

# Religion, Worldview, and Values in an International Class

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## Abstract

Students attending the international course, “Multicultural Identity in a Global World” (MCI), in Oslo, come from many different European countries, some also from Asia, Africa, Latin-America or the USA. They meet and mingle daily and learn cultural codes and values from each-other, in classes of 24-32 students. During the course, they are challenged to present their own culture, with its values and norms, to their fellow-students, an eye-opener toward traits and values of their own culture. They are, furthermore, exposed to their own stereotypes and identity-markers, giving reason to think through their own attitudes toward peoples and cultures with different characteristics and values. Many of the students come from a secularized modern society in Europe, and in this encounter discover some deep structures in their own society, becoming more conscious of the religious roots and framework. Class-discussions go high under topics such as Cultural Identity and Cultural Awareness, Alternative Value Dimensions, Culture and Religion, Multicultural Competence, and Culture and Ethical Challenges. The students are also exposed to the multicultural environment of the city of Oslo, with more than 25% immigrant population, and schools and kindergartens in some areas of the town with as many as 80-90% of minority-background. Through an extensive questionnaire and interviews, to the classes of 2005-12, supplemented by impressions from class-discussions, we analyze the attitudes to Religion, Worldview and Values, as related to their home-culture, as well as the culture of the place of study.

*Key words:* Cultural awareness; Cultural codes; Worldview; Religion in Culture; Multicultural Identity.

## 1.0. Introduction

This article presents a discussion concerning cultural identity and world-view as experienced by students of an international class. We may ask, why do students go abroad on exchange-programs? How do they react to the new environment, to the international setting? How do they respond to different cultural codes and worldview among their new classmates? We address some of these issues, basing this article on an extensive questionnaire and interviews to the first 8 classes of a course on multicultural issues (hereafter called MCI) in Oslo, Norway, from 2005 to 2012. We challenge the students to express how their attitudes, values, and convictions have been influenced by the course. The main issues mentioned are discussed in relation to theory, both the required readings of the course, as well as supplementary

literature of the multicultural field in general.

### **1.1. The MCI-course**

The “Multicultural Identity in a Global World” (MCI) is a one-term course of 30 ECTS credits. The classes have varied from 24 to 32 students from 12-16 different countries, mainly Europe, including the Eastern part, but also 2-5 students in each class from other parts of the world, as well as a few national students. The MCI-students in the period of 2005-2012 total 215, and have come from 36 countries. The reasons for joining the course are quite varied. Some of the students focus on the content of the course, the main concepts of culture and identity. They are concerned with how they can make a positive contribution in the multicultural society, how they can make a difference for children growing up in today’s globalized world. Others just want to go abroad.

There are two main focal concepts of the course, that of “culture” and “identity”, both with reference to childhood and education. Some of the sub-themes are cultural identity and cultural awareness, alternative value dimensions, culture and religion, multicultural competence, and culture and ethical challenges. The cultural background of each participant is a vital resource in the discussions, and the city of Oslo, increasingly multicultural, is an important arena for contextualization. The course offers fieldwork in schools and kindergartens, which becomes an important basis for their reports, often in comparison with experiences from their own background. Most of the students are midway in their teacher education, either for primary school or for kindergarten.

### **1.2 Materials and Methods**

Of all the 158 students who attended the MCI-course during the first research period of 2005-2010, 129 (82%) responded to the 66 questions, of which 10 were open-spaced for personal comments. Later, 3 students from each class were chosen for an in-depth qualitative survey, with 20 open questions (see Hoaas 2010).

The questionnaire asked for feedback on both structure of the course, practical issues, topics treated, teaching methods, class-management, relations to teachers and fellow-students, the requirements, the form of the exams, their own input, the relevance of the course for themselves, and finally, how the course had any influence on their attitudes toward other cultures. The students for the qualitative survey were chosen both to give a broad range of countries as well as diverse educational background. The total material is therefore partially quantitative and partially qualitative. However, this article is mainly based on the open questions in the questionnaire and on the in-depth survey of the selected students, as these questions more specifically relate to our present research question. Methodological and ethical aspects are treated in line with Kvale and Brinkmann’s principles, and the interviews, including those from the classes of 2011 and 2012, have focused on the understanding of concepts rather than of facts and practical issues, as well as having

observed also the main elements of discursive interviews (see chaps. 4 and 8; cf. Hammersley & Atkinson).

In addition to these questionnaires and interviews, the article also incorporates impressions from class-work and on-going communication with the students during their 4 month period of study. The author is therefore also a participant observer to the process as the curriculum of the course becomes a natural outline for most of the topics for discussion (Hammersley & Atkinson, chaps 4 and 5). Although some introductory questions have already been mentioned, our main point of research is: ***“How are the values and worldview of exchange-students influenced by their attendance in an international course, being exposed to the multicultural issues treated?”***

### **1.3 Background of the MCI-Students.**

The exchange-students come from a variety of backgrounds. Even though they are mostly from within Europe, their cultural context, including political climate, is widely differing. Some come from countries with dramatic events in the recent past, such as the Baltics, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. Others have experienced severe struggles as to the position of their own language. For both Belgian, Swiss, and Catalan students their mother-tongue as their identity-marker was considered very important. For others, their cultural identity seemed rather vague, at least at the outset.

Culture presentations from every country represented in the class, is part of the syllabus. The students are free to focus on whatever they choose, in the overall framework of identity and education. It may be surprising that these young students in their early twenties very often focus primarily on traditional aspects of their culture, such as major festivals, nature, architecture, costumes, food, drinks, and music. History, religion and traditional values are in the fore, rather than raising recent critical and sensitive issues in their home-society. Major symbols are presented such as the flag, colors, buildings, as well as music, arts, and sports, also focusing on famous people, including the royal families and top politicians.

As for the religious context, the variety among the students was even greater. Some of them would seem rather “secularized”, such as many of the Germans and the Nordic students, and had only a distant notion of the place of religion in society. Others are brought up in strong religious traditions in their previous schooling, such as some of the Dutch and Belgian students. Still others are brought up in a society dominated and partly controlled by the religious establishment, which caused some of these students to react against that kind of religious guardianship. This could be true of the Spanish or Italian students. Still others are brought up in a society, which for half a century has been characterized by the atheistic values of the state, but where people now again may freely engage in religious activities, such as in Hungary, the Czech Republic, and the Baltics. For this last group it becomes almost

a paradox that in the previous Christian Western Europe, the religious values have become almost invisible.

## **2. Encountering Norwegian Schools and kindergartens**

As an integrated part of the course, called Fieldwork, the MCI-students visit schools and kindergartens also in parts of the city where there are large concentrations of immigrants. Some of the students live in student hostels in such areas, and are surprised to see many more mosques than churches. Even students from the Netherlands and Germany, who actually have large immigrant groups, are somewhat surprised that so many ethnic groups and languages are present in the same school or kindergarten, even in the same classes. They are more used to seeing the different ethnic groups clustered in different parts of the big cities, and therefore belonging to different schools. The exposure to the local multicultural environment is therefore a surprise for many, unexpected in a Nordic country, especially for the students from East-Europe, since their immigrant population is still rather limited.

### **2.1 Religion, Culture and Tradition.**

In the schools and kindergartens, our students encounter some of the values and subjects treated there, causing further surprise. The Value-clauses of both schools and kindergartens are explicit in underlining the Christian and humanistic heritage, as we see from the following Value-clause in school:

*Education and training shall be based on fundamental values in Christian and humanist heritage and traditions, such as respect for human dignity and nature, on intellectual freedom, charity, forgiveness, equality and solidarity, values that also appear in different religions and beliefs and are rooted in human rights.*

*Education and training shall help increase the knowledge and understanding of the national cultural heritage and our common international cultural traditions.*  
(Education Act, 2008)

They furthermore encounter a subject unfamiliar to most of the MCI-students, the RLE-subject (Religion, Philosophy of Life, Ethics). The Subject came into being in 1967 as KRL (Christianity, Religion, Philosophy of Life), as a more inclusive subject than the previous subject of Christianity. It became a much debated subject, and went through a number of reforms, presently as RLE, a compulsory subject for all pupils in Norwegian elementary school. The focus is now on plurality of faiths and world-view, with a strong emphasis on common ethical values. And yet, also in this subject, the above mentioned cultural values are very evident, underlining Christianity as a major cultural heritage in the Norwegian society. The subject is introduced as follows:

*“Knowledge of religions and philosophies of life is important for human beings to understand their existence and to gain an understanding of cultures within one's own society and in societies around the world. Children and adolescents of*

*today encounter an overwhelming amount of cultural influence and traditional values. The Christian faith and traditions have characterised European and Norwegian culture for centuries. At the same time, traditional humanistic values have brought to western cultural heritage a wider scope of understanding. Religious and ethical diversity are becoming more and more important in society in general. Familiarising oneself with different religions, philosophies of life, ethics and philosophies is an important precondition for understanding and interpreting our lives, and for gaining ethical awareness and understanding across religious faiths and cultural borders.” (RLE-Curriculum, 2011)*

The Value-clause for Norwegian kindergartens is quite similar, as in the Kindergarten Act:

*“... The Kindergarten shall be based on fundamental values in the Christian and humanist heritage and tradition, such as respect for human dignity and nature, on intellectual freedom, charity, forgiveness, equality and solidarity, values that also appear in different religions and beliefs and are rooted in human rights... Kindergartens shall promote equality and work against all forms of discrimination.” (Kindergarten Act, 2005).*

In their Fieldwork, visiting schools and kindergartens, the MCI-students have met the above principles in the daily activities and subjects, including the RLE subject. The seasonal activities were an integrated part of the education, such as preparing for Easter with crafts, stories, and dramas. Or visiting the local church for input by the minister, through songs, music or art. The MCI-students also visited an exhibition called «Holy Rooms» at the International Culture Center and Museum, where the major religions exhibited a Church, Mosque, Synagogue, Gurdwara, Hindu and Buddhist temple, in a minimized format. This was also an exhibition common for classes in elementary school, in an effort of relating to religious values in a very concrete fashion.

## **2.2 Nordic «Child-centered Pedagogy»**

Several of the MCI-students have their Fieldwork in local kindergartens. They are prepared through studies of the above Value-clause and the pedagogical principles underlined both in the so-called Kindergarten Act, as well as in the more practical Framework-plan which all kindergartens are obliged to follow. Most representative are the two following phrases in the Kindergarten Act:

*Care, upbringing and learning in kindergartens shall promote human dignity, equality, intellectual freedom, tolerance, health and an appreciation of sustainable development.*

*Kindergartens shall impart values and culture, provide room for children’s own cultural creativity and help to ensure that all children experience happiness and ability to cope in a social and cultural community. (Kindergarten Act, 2005, Section 2, Content of kindergartens)*

The following ethical values are underlined: Friendship, Helpfulness, Respect, Tolerance, Solidarity, and Empathy. The Pedagogical principles for reaching these goals are the concepts of Recognition, Acceptance, Mutuality, and Dialogue. The lingering question is of course, “How do we teach small children these values?” Also in the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC), we encounter fundamental values, such as the “3 P’s”, that of Provision, Protection and Participation. The issues are debated in the MCI, particularly Participation, as that is specified in the Kindergarten Act:

- *Children in kindergartens shall have the right to express their views on the day-to-day activities of the kindergarten.*
- *Children shall regularly be given the opportunity to take active part in planning and assessing the activities of the kindergarten.*
- *Children’s views shall be given due weight according to their age and maturity.*

(Kindergarten Act, 2005, Section 3, Children’s right to participation)

This is a clear expression of a strong emphasis in Nordic Pedagogy, namely the children’s right to participate in all matters of relevance to the well-being of the child, and expresses explicitly what democracy is all about also in early childhood.

### **3. Findings and Topics for Discussion.**

We will single out those topics most relevant to our research question, also including some issues visualizing a broader context. The student-quotations illustrate relevant aspects of the themes in question.

#### **3.1 Perception of Culture**

There are many definitions of culture. Clifford Geertz, (1973, p.89), describes culture as “*a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which people communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life*”. Crucial expressions here are “inherited conceptions” and “perpetuate and develop”, combining both the unchanging aspect, often derogatory called essentialism, with the dynamic and always evolving element. Samovar (2010, p.22) maintains that “*Culture is a way of organizing the world, offering a group-worldview, a framework, allowing the members to make sense of themselves and of the world*”. Culture teaches the child how to behave in an acceptable way, and protects people from the unknown. According to Hofstede (2001), the concept of culture covers the main elements found in all cultures, such as history, religion, values, social organization, and language.

This analysis has given reason for the students to focus with fresh eyes on the values of their own culture, often in a critical way. It would also be fitting to refer to Kluckhorn and Strodtbeck’s analysis, with their focus on “value-orientation”,

claiming that everybody turn to their cultures for answers to the fundamental questions, concerning human nature, nature, time, activity, and behavior.

Some of our students are familiar with present trends to disassociate culture from national or ethnic connotations, such as Holliday, Piller, Parekh, May, and Scollon, who focus more on border-crossing traits of human behavior and interest. However, for most of our students, national and ethnic peculiarities seem to catch their attention, seeing their own culture both as unique as well as in a broader geographic context, for example that of Europe, as in Burgess. Many students protest the notion that this is a prejudice, or “neo-essentialism” or “chauvinism”, as in Piller (2011, p.15), and are a bit surprised that there should be a contradiction between Hofstede’s categories on the one hand, and the more trendy expression of “global cosmopolitanism” on the other, as in Holliday (2011, p.11). May not the two be interrelated and complementary? This question is related to elements in the debate on “Acculturation”, focusing on both the psychological aspects as well as the variety of perception within the concept of acculturation, as by Sam & Berry (2006). The MCI-course gives space to such a discussion, also that of critical multiculturalism, as in May (1999) and Baumann (1999).

The MCI-students are required to present their own culture to the class, which to a large degree is delivered within a national and ethnic framework. They find it interesting to listen to what their peer-students have to say about their own culture (89% in the questionnaire), specifically what pertains to their cultural identity (85%). However, it was also challenging to think through what values in their own culture they would like to relate to the class (90%). Many of the comments concerning their own cultural presentation stressed the process and importance of becoming aware of one’s own identity and world-view. Some comments from the students may illustrate this:

S-05 (student of 2005-class): “I understood that behind a behavior there is a complex system of symbols, meanings, both personal and cultural. Identity and need for identity is flexible and changing and very often the differences are in the level of form not in concept”.

S-07: “Since I have been brought up within three completely different cultures, it gave me an exceptional insight to understand many things about myself better...When I ‘flex’ between different cultures, I am now much more aware of both my own behaviour, as well as my values”.

S-10: “I have never been conscious of my world-view as part of my culture before. This connection has become clearer to me now, and it will challenge me on my values and priorities”.

It becomes evident that educational systems are indeed culturally dependent and have roots and inherent values that cannot be overlooked, well underlined by Sonia Nieto (in May 1999, chap.8, and in Banks, 2009, chap.5). Why is it natural in some

countries to have religious symbols in the classroom, such as in Italy, while it is unthinkable in others? Why is the national flag used frequently in some countries, while very seldom in others? Some of the students, especially those from Southern Europe, are very critical of the ruling political establishment in their home-countries, they would rather identify with protest-movements, with humanistic and international ideals. Through the MCI-course the students become even more aware of this dilemma, and even though it may be a kind of adventure-trip coming to Oslo, they discover deeper aspects of other cultures through their personal contacts in the course. A substantial majority (90%) underscored the relevancy of the MCI-course for their future work or studies, specifying the competency they acquired through the course as most valuable (85%). Some of the students comment on their cultural identity:

S-08: "I was born in a mixed family so I always had contact with different cultures simultaneously, but never with so many at once. I believe that the MCI-course made me more conscious both of my personal values and cultural identity as well as of my 'global' identity".

S-05: "I have always hated my country, but when I felt down, maybe missing friends or family, I discovered how I loved some 'normal' attitudes back home, I became conscious of some of my hidden values".

### **3.2 Cultural Awareness and Stereotypes**

Stereotypes and prejudices are dealt with in many of the different sections of the MCI-course. Already in the first class-session, the students are confronted with their own biases and stereotypes, in the topics of "Cultural Identity" and "Cultural Awareness". They have barely become acquainted with each-other and are now challenged to write down what stereotypes/biases/ prejudices they might have toward each-other. Sometimes, this exercise starts with a great degree of caution, so as not to offend any of the newly acquired friends, already on the first day. However, usually someone breaks the ice with a direct characteristic of another country, and others follow suit. It could be how Southern Europeans view the Germans, the Northern Europeans toward the Italians, the English toward the French or vice versa, but probably the most common one is the attitude of many Europeans toward the Americans, with strong stereotypical expressions. Several of the students are willing to be quite frank about their prejudices, and even if this exercise is somewhat sensitive, it ends in a friendly and pleasant atmosphere.

This focus on stereotypes and prejudices is dealt with both in the sociological parts on anti-racism and globalization, as by Donnelly and Giddens (cf. Beck, and Steger), and within the topics on culture and religion, especially by McGuire and Woodhead, as well as the pedagogical topics of identity-construction, as related by Gundara and Kjørholt. The students are also much concerned about this issue during their fieldwork in kindergartens and schools. They are reminded that knowledge and education is the key to liberate oneself from prejudices.

Stereotypes can often be complicated. You sometimes see what you want to see, or as Gudykunst (p.140) expresses it: “*Stereotypes can create self-fulfilling prophecies. Individuals tend to see behavior that confirms their expectations, even when it is absent*”. To discover such mechanisms is vital, and also part of the objective of the MCI-course. Several of the students gave feedback to that effect. It was frightening to discover that stereotypes so easily colored one’s attitudes, but also liberating to become aware of this process, not the least in relation to the cultural interaction as in Spencer-Oatey, as well as in the thorough treatment of culture-shock in Ward.

With increased knowledge and awareness of stereotypes in general, the students usually become more critical of issues in their home-country, issues they didn’t feel strongly about previously. For some, it was also an eye-opener for several positive aspects of their own culture.

S-06: “It was interesting to be in such an international class, where almost everybody was very proud of their countries and it did make me reflect on my own national identity and my relationship with it”, referring to herself as a Third Culture Kid, an expression from Pollock & Van Reken.

S-08: “As a result of my work, I try and advocate for refugees and migrants whenever I face prejudice, when I feel I can do something about it, and promote the values I believe in”.

S-10: “I guess what surprised me is that there still are so many stereotypes in the world and that even people my age, even fellow MCI-students, who have unlimited access to information and live in a free world, consider them as the truth”.

### **3.3 Children and Identity. Challenges in the Multicultural Kindergarten/school**

In what way is democracy and values being taught and practiced in the kindergarten? What do we mean by saying that a child is a resource or subject? What is the content of “the competent child”? These are important issues under the topic of “Childhood and Identity Construction”, where articles such as Kjørholt “The Participating Child”, and Jans “Children as citizens” are in focus. As we saw from the Kindergarten Act, the principle of children’s participation is fundamental in Nordic pedagogy, and even though this aspect is not unknown in other European countries, the impact seems less obvious, and it is surprising to many of the MCI-students that children’s perspectives are given such weight. This is thoroughly treated by Berit Bae, in her article “Qualitative Aspects of Dialogue between Children and Adults in Pre-school Institutions”. Similarly, Eide and Winger focus on the reciprocity in the communication between adults and children in their research on interviewing children. Here we encounter some of the most characteristic elements of Nordic Early Childhood pedagogy, expounding the concept of mutual recognition. Many of the MCI-students find this emphasis both surprising and interesting, not the least when related to the multicultural kindergartens and schools they become acquainted with.

The MCI-students see classes with fewer children per adult than they are used to, and even sometimes an assistant for only one particular child, which would never happen in their home-country. They also sometimes meet mother-tongue-assistants, especially in the kindergartens, and realize that they can be of valuable help for some of the children. They find that inclusion may function, although at different levels. They are also surprised to see how the RLE-subject works (Religion, Philosophy of life, and Ethics), being compulsory for all pupils in school. Here the children learn about each-others' festivals, religious traditions and stories, and can thereby understand better what is important for the identity of each child. Knowledge creates understanding, and understanding in turn creates a more tolerant and open atmosphere. It is a cornerstone in building democracy.

### 3.4 Culture and Worldview, Culture and Religion

Worldview is an overarching set of values, which most people within a culture adhere to, and it helps people to make sense of reality. The MCI-course deals with this concept under such sub-headings as "The Deep Structures of Culture", and "Worldview: Cultural Explanations of Life and Death". Samovar (p.98), holds that *"worldview is at the core of human behaviour since it helps define perceptions of reality and instructs the individual on how to function effectively within their perceived reality"*.

Likewise, a definition of religion is appropriate at this point, *"Religion can be understood as a system of conceptions of faith, which gives direction and content to the thinking of the individuals, their way of evaluation and action"*, (Dahl, p.132, my translation). We distinguish some of the elements that all science of religion must have in mind, as expressed in Ninian Smart's 7 Dimensions of religion: the dogmatic, ethic, mythical, rituals, experiences, social, and material dimension. These dimensions give meaning to the MCI-students, as verbalized in class-discussions. Their fragmented impressions of the place of religion in society become clearer, and so does their own relation to religion, seeing which elements of religion that are meaningful to them.

Following McGuire's sociological approach, one does not primarily focus on what the religion *teaches*, but what religion *does* for the individual. Religion expounds the unknown, personifies the ideals, integrates culture, legitimates the social system and interprets human existence. As religion for many brings meaning into their experiences, people will therefore choose meaning from a greater system, from a worldview. Meaning becomes acquired. Clifford Geertz holds to a functional perception of religion, and sees religion as *"a template for meaning, [which] not only interprets reality but also shapes it"* (Geertz 1966, p.40), and that *"people interpret events and experiences as meaningful by linking them with a larger sense of order"* (p.12).

McGuire, referring to Berger, claims that a system of meaning demands a “social basis”, a “plausibility structure”, that will give social support to its members. This gives a strong sense of belonging for the majority, and likewise a strong desire among minorities to mark their own belonging, sometimes legitimizing the creation of ghettos, or cultural and ethnic enclaves, where the religious belonging, a kind of “collective representation”, becomes a vital characteristic trait. Many MCI-students on their daily trip to the university through some parts of the city, claim to see such enclaves, a kind of visible “social basis”, especially around the mosques in the area. The reasoning behind such ghettos may well be the desire to preserve their faith and tradition, but also to protect against undesired influences from the majority society, especially as to the moral standards of the secularized Nordic country, often conceived as rather decadent.

The discussions in the MCI-class will therefore often deal with the place of religion within the scope of cultural identity. For some, this is less important, while for others, quite fundamental, as their religious belief is not just a cultural trait, but a personal conviction. Many will discover, without regard of their own personal attitudes and experiences, that their own culture is highly influenced by religion, be it in language, symbols, different rituals, structures, and not the least, in art. They realize that religion often legitimates and justifies social actions. Religion has a place in all societies, as a kind of collective representation, sometimes very visible, at other times more behind the scene. Some MCI-students comment on these issues, primarily in relation to values.

S-07: “I was surprised to listen to children of different faiths tell about their festivals in such an open manner, and even sing one their religious songs. I was not used to that. They did not seem embarrassed and the others did not make fun of them.”  
[observations from fieldwork in primary-school]

S-09: “[The MCI-course] provided me a means to understand my own cultural values, including their religious roots, in a theoretical framework. Also, it boosted my ethical values by helping me being more tolerant to other cultures, respecting the dignity of each culture”.

S-11: “The MCI-course helped me redefine my own world-view, and I became more conscious of my values, even the religious values that I had not thought so much about before”.

S-12: “In my work as a kindergarten teacher, as a parent and a friend, I think it is important to further pass on values, such as was discussed in the course, and to act by them”.

#### **4. Concluding Remarks**

When asked about the most valuable experiences resulting from this period abroad, the most prevalent answers are: lasting cross-cultural friendships, becoming more self-confident and independent, and having been able to adapt to a foreign

environment. The MCI-course had furthermore opened up for dialogue on issues sometimes considered personal and difficult to discuss, such as faith and world-view. They found that topics of religion and faith are not topics of a special realm for special people, but an area of thinking and experience that is most fundamental for achieving a friendly and open communication between people of differing backgrounds.

At the outset we asked why students go on exchange-programs. We also asked how their attitudes, values, and convictions have been influenced through the MCI-course. We have not answered that in full, but we have commented on some relevant issues in relation to basic theory. As active citizens in a multicultural society, they claim that their level of consciousness related to these issues has been raised, considering themselves as representatives of the new global cosmopolitanism, that Holliday speaks of. Yet, at the same time, they also underline the characteristic traits of their own ethnic or national background. Both perspectives are significant elements of the topics treated in the MCI-course, and are also noted as partial answers to our initial research questions. Many of the MCI-students have a desire “to make a difference”. They are genuinely concerned about how they, in accordance with their fundamental values, can change the world, in their immediate society, in school and kindergarten, in social work, and youth-institutions. Their responses confirm that they have acquired at least a partial “Multicultural Competence”, which they were not very conscious of in advance, but now see as a valuable tool for their coming profession.

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