



The Rationalities Behind Guidance and Counselling in Basic Finnish Education's Core Curricula

MIRA KALALAHTI

JANNE VARJO

**Author affiliations can be found in the back matter of this article*

RESEARCH



STOCKHOLM
UNIVERSITY PRESS

ABSTRACT

Guidance given in schools has emerged in both the political agendas of supranational operators, such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Finnish education and labour-market policy discussions. Guidance given in schools has been offered as an overall solution to multiple problems concerning education, matching with workforce demands and preventing young people's marginalisation. This article applies the document analysis method to explore the societal objects set for guidance in Finnish core curricula for basic education. The research data include all national core curricula used in basic education (totalling five and covering 1970 to the present). We examine guidance and counselling in basic education as a governance technology – a tool for exercising authority based on specific moral and ideological foundations called *rationalities*. The article builds on and extends our earlier Finnish-language analysis (Varjo et al., 2020). On the one hand, our analysis shows that the rationalities of a knowledge-based economy, lifelong learning and equality have shaped the objectives and content of guidance and counselling in basic Finnish education since the 1970s, throughout the existence of Finland's comprehensive school system. On the other hand, our analysis illustrates how the guidance content and objectives of the 1970s and 1980s adopted new emphases in the 1990s.

ABSTRAKTI

Oppilaitoksissa annettava ohjaus on nostettu koulutus- ja työvoimapolitiittisen keskustelun kohteeksi sekä ylikansallisten toimijoiden, kuten OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development), että kansallisten toimesta. Ohjausta on tarjottu kokonaisvaltaiseksi ratkaisuksi moniin yhteiskunnallista ongelmiin, kuten työelämän kohtaantoon ja nuorten syrjäytymisen ehkäisemiseen. Tämä artikkeli tarkastelee dokumenttianalyysin keinoin suomalaisen perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteissa oppilaanohjaukselle esitettyjä yhteiskunnallisia

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Mira Kalalahti

University of Jyväskylä, Finland
mira.m.kalalahti@jyu.fi

KEYWORDS:

core curricula; educational and career guidance; comprehensive school; rationalities; Finland

AVAINSANAT:

opetussuunnitelman perusteet; opinto- ja uraohjaus; peruskoulu; rationaliteetit; Suomi

TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Kalalahti, M., & Varjo, J. (2026). The Rationalities Behind Guidance and Counselling in Basic Finnish Education's Core Curricula. *Nordic Journal of Transitions, Careers and Guidance*, 7(1), pp. 14–27. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.16993/njtcg.104>

odotuksia. Tutkimusaineistona on kaikki suomalaisen peruskouluajan opetussuunnitelman perustetta (viisi opetussuunnitelman perustetta vuodesta 1970 tähän hetkeen). Tarkastelemme perusopetuksen oppilaanohjausta hallinnan teknologiana – välineenä, jolla voidaan käyttää moraalisiin ja ideologisiin perusteisiin, *rationaliteetteihin*, perustuvaa valtaa. Artikkelini pohjautuu aiempaan suomenkieliseen analyysiimme (Varjo ym. 2020). Analyysimme osoittaa, että oppilaanohjauksen tavoitteita ovat koko peruskouluajan muokanneet tietoyhteiskunnan talouteen, elinikäiseen oppimiseen ja tasa-arvoon liittyvät rationaliteetit. Kuvaamme myös, miten 1970- ja 1980-lukujen jälkeen oppilaanohjauksen sisällöt ja tavoitteet saivat uusia painotuksia 1990-luvun opetussuunnitelmissa.

INTRODUCTION: TRANSNATIONAL GUIDANCE POLICY DISCOURSES

Educational and career guidance has been offered constantly as a response to problems related to fragmented educational paths, prolonged transitions from education to the workforce, dropping out of school and mismatches between education and employment. The argument has been made that it can promote young people's successful education, support their transition from education to the workforce and contribute to social justice (Bengtsson, 2015; Bergmo-Prvulovic, 2014; Dale et al., 2016; Haug et al., 2020; Watts et al., 2010).

Research into the societal objectives of guidance given in schools and its underlying politics has revealed certain common discourses that govern its provision. These discourses can be understood as a normative framework that intersects actors in education management, functions and different administration levels (Dale et al., 2016; Harjula & Kalalahti, 2024). The discourses convey policy reforms around the globe that are shaped by a wide range of social and political contexts with different histories. Transnational policy discourses encounter pre-existing national, regional and local practices. In this process, global discourses undergo varying local interpretations and manifestations. Importantly, in different contexts, justification is not necessarily applied uniformly.

There are three widely recognised transnational guidance policy discourses. The first concerns changes in work. A *knowledge-based economy* focuses on skills, competence and economic competitiveness (Kjærgård, 2020). It is characterised by increasingly fragmented careers and new workforce divisions, with a need for a new kind of awareness of guidance work (Bergmo-Prvulovic, 2014; Patton & McMahon, 2006; Roberts, 2013).

Second, guidance shaped by *lifelong learning* discourse can be perceived as an answer to the demands of a European knowledge-based economy (Bengtsson, 2015; Bergmo-Prvulovic, 2014). The global educational policy goal of lifelong learning aims for individuals to modify themselves, recognising active labour-market citizenship. The knowledge-based economy discourse's objectives direct guidance towards a competitiveness-oriented society, human capital and economic growth (Kinnari, 2020). The guidance provided in a knowledge-based economy emphasises identifying key competencies and continuously updating them through lifelong learning (Dale et al., 2016). As a result, guidance policies that stress individual needs have evolved to resemble demand-led skill systems (Watts, 2013).

Third, in addition to the discourses emphasising efficiency and economic aspects, guidance has been considered to promote social goals; the multidisciplinary guidance system aims to respond to demands for *equality* of opportunities and social mobility (see also Sultana, 2014; Watts, 2002, 2013).

However, transnational discourses on guidance are not necessarily indisputable, shared or acceptable to all. Moreover, they tend to change over time. An analysis of Finnish parliamentary discussions on guidance by Varjo, Kalalahti and Hooley (2022) demonstrates how wider ideological trends influence guidance. This examination observes a shift from the more structural corporatist approaches of the 1960s, when guidance sought to fulfil societal needs, towards third-way individualism in the 1990s. The current reform of 2020, which seeks to extend compulsory education and reinforce guidance, may represent a return to more structural approaches.

In this article, we analyse the societal objectives in core curricula for basic education, aiming to explore *rationalities* for guidance and counselling and how they change over time. The research data include all national core curricula used in Finland's basic education from 1970 to 2014. We examine guidance in basic education as a *technology* (Foucault, 1991) shaped by transnational discourses and used to govern education. It is a tool for exercising authority based on specific social, moral and ideological foundations, i.e. rationalities (Miller & Rose, 2008). From this perspective, the core curricula are programmes of governance that seek to frame guidance-related activities. This institutional framework also imposes formal and informal cultural demands on young people's agency or expects certain types of behaviour (Harjula & Kalalahti, 2024).

NATIONAL CORE CURRICULA AS AUTHORITATIVE EXPERT DISCOURSE

Guidance practices at schools and other educational institutions vary significantly between countries. The progress report of the European Lifelong Guidance Policies Network (ELGPN, 2012, p. 21) presents three ways of implementing guidance in compulsory education. First, guidance is typically provided as a specific subject in pupils' academic schedules. Second, it can be included in curricula and integrated into several subjects. The third alternative provides guidance as an extracurricular activity. The Finnish model, which integrates guidance into pupils' schedules and education system structures via the core curriculum, has attracted much international interest. After a 2008 council resolution titled Better Integrating Lifelong Guidance into Lifelong Learning Strategies on the Member States of the European Union (EU), many other EU member states launched measures to integrate guidance into their national core curricula (Council of the European Union, 2008).

Written documents (such as core curricula) exemplify the technologies used to spread governance rationalities; they are a method for transforming ideas (such as transnational discourses on guidance) into practices (Miller & Rose, 2008). Technologies conceptualise and shape reality in ways that help guide and assess people's lives and activities. Thus, technologies serve as channels through which a governance approach's fundamental objectives are applied to concrete subjects. In other words, technologies link governance rationalities with governance subjects.

Additionally, technologies specify governance subjects and objectives, providing instructions on how to reach set goals. They connect conceptual vocabularies with practical measures while concretising articulated goals at a general level so that they can be applied in governing people and society (Miller & Rose, 2008; Rose, 1999). In the school context, governance technologies include class schedules and assessment practices in education as well as curricula.

National core curricula are administrative documents that define the objectives and key contents of education, as well as guidance and counselling provision, instructional time, teaching methods and learning assessment. These curricula are designed to incorporate the official knowledge that new generations of citizens are expected to acquire (Apple, 1979). Indeed, the core curriculum summarises society's educational objectives and underlying assumptions about the knowledge, skills and attitudes considered necessary for children, young people and adults. According to Simola (2015; see also Foucault, 2002), the core curriculum exemplifies *authoritative expert discourse*, a practice that systematically shapes the subjects it addresses. Thus, a core curriculum is more than a written text; it also encompasses practices with significant societal implications.

THEORETICAL TOOLS FOR ANALYSING GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING RATIONALITIES

Foucault (1991, 1995) examined *governmentality* as comprising various operating approaches, institutions and calculations that enable the exercising of power over a population, 'governing' them in a broad sense of the term. Dean (1999) explained this process as a conscious and rational operation by various kinds of authorities and other agents using different techniques and forms of knowledge. Governmentality seeks to guide self-directed individuals through their wishes, aims

and interests in accomplishing clear but changing objectives. To be effective, governmentality must be individualised: people must be guided to perceive themselves as, for instance, individuals, consumers, workers or students who all have specific personal responsibilities.

The governmentality of society and different social functions, such as education and work, can be based on certain ways of structuring the world. Miller and Rose (2008), as well as Dean (1999), have continued Foucault's analysis of governance in post-modern society. They discern between the concept of governmentality by examining its foundational rationality, the technologies it applies, and the subjects expected to internalise its rationality.

Simply put, rationalities refer to ways of understanding the world. They always contain certain basic features. First, according to Rose (1999), rationalities have an identifiable *moral form*: they embody conceptions of legitimate authority's nature, scope and division between different agents (such as political, military and pedagogical agents), as well as the principles that should guide the exercising of authority (including freedom, justice and equality). Second, rationalities have been articulated vis-à-vis conceptions of governed subjects – the state, the economy, work or education, which also have their own specific *epistemological character*. Third, they are *idiomatic*: they employ a specific language with a particular vocabulary and manner of speaking. Rationalities can be examined based on their vocabularies (such as metaphors or rhetoric). Also, rationalities are reversible: they can operate in many different contexts and assume various technical manifestations. (Rose, 1999).

We read national core curricula – and guidance and counselling involved – as linguistically constructed, historically, socially and institutionally changing, varied ways of defining knowledge and truths. They conceptualise and shape reality in ways that allow for guiding people's lives and activities. These curricula specify the objectives of guidance and direct how to achieve set goals. They link discourses and practical measures while simultaneously concretising objectives that are articulated at a general level such that they can be applied in managing people and society. (Miller & Rose, 2008; Rose, 1999).

BACKGROUND

This article focuses on the guidance provided via basic education. The time span of the article covers the entire era of the comprehensive school in Finland (1972 onwards), during which the school subject of *opinto-ohjaus* (guidance counselling, since 1985 onwards *oppilaanohjaus*, guidance and counselling) was established in the Finnish basic education and national core curricula (Ahola & Mikkola, 2004; Merimaa, 1992).

In Finland, guidance given at schools originates from *ammatinvalinnanohjaus* (career counselling) aimed at pupils in grammar schools and middle schools as of the 1930s. Systematic advice and counselling services, as well as personal guidance for students via extension classes in middle school, began in Helsinki during the academic year of 1946–1947; grammar school pupils first participated in these activities in the autumn of 1949 (Nykänen & Vuorinen, 1991). As part of comprehensive school reform (1972–1977) in Finland, guidance counselling paradigmatically replaced career counselling and established its position as a subject included in the national distribution of lesson hours and the core curriculum. From this point on, the core curriculum has established guidance objectives and content.

Since the first National Core Curriculum, guidance and counselling have comprised three principal areas: *kasvatuksellinen ohjaus* (educational guidance), *opetuksellinen ohjaus* (instructional guidance) and *ammatinvalinnanohjaus* (career guidance) (KM, 1970a, p. 180). In the Finnish National Core Curricula, the concept has remained the same throughout the entire history of the comprehensive school system, across the period examined here, despite ongoing definitional debates in both domestic and international research on guidance (see Nykänen & Vuorinen, 1991). In this article, we use the concept of 'guidance' as guidance given at schools. In our analysis, there is no distinction between the school subject *oppilaanohjaus* or *opinto-ohjaus* ('guidance counselling or guidance and counselling') and other concepts of guidance given at school if not analytically necessary.

Today, guidance and counselling in basic education are given by teachers specialised in guidance. Guidance consists of individual, group- or class-based guidance sessions as well as of working life familiarization (FNAE, 2026). The pupils have a legal right to guidance and counselling with

a specific time allocation (see also [Euroguidance, 2025](#)). Guidance has independent status and curricula, although it is also integrated into the curricula of other subjects. The aims given for guidance and counselling are broad, as they include not only career planning but also the support of students' learning, study skills and individual development ([Nummenmaa, 1992](#)).

RESEARCH QUESTION, DATA AND METHOD

Methodologically, this analysis derives from Michel Foucault's (1998) concept of *genealogy*, which is interested in the production of truth and sense – what is considered sensible and rational at a given time, who uses the voice of reason, and which epistemological, institutional and technical conditions regulate and organise truth production. Genealogy emphasises practices in the constitution of knowledge. It seeks to discover systems of knowledge that meet and aim to control one another epistemologically. According to Foucault (1998), knowledge is examined in relation to action – as a field of possible confrontations in which the logic of truth and sense, as well as criteria, intersect. In genealogy, the topic of examination is as follows: How does a political rationality that can be used to solve and organise these confrontations in the name of, for instance, justice or effectiveness form in the field (Foucault, 1998; Rose, 1999)? Our interpretation draws from our earlier analysis (Varjo et al., 2020), which we elaborate upon here from a perspective based on governmentality.

This article aims to explore the rationalities of guidance and counselling and how they change over time. We explore what kinds of rationalities guidance is based on, either explicitly read or implicitly interpreted. It is important to note that our analysis offers novel insight into official societal aims established for guidance and counselling, not the actual guidance practises at schools or the results of these. Our research question is as follows: How have Finnish rationalities of guidance and counselling been constructed in the national core curricula since the 1970s?

Our research data comprise all national core curricula implemented in Finnish basic education from the 1970s to the present (KM, 1970a, 1970b; KH, 1985; OPH, 1994, 2004, 2014). Through document analysis (Kutsyruba, 2017), we analysed the emphases and wording concerned with guidance in the curricula. We paid special attention to which kinds of rationalities these elements were based on, whether through explicit reading or implicit interpretation. This approach emphasises the significance of context (guidance in comprehensive schools) and temporality (the periodisation of Finland's education and social policy) (see Ahonen, 2001; Simola et al., 2017). The analysis was conducted for the Finnish documents. Citations are translated by the authors.

RESULTS

The empirical results are introduced in two eras: First, national core curricula for 1970 and 1985 can be perceived as documents that established contents and objectives of guidance in comprehensive school's early phase defined by planned economy, system-centric education system and modern guidance. Second, national core curricula for 1994, 2004 and 2014 represent a more decentralised and individualised society and its education system. In tandem, the paradigm shifted from a modern to a post-modern view and greater individualism, which meant that guidance should be oriented more towards the whole person and his or her life projects (Lovén, 2003). We identified three Finnish rationalities of guidance (equality, knowledge-based economy and lifelong learning) that penetrated the two eras and echoed transnational discourses. Those rationalities are discussed in the next two sections after providing a brief description of the eras.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS AND THE RATIONALITIES OF GUIDANCE IN NATIONAL CORE CURRICULA OF THE 1970S AND 1980S

In Finland, comprehensive school reform and the establishment of guidance and counselling took place during an era that has been described as a *planned economy* (Alasuutari, 1996), a period characterised by a strong belief in the ability to best solve societal problems with 'scientific' planning and organisation. Better planning was believed to provide a solution to problems in the national economy, as well as issues pertaining to the practical operability and flexibility of certain societal institutions. The planned economy – and the comprehensive school

reform as its product – were aligned with the aims given to guidance. This era of objectivistic science and industrial society viewed careers as comprising distinct developmental stages, where guidance and counselling interventions aimed at fostering rational planning and self-marketing in support of career choice (Savickas, 1993).

The first national curriculum (KM, 1970a, 1970b) was a product of the post-WWII planned economy. It laid out clear, structured and carefully articulated responsibilities and obligations for guidance provision. The sole purpose of this extensive, highly precise steering document was to equip all students with equal knowledge- and skills-based capabilities through an ideology of equal education opportunities (Ahonen, 2001; Kalalahti & Varjo, 2023).

The goals of the guidance were wide-ranging and integrated into other educational practices. ‘The guidance measures targeted at pupils in basic education’ (KM, 1970a, p. 180) were divided into three primary areas: *educational guidance*, *instructional guidance* and *career guidance*. The overall goal of *educational guidance* was to help pupils develop into independent, active and adaptable individuals with intact personalities and the prerequisites for continuous self-development and enhancing community growth. *Instructional guidance* sought to help pupils develop their working approaches and select studies that matched their abilities and interests. This approach was used to improve students’ opportunities to utilise school lessons through guidance. Broadly speaking, *career guidance* aimed to help pupils determine their tendencies and interests, preparing and implementing plans for their education and professional careers, as well as related decisions (KM, 1970a, p. 180).

The division between these three primary areas reflected the scientific foundations of guidance in the 1970s and 1980s, which emphasised the central role of psychology and educational science (Nykänen & Vuorinen, 1991). Professionally, elements of the teacher-educator profession and the occupation of a career guidance counsellor with psychological training were combined (Nykänen & Vuorinen, 1991). Integrating guidance and counselling into the reform of the comprehensive school and the development of national core curricula also reflected the overall emphasis on the scientification of teacher education and its development into master-level qualification (Furuhagen et al., 2019). Master-level qualification programmes in guidance and counselling have been offered since 1971 (Nykänen & Vuorinen, 1991).

During the planned economy era, the three identified rationalities for guidance tied guidance to *equality* of universalist basic education, but also to the demands of *knowledge-based economy* and *lifelong learning*.

The rationality of equality: guidance as part of universalistic basic education

The first rationality that emerged in the analysis of the national core curricula described here is the *rationality of equality*. It established several extensive obligations for guidance provision in the 1970s. The 1970 committee report by the basic education curriculum committee (KM, 1970a) highlighted different questions related to topics such as safety, study situations, collaboration and the school environment as examples of collaboration that complies with fundamental social rules relevant to educational guidance in particular:

The pupils must have an opportunity to participate in preparing the rules of the classroom community and school community based on their prerequisites and they should accept the jointly prepared basic rules as applying equally to all members of the community. (KM, 1970a, p. 181)

Our analysis shows that the 1970 committee report also set goals for guiding and supporting school communities and pupil groups, as well as individual pupils: ‘educational guidance aims to train pupils in the requirements set by democratic coexistence’ (KM, 1970a, p. 181). The educational guidance that all basic education teachers provided was justified by the pursuit of equality and fairness. In practice, educational guidance included teaching rules (in areas such as safety, study situations, collaboration and school-environment tidiness), guiding pupils to act according to norms, inviting pupils to prepare the rules, and educating them about inclusion.

The 1970s educational guidance’s focus on rules persisted in the 1985 National Core Curriculum. For example, topics presented under the title ‘School Community’ for year seven of basic education included ‘the ground rules for upper comprehensive school’ and ‘class organisation’ (KH, 1985, p. 226). The jointly shared ‘rights’, ‘responsibilities’ and ‘manners’ were legitimised through the universal right and responsibility of equal participation.

An emphasis on ‘bringing the school closer to local society’ emerged strongly in the 1985 National Core Curriculum. Because of the emphasis on localism and the tendency towards decentralisation in governance that began in the 1980s, the meanings ascribed to the concept of ‘society’ were increasingly local (Simola et al., 2017). Indeed, the rationality of equality was increasingly applied at the local level. Pupils’ familiarisation with working life as a means of bridging the gap between school and surrounding society was mentioned for the first time in the 1980s. According to the 1985 core curriculum, ‘This must be planned at the municipal level within the frame set by the national syllabi, taking into account the special conditions and opportunities of the locality’ (KH, 1985, p. 39).

Although the goals for universalistic basic education and its guidance undoubtedly derived from the rationality of equality, the requirement for equality was first explicitly articulated in the 1985 National Core Curriculum: ‘To develop equality, pupils must be provided with information about the factors influencing gender roles’ (KH, 1985, p. 229). As the quote exemplifies, this expression occurred in the context of the active ‘development’ of gender equality instead of the passive ‘implementation’ of equality.

The rationality of the knowledge-based economy: guidance in response to rapid societal change

The second rationality identified in this analysis concerns the change in Finland’s industrial structure towards a knowledge-based economy. After the WWII, Finland was quick to change from a poor agricultural state into an increasingly wealthy industrial and service society. The country’s industrial structure was transforming at a rapid pace; at the same time, its citizens were expected to have increasingly advanced and broad knowledge and skills, as well as a new kind of mobility (Simola et al., 2017). In this context, the concepts of information and its acquisition were ascribed increasingly extensive content and meaning in the 1970 committee report:

One of the key tasks of guidance is to develop pupils’ ability to obtain information from various information sources, structure it into meaningful wholes, memorize information in a sensible and appropriate manner, and utilise the information.
(KM, 1970b, p. 402)

Alongside information acquisition, which emerged as a significant theme, the report considered changes in occupational structures, which it interpreted as inevitable and constantly accelerating, explicitly relating it to guidance:

Without a doubt, it is currently more important than before that we also educate pupils to tolerate changes and uncertainty as even the technical development of occupations alone will result in changing one’s profession or industry, often several times during one’s lifetime. Pupils must be helped in their pursuit of a professional career instead of a specific and carefully defined profession. (KM, 1970b, p. 405)

In the 1970s context, *the rationality of the knowledge-based economy* was based on an understanding of an inevitable change in societies’ needs and methods of working. Under these changing conditions, guiding young people to choose carefully defined, ostensibly permanent professions was no longer appropriate. Readiness to change one’s profession or industry emerged as a desirable trait for individuals and the ability to tolerate changes and uncertainty as a goal of guidance. However, the emergence of the knowledge-based economy as such was not expected to change the prevailing industrial structure’s foundations – to result in new professions or render old ones unnecessary. Rather, it concerned individuals’ ability to discover (or rediscover) their places in the professional system as circumstances changed.

Under these conditions – viewed as constantly changing yet, structurally, still defined relatively clearly defined – the 1985 National Core Curriculum is still based on the goal of guidance as ‘providing a structured understanding of working life, professions and education and training’ (KH, 1985, p. 228). For instance, in presenting guidance content in year eight of basic education, professions were considered a clearly defined system (‘the grouping of professions’, KH, 1985, p. 228) in which pupils ultimately pursued either vocational education and training or general upper secondary education (‘Education pathways: general education and vocational studies’, KH, 1985, p. 228). As a result of the 1980s emphasis on incipient localism, the local context gained new importance: ‘The working life and profession in the local municipality and environment must particularly be explored’ (KH, 1985, p. 228).

The rationality of lifelong learning: from guidance to independent information acquisition

The third rationality of the knowledge-based economy outlined above emphasises the role of knowledge and skills as part of a changing industrial structure and a national reserve of human capital. By contrast, *the rationality of lifelong learning* ascribed new prominence to continuous learning, as well as the goal-oriented accumulation of competence as part of individuals' life courses, in the 1970s. With the strict division of the 1970 National Core Curriculum, guidance on study techniques formed the area of instructional guidance (together with guidance on course and subject selection). Indeed, guidance on study techniques implicitly included a strong lifelong learning imperative:

The long-term goal is to equip the pupil with skills that enable him to obtain information independently and efficiently in various situations and apply this in versatile ways in problem situations. (KM, 1970a, s. 184)

Selecting a destination for further studies and a profession constituted the 'problem situations' described above. One goal of the guidance on study technique was to support actual guidance in career choices and reduce pupils' needs for personal guidance. Most pupils equipped with better information acquisition skills were estimated to cope with such decision-making situations with relatively low investments in guidance:

A substantial share of pupils can cope with the task of choosing a study path and profession with the support of the above influences, the instruction on career choices provided by the school and the advice provided by a guidance counsellor. (KM, 1970a, p. 188)

Meanwhile, pupils who had 'failed to get a clear idea of their personal capabilities and were unable to form an image of their goals' (KM, 1970a, p. 188) had to be provided with opportunities to access services at career counselling agencies.

As a result of the rationality of lifelong learning, the contexts and methods of information acquisition were expanded and diversified. The guidance on study techniques separately mentioned capacities for 'distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant content', the 'utilisation of graphic presentations and tables and the use of group projects as necessary for pupils' (KM, 1970a, p. 185).

Significance was ascribed to extending adept and critical information searches by using multiple sources, as well as to the requirement for continuous learning beyond the school context during leisure time and private life:

However, guidance must be extended to also cover the efforts to critically search and apply information occurring outside the school. One must not be confined to the use of literary sources in this context. (KM, 1970a, p. 185)

This expansion of the learning context continued in the 1985 National Core Curriculum. Guidance came to cover a broader and more comprehensive area. Now, pupils had to be 'guided to use their leisure time diversely', and guidance had to 'support the pupils in gaining independence and developing a balanced personality' (KH, 1985, p. 39). At the same time, an emphasis on planning one's life path began to take shape as part of guidance objectives and content.

INCREASING INDIVIDUALISATION IN GUIDANCE AND A SHIFT IN GUIDANCE RATIONALITIES DURING THE 1990S–2020S

Pertti Alasuutari (1996) describes the general transformation of the operating environment of the welfare state and its public authorities that began in the late 1980s as a shift from a planned economy to a *competitive economy*, during which both the orientation of key societal actors and the ways in which change was discussed were transformed. In tandem, Finnish society – including its education system – also began to evolve in a more individualised direction.

In guidance, these societal changes led to a paradigm shift from a modern to a *post-modern* perspective and towards greater individualism. This implies that guidance should be oriented towards the whole person and his or her life projects (Lovén, 2003). Guidance evolved from 'fitting individuals to occupational roles' to life-design counselling (Savickas, 1993, pp. 211–212). This shift was manifested, for instance, in a strong emphasis on constructivism and holistic

counselling (Peavy, 1996). Guidance in the post-modern era required new practices involving reflexive skills and flexibility (Lairio et al., 1999), and it broadened the scientific foundations of guidance to include the social sciences (Nykänen & Vuorinen, 1991).

Along with the trend towards individualisation in the 1990s, the number of weekly hours allocated to compulsory subjects was reduced, while the share of optional studies increased. This expansion of optional content was considered to have a considerable influence on the preparatory work for the 1994 National Core Curriculum (OPH, 1994); the national reserve of talent should be better utilised, as pupils are likely to select subjects they are drawn to or expect to excel in.

Until the 1990s, guidance was described in the national core curricula as a separate entity, defined primarily through the job description of guidance counsellors, and distinguished, for example, from teaching (KM [Komiteamietintö], 1970a, 1970b; Kouluhallitus, 1985). Guidance and counselling was treated alongside other subjects. As student choice increased, guidance began to be used to support the compilation of an individual study plan for each pupil. At the same time, guidance was legitimised more broadly than merely through the role of an individual counsellor (Vuorinen & Sampson, 2002).

During the era of competitive economy, the three previously identified rationalities existed but took part in redefining equality, knowledge-based economy, and lifelong learning.

The rationality of redefining equality

Beginning in the 1990s, the rationality of the knowledge-based economy and its requirements divided young people into those who independently planned and implemented their education and career choices and those who needed special guidance in these processes. This guidance emerged as a key question of equality in the 1990s. The mechanism of targeting appeared in the 1994 core curriculum: 'By counselling, those young people, in particular who have difficulties relating to study, are supported, or those who, after the comprehensive school, are not going to have a place to continue their studies' (OPH, 1994, p. 44). This statement represented a notable change in the moral dimension of the rationality for equality.

In the 2004 National Core Curriculum, the guidance objective to support pupils' 'learning skills and capabilities, and to prevent the emergence of study-related problems' persisted (OPH, 2004, p. 21). Targeting remained explicitly articulated in 2004:

In addition to preventive activities, guidance and counselling implemented at the school should especially support those pupils who have difficulties with studying or who are in danger of dropping out. (OPH, 2004, p. 23)

Nevertheless, in the 2014 core curriculum, special concrete guidance services were no longer targeted at a specific, separately defined group. Targeting merged into a wider prevention of social exclusion from education and working life (OPH, 2014). As the universalistic moral ethos linked to guidance has waned since the 1990s, curriculum texts have articulated the concept of 'equality'. At the same time, the topics that seek equality have expanded considerably. In 1994, guidance was aimed at promoting equality in education and between genders (OPH, 1994). Just 10 years later, the core curriculum referred to 'educational, ethnic and gender equality' (OPH, 2004, p. 258).

In the 2010s, equality objectives for guidance were defined even more extensively. The 2014 National Core Curriculum used guidance to promote 'fairness, equity, equality and participation, and prevents exclusion from education and working life' (OPH, 2014, p. 150). Notably, the concept of equality – like its related objectives in the 2010s – was not defined in further detail or given any precise meaning. Despite this lack of definition, the word was used in a declaratory and list-like manner.

The rationality of the knowledge-based economy and the changing perception of education and career paths

By the start of the 1990s, the idea of a special knowledge-based economy had lost its novelty appeal (Kinnari, 2020). In practice, this change manifested in the National Core Curriculum's ceasing to emphasise the unavoidable and all-compassing changes in work and industrial structure. This suggests that the rationality of the knowledge-based economy had morally mainstreamed the change and uncertainty in the labour market.

The 1994 National Core Curriculum's overall goal for guidance was to provide information 'about working life, trades and professions and education opportunities and the effect of decisions on further study and working life' (OPH, 1994, p. 38). In fact, the significance of making various individual choices has been underscored. Obviously, therefore, young people's transition into members of the knowledge-based economy and the labour market's status hierarchy were considered epistemologically to require several personal education choices.

However, new phenomena related to work and working emerged simultaneously. The 1994 core curriculum saw an abatement of the previous view of the workforce as a national resource emphasising the economy; instead, for the first time, the 1990s' knowledge-based economy, studies and working life were described as international phenomena beyond the nation-state's borders. This also had to be considered in guidance:

The students should also be able to become well acquainted with information on today's society, education and working life, and start to become familiar with international study and work possibilities and the effect of internalization on study and working life. (OPH, 1994, p. 38)

The understanding of working life continued to expand in the 2004 National Core Curriculum. At the start of the new millennium, 'working life' was no longer synonymous with 'paid employment'. Based on this curriculum's wording, pupils had to be guided to 'obtain information about vocational fields, vocations and working life and acquire information about entrepreneurial activity' (OPH, 2004, p. 258). Nevertheless, the question of who should offer these incentives and how remains unanswered. Additionally, both national core curricula published in the 2000s mentioned guiding pupils to entrepreneurship, in addition to traditional forms of paid employment, as a guidance task.

At the same time, the guidance objectives incorporated a moral future horizon that was articulated more explicitly than before. Now, guidance had to be used to promote 'the availability of skilled workforce and the coordination of the supply and demand of skills in the future working life' (OPH, 2014, p. 277). Nevertheless, the achievement of these societal goals was considered to rely epistemologically and increasingly on self-directed individuals' choices; this, in turn, required increasingly individualised and comprehensive guidance.

The rationality of lifelong learning and self-directed guidance

In the 1990s, the rationality of the knowledge-based economy began to be more closely linked with the *rationality of lifelong learning*. In practice, this association meant that, together, these began setting similar objectives to guidance: the former by laying out what kinds of structural factors would determine future education and career paths, and the latter by determining what kinds of capabilities and attitudes a future labour-market citizen should be equipped with.

The 1994 core curriculum's objective for guidance was as follows:

To develop the student's study skills and procedures, to increase his self-esteem and to mature his study and career plans. The purpose of student counselling is further to inspire a positive attitude toward further study and work in the student during his years in the comprehensive school. (OPH, 1994, p. 38)

Multidisciplinary capabilities developed through guidance were necessary since education and career paths were becoming more diverse, based on personal choices and competition. With guidance,

every student gets through his/her studies in the comprehensive school as well as possible and can make appropriate and suitable decisions concerning his/her schooling and career. (OPH, 1994, p. 38)

Notably, the capabilities, knowledge, skills and attitudes developed through guidance in the 2000s were no longer limited to the school context. Instead, they laid the foundation for activities referred to as 'life-planning' that helped 'the pupils to reach decisions on studying, training, day-to-day life, and careers based on their own abilities and interests' (OPH, 2004, p. 258). The ability to assess solutions in changing circumstances was also needed.

Indeed, the guidance and counselling provided in basic education could no longer suffice on their own as a basis for individual life planning. Therefore, pupils had to be guided 'in using the guidance, informational and counselling services offered by the educational and labour administration and other public agencies' (OPH, 2004, p. 259). Consequently, the 2014 core curriculum states that 'the guidance helps pupils become aware of their possibilities of influencing plans and decisions that concern their own lives' (OPH, 2014, p. 150).

The 2000s' individualised understanding of lifelong learning also entailed a critical view of information and different information sources: 'The pupils are encouraged to reflect on the preconceptions related to education and professions and to challenge them as well as make choices based on their own strengths and interests' (OPH, 2014, p. 150). As sources of information increased and diversified, understanding one's own abilities and interests became increasingly important when making educational and career choices.

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, we analysed the national core curricula as technologies used to transmit the rationalities of governance. The transnational discourses of the knowledge-based economy (Bergmo-Prvulovic, 2014; Patton & McMahon, 2006; Roberts, 2013), lifelong learning (Bengtsson, 2015; Bergmo-Prvulovic, 2014) and equality (Sultana, 2014; Watts, 2013) have been adapted for the guidance rationalities provided in basic education throughout the Finnish comprehensive school system's existence from the 1970s to today. Guidance through basic education echoes transnational discourses; although the dominant rationalities for guidance remain the same throughout the years, the tangible guidance contents and objectives within a given rationality change over time.

The *rationality of equality* in the 1970s and 1980s largely echoed the universalist ideology of its time. Its moral dimension derived from the premise that guidance aimed to provide opportunities for all students to participate equally in the school community's activities and to teach everyone the skills needed for collaboration. The epistemological nature of the rationality of equality emphasised the democratic activities practised through guidance and the possibility for everyone to participate in managing common affairs. Hence, its expressions (rights, duties, customs and rules) legitimised the possibility of and obligation for equal participation by all. Since the 1990s, the moral dimension of the rationality of equality has become more individualistic, particularistic and self-directed, focusing especially on young people threatened by school dropout.

At the same time, its field expanded beyond schools' internal functions to explicitly cover topics such as post comprehensive studies and employment. In this way, the guidance became epistemically wide-ranging training of active and goal-oriented students. Simultaneously, the earlier meaning of guidance – for example, in cooperation or social rules in socialisation – was allowed to recede from the curriculum texts. Correspondingly, the range of targets for equality (gender, ethnic background, etc.) expanded from the 1990s onwards.

The moral dimension of the *rationality of the knowledge-based economy* in the 1970s and 1980s emphasised the importance of everyone's knowledge and skills as part of the economic structure's transformation and the national stock of human capital. Epistemologically, the ability to change a profession or field is shaped into a desirable quality for individuals. Meanwhile, the guidance's key goal was to produce the capacity for change and uncertainty. Change and uncertainty appeared to be inevitable structural phenomena, part of the liturgy of working life's changing rules. Beginning in the 1990s, the idea of an information society became implicit; rationality's moral dimension presented the change and uncertainty of the labour market as inevitable to the mainstream. The new moral dimension also emphasised studying and employment as international phenomena. Understandably, therefore, young people's transition to society was found to require more personal decisions in terms of education and career choices. This need was met through guidance in several ways, such as through the provision of 'knowledge'.

From the 1970s onwards, the moral dimension of the *rationality of lifelong learning* highlighted continuous learning and the goal-oriented accumulation of competence as part of individuals' life courses. Particularly significant were the expansion of skilled, critical and multi-source information retrieval and the epistemological requirement for continuous learning outside the

school context as part of leisure and private life. Using graphic presentations and tables – as well as ‘critical data discovery and application outside of school’ – exemplifies the idioms for lifelong learning rationality in the 1970s and 1980s. In the 1990s, the rationality of lifelong learning became increasingly linked to the rationality of the knowledge-based economy. In practice, this meant that, together, the rationalities of lifelong learning and the knowledge-based economy set similar moral premises for guiding learners towards ever more individualised careers. Epistemologically, the former outlined what kinds of structural factors would determine future educational and career paths and the other outlined what kind of capabilities and attitudes the future labour-market citizen should be equipped with. Competition, options and personal choices emerged as key new expressions.

In this article, we have asked how have Finnish rationalities of guidance and counselling been constructed in the national core curricula since the 1970s. Our analysis emphasises that guidance practices are governed by transnational discourses. The rationalities of the knowledge-based economy, lifelong learning and equality transform transnational discourses of guidance into authoritative expert discourses, which are publicly articulated in national core curricula. Although our analysis does not cover the implementation of the core curricula within schools or guidance practices, these societal rationalities shape and conceptualise guidance practices. They also embed power relations and societal expectations regarding particular types of behaviour (Harjula & Kalalahti, 2024).

The national core curricula published in 1970–2014 define guidance as activities that conform to the continuous and inevitable change in society and working life from one decade to another – or, rather, as proactive activities that constantly prepare pupils for new conditions. In the 1990s, a transition in guidance and counselling focus – from society to individuals – emerged in the emphases placed on societal structures of society and working life, shifting towards definitions based on individuals’ actions. Nonetheless, it is worth considering that the objectives and content defined for guidance remain largely societal, although they have increasingly pursued the development of pupils’ personal capabilities to obtain information, make choices and take responsibility for their actions since the 1990s.

The changed in the rationalities of guidance have also wider implications for guidance and counselling practice. The *individualistic turn*, characterised by an emphasis on individual life courses and self-directed skills alongside expanded equality objectives, requires new competencies from guidance counsellors and new pedagogical tools to address increasing diversity among individuals. Another shift is related to the *changes and uncertainties of the knowledge-based economy* and emerging questions concerning future competencies and skills. These developments also have implications for guidance and counselling practices, as they call for new tools to support individual life design and to engage with evolving and continually changing understandings of ‘career’ and ‘knowledge’.

We have examined the societal objectives assigned to guidance and counselling in national curricula as a technology of governance (see Miller & Rose, 2008) that frames and directs guidance practices and the horizons of individual agents. However, the rationalities we describe are also interpreted locally, as the curricular texts analysed do not provide information about the practices that emerge from these interpretations. Our decision to focus on socio-politically constructed core curriculum texts necessarily limits our argument. Based on our findings, we cannot engage in dialogue with the actual practices of guidance or with their theoretical or practical development. Future research should therefore examine guidance practices in school contexts and explore the meanings attributed to them by guidance counsellors, teachers and students.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

AUTHOR AFFILIATIONS

Mira Kalalahti  orcid.org/0000-0003-1254-9351
University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Janne Varjo  orcid.org/0000-0003-2528-4241
University of Helsinki, Finland

- Ahola, S., & Mikkola, J. (2004). *Opinto-ohjaus, muutos ja epävarmuus: Turun yläasteiden ja lukioiden opinto-ohjaajien näkemyksiä ohjauksesta ja oman työnsä lähtökohdista*. [Guidance and counselling, change and uncertainty: Guidance counsellors' perceptions on guidance and their work at lower secondary and general upper secondary schools in Turku.] University of Turku.
- Ahonen, S. (2001). The end of common school? Change in the ethos and politics of education in Finland towards the end of the 1990's. In S. Ahonen & J. Rantala (Eds.), *Nordic lights. Education for nation and civic society in the Nordic countries 1850–2000* (pp. 175–203). Studia Fennica Historica 1. Finnish Literature Society.
- Alasuutari, P. (1996). *Toinen tasavalta: Suomi 1946–1994* [The Second Republic: Finland 1946–1994]. Vastapaino.
- Apple, M. (1979). *Ideology and curriculum*. Routledge & Kegan Paul. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203241219>
- Bengtsson, A. (2015). European career guidance policy: A focus on subtle regulatory mechanisms. *Zeitschrift für Weiterbildungsforschung*, 38(2), 241–250. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40955-015-0035-8>
- Bergmo-Prvulovic, I. (2014). Is career guidance for the individual or for the market? Implications of EU policy for career guidance. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 33(3), 376–392. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2014.891886>
- Council of the European Union. (2008). *Better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies*. 15030/08. EDUC 257 SOC 653. <https://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2015030%202008%20INIT>
- Dale, R., Kazepov, Y., Rinne, R., & Robertson, S. (2016). Scales, discourses and institutions in the governance of educational trajectories in Europe. In A. Walther, M. Amaral, M. Cuconato, & R. Dale (Eds.), *Governance of educational trajectories in Europe: Pathways, policy and practice* (pp. 55–74). Bloomsbury. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781474287203.ch-003>
- Dean, M. (1999). *Governmentality. Power and rule in modern society*. Sage.
- ELGPN (European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network). (2012). *Lifelong guidance policy development: A European resource kit*. https://www.elgpn.eu/publications/browse-by-language/english/ELGPN_resource_kit_2011-12_web.pdf/
- Euroguidance. (2025). *Guidance system in Finland*. <https://euroguidance.eu/guidance-system-in-finland>
- FNAE (Finnish National Agency for Education). (2026). *Guidance and counselling in basic education*. <https://www.oph.fi/en/education-and-qualifications/guidance-and-counselling-basic-education>
- Foucault, M. (1991). Governmentality. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon, & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality* (pp. 87–104). Chicago University Press.
- Foucault, M. (1998). Nietzsche, genealogy, history. In J. D. Faubion (Ed.), *Aesthetics, method and epistemology. Essential works of Foucault 1954–1984* (Vol. II, pp. 369–392). The New Press.
- Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (2nd ed.). Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M. (2002). *Archaeology of knowledge* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Furuhaugen, B., Holmén, J., & Sääntti, J. (2019). The ideal teacher: orientations of teacher education in Sweden and Finland after the Second World War. *History of Education*, 48(6), 784–805. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0046760X.2019.1606945>
- Harjula, S., & Kalalahti, M. (2024). Pastoral power manifestations within the guidance professionals' talk on guidance practices. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*, 10(1), 14–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20020317.2024.2304284>
- Haug, E. H., Hooley, T., Kettunen, J., & Thomsen, R. (Eds.) (2020). *Career guidance in the Nordic countries*. Brill Sense. <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004428096>
- Kalalahti, M., & Varjo, J. (2023). Municipal Governance of Comprehensive Education: The emergence of local universalisms. In M. Thrupp, P. Seppänen, J. Kauko & S. Kosunen (Eds.), *Finland's Famous Education System: Unvarnished insights into Finnish schooling* (pp. 19–34). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-8241-5_2
- KH (Kouluhallitus). (1985). *Peruskoulun opetussuunnitelman perusteet 1985* [National core curriculum for comprehensive school 1985]. Valtion painatuskeskus.
- Kinnari, H. (2020). *Elinikäinen oppiminen ihmistä määrittämässä: Genealoginen analyysi EU:n, OECD:n ja Unescon politiikasta* [Lifelong learning defining the conception of human. Genealogical analysis of the policies of EU, OECD, and UNESCO]. Suomen kasvatustieteellinen seura.
- Kjærgård, R. (2020). Career guidance and the production of subjectivity. In E. H. Haug, T. Hooley, J. Kettunen, & R. Thomsen (Eds.), *Career and career guidance in the Nordic countries* (pp. 81–92). Brill|Sense. <https://brill.com/view/book/edcoll/9789004428096/BP000014.xml>
- KM (Komiteamietintö). (1970a). *Peruskoulun opetussuunnitelmakomitean mietintö I*. *Opetussuunnitelman perusteet* [Memorandum of Curriculum Committee for Comprehensive School, part I]. Komiteamietintö 1970: A4.
- KM (Komiteamietintö). (1970b). *Peruskoulun opetussuunnitelmakomitean mietintö II*. *Oppiaineiden opetussuunnitelmat* [Memorandum of Curriculum Committee for Comprehensive School, part II]. Komiteamietintö 1970: A5.

- Kutsyruba, B.** (2017). Using document analysis methodology to explore educational reforms and policy changes in post-Soviet Ukraine. In I. Silova, N. Sobe, A. Korzh, & S. Kovalchuk (Eds.), *Reimagining utopias – theory and method for educational research in post-socialist contexts* (pp. 199–214). Sense Publishers. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6351-011-0_12
- Lairio, M., Puukari, S., & Varis, E.** (1999). Opinto-ohjaajan toimenkuva. [Guidance counsellor's work description]. In M. Lairio & S. Puukari (Eds.), *Opinto-ohjaajan toimenkuva muuttuvassa yhteiskunnassa* (pp. 65–72). Jyväskylän yliopisto.
- Lovén, A.** (2003). The paradigm shift – rhetoric or reality? *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 3, 123–135. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1024708123698>
- Merimaa, E.** (1992). Työntiedosta ja ammatinvalinnasta opiskelun ohjaukseen. [From work knowledge and vocational choice to study guidance]. *Kuvia suomalaisesta koulutuksesta. Koulu ja menneisyys: Suomen kouluhistoriallisen seuran julkaisuja 30*, (pp. 108–120). Suomen kouluhistoriallinen seura.
- Miller, P., & Rose, N.** (2008). *Governing the present: Administering economic, social and personal life*. Wiley.
- Nummenmaa, A. R.** (1992). Ohjaus menetelmänä ja toimintana. [Guidance as a method and as an action]. In M. Lairio (Ed.), *Opinto-ohjaajan työ ja koulutus* (pp. 6–16). Jyväskylän yliopisto.
- Nykänen, S., & Vuorinen, R.** (1991). *Oppilaanohjauksen kehittäminen. Oppilaanohjauksen kohde- ja teorianhistoriallinen analyysi Suomessa vuosina 1970–1990* [Developing school counsellor's work and school counselling practices. Historical analysis of object and theory of school counselling in Finland in 1970–1990]. Jyväskylän ammatillinen opettajakorkeakoulu.
- OPH (Opetushallitus).** (1994). *Peruskoulun opetussuunnitelman perusteet 1994* [Framework curriculum for the comprehensive school 1994]. Opetushallitus.
- OPH (Opetushallitus).** (2004). *Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet 2004* [National core curriculum for basic education 2004]. Opetushallitus.
- OPH (Opetushallitus).** (2014). *Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet 2014* [National core curriculum for basic education 2014]. Opetushallitus. https://www.oph.fi/sites/default/files/documents/perusopetuksen_opetussuunnitelman_perusteet_2014.pdf
- Patton, W., & McMahon, M.** (2006). *Career development and systems theory. Connecting theory and practice* (2nd ed.). Sense. <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789087903343>
- Peavy, V.** (1996). Constructivist career counselling and assessment. *Guidance & Counseling*, 11(3), 8–14.
- Roberts, K.** (2013). Career guidance in England today: Reform, accidental injury or attempted murder? *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 41(3), 240–253. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2013.773962>
- Rose, N.** (1999). *Powers of freedom. Reframing political thought*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511488856.003>
- Savickas, M. L.** (1993). Career counseling in the postmodern era. *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy: An International Quarterly*, 7(3), 205–215. <https://doi.org/10.1891/0889-8391.7.3.205>
- Simola, H.** (2015). *Finnish education mystery*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203068762>
- Simola, H., Kauko, J., Varjo, J., Kalalahti, M., & Sahlström, F.** (2017). *Dynamics in education politics – Understanding and explaining the Finnish case*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203068793>
- Sultana, R. G.** (2014). Career guidance for social justice in neoliberal times. In G. Arulmani, A. J. Baksi, F. Leong, & A. G. Watts (Eds.), *Handbook of career development* (pp. 317–333). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-9460-7_18
- Varjo, J., Kalalahti, M., & Hooley, T.** (2022). Actantial construction of career guidance in Parliament of Finland's education policy debates 1967–2020. *Journal of Education Policy*, 37(6), 1009–1027. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2025.2469875>
- Varjo, J., Kalalahti, M., & Silvonen, J.** (2020). Mihin oppilaita ohjataan? Opinto-ohjauksen rationaliteetit peruskoulun opetussuunnitelmien perusteissa [Where are pupils guided for? The rationalities of guidance in national core curricula]. *Kasvatus & Aika*, 14(4), 4–20. <https://doi.org/10.33350/ka.91517>
- Vuorinen, R., & Sampson, J. P.** (2002). Ohjaus opintojen suunnittelun ja arvioinnin tukena [Guidance supporting study planning and evaluation]. In J. Onnismä, H. Pasanen, & T. Spangar (Eds.), *Ohjaus ammatina ja tieteenalana 2: Ohjauksen toimintakentät* (pp. 46–69). PS-kustannus.
- Watts, A. G.** (2002). Socio-political ideologies in guidance. In A. G. Watts, B. Law, J. Killeen, K. M. Kidd, & R. Hawthorn (Eds.), *Rethinking careers education and guidance: Theory, policy and practice* (pp. 351–365). Routledge.
- Watts, A. G.** (2013). False dawns, bleak sunset: The coalition government's policies on career guidance. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 41(4), 442–453. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2012.744956>
- Watts, A. G., Sultana, R. G., & McCarthy, J.** (2010). The involvement of the European Union in career guidance policy: A brief history. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 10(2), 89–107. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10775-010-9177-9>

TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Kalalahti, M., & Varjo, J. (2026). The Rationalities Behind Guidance and Counselling in Basic Finnish Education's Core Curricula. *Nordic Journal of Transitions, Careers and Guidance*, 7(1), pp. 14–27. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.16993/njtcg.104>

Submitted: 15 March 2025

Accepted: 20 March 2026

Published: 15 May 2026

COPYRIGHT:

© 2026 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

Nordic Journal of Transitions, Careers and Guidance is a peer-reviewed open access journal published by Stockholm University Press.

