

2. The Thickening Modern: Developing a Research Agenda beyond Intensifying Rationalism

Jaakko Kauko & Mika K. T. Pajunen

Introduction

This is an exploratory essay and transdisciplinary trial that introduces¹ and analyzes the concept of *the thickening modern*. We understand it to be embedded in modern epistemology: it is an attempt to control premodern and postmodern understandings through rationalism and empiricism. We see the concepts of premodern, modern, and postmodern as ways to understand the world – paradigms, or onto-epistemic approaches, that slowly transform in history, yet all of them carry meaning in our everyday practices as layers. We coin the term thickening as a useful metaphor: like a fog, plot or soup, modern epistemology becomes denser, more complex, and stronger: its rationalist epistemology covers the premodern and postmodern epistemologies, which are embedded in the symbolic, normative, or affective understandings of life.

The modern period and its properties as ‘modernity’ have been subject to the scrutiny of many scholars. Latour (1993) has a useful notion that we have never been modern (or any other essentialist category of pre- or postmodern), which links to our understanding in the sense that these shifts are never complete ontologically or epistemologically, but only layered. As a sense of movement, the idea of the thickening modern shares Bauman’s idea of the liquid modern being “infinity of improvement” (Bauman 2012, ix). Beck’s second modernity is a shift from a logic of categorizing of the first modern into a context in which

¹The first use of ‘thickening modern’ (*tihenevä moderni*) was Mika K. T. Pajunen’s (2017).

Chapter forthcoming in the book Peter Dahler-Larsen (Ed.) *A Research Agenda for Evaluation: Inspirational Themes*. Edward Elgar. Please check the final publication for quotations. Distribution only via the authors.

institutions are challenged with interlinked global processes (Beck & Lau, 2005). We share the second modernity conception of a dynamic in which the “process of modernization itself ... calls the institutional order of the first modernity into question” (Beck & Lau, 2005, p. 528): we argue the thickening appears when modern epistemology attempts to solve issues that it cannot grasp (feelings and values, for example). In relation to evaluation, Peter Dahler-Larsen (2011) distinguishes three sociohistorical stages in relation to evaluation – modernity, reflexive modernity, and the audit society – to describe how evaluation has morphed and become layered over time. We share his premise that “[w]ithout this specifically modern cosmology, evaluation could not have been invented” (Dahler-Larsen, 2011, p. 101). Our perspective, in emphasizing the thickening modern, implies an intensifying process without a clear beginning or end. This process clings to modern epistemology, disregarding the fact that in an ontological sense we are not modern.² While this epistemology clouds our view of the other epistemologies in the world, it but does not render them meaningless.

Our aim in this chapter is to identify items for a research agenda that recognize non-rationalistic epistemologies and then to ponder what this means for evaluation research. To do this, we position our work in the larger theoretical frame of political science and more specifically in education policy and the questions of governance and policymaking. We further draw on philosophy and theology. Modern epistemology has also affected how politics is understood. Ankersmit (1996) argues that much of political philosophy, as represented by Rawls, has attempted to address and rationalize the brokenness and conflict-ridden aspects of politics. In this sense, the non-rational aspects have been seen as flaws. It is our view that rather than expecting rational processes of politics and governance researchers should be vigilant for the processes that are not rational. In this regard our task closes that of Agamben (2000), who argues for understanding politics as mediality, “making the means visible as such” (p. 115), which we understand as making prominent the “contingent sensemaking of contingency” (Kauko & Wermke, 2018). By identifying the thickening modern as a rational veil of ignorance, we aim to discern existing and new directions for analysis. In this chapter we suggest that affective, symbolic, and normative dimensions are often ignored because of their disregard in the modern. We thus argue that the epistemology of the modern has shaped evaluation into a rationalistic rite. Rite represents and reproduces

² We wish to thank our reviewer for helping us to conceptualize this in a more helpful manner.

Chapter forthcoming in the book Peter Dahler-Larsen (Ed.) *A Research Agenda for Evaluation: Inspirational Themes*. Edward Elgar. Please check the final publication for quotations. Distribution only via the authors.

the world in which one believes. If the world is believed to be rational, the rite (evaluation) represents and reproduces rationality. If the world is believed to have a religious reality, the rite carries a representation of the transcendent (however, with a rational dimension in conceptualizations and procedures, for example). This conflict with modern (Western) thinking has been noted in the studies of liturgy:

“Quite a profusion of studies attempt to analyze the cultural and religious crisis of the contemporary world, especially the Western world, and they all have implications for liturgy and its symbols. A common foundation of these studies is the principle that individuals and societies relate to the world and among themselves through symbols and myths, which represent reality in a nonrational way, in images and stories which evoke feelings and command relationships, and which promise well-being to those who adhere to the vision which they embody. ... [T]he coherence of [Western] life still requires symbolic expression” (Power, 1984, p. 15).

In other words, the thickening modern fogs our perspective on the symbolic aspects of evaluation and the life of its ‘evaluands’.³ We argue that in addition to the symbolic expression at least affective and normative understandings are also hidden behind the thickening modern.

We analyze the thickening modern in two political discussions related to everyday practices. By analyzing rites of rationality, we hope also to understand the nonrational element: the decision making of religious communities in a secular society, especially in relation to same-sex marriage; and evaluating quality in education. While these two areas are distant, we interpret them both as instances of the thickening modern. In both cases there is a shift towards a postmodern ontological uncertainty, yet an attempt to cling to the modern epistemology. This leads to a situation in which societal expectations of what the world is and how it can be understood are drifting apart. This change can be observed at the level of rites by analyzing what they represent and reproduce. The cases differ in the sense that our expectation is that the rite of marrying same-sex people encounters the difficulty of addressing a religious debate with modern rational terminology, and the rite of evaluating quality encounters difficulties in rationally controlling the full spectrum of human action.

³ We wish to thank Peter Dahler-Larsen for helping us to crystallize this idea.

Chapter forthcoming in the book Peter Dahler-Larsen (Ed.) *A Research Agenda for Evaluation: Inspirational Themes*. Edward Elgar. Please check the final publication for quotations. Distribution only via the authors.

In the next section we take issue with the idea of rationality as a defining feature of the modern and develop the idea further to understand the main features of the thickening modern by discussing the two empirical examples of this phenomenon. Before concluding, we theoretically attempt to underpin some possible directions for an analysis that might overcome the research-narrowing perspective of the thickening modern. In the conclusion, we critically assess the validity of our approach and the usability of the ‘thickening modern’ concept in the main analytical concern of this edited volume: research on evaluation.

Rationality as an epistemology of the modern

At a deeply societal level rationality is a defining feature of the modern era, and the distinction between the rational and irrational is one between premodern and modern narratives (Latour, 1993). Weber (1919) discussed the disenchantment of the world through the rationalization of premodern ideas of religion. In tracing ‘the long process of Reform in Latin Christendom’ and secularity Taylor (2007) describes the change of culturally acceptable argumentation and narratives especially in relation to religion and rationality. Popper (2013 [1945]) dates the conflict between rationalism and irrationalism to the medieval debates between scholasticism and mysticism. He further argues against ‘irrationalism’, which endangers empirical and intellectual rationalism by resorting to teleological-ideological explanations of the world (Popper, 2013 [1945], critiquing Toynbee’s reading of Marx and Hegel). This modern rationalism has faced an intensifying critique. Latour (1993) sees a failure in modernity’s attempts to harness nature (through rationalism) when the premodern understanding might help us to see its inseparability from society. Poststructuralist approaches have proved that the modern narrative exerts colonizing and marginalizing effects in non-western contexts: the colonial past and present is forced to fit with a western history that fails to recognize indigenous stories (Ahmed, 2000; Tikly, 2001). Philosophers of education have pointed out that the modern project is unable to change the world to meet the eco-crisis: technology cannot resolve the prevailing idea of economic growth in an ecologically sustainable way (Värri, 2018). Feminist research has described how essentialist categories fail to understand gender: gendered categories are created daily in the ways people act (not by the binary essential-biological sex into which they are categorized) (Butler, 1999). Philosophers of religion have suggested that the immanence of modernity fails to answer basic existential questions (Taylor, 2007). Even the leading figures of the Frankfurt School have recently voiced criticisms of rationalism’s ‘hard naturalism’ (Habermas, 2008). This

Chapter forthcoming in the book Peter Dahler-Larsen (Ed.) *A Research Agenda for Evaluation: Inspirational Themes*. Edward Elgar. Please check the final publication for quotations. Distribution only via the authors.

non-exhaustive scrutiny prompts the conclusion that modern rationalism as an interpretative frame finds it quite difficult to create holistic understandings of the world. The modern's main epistemology is rationalism, but this clearly fails to provide enough tools to understand and resolve some of humanity's most basic problems in relation to the environment – existence and morality, for example. Paradoxically, it therefore seems implausible that rationalism could work as the sole frame for evaluation, even if it is certainly a child of modern rationalism.

There are glimpses of how the thickening modern is facing problems with the complexity of the world. Research on the pinnacle of modern rationalism, evidence-based policy, has noted that it cannot deliver in the face of politicians' urgent requirements, political preferences and the attraction of ideologically biased knowledge (e.g. Goldstein, 2008; Stehr & Grundmann, 2012; Craft & Howlett, 2013; Klees & Edwards, 2014). Evidence-based policy carries the rationalism of modernity (Sanderson, 2011), but the actual use of evidence for policy is varied, arguable, and only one of many inputs for decision making (Gormley, 2011). Governance also clings to modern epistemology with increasingly complex understandings: 'New Public Management' (Hood & Jackson, 1991), 'Neo-Weberian State', 'networked governance' (Goodin et al., 2008; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011) and 'metagovernance' (Rhodes, 2011). All these titles illustrate a change of governance from a bureaucratic ideal to uncontrollable but measurable ways of controlling action. Research in the education sector in the wake of global quality indicators such as PISA and other large-scale assessments has been particularly interesting in this respect: quality has become one of the most important framing factors in education and has for decades been of growing interest to international organizations and national policies (Leeuw, 2002; Power, 1994; Smith, 1990; Dahler-Larsen, 2012). OECD PISA data production is highly complex, but the data production process remains uncontested (Carvalho, 2013) behind the rationalistic veil in our argument. While the global use, flow and gathering of data meet severe friction, data serve as an undisputed premise for evidence-based policy (Piattoeva et al., 2018). An analysis of governance suggests that an increasingly rationalist paradigm is embedded in the current political culture. Analyses of the rationalistic tools such as measuring, and evidence support the conclusion that modern epistemology encounters difficulties as a governance tool. As we know, evaluation is one of these tools. Indeed, evaluation studies have identified and discussed these paradoxes. As early as the 1970s, Rittel and Webber (1973) argued that the 'wickedness' of societal problems and the impossibility of defining complex societal issues

Chapter forthcoming in the book Peter Dahler-Larsen (Ed.) *A Research Agenda for Evaluation: Inspirational Themes*. Edward Elgar. Please check the final publication for quotations. Distribution only via the authors.

led to a situation in which there are no definitive solutions, and Weiss (1970) analyzed how evaluation became subject to political interests and preconceptions.

In summary it is well established in research that the modern is defined by rationality. There are also indications in how policymaking and governance increasingly favor rational arguments that support political claims rather than basing the arguments on values and ideology. This is the process of the thickening modern: the increasing and self-evident importance of rationalism.

The thickening modern

In the rough generalization of premodern, modern and postmodern the thickening modern can be seen as the modern bursting into the postmodern. We use 'thickening modern' to describe how the modern rational paradigm collapses like a star into an exploding supernova. There the guiding principles of the modern are driven to their logical conclusion, effecting saturation and thus 'thickening', which eats space away from other options until the paradigm either conquers the world by offering a panopticon after which all is clear and there is no room for reinterpretation, or more likely explodes into something else by failing to deliver what it promises, namely the rationale, or better, the ultimate meaning for which people putting their faith in it crave. To make more sense of this we track some processes that exemplify this change.

One of the key elements in the change is reason. In the premodern world reason was embedded not only in the human mind or the realm of eternal truths, but in the very framework of the world. Taylor (2007) describes how the concept of the natural world changed from a cosmos that pointed beyond itself to a universe of immanent order guided by natural laws. A similar change occurred in perceiving the self from a premodern 'porous self', vulnerable to external 'magical' forces, to a modern 'buffered self' isolated in one's own mind from the external world. Both changes create scope for the rise of what was considered objective instrumental reason.

In the modern reason became decidedly objective and rational, even instrumental. Especially in the first phase of the modern a deep belief in the power of language to define the world and thus conquer it led to unbounded optimism concerning human capabilities and progress. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the concept of 'quality' began to change from something that was the unattainable Platonic quality of a thing to something that

Chapter forthcoming in the book Peter Dahler-Larsen (Ed.) A Research Agenda for Evaluation: Inspirational Themes. Edward Elgar. Please check the final publication for quotations. Distribution only via the authors.

marked social rank, only during the modern to become something that rationally defined rank (Dahler-Larsen, 2019).

In the postmodern reason is tied to the various narratives and perspectives of interpreters, both individually and communally. Taylor (2007) has recognized an inherent tendency in previous axial breakthroughs and reforms to homogenize “all of life under the sway of a single principle or demand” and “by ironing out or sidelining whatever in human life might seem not to consort easily with this single demand” (Taylor, 2007, p. 771). The thickening modern can be described as a stage of the modern in which it is attempted to apply this homogenizing and standardizing tendency of modernity to every area of life. In this regard, the modern becomes a rite that reproduces rationality.

The thickening modern can thus be described as a dynamic of the modern project, in which the rite of instrumental objective reason is reproduced in every sphere of public life, driving the personal, emotional, religious, or ideological into the private. The problem here lies in the fact that its exclusion and marginalization of what it perceives as ‘the irrational’ does not cease to function in people’s minds and affect their decision making. This is reminiscent of how Taylor (2007) speaks of former religious beliefs ‘haunting’ secular societies. The same happens to all the symbols, affects and norms that *de facto* guide people’s lives, whether they are publicly acknowledged or not.

Thus, the kind of ritual rationality that fails to recognize their power ceases to be descriptive and analytical, becoming in fact normative, setting rules for what is allowed in public debate. This is more harmful if it takes place unaware, because it makes it impossible to address what it seeks to suppress. Public life therefore becomes inaccessible to those who do not succumb to this assumption, leading to the marginalization and exclusion of those who do not share the unarticulated metanarrative.

More broadly the thickening modern, insofar as it strives for a single truth and discourse that can be objectively verified and described, leads to a need for ever stricter definition. This is above all due to its attempt to iron out the possibilities of reinterpretation in preference to over-defined and once-for-all locked meanings.

In the extreme interpretation of the world of the thickening modern one cannot base one’s argument on values or beliefs that cannot be shared by the whole of society. World society

Chapter forthcoming in the book Peter Dahler-Larsen (Ed.) *A Research Agenda for Evaluation: Inspirational Themes*. Edward Elgar. Please check the final publication for quotations. Distribution only via the authors.

theory has attempted to argue for a global culture and has coined the idea of how a ‘newly discovered island’ will soon start converging with the rest of the world (Meyer et al., 1997) with the help of ‘international carriers’ such as international organizations (Meyer & Ramirez, 2003). To be shared by the whole of society, these values and beliefs should be broad, publicly distributed, defined, and ratified, such as various state constitutions giving certain rights to their citizens or binding international agreements such as UN human rights. The problem here is that when articulated in their rational form these values and beliefs are so general that they may for example fail to motivate much of the philanthropy with which private citizens engage and which in fact guarantees the functioning of certain aspects of civil society, nor do they give (enough) guidance for the difficult ethical questions of decision making in which the public views of the interpretation of these basics differ. Criticism of world culture draws attention to how this notion’s view is teleological and nation-state centered (Nóvoa et al., 2003; see also Rappleye, 2015). In other words it shares key features of the western rational idea of progress, risking marginalization (Tikly, 2001) and the production of “failed historicity” (Ahmed, 2000, p. 10) especially in postcolonial contexts. This leads to the paradox of the thickening modern. There is an inability to define the leading ethical or religious principles through the rational process and an inability to trust that others will follow them once they are publicly agreed or acknowledged. The ever-sharper definition of the ground for common work and good therefore leads to a situation in which practices that previously guaranteed the steady improvement of the quality of life now begin to hinder it.

There are ample examples of this, but we discuss two such cases stemming from the world of education and religion in our chapter. In both cases it seems the difficulty of the thickening modern lies in tackling the underlying values and beliefs it fails to recognize and thus address. However, we believe there is much in these debates that stems from the territory that is left unaddressed or is excluded in the domain of private choice, which needs to be unearthed and addressed to gain a better understanding of the very phenomenon and all it entails.

Religious communities and the symbolic in a secular society

The case of religious communities offers a unique perspective for assessing societal change, especially in relation to the symbolic. According to Frank C. Senn, “The Christian Church shares with all human societies a symbolic discourse and a repertoire of rites ... Natural symbols possess an archetypal power that appeals to the realm of human instinct that is not so much logical as emotional, not so much propositional as evocative” (Senn, 1997, p. 30).

Nevertheless, modern western societies have sought to tame these powers through increasingly refined definitions and legislative force. Among the most contested has been marriage. The modern state has moved towards the separation of its civil and religious aspects. In many post-Christendom societies religious communities have retained a right to solemnize marriages, although their civil aspect has been deemed determinative. In the legal sense the final say concerning what marriage is has thus fallen to the state (Senn, 2016). This arrangement has served most religious communities rather well for a long time. However, the broadening understanding and the introduction of same-sex marriage has caused unforeseen consequences for some. This has been especially true of the forms of Lutheranism that have traditionally claimed marriage to be primarily a societal estate that is therefore ordered by the state, but which now struggle to come to terms with the changing reality of both marriage and society. Pajunen (2017) first used the concept of the thickening modern to explain this difficulty in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (ELCF)⁴ when a new marriage law allowing for same-sex marriage entered into force in Finland in 2017.

In debating the new marriage law, the Finnish Parliament intended that it should not change the status or practices of religious communities, but that it should be left to the communities themselves to decide whom to marry within the confines of the law (Tuori, 2019). This posed no problem for most religious communities, yet this was not the case in the ELCF, where the issues of human sexuality had been discussed for some time without the

⁴ The ELCF is an historic folk church with a recognized status in Finnish society. It still conducts most Finnish marriages, though this number has significantly decreased (Concerning the ELCF, see e.g. Lauha, 2005; Heikkilä & Heininen, 2016). Clergy officiating at the marriage ceremony act both in religious and civic roles, the latter sanctioned by the state.

Chapter forthcoming in the book Peter Dahler-Larsen (Ed.) *A Research Agenda for Evaluation: Inspirational Themes*. Edward Elgar. Please check the final publication for quotations. Distribution only via the authors.

emergence of a clear majority. The church leadership's initial interpretation of the situation was that the present legislation and directives did not allow Lutheran clergy to marry same-sex couples. This was communicated by the bishops to the clergy but soon contested, with a significant number of the latter volunteering to marry same-sex couples (Audas, 2020, p. 410; Kallatsa & Kiiski, 2019). This was also the point at which the processes of the thickening modern became apparent.

Audas (2020), who has studied the debate, explains that the problem lies less in what is

“expressed in the discussions around marriage, but mainly because of the thoughts that are *not* expressed or articulated and yet which, beneath the surface, greatly affect the discussion. Issues regarding the church's theology of marriage are difficult to solve or even advance as long as one speaks of marriage as something already defined. More importantly: questions regarding marriage theology cannot be solved as long as subjects such as love, sex, gender, children and family are viewed as clearly-defined points of departure.” (Audas, 2020, p. 410, original emphasis)

This shows it is much easier to use and uphold symbols than to define their meaning in a normative analytical language in which either something important seems to escape the attention or if defined to the letter risks contestation. This presents another paradox of the thickening modern: if faith is viewed primarily in propositional terms, the more it is defined, the less there are those who wholeheartedly subscribe to such definitions. In this respect faith might be better defined as something more than or beyond rational propositions. If this is the case the primacy of the symbolic in its interpretation challenges modern attempts at clarity of definition. One way to relate to this might be the adoption of an *apophatic* stance, discussed by Audas, that would continue to debate but remain open to the innate complexity of human life (Audas, 2020). However, the very complexity leads to another debate in which the original concern risks being buried under how the outcome is managed according to modern rational principles. In the ELCF this has meant, for example, that the theological debate concerning the interpretation of marriage has begun to be diverted to the correct interpretations of the legal situation in society, because no consensus has emerged concerning the symbolic.

This is best exemplified by the two main camps heading in opposite directions to escape the impasse. According to the conservative view nothing changed with the amendment of the

Chapter forthcoming in the book Peter Dahler-Larsen (Ed.) *A Research Agenda for Evaluation: Inspirational Themes*. Edward Elgar. Please check the final publication for quotations. Distribution only via the authors.

marriage law; in the church, marriage was still a union of one man with one woman as enshrined in the Bible, testified to by the Lutheran Confessions, acknowledged in the Church Order and Law and stipulated in the Service Book's marriage rite. Yet the liberal view began from the opposite end, affirming that marriage according to the Lutheran confession and ethics was above all a societal estate governed by the state and officiated and prayed for by the church, and definitely not a sacrament like baptism and eucharist that transmitted salvific grace. Both views appeared united by their certainty in their cause and the existence of a single definition permanently resolving the matter. In this situation of opposing views, there have since been cases of diocesan chapters reprimanding renegade clergy, who in turn have appealed to the secular courts to invalidate their sanctions, leading to an ever-deeper study of the rules and regulations governing church life. However, it has proved difficult to excise the significance of episcopal oversight or the bishops' right to instruct and reprimand the clergy in the light of modern employment laws, especially as this is left for the secular courts to decide (Tuori, 2019).

The difficulty seems to stem from the very essence of marriage as a symbol that no single descriptive language can define without losing something of its archetypal power. Such an attempt equals to explaining a poem in prose without the original text. Like a good poem, marriage as an archetypal symbol contains several meanings and interpretative clues whose significance may change depending on the time and context. The same applies to all religious symbols including the episcopal oversight. In the face of the secular law both the marriage and the episcopal oversight seem to have no more power than that clearly expressed in the legal code (Pajunen, 2017). Ultimately, the law does not define the symbolic but only recognizes and legislates for its consequences.⁵

⁵ What makes this especially difficult for Lutheranism is that the seeds of such secularism may already have been sown at the Reformation, which emphasized the freedom of individuals to read and interpret in accordance with their consciences and view most rituals as human forms rather than divine institutions. Lutheranism has therefore traditionally lacked a strong emphasis on liturgical uniformity and a strict oversight of the external forms of occasional services; this has been reserved for the preaching of the gospel and administration of the sacraments, regarded as essential for church unity. The newfound interest in the rubrics defining the gender of the bride and the groom therefore seems positively strange to many a good protestant.

Chapter forthcoming in the book Peter Dahler-Larsen (Ed.) *A Research Agenda for Evaluation: Inspirational Themes*. Edward Elgar. Please check the final publication for quotations. Distribution only via the authors.

Furthermore, applying modern instrumental reason to the symbolic is not confined to society alone but is creeping into the church, leading to an attempt to give the symbolic a definitive normative meaning without realizing its power and possibility to open ever new interpretations as it always has (Pajunen, 2017). Marriage, for example, has never had a single definitive meaning that has remained exactly the same across the ages but a multitude of meanings that have evolved and probably still will (cf. Audas, 2020). Even if its present western concept of a loving consensual relationship between two adults seems to avoid any overtly religious meaning, this does not mean that marriage itself has lost its symbolic significance and power stemming from the archetypal, which the vehemence of the debate confirms.

Ritualistic measurement of quality in education

Testing, quality assurance, and evaluation have expanded globally in education and can be seen as exemplifying a rationalistic rite. Although national and local testing have been generally in use in schools and universities since modern times, their systematization has become relevant only after the massification of first primary and then secondary and tertiary education. Quality as an indicator began to play a larger role in (western) education policy during the 1970s and 1980s. The main examples are the OECD's social indicator programs during the 1970s and its International Indicators of Education Systems (INES) program from 1988, and the 1983 US Nation at Risk Report. In the 1990s and the first decade of the 2000s, quality evaluation became institutionalized, at least in the OECD and European countries. The Education at a Glance reports since 1992 and the Bologna process's (1999) intensifying focus on measurable quality (e.g. Ala-Vähälä, 2020) are indications of this change. The current agenda of international organizations working in the field of education is that education needs more quality and that progress in this can be measured. The Incheon declaration (2016) by UNESCO, the World Bank Group and other UN organizations claims that "...research and assessment culture is necessary at the national and international levels" (p. 66). The global mainstream of evaluation in education favors more evaluation rather than less. In this model there are usually elements of accountability, standards, and decentralization. This way of thinking of education evaluation as accountability and standardization is expanding, and it has also reached places previously untouched (Verger et al., 2018). Sahlberg (2016) describes a 'Global Educational Reform Movement' which supports 'competition, choice, prescribed curricula, standardized testing, and privatization'.

Chapter forthcoming in the book Peter Dahler-Larsen (Ed.) *A Research Agenda for Evaluation: Inspirational Themes*. Edward Elgar. Please check the final publication for quotations. Distribution only via the authors.

Even in notable exceptions like Finland, where trust in teaching professionals is favored instead of their management, the trend of intensifying evaluation is a clear historical trajectory (Varjo, Rinne, & Simola, 2016). In other words, the question of how to identify what constitutes quality education has taken forms of certain rationalistic and systematic approaches, specifically those that emphasize competition.

The idea of the thickening modern seems to fit the logic of the global mainstream of evaluation and the growing emphasis on quality and evaluation in education policy. There is an observable expansion of evaluation: an intensifying attempt to rationally grasp its nature. The ideas of rational governance have expanded from the realm of education as a means to further learning to questions of governance (Ozga et al., 2011), data governance (Fenwick et al., 2014), and privatization of provision (Verger et al., 2016), for example. Attempts to measure and operationalize education are generally interested in increasing learning outcomes. This has had consequences for how the rite of evaluation has been formed, and what it leaves outside. First, this narrows the idea of education into increasing cognitive capacities. For example, a principal line of criticism of the OECD PISA survey is that it fails to recognize the breadth of sociocultural aspects behind schooling (e.g. Simola, 2005; see Hwa, 2019). The evaluation's attempt to rationally define the world narrows the scope that can be seen. Even in a low accountability and low control systems, such as Finland (e.g. Wallenius, 2020), at the school level the question concerns whether a pupil is seen as a whole person or only recognized for their gradable skills (Hannus, 2018). Second, the political use of learning outcomes as a 'projection surface' allows multiple and even opposite interpretations of what should be done (e.g. Waldow, 2010; Rautalin, 2013). Discussion of learning outcomes seeks to conceal that politics is a value-based and normative activity. From the perspective of the thickening modern the attempts to hide the political aspects of education policy behind a rational veil are increasingly failing. Interestingly, as Korvela and Vuorelma (2017) note, the "post-truth" movement is a sign of the return of ideologies that is "messy and conflictual" (p. 209). A possible interpretation is that the emphasis on 'facts' has politicized them because the political aspects cannot be hidden.

The ritualistic nature of the measuring of education quality is evident in how national actors align themselves with the need to measure: it seems that testing feeds a need for more testing (Piattoeva & Saari, 2018), and that quality becomes simultaneously a means of problematizing education and providing a solution for it (Minina et al., 2018). These

Chapter forthcoming in the book Peter Dahler-Larsen (Ed.) *A Research Agenda for Evaluation: Inspirational Themes*. Edward Elgar. Please check the final publication for quotations. Distribution only via the authors.

dynamics seem to be embedded in values or norms, but they are performing the rationalistic rite. The main finding of a comparative project on Brazil, China and Russia was that policy actors were less interested in defining quality than considering mechanisms to control it. A Chinese expert reported national tests were developed “because there is no data ... we need data from a place that we can trust”, and a Russian expert described an event in which international partners would not believe their views “if you couldn’t prove it, even if you were absolutely convinced you were right” (quotations in Kauko et al., 2018b). The views follow the logic of the Evaluation Society (Dahler-Larsen, 2012) in which not evaluating is not an option. Although quality is a normative concept modern rationalism has turned it into a neutral governing tool, resulting in a self-enforcing dynamic: measured quality problems are seen as best resolved with greater control of quality (Kauko et al., 2018a; 2018c). A shared understanding of the need to measure is more shared than an answer to the question of why we should measure in the first place.

If rite is a representation and reproduction of the world in which one believes, measuring the quality of education can be seen as a rite. When the idea of a modern rationalist narrative is reproduced, it represents a view of the world in which education is considered a rational process. This limits the symbolic, affective and normative aspects of education that can be represented and reproduced.

Conclusion: The start of a research agenda

The discussed cases point to the difficulties of combining modern epistemology with basic phenomena of society like religion or education. Using this modern epistemology leads to a process of thickening when addressing beliefs and values. We have identified three categories through which these could be represented and thus addressed outside the process of thickening. These are symbols, affects, and norms that exist with no metaphysical prerequisite and can therefore be present in any arena, even within the modern paradigm. The thickening modern attempts to hold more tightly to abstract notions that escape definition such as politics, quality, and religion. This attempt creates friction in policymaking, which allows empirical access to its non-rational aspects. While evaluation research has identified the problems of rationalistic approaches for decades, these viewpoints might offer ideas concerning what the blind spots of evaluation are.

Chapter forthcoming in the book Peter Dahler-Larsen (Ed.) *A Research Agenda for Evaluation: Inspirational Themes*. Edward Elgar. Please check the final publication for quotations. Distribution only via the authors.

An urge rationally to define the *symbolic* aspects of marriage in a changing societal context resulted in the process of the thickening modern. Marriage is accompanied by many symbols whether we agree with their former interpretations and the power given to them or not, and they are open to ever new interpretations. Famously, Schmitt (1934) pointed out that old power relations have endured despite the shift from transcendent to immanent rule: “All important concepts of modern research on the state are secularized theological concepts [translation JK]” (p. 49). This has been supported by subsequent views concerning conceptual history (e.g. Koselleck, 2004 [1979]) or the views of Foucault (1977) on changes in sovereign rule. In his critique of postmodern and modern concepts, Latour (1993) promotes an understanding which sustains the premodern notion that we should take seriously the notion that ‘symbols’ and ‘things’ are inseparable. This is connected with Latour’s greater idea of the unproductive separation of nature and culture as opposing concepts. Taylor (2007) shares a similar historical understanding, recognizing several processes in western Christianity that tend to disembodify religion, thus ‘excarinating’ or pushing it into the purely cerebral. This in turn leads to a diminished reading of the bodily forms it has previously carried and thus the symbols that relate to the natural world and our being in it. Topical theological debates do exist. These tease out the nonrational aspects of decision making such as the cognitive, socially binding, and relationship-based recognition of the religious identities of the self and the other (Saarinen, 2016). In the context of this research, these ideas mean that what is seen as a rational decision about ‘things’ also bears their ‘symbolic’ dimension, which makes various subjective interpretations possible. The ‘symbolic’ dimension is predictably strong in institutions with a long history or which are created for a special purpose like the church, the university or parliament, which increases the probability of the symbolic dimension when evaluating them.

Neither of the cases directly addressed *affects*, but we believe it is fair to argue that the debate on marriage is an affective one, and that the evaluation of cognitive skills in schools disregards the affective dimensions that each person carries. Furthermore, affect theory is closely linked to knowledge formation, and ‘embodied meaning-making’ concisely describes what the ‘affective turn’ addresses (Wetherell, 2012). Affect research also shares the idea of escaping a modernist rationalist paradigm. Bennett (2001) describes how the “very characterization of the world as disenchanted ignores and then discourages affective attachment to that world” (p. 3). Affects, “embodied, unformed, and less conscious [than emotions]”, have increasingly been of interest to social scientists, in contrast with a previous

Chapter forthcoming in the book Peter Dahler-Larsen (Ed.) *A Research Agenda for Evaluation: Inspirational Themes*. Edward Elgar. Please check the final publication for quotations. Distribution only via the authors.

view which maintained that “for much of the last century ... it was assumed that political subjects were essentially rational actors busily maximising their strategic interests”

(Thompson & Hogget, 2012, pp. 11 - 12). Rational knowledge also affects flow in networks (Wetherell, 2012). For example, there is an empirical analysis of how affects move and morph in networks (Brøgger & Staunæs, 2016; Staunæs, Brøgger, & Krejsler, 2018), and how complex issues such as gender equality struggle to reach political agendas dominated by rationalist-simplistic governance tools, while affective strategies have the potential to change agendas (Elomäki et al., 2016). In summary the growing interest in affects in research is helpful for an understanding of the non-rational aspects that can help us to glimpse other ways of understanding beyond the thickening modern. In evaluation the rational rite carries affective dimensions whether it has preferred them or not: Grek has pointed out how inspection is used as a tool for affective governance (Grek et al., 2014).

The debate on same-sex marriage discusses *societal norms*, and evaluating quality in education is the business of making *normative ranks*. The normativity of these political processes comes as no surprise in research on policy, because norms and values lie at the heart of policymaking. However, their discussion is often disguised by a cloak of rationalism. These normative aspects affect knowledge. At the practical and empirically observed level the problem for understanding appears to be that policymakers and providers of evidence (such as researchers) understand knowledge differently (Henig, 2009; Kauko & Wermke, 2018). Studies focusing on the use of evidence have underlined that this depends on the power of those who make policy and can therefore be called ‘policy-based evidence’ (Tombs & Whyte, 2003; Walters, 2008; Sanderson, 2011; Strassheim & Kettunen, 2014). The acceptance that ‘rational decision making’ is a modernist mirage in relation to premodern ‘irrational’ decision making (see Latour, 1993) is analogous to the category of Strassheim and Kettunen (2014), which distinguishes between the cognitive and normative selectivity of evidence in policymaking. Weiss (1970) already recognized this phenomenon. Examining rational decision making as a rite, a reproduction and representation of rationality, might also open theoretical pathways for evaluation.

The thickening modern is quite familiar yet unnamed in the study and practice of evaluation. The key point we seek to make is that while quality has been transformed from something that cannot be achieved into something that can be operationalized and measured, institutions’ evaluation attempts to understand remain temporally layered. It might also be

Chapter forthcoming in the book Peter Dahler-Larsen (Ed.) *A Research Agenda for Evaluation: Inspirational Themes*. Edward Elgar. Please check the final publication for quotations. Distribution only via the authors.

fair to say that the practice of evaluation is layered, but this has not been the focus of our work. In other words, if we wish to understand what a school is, we need to accept its institutional boundaries, complexities, and possibilities. It is not a mere place of cognition but a place of affects, symbols, and norms. To understand how it functions, we should recognize their existence. Many education sociologists have previously pointed this out. While this has been recognized in evaluation theory, the message has not yet been entirely received in the evaluation industry. The question with organized religion is akin to that of the school. Like the school, religious institutions are layered. Whereas the school is easily misunderstood as a purely rational institution, religious institutions, although not necessarily considered such, are still expected to act as if they were. Going beyond the thickening modern would require us to accept that certain aspects are unachievable by evaluation in these institutions. This might be easier for religious institutions, because they were born to operate with the transcendent. The challenge for secular schools remains in their struggle to be key examples of the Enlightenment project.⁶

Yet going any further would trap us in the thickening modern. In a thickening modern paradigm, we would write that we should further develop evaluation to enable it to take rational hold of affects, symbols, and norms. This would mean we would try to evaluate schools' affects, symbols, and norms by measuring and operationalizing them. It would also mean we would try to create a way of communicating the affects, symbols, and norms of religion with the help of a rational argument.

So is the thickening modern beyond the reach of our rational research endeavor, and is evaluation thus trapped inside rationalism? The answer is no. Understanding the difference between evaluation and research is key here. Through research it is possible to study the experiences of people without assessment. Through research, we have come to an acknowledgement of the phenomenon we claim to be the thickening modern. Research can adjust its epistemic and ontological approaches. If evaluation aims to create a normative rank of affects, symbols, or norms, it risks being caught in the rationalist trap. The question of whether evaluation can host a paradigm shift is thus left open or waiting for Don Westerheijden's (1999) question: 'Where are the quantum jumps in quality assurance?'

⁶ An example of the layeredness of epistemologies is also that many schools or even education systems have their roots in religious education.

Chapter forthcoming in the book Peter Dahler-Larsen (Ed.) A Research Agenda for Evaluation: Inspirational Themes. Edward Elgar. Please check the final publication for quotations. Distribution only via the authors.

Acknowledgements

Both authors wish to thank the editor and the reviewer for their valuable comments, which helped to develop our argument. Jaakko Kauko would like to thank Dr Anna Medvedeva (Tampere University) for contributing to the section which discusses evidence-based policy. This subchapter greatly benefitted from her review work and the related discussions. The authors take responsibility for all remaining errors and inconsistencies.

Chapter forthcoming in the book Peter Dahler-Larsen (Ed.) *A Research Agenda for Evaluation: Inspirational Themes*. Edward Elgar. Please check the final publication for quotations. Distribution only via the authors.

References

Ahmed, Sara (2000). *Strange encounters. Embodied others and post-colonialism*. London: Routledge.

Ala-Vähälä, T. (2020). *Coping with Diversity in Higher Education in the European Higher Education Area: The Case of Quality Assurance*. Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä.

Ankersmit, F. (1996). *Aesthetic Politics: Political Philosophy Beyond Fact and Value*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Audas, Emma (2020). *Det heliga äktenskap*. Skellefteå: Artos & Norma bokförlag.

Bauman, Zygmunt (2012). *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bennett, Janet (2001). *The Enchantment of Modern Life. Attachments, Crossings, and Ethics*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Brøgger, K. & Staunæs, D. (2016). Standards and (self)implosion: How the circulation of affects accelerates the spread of standards and intensifies the embodiment of colliding, temporal ontologies. *Theory & Psychology*, 26 (2), pp. 223 - 242.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0959354316635889>

Butler, Judith (1999). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge.

Carvalho, L. M. (2013). The Fabrications and Travels of a Knowledge-Policy Instrument. *European Educational Research Journal*, 11 (2), pp. 172-188.

Dahler-Larsen, P. (2012). Constitutive effects as a social accomplishment: A qualitative study of the political in testing. *Educational Inquiry*, 3 (2), pp. 171 - 186.

Elomäki, A., Kantola, J., Koivunen, A., & Ylöstalo, H (2016). Kamppailu tasa-arvosta: tunne, asiantuntijuus ja vastarinta strategisessa valtiossa [Struggle over equality: affect, expertise, and resistance in a strategic state] *Sosiologia* 53 (4), pp. 257 - 275.

Chapter forthcoming in the book Peter Dahler-Larsen (Ed.) *A Research Agenda for Evaluation: Inspirational Themes*. Edward Elgar. Please check the final publication for quotations. Distribution only via the authors.

Fenwick, T., Mangez, E., & Ozga, J. (2014). *Governing Knowledge: Comparison, Knowledge-Based Technologies and Expertise in the Regulation of Education*. London: Routledge.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. London: Allen Lane.

Foucault, M. (1986). Truth and Power. In C. Gordon (ed) *Michel Foucault. Power/knowledge*. Brighton: Harvester.

Foucault, M. (2003). *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976*. New York, NY: Picador.

Fouilleux, E., Maillard J. de, & Smith, A. (2005). Technical or political? The working groups of the EU Council of Ministers, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 12 (4), pp. 609 - 623.

Goldstein, H. (2008). Evidence and education policy – some reflections and allegations. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 38 (3), pp. 393 - 400.

Goodin, R. E., Rein, M., & Moran, M. (2008). The Public and its Policies, in R. E. Goodin, M. Moran, & M. Rein (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gormley, W. Jr. (2011). From science to policy in early childhood education. *Science*, 333 (6,045), pp. 978 - 981

Grek, S., Lindgren, J., & Clarke, J. (2014). Inspection and emotion: the role of affective governing. In S. Grek & J. Lindgren (eds) *Governing by Inspection. Studies in European Education*. London: Routledge, pp. 116 - 136.

Habermas, J. (2008). *Between Naturalism and Religion: Philosophical Essays*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hannus, Susanna (2018). Pienten askelten tanssi. Performatiivinen etnografia hierarkioiden rakentumisista ja purkamisen mahdollisuuksista kahdella yläkoululla. *Kasvatustieteellisiä tutkimuksia* 27. Helsinki: Kasvatustieteellinen tiedekunta, Helsingin yliopisto. Retrieved 11 November 2020 from: <https://helda.helsinki.fi/handle/10138/234526>

Chapter forthcoming in the book Peter Dahler-Larsen (Ed.) *A Research Agenda for Evaluation: Inspirational Themes*. Edward Elgar. Please check the final publication for quotations. Distribution only via the authors.

Havlin, S. & Cohen, R. (2010). *Complex Networks: Structure, Robustness and Function*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Heikkilä, M. & Heininen, S. (2016). *A History of the Finnish Church*. Trans. Jamieson, J. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.

Henig, J. (2009). Politicization of evidence: lessons for an informed democracy. *Educational Policy*, 23(1), pp. 137 – 160.

Henry, M., Lingard, B., Rizvi, F., & Taylor, S. (2001). *The OECD, Globalisation and Education Policy*. Oxford: Springer.

Hood, C. & Jackson, M. (1991). *Administrative Argument*. Aldershot: Dartmouth.

Rittel, W. J. Horst & Webber, Melvin M. (1973). Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning. *Policy Sciences*, 4 (2), pp. 155 - 169.

Hytönen, K., Palonen, T., & Hakkarainen, K. (2014). Cognitively central actors and their personal networks in an energy efficiency training program, *Frontline Learning Research*, 5, pp. 15 - 37.

Hwa, Y. (2019). Teacher accountability policy and sociocultural context: A cross-country study focusing on Finland and Singapore (Doctoral thesis). Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge.

Incheon declaration (2016). Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4

Jenkins-Smith, H. C. & Sabatier, P. A. (1993). The Dynamics of Policy-Oriented Learning. In P. A. Sabatier & H. C. Jenkins-Smith (eds) *Policy Change and Learning. An Advocacy Coalition Approach*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, pp. 41 - 58.

Kallatsa, Laura & Kiiski, Jouko. (2019). Vihkiäkö vai ei? Suomen evankelis-luterilaisen kirkon pappien käsitykset samaa sukupuolta olevien oikeudesta kirkolliseen avioliittoon, *Kirkon tutkimuskeskuksen verkkojulkaisuja* 60. Retrieved 11 November 2020 from: <https://evl.fi/documents/1327140/45386794/Vihki%C3%A4k%C3%B6+vai+ei/0df91547-ea1f-7432-2b27-f78524753c29>

Chapter forthcoming in the book Peter Dahler-Larsen (Ed.) *A Research Agenda for Evaluation: Inspirational Themes*. Edward Elgar. Please check the final publication for quotations. Distribution only via the authors.

Kauko, J. & Wermke, W. (2018). The contingent sense-making of contingency: Epistemologies of change in comparative education. *Comparative Education Review* 62 (2).

Kauko, J., Centeno, V. G., Piattoeva, N., Candido, H., Gurova, G., Medvedeva, A., Santos, I., Suominen, O., & Zhou, X. (2018a). Layers of reflectivity in comparative research. In J. Kauko, R. Rinne & T. Takala (eds) *Politics of Quality in Education: A Comparative Study of Brazil, China, and Russia*, pp. 17 - 43. London: Routledge.

Kauko, J., Rinne, R., & Takala, T. (2018c). Conclusion. In J. Kauko, R. Rinne & T. Takala (eds) *Politics of Quality in Education: A Comparative Study of Brazil, China, and Russia*. London: Routledge.

Kauko, J., Takala, T., & Rinne, R. (2018b) Comparing politics of quality in education. In J. Kauko, R. Rinne & T. Takala (eds) *Politics of Quality in Education: A Comparative Study of Brazil, China, and Russia*. London: Routledge.

Kerbs, T. (1987). Building Third World Affiliates. A Comparison of NGO Strategies. *Bulletin of Peace Proposals*, 18 (2), pp. 173 - 189.

Klees, S. J. & Edwards, B. (2014). Knowledge Production and Technologies of Governance in Education. In T. Fenwick, E. Mangez, & J. Ozga (eds) *Governing Knowledge: Comparison, Knowledge-based Technologies and Expertise in the Regulation of Education*. London: Routledge.

Korvela, P.-E. & Vuorelma, J. (2017). Ideologioiden sotkuinen paluu. In P.-E. Korvela & J. Vuorelma (eds) *Puhun niin totta kuin osaan – Poliittikka faktojen jälkeen*. Jyväskylä: Docendo, pp. 196 - 210.

Koselleck, Reinhart. (1979 [2004]). *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press

Kuhn, T. S. (1962). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Latour, B. (1993). *We Have Never Been Modern*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Chapter forthcoming in the book Peter Dahler-Larsen (Ed.) *A Research Agenda for Evaluation: Inspirational Themes*. Edward Elgar. Please check the final publication for quotations. Distribution only via the authors.

Lauha, Aila. (2005). 3. Finnish Christianity since 1940. In *Nordic Folk Churches. A Contemporary Church History*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Grand Rapids, Michigan, pp. 27 - 40.

Leeuw, F. L. (2002). Evaluation in Europe 2000: Challenges to a growth industry. *Evaluation*, 8 (1), pp. 5 - 12.

Meyer, John W. & Ramirez Francisco O. (2003). The World Institutionalization of Education. In Jürgen Schriewer (ed) *Discourse Formation in Comparative Education*. Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, pp. 111 - 132.

Meyer, John W., Boli John, Thomas, George M. & Ramirez, Francisco O. (1997). World Society and the Nation-State. *American Journal of Sociology* 103 (1), pp- 144 - 181.

Minina, E. 2016, "Quality revolution" in post-Soviet education in Russia: From control to assurance? *Journal of Education Policy*, 31 (6), pp. 1 - 22

Nóvoa, António, Luís Miguel Carvalho, António Carlos Correia, Ana Isabel Madeira, and Jorge Ramos de Ó. (2003). *Educational Knowledge and Its Circulation. Historical and Comparative Approaches of Portuguese-Speaking Countries*. Lisbon: Educa.

Ozga, J., Dahler-Larsen, P., Segerholm, C., & Simola, H. (eds) (2011). *Fabricating Quality in Education: Data and Education Governance*. London: Routledge.

Pajunen, Mika K. T. (2017). Uusi avioliittolaki on tihenevän modernin kirkon ongelma. – *Vartija*. 28.2.2017. Retrieved 11 November 2020 from: <http://www.vartija-lehti.fi/uusi-avioliittolaki-on-tihenevan-modernin-kirkon-ongelma/>

Piattoeva, N., Centeno V. G., Suominen, O., & Rinne, R. (2018). Governance by data circulation? The production, availability, and use of national large-scale assessments data. In J. Kauko, R. Rinne, & T. Takala. (eds) *Politics of Quality in Education: A Comparative Study of Brazil, China, and Russia*. London: Routledge.

Piattoeva, N. & Saari, A. 2018, The infrastructures of objectivity in standardized testing. In B. Maddox (ed) *International Large-Scale Assessments in Education*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury.

Chapter forthcoming in the book Peter Dahler-Larsen (Ed.) *A Research Agenda for Evaluation: Inspirational Themes*. Edward Elgar. Please check the final publication for quotations. Distribution only via the authors.

Pollitt, C. & Bouckaert, G. (2011). *Public Management Reform: A Comparative Analysis – New Public Management, Governance, and the Neo-Weberian State*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Popper, C. (2013 [1945]). *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. Vol. 1. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Power, David N. (1984). *Unsearchable Riches: The Symbolic Nature of Liturgy*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock.

Power, M. (1994). *The Audit Explosion*. London: Demos.

Rappleye, J. (2015). Revisiting the metaphor of the island: challenging ‘world culture’ from an island misunderstood, *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 13 (1), pp. 58 - 87.

Rautalin, M. (2013). *Domestication of International Comparisons: The Role of the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in Finnish Education Policy*. Tampere: Tampere University Press.

Rhodes, R. A. W. (2011). *Everyday Life in British Government*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Saarinen, R. (2016). *Recognition and Religion: A Historical and Systematic Study*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sahlberg, P. (2016). The global educational reform movement and its impact on schooling, in K. Mundy, A. Green, B. Lingard, and A. Verger (eds) *The Handbook of Global Education Policy*. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.

Sanderson, I. (2011). Evidence-based policy or policy-based evidence? Reflections on Scottish experience. *Evidence & Policy*, 7 (1), pp. 59 - 76.

Senn, Frank C. (1997). *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical*. Augsburg Fortress. Minneapolis.

Senn, Frank C. (2016). *Embodied Liturgy: Lessons in Christian Ritual*. Fortress Press. Minneapolis.

Chapter forthcoming in the book Peter Dahler-Larsen (Ed.) *A Research Agenda for Evaluation: Inspirational Themes*. Edward Elgar. Please check the final publication for quotations. Distribution only via the authors.

Simola, H. (2005). The Finnish miracle of PISA: historical and sociological remarks on teaching and teacher education. *Comparative Education*, 41 (4), pp. 455 - 470.

Smith, D. (1990). Assessment, technology and the quality revolution. In T. Schuler (eds). *World Yearbook of Education 1990: Assessment and Evaluation*. London: Kogan Page.

Staunæs, D., Brøgger, K., & Krejsler, J. B. (2018). How reforms morph as they move. Performative approaches to education reforms and their un/intended effects. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 31 (5), pp. 345 - 352.

Stehr, N. & Grundmann, R. (2012). How does knowledge relate to political action? *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 25 (1), pp. 29 - 44.

Strassheim, I. & Kettunen, P. (2014). When does evidence-based policy turn into policy-based evidence? Configurations, contexts and mechanisms, *Evidence & Policy*, 10 (2), pp. 259 - 277.

Taylor, C. (2007). *A Secular Age*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Thompson, S. & Hoggett, P. (2012). *Politics and the Emotions: The Affective Turn in Contemporary Political Studies*. New York: Continuum.

Tikly, L. (2001). Globalisation and Education in the Postcolonial World: Towards a Conceptual Framework. *Comparative Education*, 37 (2), pp. 151 – 171.

Tombs, S. & Whyte, D. (2003). *Unmasking Crimes of the Powerful: Scrutinizing States and Corporations*, New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Tuori, R. (2019). Tasa-arvoinen avioliitto kirkon oikeudessa. – *Teologinen Aikakauskirja*, 124 (5).

Varjo, J., Simola, H., and Rinne, R. (2016). *Arvioida ja hallita – perään katsomisesta informaatio-ohjaukseen suomalaisessa koulupolitiikassa* [To evaluate and govern – From “looking after” to management by data in Finnish education politics]. *Kasvatusalan tutkimuksia* 70. Jyväskylä: Suomen kasvatustieteellinen seura.

Värri, V.-M. (2018). *Kasvatus ekokriisin aikakaudella* [Education in an era of ecocrisis]. Tampere: Vastapaino.

Chapter forthcoming in the book Peter Dahler-Larsen (Ed.) *A Research Agenda for Evaluation: Inspirational Themes*. Edward Elgar. Please check the final publication for quotations. Distribution only via the authors.

Verger, A., Parcerisa, L., & Fontdevila Clara (2019). The growth and spread of large-scale assessments and test-based accountabilities: a political sociology of global education reforms, *Educational Review*, 71 (1), pp. 5 - 30.

Waldow, F. (2010). Der traum vom "Skandinavisch schlau werden". Drei thesen zur rolle Finnlands als projektionsfläche in der gegenwärtigen bildungsdebatte, *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik*, 56 (4), pp. 497 - 511.

Wallenius, T. (2020). *Schools, performance and publicity. Contrasting the policy on publicising school performance indicators in Finland with the other Nordic countries*. Academic dissertation. Faculty of Educational Sciences. Helsinki: University of Helsinki.

Walters, R. (2008). Government manipulation of criminological knowledge and policies of deceit. In T. Hope & R. Walters (eds) *Critical Thinking about the Uses of Research*. London: Centre for Criminal Justice Studies, King's College London.

Weber, M. (2009 [1919]). *Tiede ja politiikka – kutsumus ja ammatti*. [Science and politics – calling and vocation.] Tampere: Vastapaino.

Westerheijden, D. F. (1999). Where are the quantum jumps in quality assurance? *Higher Education* 38, pp. 233 - 254.

Wetherell, Margaret (2012). *Affect and Emotion: A New Social Science Understanding*. London: SAGE.

Verger, A., Fontdevila, C., & Zancajo, A. 2016, *The Privatization of Education: A Political Economy of Global Education Reform*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Weiss, C. H. (1970). The Politicization of Evaluation Research. *Journal of Social Issues* 26 (4), pp. 57 - 68.

Williams, Rowan. (2012). *Faith in the Public Square*. Bloomsbury Publishing. Kindle Edition.