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Constructing Threats and a Need for Control: Textbook Descriptions of a Growing, Moving World Population

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Abstract

The population of the world is growing and moving. The overwhelming majority of people are on the move inside their own country and mostly towards cities while a minority moves from non-Western areas to the West. In Finnish geography, history and social science school textbooks, this mobility tends to be depicted differently depending on whether the movers represent "us" or "them." Global population growth is most prevalent in the poorest regions of the world, even though Europe is clearly the most densely populated continent. Still, the talk of "overpopulation" does not usually concern Europe or the West. The article uses discourse theory analysis and a postcolonial framework to research the discourse of 'us' and 'them' with regard to population growth and migration as they are presented in Finnish textbooks. The results show that the hegemony of a superior West is alive and well in the books, which portray the non-Western populations as growing and moving in uncontrolled and threatening ways. Uncontrolled urbanization is seen as dangerous, and the implication is that there are too many people in non-Western areas. Metaphors such as natural disasters or floods are used to describe the moving population, while cities are described as "suffocating."

Keywords: Population, migration, geography education, textbook research, postcolonial perspective

Introduction

The population of the world is growing and moving. Out of the world population, the share of international migrants has been stable at around 3% over the last 50 years (UNDP, 2009). Traditionally, people moving from South to North have been the main driver of global migration, but today migration between countries in the South is almost as common as from South to North (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2012). Reports on the reasons for moving mention: gaining access to higher income,

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better education and health, and improved prospects for children (UNDP, 2009). About 7% of the world's migrants have left their homes because of insecurity or conflict. Of these refugees, 87 % were hosted by countries in the global South in 2010 (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2012). The overwhelming majority of people on the move, approximately 740 million, are internal migrants, often moving towards cities in their own countries (UNDP, 2009). This mobility tends to be depicted differently depending on whether the movers represent "us" (as in Western workers or tourists) or "them" (refugees, unskilled migrants), which raises questions about how migration can be portrayed in a more balanced way in the public discourse, such as in media reporting (International Organization for Migration, 2011). Another topic that would generally benefit from a more balanced reporting is the question of population growth. It is most prevalent in the poorest regions of the world, even though Europe is clearly the most densely populated continent. Still, the talk of "overpopulation" does not usually concern Europe or the West. According to Bauman (2004), "overpopulation" is not tied to numbers of people; rather, it functions as a code name for the appearance of people who do not help the smooth functioning of the economy, but stand in its way instead. Of interest in this article is the construction of "us" and "them" with regard to population growth and migration in the commonly used Finnish lower secondary school textbooks in geography, history and social science, printed in 2005-2010. We ask how the textbooks portray the world as a place for "us" or "them." After a brief introduction of the postcolonial framework and the methodology of the research, we discuss the portrayal of population growth, migration and urbanization as phenomena before moving on to analyzing the representations of these in the studied textbooks.

The postcolonial in education

Much of 20th century Europe has been marked by a colonial, racist understanding of the world, with white Westerners on top of the hierarchy. Even though the Nordic countries were not among the most important colonial powers, they have taken part in the construction of a colonial discourse, and benefitted from colonial trade (Loftsdóttir and Jensen, 2012). Vuorela (2009) calls this colonial complicity, meaning that the Nordic countries should not be seen as innocent bystanders but as partners in crime, through shared epistemic construction of and economic winnings from colonialism. Still today the past of colonial complicity is linguistically apparent as can be shown also in this paper. Changing this legacy of racist vocabulary, prevalent within education and culture in the Nordic countries during the 20th century, has been met with resistance (Loftsdóttir and Jensen, 2012).

The Finnish national curriculum (National Board of Education, 2004) promotes key concepts such as democracy, human rights and equality as the underlying values for education. Equality, as in the equal value of all human beings, could be assumed to mean portraying the world as consisting of human beings of equal value, not one where Westerners are superior to others. When using the term "othering" we refer to the postcolonial understanding of the word, meaning a constructed division between "West" and the "Rest," as described by Frantz Fanon (1961) and Edward Said (1978), and later developed, for instance, by Stuart Hall (1992) and Etienne Balibar (2009). As Said

noted in *Orientalism* (1978), attributing negative stereotypical features to people from the East was a way for Western scientists to construct their own superior identity. Today, the discussion about who "we" and "they" represent has less and less to do with geographical markers or where people live. "They" might live next door to "us" and still be "others." International research shows that school textbooks in geography, history and social studies have historically been shown to reflect prejudices, even though blatant racism has faded since the 1960s (Marsden, 2001; Graves, 1996). However, even without overtly offensive statements, prejudices and stereotypes have harmful effects. It has been suggested that the perspectives represented in school textbooks is one of the main reasons for negative attitudes towards minority groups among Finnish youth (Pudas, 2013).

Globalization is often portrayed as a new phenomenon. According to Rizvi (2007), globalization is often viewed as ahistorical, not as a contemporary ideology with economic progress as the main agenda. Rizvi emphasizes that globalization discussed as a new phenomenon hides the historical connection it has to its roots within the European projects of imperialism and colonialism. These roots continue to shape the lives of people all over the world, with what he calls an unequal "global geometry of power" (p.260). He calls for the use of postcolonial theory in the study of globalization and education for a better understanding of this historical connection. In the search for such a study and discussion of an alternative global citizenship education, Andreotti and de Souza (2012) point out the need to focus not on educational practices that reproduce ethnocentric, ahistorical, depoliticized or paternalistic approaches, but on analyzing hegemonies that reproduce and maintain global inequalities. This, they suggest, can be done by moving beyond current polarizations in the debate and toward new postcolonial educational opportunities. For instance, instead of either depoliticization or political hijacking of the educational agenda, they suggest embracing opportunities for a deeper analysis of production and the effects of unequal relations of power.

Building the Hegemony of a Superior West: Articulations and Discourses

Our research objective is not to examine the extent to which the textbooks deal with what "really happened," but rather to see how the descriptions of events are used in order to create a sense of objectivity. The method chosen is inspired by discourse theory, as developed by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (2008/1985). The method requires an understanding of Laclau's and Mouffe's ontology. Their view of the world is not that of a reality existing out there, needing to be uncovered in order to be understood. Instead, they see us as constantly creating an understanding of what is real and true in our talk, text and actions. They call this creating objectivity.

Laclau and Mouffe suggest using concepts such as hegemony, discourses and articulations, in order to understand the creation of objectivity. Articulations are any bits of text, talk or action that attempt to create objectivity. In this study, texts, pictures and assignments in the textbooks become articulations. There is no "pure" or authentic meaning to be found in articulations; they are all discursively constructed (Torfing, 1999). Discourses are the results of the articulatory practice. The concept of hegemony,

originally developed by Gramsci, is an important part of Laclau's and Mouffe's theory. Hegemony is a state of naturalized power relations, or a set of culturally or ideologically dominant ideas that come to be perceived as a norm, a universal ideology. Of interest here is the hegemony of a superior West. In our analysis, we have identified articulations that support two discourses. We see these discourses as the load-bearing pillars of hegemony – in this case, the hegemony of a superior West. As an example of an articulation, on the topic of population growth in India, a textbook graph can be shown to "hit the roof" or turn color from a neutral yellow to a dark red, indicating that population growth has reached its limits. This articulation, among others, contributes to the discourse that "their population growth is to be seen as a threat." In other words, the articulations that make up the discourse would be found in numerous textbooks and in different forms such as texts, graphs, and text accompanying pictures.

This research analyzed a total of 70 Finnish textbooks for the grades 5-9. These are all the textbooks published in Finland in geography, history and social science by the six major publishing companies between 2005 and 2010. All the books were read and examined with regard to either a portrayal of all human beings as equal (as in accordance with the values of the Finnish core curriculum) or a portrayal of the West as superior. This naturally meant reviewing very different themes in different subjects, but with one question in mind: "Does this particular text/picture/assignment/graph comply with the idea that all humans are equal, or with the idea that Westerners are superior to others?" Whether the articulations supported or challenged the hegemony of a superior West, they were recorded and divided into a wide range of categories that emerged from the textbooks, such as population growth, migration, urbanization, poverty, trade, religion and war. For this article, articulations in the categories population growth, migration and urbanization were further analyzed. We asked how these descriptions of a growing, moving world population related to questions of "us" and "them". The two discourses that emerged from the articulations are presented in this article, accompanied by textbook quotes that serve as examples. The textbooks quoted here represent mainly geography (eight books), but also history (four books) and social science (three books).

Portraying a Growing, Moving World Population

The aim of the following introduction to the phenomena of population growth, mobility and urbanization is to develop an understanding of their importance for the study of the relation between Westerners and others. The textbook topics to be examined are related to place and position in the world. The discussion about population increase is essentially about deciding who has the right to live, or be in the world. Cross-border mobility and the debate around it are subject to the same kind of discussion about rights: who has the right to live, or be in a particular country/part of the world? Finally, the topic of urbanization is here seen as asking who has the right to live, or be in the city. All in all, the topics are about a growing and moving global population.

Population

According to population scientists, the media contains a great deal of alarm and preconceptions about global population growth and its impact on the planet, ideas that

are not shared by the professionals (Holdsworth, Finney, Marshall & Norman 2013). Reaching out with up-to-date scientific data seems difficult, and old explanations of the world still endure, such as the belief that most women in the global South give birth to multiple children. Fertility rates are falling all around the world. China has a fertility rate of 1.6 children per woman (UNFPA 2012). Still, a biology and geography textbook summarizes its China chapter in three points, stating that too rapid population growth is one of China's main problems:

> *Summary: 1. China has 1.3 billion inhabitants. 2. China's problems are air pollution and a population that is growing too fast. 3. China's culture is ancient. (Koulun biologia ja maantieto 6 2005, p. 96)*[1]

Having multiple children is typical for women in the poorest areas of the world. It is therefore important to understand how to slow population growth in these areas. Scientific discoveries suggest that the way to tackle population growth is by developing healthcare and education. The link between wealth and smaller families at all levels, from individuals to societies, is undeniable (Holdsworth, Finney, Marshall & Norman 2013). Making contraceptives available to all women would help but it is not an adequate solution. Economic reforms, health care and education reforms are needed as well. On the other hand, many governments have attempted to control population growth by force rather than by means such as developing healthcare and education (Lappé & Shurman 1988). There is also a widespread misunderstanding that saving poor children's lives makes populations grow faster. Quite the contrary; developing healthcare and education in order for more children to survive their early years contributes to a drop in fertility rates. Child mortality in recent years has dropped so much that the number of children in the world has stopped growing (Gates, 2014). Consequently, helping poor children survive is not only ethical but sustainable for the planet (Gapminder, 2014).

Population questions bring about discussion on ethics, especially regarding the West and the "rest." How many are considered too many and consequently, who are the ones that there are too many of? Bauman (2004) connects population questions with the role of people in the "center" and at the "margins." The worries of overpopulation are focused on non-Westerners, even though Europe is the most densely populated continent, and most areas with high population growth are currently the least densely populated. In fact, Europe has had an exceptional population growth in the last few centuries. In the textbooks examined, Europe's history of rapid population growth is not portrayed in a negative way; quite the contrary:

> *The cultivation of the potato brought more than twice the nutrition per square area unit than cereals. Thereby, the potato enabled fast population growth and the birth of the industrial society in Europe. (KM Amerikka 7, p. 87)*

[1] All the quotes were translated by the authors and later language checked by a professional translator.

This description of Europe celebrates the historical rapid population growth and the birth of the industrial society, thanks to the introduction of potatoes. Today, Europe can support its high population density by using commodities from other lands and ecosystems. Still, non-European population growth is often linked to worries about the future of the planet. For instance, it used to be assumed that the rain forest in Brazil was being pillaged in order to create a better living for the poor. However, looking at land ownership inequality and the demand for exported goods suggests that the problem lay not in population growth but in the demand for economic growth (Lappé & Schurman 1988, 17). Mies and Shiva suggest that the blame that people in poor areas with high population growth have to bear for causing strain on local ecosystems should be lifted since the richest billion are responsible for a disproportionate share of the resources used and waste in the world. They call for an ecological-feminist perspective on population growth, one that releases the blame from the women in the global South and sheds light on the capitalist system, which forces some people to remain poor (Mies & Shiva 2001).

Mobility

Some words easily tend to get negatively charged, which makes them difficult or impossible to use in a context in which the author wants to refrain from the negative use. Consider how the word 'immigrant' has been replaced by the less stigmatizing 'migrant,' a word which is already becoming "stained." In Europe today a migrant is most likely understood to mean a non-European working in a low-skilled job rather than a European factory owner in India. Seemingly neutral concepts tend to elicit ideas related to "othering", the West and the rest; the European factory owner in India might refer to him/herself as an 'expatriate' rather than a 'migrant." Here, the term human mobility is used instead of migration. It is an attempt to universalize the discussion – people move around the planet. Human mobility takes place all over the world like it always has, despite borders and whether or not people have the right documents. A geography textbook shows how "we" — here Europeans — are expected to be welcomed and to enjoy what the world has to offer, as in the following quote, which still uses the old colonial concept of "Farther India":

> *Thailand's capital Bangkok, the biggest city in Farther India, is growing almost explosively. The city is a popular tourist attraction and an important airline hub. Many Europeans travel via Bangkok to other countries in the Far East. Thailand's beaches offer tourists warmth and the joy of swimming all year round. (Koulun biologia ja maantieto 6 2005, p. 84)*

With regard to mobility, Brown (2011) points out three paradoxes in today's world. Firstly, people of all political views perceive the world as an interconnected global market system and themselves as global citizens. Still, many states keep strengthening their borders and building walls. Secondly, even though democracy is seen as an ideal by most people in the world, barriers and borders are built to create segregation between those whose mobility is prioritized and those who are met by suspicion. Thirdly, there is a paradox between today's weapons, biological, network-based or hidden on people's bodies, and the physicality of the border walls. It seems that walls are not built to hinder

attacks by foreign countries but by something else, an abstract feeling of danger from the outside. Non-Western migrants are often portrayed negatively in the media. Brown (2011) notes that using concepts such as "herds of immigrants" is an effective way for politicians to evoke xenophobia and to call for nationalist politics. Describing people as coming in herds or floods, as threats rather than as human beings, insinuates that the nation is subjected to something it cannot cope with. It thus becomes necessary for the state to take action to control the situation. The following geography textbook quote about the situation in Great Britain states an example:

> *There has been a need to restrict the number of new immigrants. In the large cities, violent clashes have occasionally erupted between Brits and immigrants. (KM Maailma 8, p. 91)*

Limiting the freedom of movement is here seen as the rational thing to do. There is no agent in the sentence ("has been a need to"), which makes the limitation a rational, not political choice. Additionally, the quote suggests that problems are caused only by the number of immigrants, ignoring factors such as the lack of integration, shortage of job opportunities and prevalent discrimination. Meanwhile, white westerners are not talked about in terms of floods, and rarely affected by the barriers of the world. In a task in a grade 9 social science assignment book, the student is shown a world map and asked to circle in different colors "the areas where I would like to go on vacation," "the areas where I could live and work." and "the areas where I would not like to live " (Yhteiskunnan tuulet-Tehtäväkirja 9, p.182). The Finnish students' freedom of movement is taken for granted.

Urbanization

The most common form of human mobility is moving from the countryside to the city. Globally, urbanization has increased at a rapid rate during the last decades. There are now more urban than rural dwellers, and almost all future population growth is expected to take place in cities. People generally move to the city in search of jobs or better life opportunities. However, not everyone finds a job or a better future in the city. Lately, structural and technical changes in agriculture, harsh competition with commercial farmers, and droughts are factors that motivate people to move away from the countryside even when cities do not have much to offer them (Davis, 2007).

Sassen poses the question "Whose city is it?" (1996) and notes how divided the city is between those who move around between top hotels and restaurants and see the city as an international business center, and the unseen people at the other extreme, who inhabit the same cities but live completely different lives in poverty. This division exists in all big cities, independently of whether they are located in the poorer or richer areas of the globe. When the urban poor demand changes, they are often met with force. The signal is that the city is not for them. In a textbook section about London, the view of a (Finnish/Western) tourist is described as follows:

> *A warning about terrorist bombs on the wall in the car catches my eye: "If you see an unaccompanied bag, do not touch it and do not pull the emergency brake of the train…" Having quickly looked around me, I fortunately did not see any unaccompanied bag. I am really in a metropolis with seven million inhabitants*

> *and anything can happen…. Everywhere there are people with all imaginable skin colors from pale white to dark brown. Some are apparently from India or other places in Asia. The people are also dressed in many different ways. Many seem to come from the former colonies, countries that still belong to the British Commonwealth. I blend into the crowd no matter how I look; being different is here more of a rule than an exception. (Uppdrag Europa 8, p.58)*

The clash between the terrorist warning in the first phrase and rest of the text shows that it seems possible to both celebrate the diversity of the city and support a fear of "terrorists." Does this suggest that multiculturalism comes at the price of fear? What does it mean to say that being different is the norm? The speaker says that he blends in no matter what he looks like, but is that really true? Considering the terrorist warning; would he blend in if he looked like a traditional Afghan? It seems that within any city, there are both "ordinary" and "deviant" people. In the case of a lack of infrastructure, unofficial dwellings such as slums are formed. Some have lived this kind of city life for generations, but are still denied their rights (Davis, 2007). The following geography textbook quote describes street children in Brazil:

> *Most children do not go to school and many who are abandoned by their families end up as street children. The miserable slums cast a long shadow over an otherwise wealthy Brazil. (KM Amerikka 7, p. 52)*

Here, the notion is that if it were not for the slums, wealthy Brazil would shine. The slum-dwellers are not taken into account; they only constitute a barrier for Brazil to be all that it could be (wealthy). Davis (2007) notes how slum areas are demolished especially in times of big events that put the city on display for the world. Additionally, unofficial dwellings are often criminalized, thereby making slum dwellers into criminals threatening the city. In some cases, the rich elite build gated communities, making homes into fortresses that work to keep "them" on the outside.

Discourses

"Their" population growth and mobility portrayed as natural forces

This section discusses how people in the school textbooks are referred to with concepts that usually describe natural phenomena. They might be described, for example, as coming in "floods." Zoological terms are also used to keep "others" out (Azar, 2004). This discourse consists of articulations focused on non-Westerners' population growth, human mobility and urbanization, and couched in terms of natural forces. Here, we examine how people on the move are described in terms of streams, floods, eruptions or other forces of nature. Referring to people as masses means replacing the idea that human beings are rational individuals with an understanding of them as a threat.

Too many people as the problem

A chapter in a textbook about inequality and development in India includes the following statement: "The poor are India's big problem." (Horisont, p. 315.) The statement that *the poor*, rather than *poverty*, is the biggest problem in India gives reason to ask for whom the poor people constitute a problem. Who is the country for, if its

inhabitants are its big problem? Another textbook includes a similar description of the population of Egypt:

> *The biggest problem in Egypt is rapid population growth. Even though the number of children per family has clearly decreased, there are too many inhabitants. (Koulun biologia ja maantieto 5, p. 79)*

One does not expect a school textbook to deliver such a harsh message: there are too many Egyptians. From a human rights point of view, this is disturbing to read. Preventing future children from being born is one thing, but stating that there are too many people in a place indicates that something should be done about it. What would this be? Apart from this, saying that population is the biggest problem in a country without discussing the larger context of undemocratic practices and wide ranging poverty creates an understanding of a hierarchy of problems of which the large population is the most serious.

Sometimes, masses of people constitute a problem not for "us" but for the environment. Talking about certain people in terms of threats to the environment could of course benefit from a more thorough analysis of concepts such as carbon footprints. It could also remind the reader that cutting down the rainforest is strongly linked to the manufacturing of goods being used by people in the global North. However, only the locals are blamed in the following quote:

> *However, nowadays the population of Congo is growing fast. The new inhabitants need more and more houses, fields and roads accessible by car. Therefore, more and more of the rainforest is being cut down. What is wanted is a maximum financial benefit from the forests. Therefore, new plantations and mines are being established in the area. The forest is cut down as raw material for paper and furniture, too. However, protecting the rainforest is important. (Pisara 6, p. 37)*

The responsibility of multinational corporations is bypassed through the use of the passive tense in "What is wanted is a maximum financial benefit from the forests". In the following quote from another geography textbook, the locals are again blamed, and in addition, the verb 'press forward ' seems to imply that the locals are taking over the forests in unjustified ways.

> *The population growth in Congo is rapid, and therefore there is a need for more land that can be cultivated. Settlements press forward all the more deeply into the untouched rain forest. (Koulun biologia ja maantieto 5, p. 92)*

Using the noun "settlement" in the sentence is a way of ignoring the agent. The above-mentioned quote is part of a text next to an illustration of two men carrying a big snake that they have seemingly captured. The men are anonymous and do not look into the camera. Together with the text, the image strengthens the otherness and culpability of the inhabitants of the Congo rainforest.

"Their" mobility described as dangerous floods

"Floods" of migrants as a concept is recurrent in some of the descriptions of mobility, as in the following:

> *Germany has also accepted more refugees than any other European country, and illegal immigrants flood into Germany the whole time. Nowadays, migrants and refugees together with their families make up almost 10 % of Germany's population. (KM Maailma 8, p. 96)*

The difference between refugees and legal migrants on the one hand and "illegal immigrants" on the other hand is highlighted here, as well as in other textbook articulations. In an even more blatantly divisive way, the following quote suggests that anybody from the South is a potential (dangerous) migrant:

> *The world is divided into two: the rich northern half of the globe and the poor southern half. The industrialized countries are in the North and the countries that live off agriculture and the production of raw materials are in the South. The gap between the rich and poor is growing all the time, even though everyone would benefit from smaller differences in the standards of living. Ongoing wars have been and still are prevalent in the developing countries. Often they are about fighting over natural resources. When the standard of living in these countries remains low, but when people find out how people are living elsewhere, a moving flood of refugees to the North can be expected. It would be important for the developing countries to become equal players in the world market, since both halves of the globe need each other. (Yhteiskunta NYT 9, p. 156)*

This is about floods of economic refugees – a step more problematic than a flood of refugees since it could include most of the population in the developing countries. It attempts to create a fear of the future, when the poor learn about the lifestyle of the rich. In today's information society, this kind of a statement makes little sense. One can also ask what kind of classroom conversation is sparked by the suggested coming flood of refugees. The following quote tries to diversify the discussion about migrants by explaining that migration for economic reasons benefits both the North and the South, but that this kind of migration also leads to exploitation of migrants as well as illegal migration. The stark division between the industrialized and developing countries seems to prevail in the textbooks.

> *The industrial countries need migrants as workforce, and people from the developing countries strive for a better life in the industrialized countries. The bad sides of migration are illegal migration and the exploitation of the cheap labor carried out by migrants. Human trafficking is part of international crime. (Aikalainen 8, p. 185)*

There is no mention of who the exploiters are. Reminding the reader about human trafficking as an international crime in connection with migration serves as a warning – there is always a potential danger with migration.

Using visual maps can make the image of floods of migrants even more powerful, as in an 8th grade geography textbook where thick, red arrows point to England and Middle Europe, suggesting that most migrants from the South head towards these places (Uppdrag Europa 8, p. 119). The resemblance to a war strategy map effectively feeds

the idea that people moving in from the South are "invading" Europe. This map would have benefitted from a comparable map with global migration patterns to show how small a percentage of refugees and other migrants come to Europe. However, this is not mentioned.

Streaming people, suffering cities

Cities are filled with people all of whom have a name and a story. Some textbooks have humanizing examples, such as the picture and a short text telling the story of Sanjay Gupta, a rickshaw driver in a slum (Koulun biologia ja maantieto 6 2005, p. 74). Mentioning the name of a person, and perhaps telling about the person's family or dreams is enough to remind the reader that "floods" of migrants or city-dwellers are constituted of human beings. This can be seen as a step on the way to writing against othering (Krumer-Nevo and Sidi, 2012). However, mobility towards cities is often described using words referring to natural forces such as flooding or streaming, as in the following textbook quote:

> *Job-seekers stream in from rural areas to the big cities. Large slum areas with makeshift shacks without water, sewage or electricity emerge around the outskirts of the cities. Out of Latin America's 270 million inhabitants, 40 million are estimated to live in these slums. (Horisont, p. 329)*

While people come in floods, the city is suffocating:

> *There is the capital, Jakarta, too. Just like many other big cities in Asia, the city is choking due to the crowds of arriving migrants, since more and more people are moving there all the time in search of a better life (Koulun biologia ja maantieto 6 2010, p. 88)*

When it comes to big cities in the South, people can be referred to as natural forces while the cities are actually given human features. Clearly a city cannot suffocate, only people can. Giving institutions human features was also common during the financial crisis, when newspaper headlines told about banks "suffering" and "taking their last breaths." The last quote seems to awaken sympathy mainly for the city of Jakarta, not for its human inhabitants.

"Their" populations and mobility need to be controlled

The step from being described as a natural force to the need to be controlled is short. According to Ahmed (2011), describing people in terms of floods is a way of constituting them as a threat, meaning that they need to be controlled. The need to control growing, moving populations is not always spelled out. The use of the passive voice, however, suggests what needs to be done without mentioning the agent that should do the controlling, and thus defends the actions of control. The following quote about the Sahel area serves as an example:

> *There have been attempts to slow the advancement of the desert by planting trees, and nomads have been transferred to new areas with new sources of livelihood. (KM Maailma 8, p. 123)*

The people mentioned in the articulation have been transferred because they constitute a threat to nature by contributing to deforestation. Using the passive voice

makes it possible to avoid mentioning the agent enacting the transfer. Who forced them to move? And what might they have to say about this? Questions such as these are not answered. Deforestation is only linked to locals and once again not to global consumption needs. The articulations in this discourse are focused on the control of 'their' populations, mobility and urbanization.

The need to control "their" population

The need to control the population is implied in textbook articulations claiming, for instance, that there are "too many" inhabitants in countries in the global South. Some textbook quotes dig deeper into the reasons for the population growth dilemma:

> *Catholicism, the dominant religion in Latin America, does not accept the use of contraceptives to regulate birth rates, so family planning is difficult. Traditionally, big families have been respected. People often want many children as workers on farms and as a security for parents' old age. Therefore the population in many Latin American countries is growing far too fast. In many countries it is almost impossible to build apartments, schools and health centers at the same pace as population growth. (KM Amerikka 7, p. 79)*

Suggesting that the population is growing far too fast calls for control actions. But since the people in Latin America, according to the quote, want to have many children, the agent is yet again invisible; the population is growing too fast according to whom? Additionally, the general claim that the population in Latin America is growing far too fast can be challenged using actual demographic data. The total fertility rate per woman in Latin America and the Caribbean is 2. Few Latin American countries today have fertility rates higher than 3 per woman, Guatemala has the highest fertility rate at 3.8. For instance, Brazilian women give birth to fewer children than Finnish women today – as do women in southern countries such as Iran, Thailand and Vietnam (UNFPA 2012). The textbook with the above quoted passage was printed in 2010. It is intriguing to ask why the old worldview of a population "explosion" in the South is so difficult to change. Generally, the notion of alarm over population growth in the global South has not gone unnoticed in the geography textbooks that Finnish students read. However, many of the scientific theories and explanations about population growth have.

One scientific explanation advanced by population science, which could be made clearer in the textbooks, is the agreed-upon theory that a way to ensure a stable, more moderate development of the population is to develop healthcare and education to make sure that fewer children die before the age of five (see the section on Population). Instead of focusing on the fact that high infant mortality is closely linked to population increase, some textbooks suggest that child mortality hinders population growth, as in the following excerpt:

> *The population is growing fast despite high child mortality. In some African countries, such as Niger and Somalia, an average of seven children is born per family. In the countryside especially, children are seen as an important security for old age. The population of Africa is expected to double by the year*

> *2050; that means rising to almost 2 billion. (Biologian ja maantiedon polku 6, p. 91)*

The wording in the first sentence is also problematic from an ethical point of view. Letting the students think that high child mortality could decrease population growth means promoting ignorance, since it would suggest that measures to help more children survive would be harmful, not beneficial to a more sustainable population growth. Instead of articulating an alarming need to control populations, the following quote focuses on a solution for feeding a growing world population:

> *Good rice cultivation areas can give two harvests a year. Rice varieties that grow faster and give more bountiful harvests are being developed in order to feed a growing population. (Jäljillä 6, p. 113)*

The textbook articulation above challenges the discourse of a need to control populations by suggesting that there are solutions to be found. It is a way of looking at solutions, and not only problems regarding population growth.

The textbooks rarely discuss population questions with regard to the continuity of the colonial order in relation to today's globalization (as proposed by Rizvi), or the need for a global power analysis, as suggested by Andreotti and de Souza. The following text appears in a separate yellow box, which could be interpreted as voluntary in-depth reading:

> *As a result of an explosive population growth and underdeveloped farming, the biggest problem in the African countries has been hunger. Alongside with it, AIDS, which spreads through intravenous drugs, sexual contact or blood transfers, has risen. The rapid spreading of the disease in the growing African big cities is evidence of the inability of the states to deal with their social problems, such as massive unemployment, housing shortages and crime. Support to families, improvement of the situation for women and child protection services in Africa are on a modest level compared with the West. …Refugees, infectious diseases and environmental and demographic disasters are global problems that shake the whole world. They force the rich Western countries to reflect, on the one hand, on the consequences of the politics carried out during the colonial period, and, on the other hand, on the shared responsibility for the welfare of the world: what are we willing to give up for the benefit of the well-being of the planet? (Kronikka 8, p. 175)*

Many important issues are raised in this quote. Population questions are mentioned twice, first as "explosive" and later as a "demographic disaster." The text leaves it up to the teacher to explain further the relationship between the problems and colonial politics. Raising the topic of the need for global responsibility is welcome; however, the question at the end suggests that all that is needed is that "we" give up something for the benefit of the planet. What we need to give up remains abstract. While calling for responsibility, it still fails to show how the North's exploitation of the South's people and natural resources are not only features of a colonial past, but something that characterizes economic globalization (Rizvi, 2007).

Constructing a need to control "their" mobility

The link between population growth and mobility is implicit in the following quote about European history:

> *The cultivation of potatoes and corn brought more nutrition to the Europeans, whose population started to grow. As a result of population growth, there was no longer enough cultivation land at home, and therefore more and more people moved to the conquered areas. The quick reduction of the Indian population caused a need for a larger workforce on the plantations and in the mines. By the mid-16th century, African slaves were acquired to replace the Indians (Historia kertoo 6, p. 44)*

The fact that the European population increase was so intense that it sent people off to other continents is here seen as natural. It continues to describe the situation for the European conquerors in America as factual and without any blame. Even the "reduction" of Native Americans is mentioned mainly as a problem for the conquerors, who needed laborers, and the words "were acquired", usually referring to goods rather than people, are used for the African slaves. Additionally, the use of the passive hides the agent. Overall, the tone in the text is anything but alarming; moving from one continent to another is understood as rational and pragmatic, in the case of Europeans.

The descriptions of "their" mobility, on the other hand, are often described in another tone. A need for control of "their" mobility is based on either fear or seemingly "rational" reasons. The following quote from one textbook uses fear of the unknown as an argument for the need for control:

> *Finland has been known as a safe country, but it is not an isolated safe place. A bomb may explode in a familiar shopping mall and drugs can be sold outside a movie theater. (Yhteiskunta NYT 9, p. 68)*

These sentences are the opening of a chapter on internal and external security. It immediately connects security threats to Finland's role as not being isolated. Starting by saying that Finland used to be considered safe, it feeds on the (unrealistic) idea that Finland would be safe if we were not connected to the world. The quote is taken from a page that features a picture of a Finnish border police checking the passport of a man supposedly entering the country. In the above quote, the message is that security threats are tied to the fact that Finland is a part of the rest of the world. This ties criminality to migrants. The examples chosen in the quote are interesting since the only shopping mall bomb attack in Finland so far was carried out by a native Finn.

> *The new challenges of the national defense ... Alongside traditional wars, new risk factors have emerged. These are, for example, nuclear accidents, the sinking of an oil tanker in the Baltic Sea, terrorism or large scale immigration of refugees. (Yhteiskunta NYT 9, p. 76)*

This quote lists the "new challenges" of the national defense and places large scale immigration of refugees at the same level as nuclear accidents, oil leaks and terrorism.

The message this sends to students is that a large number of refugees fleeing to Finland would constitute a threat that is comparable to that of a nuclear disaster.

The following quote about the tunnel between London and Paris touches upon the issue of migrants entering Great Britain. Limiting the freedom of movement is seen as rational:

> *The fancily furnished high-speed train reaches London from Paris in a little over two hours. Refugees often try to get to Great Britain through the tunnel, but because of strong security it is almost impossible. (KM Maailma 8, p. 92)*

It is noteworthy that the word "refugee" is used to describe people trying to get into Great Britain through the tunnels used by the (fancily furnished) high speed train. It is hard to say whether the text actually signals that it is a good thing or not that the security of the tunnel is so strict that few get through. Since the refugees are not given a voice or a face, they remain invisible and form an abstract threat.

The need to control the city

Who has the right to be in the city? The question of who the city is meant for arises through the following quotes. They distinguish between rich and poor, clearly siding with the rich, or as in the second quote, the "ordinary" citizens:

> *The increased crime has forced the wealthiest Americans to shield themselves behind gates in their own gated communities. (Kronikka 8, p. 195)*

> *In the big cities there are areas where it is not safe for ordinary citizens to move around even in the daytime. Steel trusses are being installed at the doors and windows of apartments. Schools are surrounded by tall fences, and metal detectors are installed at the gates. Fear has driven many Americans to take to using guns more easily. (Kronikka 8, p.195)*

These descriptions of American cities carry several interesting meanings. Rich Americans are said to have been "forced" to protect themselves in their guarded communities. The second quote is more problematic when it comes to whose perspective the reader is supposed to take. It starts off by stating that it is not safe for "ordinary" citizens to move around in certain areas, but it continues to describe all the measures taken to protect Americans, suggesting that fear has driven them to the use of weapons, and hinting that Americans have given in to fear. The quotes suggest that only the "wealthy" or the "ordinary citizens" have a reason to fear being a victim of crime. The use of "ordinary" to describe the people who are not safe to move around calls for a discussion of who these people are. "Ordinary" exemplifies normality. It is more interesting to ask who the people are who *are* safe to move around. The perspective of the "ordinary citizen" is taken for granted. Calling some people ordinary means labeling others as deviant. From the point of view of Lefebvre (1996), ignoring people who make up cities but are subjected to segregation, makes any urban strategy meaningless. Siding with "ordinary" urban residents as opposed to the others is visible also in the following quote about slum dwelling in India:

> *A slum can often begin next door to ordinary dwellings, such as in Mumbai. (Jäljillä 6, p. 92)*

The need to control "their" movement towards cities is implied in the following quote about problems in Africa:

> *The economy of black Africa is problematic. Agriculture is not doing well and cannot produce enough food for the ever-growing population. Natural disasters and civil wars follow one another. People find their ways to the cities in an uncontrolled manner, and they become slum dwellers. African industrial products cannot compete on the world market. Indebtedness and dependence on the West are on the rise. The crisis in black Africa would require internal peace and help from the outside. (Horisont, p. 326)*

The problems listed without explanations or connections create a desperate picture. Suggesting that people move to the cities in an uncontrolled manner in Africa seems odd since urbanization is not usually a controlled phenomenon, except in authoritarian states. In addition, the analysis reflects an old colonialist way of looking at the problems of Africa, suggesting that "The crisis in black Africa would require internal peace and help from the outside". Despite the ongoing exploitation of natural resources, the quote suggests that the West has no responsibility other than to "help." The text radically disconnects today's situation from historical and global power analyses.

Concluding Remarks

The articulations in the textbooks and the discourses they form show that the hegemony of a superior West is alive and well in Finnish geography, history and social science textbooks . The articulations cited portray the non-Western population as growing and moving in uncontrolled and threatening ways. This includes uncontrolled urbanization, which implies danger in the form of criminalized slums. The portrayed worldview suggests that there are too many people in non-Western areas. Metaphors such as natural disasters or floods are used to describe the moving population, while cities are described as "suffocating." These descriptions of flooding and suffocation call for ways to control the number of people living in non-Western areas as well as how and where they move.

Articulations exist that attempt to deconstruct this hegemony, but they do not challenge it. There is a need to contest the portraying of people as natural forces. One way to do this would be to tell about inhabitants in the South by using names, faces and stories – in order to remind readers of the humanity of all people. Furthermore, facts about population growth and migration need to be up-to-date with current research. However, challenging the need to control the "other's" population and mobility can only take place via the kind of power analysis suggested by Andreotti and de Souza (2012). This means pointing at the structures and power mechanisms that make white Westerners, as opposed to other people in the world, into subjects that are expected to be able to move freely, and whose reproduction is only seen as positive. Questioning social and economic structures as well as power mechanisms in order to promote a deeper understanding of geography, history and social science among lower secondary school students is an important challenge for textbook writers and producers when textbooks are renewed.

Learning to see all people as equals, the aim of the Finnish curriculum for basic education, is perhaps the most valuable lesson that school textbooks can teach. The textbooks examined in this study did not fulfill this goal. Not only was this goal not reached but pupils in lower secondary schools in Finland have for years been provided with a misinformed view of global issues articulated in discourses portraying the West as objectively superior. This article provides a new perspective on the discourses in social science textbooks through the use of a postcolonial framework and an analysis based on Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory.

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