on universities and education? This also ties into a larger debate about how students are being perceived by faculty and how they are perceiving themselves in the university setting. Are they considered real members of the academic community or rather customers and consumers? Many interviewees did mention that students should be treated as part of the academic community and that they were producers of academic knowledge. At the same time, several interviewees saw a lack of training and encouragement of students to use and share their knowledge, for example based on their master's theses. This raises the question of how students are perceived by faculty and whether they are engaged and positioned as knowledge creators, which ties into Dawson and Prewitt and the concept of unintentional socialization (Dawson & Prewitt, 1969, p. 64). Furthermore, it might also affect how the students see themselves. Whether students consider themselves members of the academic community or consumers receiving a service from the university is important. This will affect their political socialization and the development of the skills as articulated by Nussbaum as well. This can influence how they see themselves in society and whether they consider themselves active citizens or rather consumer citizens and merely fulfilling their needs and wants rather than engaging as active participants (Kallhoff, 2013, p. 179).

Perceiving education as a sellable product and something that students consume, also changes the aims of higher education and the perception of students. Is the aim to educate the right number of professionals that the market requests as fast as possible? Or is it to educate the

whole person, learning about moral and ethical complexity, empathy and democratic values? Are we educating professionals or citizens? I would argue that the university should do both and based on the findings of this study, these two roles and the skills they require are overlapping. If the culture within the university will be increasingly shaped by neoliberal values, this can shape how students perceive themselves and their role in society. This in turn can play a negative role in the democratic socialization process, by producing consumer-citizens instead of responsible, critical, empathic citizens. In turn, this will not only influence their skills and attitudes as democratic citizens, but potentially also their sense of responsibility, empathy and approach to their work.

5.3 Opportunities for the future

If students are the bridge-builders and in some way the physical manifestation of the university's values and contribution to democratic society, it seems central to have this at the core of the education that is being planned. It is not clear to me whether this is the case based on this study. It is important both for the professionals *and* citizens we are educating but also for our democratic societies and the values they are based on. We need to ensure that we have citizens who are critical thinkers, world citizens and have narrative imagination and who are prepared to apply their skills and think for themselves, in their careers and in the world.

The University of Helsinki is an institution with a strong focus on autonomy and decentralization and most of the study programs can (and do) create structures, initiatives and organize themselves in ways that are meaningful to them. There are 35 different international master's programs across faculties with similar building blocks and similar mixed and diverse student bodies and there are already many great examples to learn from. The values of the university and the skills and attitudes of Nussbaum's cosmopolitan citizenship seem to be part of the interviewees' ideals for education. This provides a strong foundation on which to stand, and this means that strengthening the integration of these values and attitudes even more, might be welcomed. One aspect seems to be providing the support to help teachers do this.

While some programs were clearly familiar with the language of cosmopolitan citizenship and already integrating this in their teaching, others were more unsure of how to do it even though the related skills, competencies and attitudes were articulated as important. It is

understandable that teachers might not have time to rethink their teaching approaches or pedagogical methods, but within the university all that expertise exists. People are researching and constantly generating knowledge on topics such as pedagogy and student-centred learning. There seems to be an opportunity for sharing good practices, ideas, and tools and possibly generate a common resource of ideas that other teachers can try out. Furthermore, it might also be a question of prioritising and incentivising this from the university's side. This might be a challenge since there seems to be a culture of not telling people what to do, which could be what this might feel like if not done well. But how might the university create a stronger emphasis and incentive to focus on these skills, for cross-faculty collaboration, supporting the organising of communication courses and so on?

The students are already perceived as a central partner and this is something that could be emphasized even more. It seems central to ensure that students are perceived as members of the university community and as people with thoughts, ideas and interests to participate, engage and impact how things are done. Are students treated as equal stakeholders in the program and in the university community? Are they seen as active participants and members, who have knowledge to contribute? For this to happen there might need to be an increased focus on communication skills, both for academic writing but also writing for and communicating to a broader audience. It could also be a stronger encouragement of students engaging in public discourse and using their knowledge and learnings outside the walls of the university.

Including a more active commitment to democratic practice and cosmopolitan citizenship does not need to mean adding a number of new courses, changing the program structure or having to teach cosmopolitan citizenship explicitly. There are a variety of opportunities to include these skills in the existing courses and within the existing structures. Nussbaum argues "a dedicated instructor can enliven the thinking of students in almost any curricular setting." (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 41). There are small ways to create the space for students to engage, to ask questions and to foster dialogue and debate, but it does require some active work. As most interviewees mentioned when asked about how they see their role within their program, being leading members of the program board, many of them mentioned that they are part of building the community, connecting the different stakeholders and actors that are engaged in the program. They facilitate, they bridge, they organize. They know that this will not happen by itself, so most of them mentioned one or more of these actions specifically. It

is the same with developing these skills and attitudes. Even if it is integrated indirectly in the courses, it still requires active facilitation, support, structures and reflection to try and ensure that students develop these skills. If the teacher is not sure how they are doing something or whether they are succeeding in what they are trying to do, there might be a need to have a more open, proactive approach to making it happen. Furthermore, if the teacher is not sure, there are a number of ways to gather feedback or engage in dialogue and debate with the students.

The work of science and research is a search for answers, it is a scientific debate, it is a process of questioning and getting comfortable with uncertainty. This is also the path to finding solutions to the world's biggest problems and fundamentally it is also the work of democracy. The university as an institution is deeply shaping the future of our societies, through knowledge, experts, thinking and norms. The production of knowledge, the shaping of our thinking, education of future decision-makers and citizens, the level of our ambition and our commitment to progress, curiosity, the search for a better way and a better world for us all. The university represents values and beliefs that are manifested in how teachers teach, how education is organised, how research is done, what research is done, and the importance, respect and resources allocated to these institutions. The university and higher education are manifestations of the values, attitudes and beliefs that we would like to see in our societies. It is not only providing subject-area experts but defining for our culture. We need to be clear on how we are shaping students and what we are really educating students for.

Being a participant indicates agency, an ability to affect something. It is action oriented, but whether one assumes the role of participant or spectator often depends on the environment and the circumstances. How is the university part of creating the kind of environment and context that invites the students to become participants? With the growing pressure of getting students through their degrees as fast as possible, the pressures of financing, the load of administrative work, and the concern of a slow transition of students into consumers of education; these developments are not cultivating the identity of being active participants. There are even people arguing that we are seeing the rise of the consumer citizen. This is detrimental to participation and detrimental to democracy. Democracy is not a service, and neither is education or research. This is not to say that this is the case at the University of Helsinki. It is more a reflection of what might be coming. It is also a warning sign for forgetting the importance of Bildung and the skills and attitudes that are at the foundation of

Nussbaum's cosmopolitan citizenship, which I would argue should be treated on equal footing with the subject area studies. I am not arguing that half the credits need to be set aside for courses in debate, citizenship, communication and critical thinking. I am arguing that the teaching should fundamentally reflect on the moral, ethical, value-based and human questions that are at the centre of most, if not all, of the fields that the University of Helsinki is educating experts for.

6

Conclusion

In this chapter, I will summarise the main contributions of this study, reflect on the larger limitations of this study and finally suggest topics for further research.

6.1 Main contributions

The aim of this study was to explore the changing demands and aims of higher education at the University of Helsinki in the context of the international master's programs. Some argue higher education should be preparing students primarily for employment, others argue that it should educate good citizens, and some emphasise higher education as an education of the whole person, through an emphasis on the ideal of *Bildung*. Due to a rapidly changing world and growing international student body, this study was aiming to see whether there was a connection between educating good professionals and good citizens. This was done through applying Nussbaum's cosmopolitan citizenship and the three abilities of critical thinking, world citizenship and narrative imagination.

The main findings of this study indicates that the interviewees' ideas of higher education are still rooted in the humanist values and overlaps largely with Nussbaum's cosmopolitan citizenship. Nussbaum's model supports the argument that there is an overlap between the non-subject area skills that students need to become responsible professionals *and* engaged citizens. This also supports the argument that these skills are not just good to have but essential to have. While this finding indicates a commitment to these values and attitudes at the University of Helsinki, it was less clear how most of the interviewees were putting these ideals into practice in the classroom, which is a central contribution of this study. While the debate might often revolve around the aims of higher education, this study indicates that it is possible to support these values but still not be sure how to integrate them in the teaching. Furthermore, through the use of political socialization theory, that it is not only what things are taught but also how things are taught that might influence students' development of skills

and attitudes. This is another contribution of this study, and it is central to consider how the classroom environment and teaching is encouraging certain behaviours from students. Finally, this study indicates that while the skills of cosmopolitan citizenship are articulated as important, there might be barriers and lack of incentives for teachers to really integrate them in the teaching. While the university does not appear to actively discourage it, it could be questioned whether there might need to be a more active encouragement. The interviewees argued that students without critical thinking, empathy and humility could use theories, models and learnings in potentially problematic ways. This is a strong indicator that these skills are essential, both for educating responsible professionals and responsible citizens that will help strengthen democracy *and* be part of addressing the big challenges humanity is facing.

6.2 Limitations of this study

While providing valuable contributions and opening up new questions, this study clearly has a number of limitations. While the interviews definitely indicated certain patterns between the programs, it is based on 11 interviewees' normative, subjective experience. Considering the autonomy that teachers are often given at the university, it is hard to say whether this study is providing a view of a broader trend at the University of Helsinki. It is hard to say whether these 11 people decided to participate based on an existing interest, meaning that they might not represent the majority of teachers. This study is also only based on one university and while this is a case study in a Finnish context, most of the theoretical framework, including Nussbaum's model, is from an American context, which obviously is a quite different context.

This study was limited to the normative, subjective experience and is primarily providing new questions, but this study is not able to make strong claims about the actual practices and neither whether this is a big issue at the University of Helsinki. Furthermore, the methodological choice of qualitative interviews, with a strong dialogical approach also gives certain limitations due to the prevalent role I as the researcher had. This study reflects on potential problems or challenges that higher education might be facing and this study is rather a starting point for conversation and reflection. It is an explorative study. In terms of methodological choices, this study is based on a personal interest and by adopting a partly inductive approach, the findings of the data are based on the challenges and issues that were

seen as interesting to me, as the researcher. Others would probably focus on other patterns and have considered other aspects more important when analysing the data.

6.3 Further research

This study aimed to explore the aims of higher education in the 21st century. As argued in the introduction, the aim here was primarily to open up new questions and explore these topics in the context of a sub-section of the international master's programs of the University of Helsinki. It would be interesting to interview whole program boards and understand the dynamics within a whole program. There is clearly an opportunity for a more representative interview study and in-depth exploration, which could be interesting in a cross-university.

The student perspective is absent from this study and this would also be a central further exploration to see whether the students would articulate their experience the same way as the teachers. How do they experience the environment and atmosphere within their program and the classrooms? How are they understanding the importance of these skills?

This could both be interesting by applying a more quantitative approach through surveys and get a broader view of these experience.

One aspect would be to actually research what is happening in practice. By applying ethnographic methods, including observation in the classroom and other program related activities would give an understanding of the actual practices. This would also be relevant in a more long-term study. I believe this would be relevant because this study implies that there might be a gap between the ideals articulated as important and the practical behaviour and teaching.

The question of the aim of higher education is a challenge not confined to the University of Helsinki and looking at cross-country contexts could be interesting, especially in contexts where neoliberal influences appear to be more prevalent and influential. It would be interesting to do a comparative study and see whether this influence had an impact on the students in terms of developing cosmopolitan citizenship and how they think of their education compared to students in the Finnish context.

8

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Appendices

7.1 Email for reaching out to potential interviewees

Dear XX,

My name is Stinne Vognæs and I'm a student in the international master's program Global Politics and Communication. I'm currently working on my master's thesis, which is exploring the role of the university in society, using the University of Helsinki as my case. I'm specifically interested in how faculty (preferably programme directors) in the international master's programs, see the importance of preparing their graduates to be engaged citizens in a democratic society, through the experiences they have in the university and the skills they develop. My aim is to interview 8-10 people from across faculties. I would be very interested in including the master's programme of XX.

I expect the interview to take around one hour and I would be interested in hearing about your thoughts on the role of the University of Helsinki in society and the role of your degree program specifically. How do you see its contribution to society and how do you think it is preparing graduates to engage productively in a democratic society as citizens and experts in their fields.

I'm hoping to conduct the interviews throughout November and early December, and I'm open to both conducting interviews over Zoom or in person, depending on your preference.

I would appreciate if you can let me know if you are interested and available and if yes, whether you already have suggestions for specific times most suitable for you?

If you are not available, I would be grateful if you could possibly suggest anyone else from your degree program board that I could reach out to, who might be interested in participating in this kind of interview.

I'm looking forward to hearing from you and wish you a lovely Wednesday evening!

Best regards,
Stinne Vognæs

7.2 Interview framework

Interviews would consider the following three themes:

- 1) The role of the university, and their degree, in society?
- 2) What and how they think of skills development in their programme?
- 3) What (if any) thought have they given to ideas of the ability and role of the university/their degree in graduates' preparation for involvement in society, taking an active stand as experts and their contribution to the democratic society they are members of?

First theme: Your role in your program and how you think of your degree specifically in relation to society?

1. Can you shortly explain how you see your role and responsibilities as program director?
2. Can you describe for me the system body in your program – diverse, backgrounds, nationalities?
 - a. How do you think that is impacting the program – strength/weakness/doesn't matter?
3. What do you see as the relevance of your program in society overall? What are the key strengths of your program, where/how do you think it is adding value in the world?

Second theme: Skill development in the master's programme

4. What do you believe are the most important skills/competences that students should gain from a master's degree generally?
5. Most important skills/competences from your program specifically?
 - a. What makes a good professional in your field?
6. What are the key attitudes, mindsets, values that your programme is striving to provide to your students? Examples?
7. Do you consider the personal development and growth of the students as an important aspect of their studies?

Third theme: More democracy-citizenship oriented questions

1. What do you think is the role of UH in democratic society here in Finland?
2. What do you think is the role of the university/UH in preparing graduates for being an active actor in society in whatever context they are in?
(Skills, attitudes, values, beliefs)
 - a. Both through their work in their field of expertise and in broader, societal questions/issues?
3. How do you perceive the importance of giving your students the opportunity to engage and wrestle with real world issues and examples? Putting the expert knowledge into the context of real challenges or cases?
4. How do you think about the importance of supporting/facilitating students in developing a sense of agency and ability to influence their surroundings (as a citizen, professional, student, etc.) while they are in the university setting?
5. Do you consider it important for the students to gain an understanding of being a part of a bigger whole, of being able to play a certain role and influence others? The role they can play in society/their workplace/as a researcher?