Globalization of Waldorf education: an ethnographic case study from the Philippines

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CHAPTER 4

Being a Discoverer or Being Discovered?

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Abstract Waldorf education is known for its outspoken ideas on personal development. The recent globalization of Waldorf education raises questions about how it is adapted locally. This article addresses Eurocentric elements in the curriculum on the basis of a case study of history education in Grade 7 at a Philippine Waldorf school. Here, the students' development is mirrored in stories about the Renaissance and the Age of Discovery. But can Filipino students identify with Christopher Columbus or Ferdinand Magellan? Are they the discoverers or the discovered in these stories? These are precarious questions in the Philippines's hybrid cultural context.

Keywords curriculum evaluation, ethnography, Eurocentrism, localization, history education

Introduction

"The main lesson in a Waldorf school is about making connections. We help children to connect with what they are and what they will be. We help them to connect with themselves and with others, including their teachers and classmates [. . .] We help them connect with the now by teaching out of head, heart, and hands. We help them connect with their futures by teaching them subjects that help their development. And we help them connect with their pasts by reminding them about who they are, and who they wanted to become [when they were still in a spiritual world]."
– paraphrased from a lecture at a Waldorf teacher training in the Philippines

"There was once a man called Ferdinand Magellan. He was a mariner [. . .] He successfully passed the deadly and narrow channel of Tierra del Fuego, passed Guam and landed on Cebu. He made friends with the local chief, and he discovered that they were fighting another tribe. Magellan tried to help them but was killed in the battle of Mactan. Only one ship survived, led by Juan Sebastian Elcano and he was the first man to circumnavigate the world."
– excerpt from student work on the travels of Ferdinand Magellan, *"discoverer of the Philippines"*

Waldorf education, an alternative educational approach known for its outspoken ideas on personal development (Avison and Rawson 2014; Lievegoed 2005; Rawson 2019), is globalizing (Boland 2015; Boland and Demirbag 2017; Gidley 2008; Göbel 2019; Hoffmann 2016; Stehlik 2018). Given its European roots and European curricular aspects, the following questions arise: How, in a globalizing context, are the educational ideals, discourses, and practices of Waldorf education adapted to new non-European local contexts? How do schools and teachers deal with Eurocentrism in the curriculum? This paper addresses the complexity and frictions of this process based on a case study in a Waldorf school in the Philippines, in which, as an appealing example of the matter, the History curriculum of a Grade 7 class is evaluated.

The case study describes how Waldorf theories of development and pedagogical aims are linked to the lesson content and take shape in a Filipino context. In addition, it discusses teachers' perceptions of Eurocentrism as well as their initial discussions and attempts to create a more inclusive and localized curriculum. The presence of Eurocentric elements in the curriculum culminates in a number of pressing questions: Can Filipino students, for instance, identify with the life stories of European seafarers, such as Ferdinand Magellan, who "discovered" the Philippines and, consequently, prefigured Spanish colonialism in the archipelago? How does this story help students develop and connect with their pasts and futures, as suggested in the opening quote?

The article makes use of three theoretical approaches to get a better understanding of the subject: (1) a typology of a purist, accommodationist, and evolutionist Waldorf curricula (Boland 2015, 197–98); (2) assumed universal applicability of Waldorf education and Waldorf schools as zones of awkward engagement (Tsing 2005, xi; Van Schie 2020), and (3)

Waldorf curricula in light of cultural inclusiveness. I will elaborate on these approaches later in the section "Three Theoretical Approaches to the Globalization of Waldorf Education."

In addition, the article identifies three main challenges in relation to the innovation and localization of the Philippine Waldorf curriculum: (1) the specific cultural and ideological background of Waldorf education; (2) the multiple intersections within the Waldorf curriculum that make it difficult to adjust only parts of it; and (3) a complicated Filipino educational context that includes an ambiguous attitude towards national identity and localization in the curriculum.

Despite the challenges, there is hope that Waldorf education, in all contexts, can provide inclusive curricula that foster broad development and help students to achieve their full potential and become their best selves. But much has still to happen.

Methodology

This article is based on case study research. Case studies are used widely within the qualitative research tradition, typically with a broad set of data collection tools (Merriam 1998). Case study research is specific in the sense that its focus is on "the particularity and complexity of a single case" (Stake 1995, xi). A case can mean many things: a group of people, an event, a locality, etc. In this research the case is a specific series of lessons (Grade 7 History lessons) taught at a specific school with a specific educational approach (a Philippine Waldorf school) in a specific location (central Philippines). Yin (1984) states that case study research is best used for "how" or "why" questions in "real-life contexts." The understanding and specific in-depth contextualized information that derives from the case study can then be placed in broader theoretical or empirical discussions, such as in this case the discussion on the globalization of Waldorf education and the Eurocentrism within Waldorf curricula. Data for the case study were collected in the following ways:

1. *By participant observation*. Much of the data, including data on teaching practice and teachers' opinions, was collected during ethnographic fieldwork using the method of participant observation (as described by many scholars, e.g., Spradley 1980; Agar 1980; Bernard 2006) at the Gamot Cogon Waldorf School, Iloilo Province, in the central Philippines, between 2017 and 2020. The fieldwork was organized in several short periods of three to seven weeks and included, among others, more than twenty-five interviews with teachers and other actors in the school, as well as about thirty class observations. Note that in reference to these interviews the teachers are randomly numbered (teacher 1, teacher 2, etc.) in order to anonymize them. Moreover, because the method of participant observation implies the inclusion of numerous day-to-day conversations and observations in and around the school (Van Schie 2021), the following spaces and events became sources of ethnographic data: in the teachers' lounge, in the playground, in the classroom, and during school events, camps, festivals, etc. As a researcher I became an active member of the school community for a time, sometimes even teaching classes myself.

2. *By curriculum evaluation*. Specific data on the curriculum were also gathered during class observations and interviews. I frequently discussed lesson content with teachers and students. Moreover, I evaluated textbooks used in the school, students' work, as well as a few important teacher handbooks, such as the widely used reference book by Avison and Rawson (2014), *The Tasks and Content of the Steiner-Waldorf Curriculum*, and the famous book by Stockmeyer (2015), *Rudolf Steiner's Curriculum for Steiner-Waldorf Schools*, which collects key quotes from the founder of Waldorf education. The findings were supplemented by teachers' opinions gathered from group discussions during a teacher training programme run by international Waldorf trainers, the Asian Waldorf Teacher Training, in Santa Rosa, Laguna, in 2018. Teachers from other Filipino Waldorf schools also attended this programme.[1] Note that in reference to the participating teachers in the group discussions, they are randomly coded by capital letters (teacher A, teacher B, and teacher C), in order to anonymize them and distinguish them from the teachers who participated in the interviews.

Waldorf Education

In this section I describe the concept of Waldorf education and its specific notion of personal development. I also briefly sketch the history of Waldorf education and its recent globalization and introduction in the Philippines.

Waldorf Education: A development-oriented educational approach

Waldorf education is an alternative educational approach. It emphasizes development-oriented education, based on a specific development theory formulated by its founder, the Austrian spiritual philosopher Rudolf Steiner, who gave form to the curriculum of the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart, Germany, in 1919. His spiritual philosophy, which is at the heart of Waldorf education, is called anthroposophy.

What are the pillars of this development-oriented form of education?

Firstly, Waldorf pedagogy envisages broad development, encompassing cognitive, social, creative, moral, and even spiritual development. In other words, Waldorf education focuses on the subjectification function of education, alongside its qualification and socialization functions (Biesta 2013), and, in this way, aspires to a contemporary approach to the pedagogical principle of *Bildung* (Rawson 2019, 2). To this end, activities that require thinking are combined and balanced with those that involve feeling and doing. This pedagogical approach is commonly summarized as education for head, heart, and hands, a threefold didactical approach based on an anthroposophical threefold image of a person in which people are believed to have spirits, souls, and physical bodies. This "threefoldness" is related to three leading Platonic educational principles that are interrelated and connected with different age groups, namely: goodness (the leading principle for ages 0–7), beauty (the leading principle for ages 7–14), and truth (the leading principle for ages 14–21) (cf. Lievegoed 2005; Rawson 2019; Steiner 1986[2]).

Secondly, Waldorf pedagogy assumes that there are specific developmental phases that

can be related to an anthroposophical image of human beings,[3] which follow a fairly fixed pattern but are influenced by the uniqueness of an individual's developmental path. Consequently, the organization of education in age groups, i.e., the context of a class comprising pupils of the same age that functions as a community of practice (Wenger 1998), is an important element in Waldorf schools. It is important to note that the word class is often used as a synonym for a specific grade level. Instead of Grade 7, for example, Waldorf teachers and students often use the term Class 7. Developmental stages are divided into seven-year phases. In the first phase, from 0 to 7 years of age, which includes preschool and kindergarten, children are thought to learn best from imitation and play. They need a secure, caring, and enabling environment, and educational aims include the stimulation of good habits, memory, reverence, listening, and joy of nature (Avison and Rawson 2014, 22–24). Formal education begins in the second phase and encompasses primary education. Education is focused on feelings and experiential learning, and the teacher is a natural authority in the class (ibid., 24). Key ingredients in the lesson plan include art, music, narratives, and visual thinking. Only towards the end of this second phase are children thought to be ready for more rationalist approaches, including logic, abstractions, and causality (ibid., 24). In the third phase, which corresponds with secondary education, students are deemed ready to learn academically, including independent thinking, critical reflection, and judgement (ibid., 28). The seven-year phases have been extrapolated for later life phases (i.e., 21 to 28 years of age, 28 to 35 years of age, etc.). These phases are less relevant for educational purposes, but teachers and parents sometimes use them to monitor their own development, and they are also used for biographical coaching of teachers within schools (Stehlik 2018, 216–18; 2002). The students' developmental stages are reflected in both the learning method and the subject matter of the lessons.

Thirdly, the development theory used in Waldorf education links individual development and the development of humanity as a whole. More specifically, development is sometimes conceptualized according to the principle that "ontogenesis recapitulates phylogenesis" (Stehlik 2018, 219). Whether this principle has been part of the Waldorf curriculum from the outset is debatable, but it is posited in many Waldorf lesson plans, either explicitly or implicitly (Barkved 2018). Following this principle, not only do individuals become increasingly independent in their thinking and acting, but so does the whole of humanity. This perception of history is also referred to as "the culture epoch theory," or, in more emic anthroposophical terms, "the evolution of consciousness" (ibid.). Steiner had a profound idea about the course of this evolution of consciousness for both the past and future, which he based not only on insights from literary and philosophical sources but also on esoteric experiences (Barkved 2020). Waldorf teachers sometimes find this line of thought – in particular, in relation to ideas of reincarnation and karma, which play major roles in anthroposophy – helpful for fostering a respectful attitude towards students and for seeing the students as more developed versions of "a human being"; or, to phrase it more esoterically, seeing them as "the last blueprints from the spiritual world," to quote an international Waldorf advisor in the Philippines. In the curriculum the principle that personal development follows the history of humanity is expressed in the use of historical narratives and symbolic images, as well as in certain themes and

Table 1. Themes and typologies for different age groups within Waldorf education		
Class and Age	**Themes/Narratives**	**Images/Typology**
Class 1, 6–7 years	folk and fairy tales	
Class 2, 7–8 years	fables and legends of saints	
Class 3, 8–9 years	Biblical stories	
Class 4, 9–10 years	Nordic mythology	
Class 5, 10–11 years	Greek mythology	
Class 6, 11–12 years	the Roman Empire and the Middle Ages	
Class 7, 12–13 years	the Renaissance and the Age of Discovery	discoverer
Class 8, 13–14 years	the Industrial Revolution	pioneer/inventor
Class 9, 14–15 years	the French Revolution	revolutionary
Class 10, 15–16 years		scientist
Class 11, 16–17 years		philosopher
Class 12, 17–18 years		idealist

Source: Drawn from research data, combined with my work experience as a Waldorf teacher

typologies that encourage students to recognize the struggles of their age (Avison and Rawson 2014; Stockmeyer 2015) (table 1).[4]

It is believed that students do not recognize this link between the content of the lessons and their developmental stage in a rational way, but rather organically and implicitly. The first Waldorf school in Stuttgart designed a development-oriented curriculum that sought to incorporate story material related to every age and developmental stage. What is striking is that in many, if not all, Waldorf schools the current curriculum shows many similarities to the original curriculum of 1919 (Stehlik 2018, 223).

These narratives and images are especially expressed in the so-called main lesson:

"Each day begins with a two-hour period known as the main lesson. This teaching unit is integrated and cross curricular and includes activities to awaken and focus the children's attention, oral and written practice of basic skills, mental arithmetic, music and drawing, presentation of new material, recall and discussion of the previous day's (or earlier) work, individual working, conversation, narratives, and practical work." (Avison and Rawson 2014, 29)

Until Class 8 there are usually no textbooks used in the main lesson; rather, the class teacher gives shape to a theme in a dynamic process with the students called artistic teaching or teaching as an art (e.g., Stehlik 2018, 220–22). This theme is based partly on the school's curriculum requirements and partly on the specific (developmental) needs and questions of individual students and/ or the whole class. This puts the onus

on teachers to continuously monitor the developmental stages of classes and individual students. Main lessons usually do not stand alone but are linked to other parts of the curriculum: "connections are made across subject areas and between main lesson themes" (Avison and Rawson 2014, 30). Main lessons are organized in blocks of three or four weeks, during which the same subject is worked on every day. The students process the content of the main lesson in so-called main lesson books, which are basically notebooks made by the students themselves and usually become very individualized and artistically designed reference works. All classes, from Class 1 to 12, follow main lesson programmes.

A short history of globalizing Waldorf education

The first Waldorf school, established in Stuttgart in 1919, was initiated by the director of the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory, Emil Molt. The social mission of the school was to give poor factory workers' children a good education and to offer an alternative to Germany's rigid state education at the turn of the twentieth century. The school began after a nine-day teacher training given by Steiner.[5] This course has been the foundation of Waldorf education until today (Stehlik 2018, 215).

Through the decades, Waldorf education has spread worldwide, initially in Europe and the United States and eventually, since the 2000s, to countries in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Currently, there are about 1,250 Waldorf schools in seventy countries,[6] including the Philippines.

As in other countries, Philippine Waldorf schools were initiated by a few determined and idealistic individuals, each with their very specific personal story (Schie 2020),[7] who were searching for educational innovation, partly as a critique of the national education system with a strong emphasis on cognition, mechanical rote learning, and competition rather than on a broader and more personal approach to education that includes socializing and artistic and self–development-oriented activities. As in numerous other countries where Waldorf education was introduced, many of its core principles, such as the specific development-oriented approach based on anthroposophical insights, as described above, as well as many of its educational practices and its curricular content, seem to have stayed relatively close to the ideas and practices, as they were formulated in 1919 in Stuttgart (Stehlik 2018, 223).

The first Philippine Waldorf school was established in Manila in 1994. Currently, there are seven Waldorf schools throughout the country[8] and several initiatives in the making. In many countries, including the Philippines, the globalization of Waldorf education coincides with the emergence of a middle class (Johnson 2014) that embraces new lifestyles and consumption patterns (Barendregt and Jaffe 2014), including conscious and critical views and choices in relation to education.

Three Theoretical Approaches to the Globalization of Waldorf Education

In this section I introduce three theoretical approaches to the process of globalizing Waldorf education. These theoretical approaches form a starting point for analysis and discussion at the end of this article.

Purist, Accommodationist, and Evolutionist Waldorf Schools

One theoretical approach in analysing the globalization of Waldorf education is by categorizing Waldorf schools according to the degree to which each school adapts to local conditions and deviates from the original curriculum, as it was formulated in Stuttgart in 1919. According to Neil Boland (2015, 197–98), who follows a typology formulated by Ida Oberman (2008), the implementation of Waldorf education can take three forms that correspond to the level of parity with the "original Waldorf curriculum."[9] Firstly, there is the purist way. Purist Waldorf schools stick to the traditions of Waldorf education and follow the original curriculum closely. They return to the "original sources" of Steiner and other Waldorf pioneers to draw inspiration to formulate curricula. They argue that educational practices have proven themselves over the years and should therefore not be adjusted too much. Secondly, there is the accommodationist way. Accommodationist Waldorf schools develop hybrid curricula, combining aspects of "original Waldorf education" with modern educational trends, government requirements, and cultural adjustments, reflecting the sociocultural context of the school community. Lastly, there is the evolutionist way. Evolutionist Waldorf schools adapt to local, cultural, and contemporary contexts. They aim to translate Waldorf principles and practices, especially the content of the curriculum, to current situations and specific contexts of school localities. Since these principles have evolved over time, there is little need to consult original resources in relation to current school curricula. The difficulty with evolutionist Waldorf schools, however, is that, at a certain point, they have adapted so much that there is little left to connect them with other Waldorf schools.

Assumed universal applicability of Waldorf education

A second theoretical approach assumes that the classification formulated above – schools divided into purist, accommodationist, and evolutionist categories – is incorrect because it ignores the particularity of each school. This approach is related to the work of cultural anthropologist Anna Tsing. Tsing (2000, 2005; Gluck and Tsing 2009) points out that, in relation to global connections, culture-specific knowledge is often incorrectly presented as universal knowledge. In fact, what is perceived as universal knowledge is locally formulated and reformulated via international networks in so-called zones of awkward engagement (Tsing 2005, xi).

To gain an understanding of this process, one should evaluate actual and specific trajectories of globalizing projects. The introduction of Waldorf education in many countries is an example of such a globalizing project, in which certain underlying ideas and practices are presented as universal while they actually have a clear European origin (Schie 2020). Whether the developmental stages of students, as formulated by Steiner,

have universal applicability often goes unquestioned.[10] Moreover, in terms of curricular content, European stories remain central in Waldorf curricula, even when taught in Waldorf schools outside Europe. Educators in and outside Europe argue that stories told in the classroom have universal value because of their implicit universal archetypal images.

Filipino Waldorf teachers, for example, exhibit this belief in the universal value of stories told in the classroom, as evinced by how they explained to me why they use the Grimm's fairy tale "The Bremen Town Musicians." This fairy tale is clearly situated in Germany, and not all the animals in the story are known by Filipino students (young pupils often do not know what a donkey is). Despite this limitation, the teachers continue to use the story because of its archetypes, which are believed to be universally recognizable to children. In this case the four animals in the story – the donkey, the dog, the cat, and the rooster – are supposed to represent either the four "bodies" of a human being (based on an anthroposophical fourfold image of the human being: the physical body, etheric body, astral body, and the I or ego) or a classical humoral classification of people into sanguine, melancholic, choleric, and phlegmatic types. Because of this assumed universal power in many of the stories used in Waldorf schools, the use of alternative local stories is limited and sometimes perceived as unnecessary. On a practical level, it is convenient for teachers to use the stories featured in Waldorf resource books; it is considered difficult to find local alternatives that hold the same archetypal symbolism and connect sufficiently with the Waldorf developmental stages.

Imagined universalism is found in all subjects, even in those that are indicated as "culture-free." Often, Eurocentrism stays unnoticed and is practiced unintentionally because of its imagined universal value. Powell and Frankenstein (1997, 2), for example, demonstrate how Eurocentrism plays a role in "even a supposedly neutral discipline like mathematics." The inclusion of the ancient civilizations of India, Persia and Egypt in the Waldorf curriculum is sometimes hailed as an international, multicultural educational approach. However, Barkved (2018, 114–15) argues that such an approach remains Eurocentric because it presents ancient societies as precursors of European civilization: "The red thread that runs from theocratic societies to incipient democracies, individualism and autonomy, is spun from a Western/European mentality; it is, in other words Eurocentric" (ibid., 115).

The image of the universal applicability of Waldorf education is reproduced in an imagined (international) Waldorf community that supports a specific Waldorf identity, including a specific spiritual thought (anthroposophy) and a distinctive lifestyle (often including organic food, alternative medicine, awareness of nature and sustainability, celebrations of seasonal festivals, and certain "anthroposophical" products).

Waldorf education in the light of cultural inclusiveness

Lastly, as a more practical application than the two theoretical perspectives presented above, Waldorf education can be evaluated in the light of cultural inclusiveness. How culturally inclusive are Waldorf schools when they stick to a century-old curriculum and perceive their core principles as universalistic?

Still, Waldorf schools can be viewed as inclusive schools in many ways. For example, socialized school fees – richer parents pay more than poorer ones – help avoid elitism and create social inclusion. In addition, the rich learning environments provided by Waldorf schools, which assign a key role to artistic activities, are often promoted as a positive precondition for many forms of inclusiveness (Woolley 2018, 158, 169). Also, the importance that is given to storytelling is potentially an asset for inclusiveness. Avison and Rawson (2014, 25) state: "Through storytelling, children become participants in their community and culture."

Nevertheless, cultural inclusion in Waldorf schools in non-European contexts can be questioned due to the Eurocentric focus of the Waldorf curriculum: "Many of the Steiner schools worldwide, even in Australia and Southeast Asia, continue to use primarily Eurocentric content rather than local, culture specific material, at best severely limiting the richness of educational experience, at worst contributing to cultural colonization" (Gidley 2008, 252). It is often argued that cultural capital is reproduced within educational settings (Bourdieu 1986, 241–58), and the discrepancies between cultural norms at home and at school can result in low achievement rates (Woolley 2018, 31–32). An inclusive pedagogy (Florian and Black-Hawkins 2011) is needed to overcome these discrepancies, which "should involve a historical perspective on oppression and inequality" (Mitchell 2017, 170). Key questions related to inclusiveness are: Who has to be included, and where should one be included? Often, there is a dominant norm to which one must be included, which means that one is simultaneously excluded from other marginal norms. By making stories and curricular content from other places – in this case, Europe – central to one's own curriculum, schools – Waldorf schools in this case – effectively marginalize their own local norms, which can be seen as "an exclusion of the self" (Ekins 2017, 40–42). Arguably, not recognizing one's own cultural context is almost an "othering" of oneself.

Localized curricula can counter this alienation and also increase study outcomes, as shown by Egcas et al. (2017) in a study about a localized learning programme for English in a Filipino context. In the Philippines's multicultural and hybrid society, the localization of a curriculum means adjusting content not only to a national context (Filipinization) but also to a local cultural context (indigenization), and a broader regional one (Asianization). Schools that accomplish this adjustment may also succeed in partly decolonizing curricula by doing away with hegemonic American and European influences. Inclusiveness, decolonization, and localization in relation to curricula involve complex processes not least because "[s]ome [inclusive] practices, whilst deemed to be inclusive within the context of that setting at that particular time in response to a particular need, may, in a different school, or at a different time, or in response to a different need, actually appear exclusionary" (Ekins 2017, 7). Thus, certain narratives and images deemed suitable in European contexts for stimulating individual development may be questionable in other contexts, as shown in the case study of this article.

A Complex Filipino Context

That Philippine Waldorf schools use "out-of-context" curricular content is not unique. Other schools in the Philippines also have Eurocentric or Americanized curricula despite continuous political attempts to Filipinize, contextualize, localize, and indigenize the national curriculum and promote more "patriotism" through the Makabayan curriculum (Mendoza and Nakayama 2003).[11] The call for nation building and strengthening of national identity is anchored in educational acts and numerous official documents, including the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, which states: "The curriculum shall be flexible enough to enable and allow schools to localize, indigenize and enhance the same based on their respective educational and social contexts. The production and development of locally produced teaching materials shall be encouraged" (Official Gazette 2013). The Makabayan subject is a significant part of the Basic Education Curriculum, which aims at "a healthy personal and national self-concept founded upon adequate understanding of Philippine history and a genuine appreciation of local culture, crafts, arts, music, and games" (Mendoza and Nakayama 2003, 15). The importance of the role of education in relation to national identity is even mentioned in the Philippine constitution: "[All educational institutions] shall inculcate patriotism and nationalism, foster . . . appreciation of the role of national heroes in the historical development of the country" (Official Gazette 1987). Despite these firm official statements, educational practices are quite different and continue to have a relatively foreign outlook.

Unsuccessful attempts in the Philippines to put education at the service of national identity formation correlate with a diffuse relationship with the colonial past. Whereas in other Asian countries, anticolonial struggles have often been employed in education for nation-building purposes, former colonial rulers in the Philippines are portrayed in ambiguous ways, as both dominant foreign intruders and as "benign paternalists" (Maca and Morris 2015, 138) who brought important developments to the country. Colonial struggles receive little attention in History textbooks, in contrast to the positive results of colonial domination. Maca and Morris (ibid., 139) provide revealing and insightful examples in which Spaniards are praised as bringers of Christianity and numerous enriching cultural features: "by absorbing the best of Spanish culture, we have become the most socially advanced of Asiatic peoples." Meanwhile, Americans are honoured as bringers of democracy and economic prosperity: "We are forever indebted to [America] for our democratic system . . . [Because of them] the Philippines has become an outpost of democracy in the orient." Maca and Morris (ibid., 139) also argue that History has only a marginal position in the curriculum, whereas in other countries "[h]istory education in schools is often one of the primary curricular instruments through which states attempt to construct a shared sense of national identity." In the Philippines history education is part of the subject Araling Panlipunan (AP), which literally means social studies and involves, other than History, Social Studies, Geography, and Economics. Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (Values Education) is another subject in the Basic Education Curriculum that contributes to national identity formation (Almonte 2003). Moreover, the Catholic Church, a significant political actor in the Philippines, advocates for teaching

shared values in relation to nation building instead of stressing the country's colonial history, an era in which the church sometimes played a dubious role (Maca and Morris 2015, 134).

Earlier unsuccessful attempts to put education at the service of national identity formation correlate with weak, negative, hybrid, and ambiguous notions of Filipino identity. Research in the 1980s has illustrated that some sections of the Filipino youth would rather have another nationality if they had the choice (Doronila 1989). Modern discourses on identity, which relate to the enormous number of overseas Filipino workers, often focus on the Filipino as a global (Tyner 2009)[12] rather than a national citizen. The ambiguity of Filipino identity, described profoundly by Fernando Zialcita (2005), is partly the result of entanglement with the cultural features of former colonial powers. It is impossible to deny Spanish and American influences on Filipino identity and culture. Ancient churches and modern shopping malls, for example, can be seen as both very Filipino and colonial. Filipino culture comprises a mix of influences. Its cuisine, fiestas, music, vocabulary, social customs, etc. are part of a mixed, mestizo culture. In particular, hispanicized lowland urban Filipinos struggle with the "Spanishness" of their identity. Issues of cultural identification are different for indigenous peoples or rural upland communities, who often feel a strong ethnic or local identity, contributing to a multiethnic and multilingual Filipino society.[13] Hybrid and ambiguous notions of Filipino identity make it challenging to distinguish between seemingly contradictory categories such as "Filipino"/ "Asian" versus "Western" or "colonial" versus "noncolonial."

The limited localization of Filipino education has a long history. For much of the Spanish era, education was available solely to the elite, who became Hispanicized within Spanish educational institutions. A local educated elite, called the ilustrados, got acquainted with European ideas, including ideas of the Enlightenment, which were a catalyst for the Philippine Revolution of 1896–1898. José Rizal, a national hero, is probably the best-known ilustrado. Mass public education was introduced in 1901 under US rule by American "Thomasite" teachers (named after the USS Thomas, the ship that brought one of the first contingents of American teachers to the Philippines). The Americans introduced English as the language of instruction, and they made use of imported American schoolbooks, "replete with American narratives, heroes, and cultural referents" (Constantino 1975 in Maca and Morris 2015, 129). The colonial administration used education to Americanize Filipino citizens and make them model colonial subjects (Maca and Morris 2015, 132). Despite attempts by the Japanese occupiers between 1942 and 1945 to Asianize Filipino education – by introducing Tagalog as a national language and including local literature in the curriculum, among other things – many Filipinos ultimately viewed these efforts as "ideas of the occupier" (ibid., 129). In fact, Americanization did not stop after independence in 1946, which, according to Constantino (1970), led to the "miseducation" of the Filipino youth, who were taught that Filipino culture was inferior to American culture.

This context of an ambiguous national education is important for understanding why Philippine Waldorf schools tend to copy an internationally formulated Waldorf curriculum

rather than design a specific Filipino variant. Moreover, those Waldorf schools wanting to localize the curriculum will likely encounter difficulties in their quest for culture-specific stories, as will be demonstrated in the case study.

Case Study:
History Education in Class 7 at a Philippine Waldorf School

In this section I present a case study of History lessons at a Philippine Waldorf school. It is important to note that, in contrast to how it is taught in Philippine public schools, History is dealt with as a separate subject in Waldorf schools. Before examining particular Filipino lesson practices and student work, I will describe the specific developmental stage of seventh graders described in authoritative Waldorf resource books and how this takes shape in the curriculum, especially in History class.

The developmental stage of seventh graders

In the Philippines, as in Waldorf schools elsewhere, seventh graders are classified as "discoverers." Aged 12, they are about to leave the safe zone of childhood and enter puberty, a confusing period due to rapid physical change and mental development (Avison and Rawson 2014, 27). Waldorf educators see puberty as a phase in which students attempt to renew their grip on the world, or even "'conquer' the world around them" (ibid., 27).

This phase can be seen as a self-centred developmental phase in which students try to progress without the help of adults (who remain important in the background), which is often characterized by struggles with authority (parents and teachers), changing habits, and new social connections (e.g., friendships sometimes suddenly change).

The discussion of real issues and social contradictions in the classroom helps students get a grip on the world. Reality is the starting point, presented by the teachers in a factual and pragmatic way. In the Science subjects, this reality-centred way of teaching can be done through precise empirical observation and abstract models. In History lessons, reconstructions of historic events replace myths, and biographies provide students with examples of other people's "inner worlds." Empathizing with important historical figures is supposed to help students reflect on themselves (ibid., 71).

The curriculum, especially the main lessons, which are organized in teaching blocks of three to four weeks, for seventh graders thus comprises themes that mirror the outer and inner discoveries of early puberty. For example, the main lesson block on "Creative Writing, Mood, and Style" helps students to express "inner discoveries" and their own moods and thoughts, whereas "outer discoveries" are embodied in new perspectives on the world, with lessons on, for example, astronomy or the geography of the Americas.

History education in Class 7: pedagogical aims and content

In Class 7, students learn to place historical events in broader contexts. According to

Steiner: “The period from the end of the Middle Ages to the beginning of Modern History is now at the centre of History lessons . . . This period of time is of utmost importance, and must be treated with great care” (quoted in Stockmeyer 2015, 151–52). In European history this period is characterized by growing independent thinking among urban elites, reflected in the arts (e.g., the Renaissance), science (e.g., the Scientific Revolution), geography (e.g., the Age of Discovery), religion (e.g., the Reformation), and politics (e.g., Enlightenment philosophy), comparable with the evolving autonomous thinking of the seventh grader.

The first History main lesson block in Class 7 is about the Renaissance, an era characterized by a great curiosity among people, interest in understanding the world based on direct empirical observation (instead of on the basis of faith), growing autonomous thinking, and individualism (e.g., expressed in the Renaissance motto carpe diem), and many major artistic and scientific developments. As a historical period, the Renaissance symbolizes the enormous curiosity observed among seventh graders. Through biographies of Leonardo da Vinci, for instance, students learn to empathize with the struggles of people from other times, as well as their own inner struggles. A typical example would be an individual’s struggle with an authoritarian other, primarily embodied during the Renaissance – and in subsequent periods in European history, such as the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the Scientific Revolution – by the church.

The second History main lesson block is about the Age of Discovery, an era parallel to the Renaissance, in which Europeans literally broadened their worldview by “discovering” new continents and sea routes. Stories about, for example, Henry the Navigator, Vasco da Gama, Christopher Columbus, Hernan Cortes, Francisco Pizarro, and Magellan are discussed, in particular their courage and perseverance, but also their fears, doubts, and hardships. Their biographies are seen as a useful mirror for seventh graders: “Since the pupils in Class 7 are going through a similar shift of relationship, history does not take place outside of themselves, in a museum, but is always topical and contemporary” (Avison and Rawson 2014, 261–62). These biographies are supplemented with factual knowledge, transforming these historical actors into real humans with whom one can identify. Henry the Navigator, for example, was important in initiating the first great Portuguese voyage of discovery, but he did not dare sail by himself. Meanwhile, Columbus, who “discovered” America by trying to reach Asia in a westward direction, often demonstrated medieval thinking.

The main lesson blocks in Class 7 are interlinked in many ways. The themes of the History blocks are also dealt with in the block on astronomy, in which the biographies of the astronomers Nicolaus Copernicus, Giordano Bruno, and Galileo Galilei are discussed. On the one hand, their discoveries influenced navigation at sea and thus the voyages of discovery; on the other hand, their biographies provide an interesting perspective on how to deal with authority. Copernicus, for example, published his famous heliocentric theory on his deathbed when the wrath of the church could no longer harm him. Galilei disclaimed his own scientific findings to evade severe punishment from the church. And Bruno was burned at the stake for refusing to recant his unwelcome ideas. A few other

cross-connections between the main lesson blocks of History and the other subjects in Grade 7 include the following: In Mathematics, insights that reached Europe from India via the Arab world at the end of the Middle Ages are discussed; Biology is about nutrition and, among other things, "discovered" products from all over the world; in Physics the themes of aerodynamics, hydrodynamics, and mechanics are related to Da Vinci's scientific findings; and in Geography the focus is on areas explored during the Age of Discovery.

History Education in Class 7 at a Waldorf School in the Central Philippines

At the Gamot Cogon Waldorf School, the location of the case study for this article, the curriculum does not differ substantially from the outline sketched in the above sections. History education in Class 7 is divided into two main lesson blocks: one about the Renaissance and another about the Age of Discovery (see the examples of student work on pp. 380–82).

The teacher's lesson plans are largely based on a well-known Waldorf textbook, The Age of Discovery by Charles Kovacs (2004), who taught at a Waldorf school in Edinburgh from 1956 to 1976. The lesson series at the Gamot Cogon Waldorf School includes a biography of Magellan, who is presented as "the discoverer of the Philippines," but he receives no more or less attention than the other explorers discussed.

Teachers' Voices

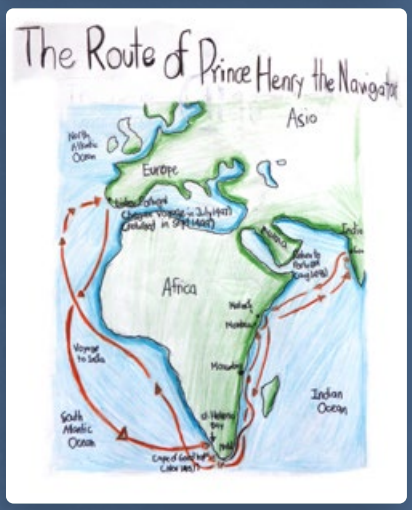
"Think about [the curriculum] like an invention. Usually, the inventor tweaks someone else's idea and makes it work. We just started the tweaking stage."
– teacher 10

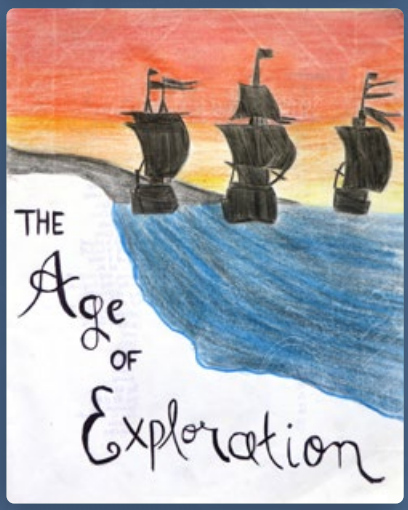
How do teachers deal with Eurocentrism in the curriculum?[14] If they see it as problematic, what can they do about it? Below, I present a spectrum of opinions on Eurocentrism in the curriculum, followed by a summary of a discussion among teachers on how the Age of Discovery History lessons could be adjusted to a Filipino context while maintaining the underlying principles and interesting cross-links between subjects in the Waldorf curriculum.

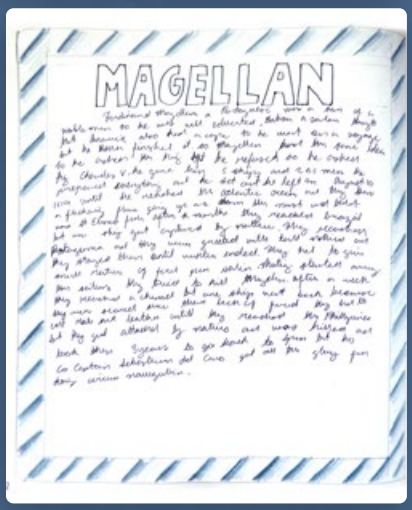
Teachers' opinions on Eurocentrism in the curriculum

Most teachers at Gamot Cogon Waldorf School recognize Eurocentrism in the curriculum, as well as in the resource books that are used. As teacher 10 sums up: "We tend to follow the époques as laid out by Steiner. Grade 4 is Norse. Grade 5 is India all the way to Greece. Grade 6 is Romans. Grade 7 is explorers. Grade 8 is Industrial Revolution." Teacher 8 adds: "Most of our resource books are European or American."

Only a few of the teachers deny Eurocentrism in the curriculum. They perceive the curriculum as universally applicable, relevant everywhere, and therefore "culture-free." Teacher 19 is such a teacher, who comments:







Student work from the Grade 7 history classes. Source: Pictures of main lesson books of students in Grade 7, taken by the author during fieldwork in 2018.

"[Waldorf education is not Eurocentric, because] it represents universal values [. . .] [When students learn about Ancient Greece for example] it is about the evolution of the consciousness [and] general human development. What happened in Greece was important for the whole of mankind. The Greeks of that era are just representatives of a certain developmental stage. Talking about Greece can be done in the Philippines as well for that reason."

Despite the general recognition of Eurocentrism, the majority of teachers do not perceive this as problematic, even in relation to the main lesson block on the Age of Discovery. Teacher 7 states it as follows: *"The important thing is that the values of these stories are linked to the developmental stage of the students. The characters or the settings of the stories are less important [. . .] My students actually like the biographies of the discoverers. So I don't see it as a problem."*

Teachers underline the universal applicability of the lesson content, as illustrated in the following quote from teacher 9: *"It doesn't matter whether you are European, Asian, or American, the universal aspects of stories can be applied in any context. I always try to go back to the universal underpinnings in a story."* Some teachers, therefore, even perceive Eurocentrism in the curriculum as an important Waldorf asset. Teacher 20, for example, puts it as follows:

"[The students] learn all these advanced subjects, which they will never learn about in mainstream schools. Like Norse mythology or about the Greeks. Sometimes people ask me, when I say what I did in class: Is this high school? Then I say: No, just Grade 6 [. . .] About Greek mythology you would only learn in college normally, I think. So, the children here are very lucky to learn all these things [. . .] Greek mythology can be taught anywhere, and it learns [sic] us general insights. Like Bathala, an upper god in Filipino mythology. Somehow that God is related to Zeus."

In addition, some teachers argue that there is still enough space in the curriculum to discuss Filipino values. European history does not replace Philippine history, which is dealt with in AP classes, albeit as an extra. Teacher 6 stresses this: *"They learn enough about Filipino culture. And they learn important Philippine values too. And love for their country. Examples of values they learn include a pledge for loyalty after the singing of the national anthem."*

Eurocentric elements in the curriculum do not mean that the school is not Filipino. Teacher 2 notes: *"Filipino culture is very evident in the school community and in the very fabric of the school. In other words: It would be impossible to not be typical Filipino."* Despite the international character of the curriculum, Filipino culture is considered to be omnipresent, especially in the way of teaching and dealing with each other. Teacher 18 confirms this, adding, *"the Filipino part is in the pedagogic style."*

Moreover, lesson content is often embedded within a Filipino context. Stories are adjusted, and local examples are added to make the subject matter understandable,

as attested by teacher 13: *"It is difficult to find local stories, because our textbooks are not from here. But sometimes we adjust stories. And I also make up stories myself. I also change for example plants in certain fairy tales. I include trees that grow here."* And sometimes a Filipino perspective is taken, like in teacher 8's lesson series on the Age of Discovery: *"When the Spaniards came here, we also highlight that the Filipinos fought against them. In some way, there is another side of the story. We try to make the main characters Filipinos instead of the discoverers."*

Given the challenges of formulating local equivalents with similar pedagogic value, teachers, like teacher 2, question the viability of alternatives to the current curriculum:

"If we are able to weave in Filipino stories that would be nice. But it is difficult. [Stories we use] have already proven their universal value. Filipino stories haven't done that. The Philippines was under colonial rule for a long time. It is hard to find real Filipino stories. They are already mixed with external influences [. . .] I don't problematize our use of European stories, because it's the best we have right now."

A few teachers, such as teacher 10, openly question Eurocentrism in the curriculum, as well as the apparently rigid Waldorf principles:

"I remember [a colleague] came back from a conference where one of the mentors had said: Steiner never said do Norse in Class 4. A teacher approached him apparently and asked, "Should I do Norse mythology in Class 4?" And he said: "Try it. If it works for you, then good." Something like that you know. But out of that statement this whole dogma was built. Like: Norse [mythology]. That's Class 4 [. . .] So yeah, the question then is whether we should focus more on Southeast Asian myths and legends, Southeast Asian culture, Southeast Asian nature in all our lessons. Or are we by doing so giving up the true Waldorf system? That is an interesting question."

Some see it as a temporary but necessary evil, a phase during which an anthroposophical base is laid out. This is explained by teacher 9:

"We definitely have gone through a dogmatic phase. And now we are a kind of stepping out of it slowly [. . .] In the beginning we didn't want to compromise at all. [. . .] There is more space for experiments now. But the challenge is to experiment with a basis, with consideration of the anthroposophical foundation."

But according to teacher 11, this is not considered an easy task: *"Courage is needed to change the curriculum. When we can fit things more into the Philippine context, we should do that. Sometimes there are Filipino events that resemble historical events in Europe. Then we can decide to use the Filipino example. To make it more relevant to our students."* Localizing the curriculum is also considered a process that needs time. Teacher 10 compares this with doing inventions:

"We are trying to build up from what is supposed to be done. And I think that once the

buildings are built and all the resources are there, we can start developing Philippine Waldorf education. [. . .] Think about it like an invention. Usually, the inventor tweaks someone else's idea and makes it work. We just started the tweaking stage. Like Edison's phonograph. That was actually the idea of someone else. Or the Wright brothers. Someone else was already fiddling around [with the idea] before they did. But the heroes are the ones that make it their own. And something new comes out."

The bottom line here is that there is no real consensus among the teachers on the topic of alleged Eurocentrism in the Waldorf curriculum. For most teachers, it is not an important issue. But as the following section illustrates, there is a small group of teachers that wants to discuss this subject within their school and take action.

Teachers' discussion on the History curriculum in Class 7

A teachers' discussion on the main lesson block on the Age of Discovery occurred during the Asian Waldorf Teacher Training in Santa Rosa, Laguna, in 2018. Three Class 7 teachers from three different Philippine Waldorf schools joined the discussion. They all had misgivings about the curriculum, which they were trying to overcome in different ways in their own schools.

Most receptive to change was teacher A, who was encouraged by her school to revise the History block as part of a broader policy to introduce more local and Asian aspects to the curriculum. As part of the Renaissance block, they had started a lesson series on Rizal, the most famous representative of the Filipino Renaissance, and as part of a block on cultural differences (in Class 8), they started a lesson series on ancient China in an attempt to include more Asian history in the curriculum. She included in the block on the Age of Discovery precolonial stories of Malay seafarers[15] who discovered and inhabited the Philippine archipelago, as well as lessons on the Chinese discoverer Zheng He, who explored large parts of the Southeast and South Asian coastline, as well as the Middle East and the African coast.

Teacher B was less radical in her amendments, but she had included Filipinized aspects by stressing precolonial Filipino culture and focusing on the Filipino side of the story, i.e., "being discovered" rather than "being the discoverer." Compared with teacher A, she was less supported by her school to make adjustments to the lesson content and modified the lesson series mainly on her own initiative.

Teacher C said that she did not get any support from her school management in adjusting the curriculum. She, therefore, had not really made any changes to the block on the Age of Discovery despite interest in the initiatives of her colleagues in the two other schools. But she stressed the fact that the theme of colonialism was dealt with during AP lessons, during which an active connection was made with the Age of Discovery block so that students also learned another side to the stories of discoverers.

In a lively conversation among the three teachers, it became clear that they were all concerned with this issue and wanted to do more in this regard. All three agreed that there were at least two barriers that complicated a more localized design for the main lesson block on the Age of Discovery:

Table 2. Advantages and disadvantages of localized elements in the main lesson history blocks in class 7

Alternatives/Additions	Advantages	Disadvantages
stories about Malay migration to the Philippine archipelago	• These stories are related to a local and national Filipino context. • Students will find it easy to identify with these stories. • These stories provide a springboard for teaching precolonial culture. • The migration angle of these stories can be related to a modern global-minded Filipino identity.	• These stories are exclusionary to some indigenous groups, including the Agta, Ati, and other Negrito indigenous groups. • It is questionable if these stories still fit well to the developmental stage of a seventh grader. • It is more difficult to relate these stories to other the themes of other lesson blocks of the curriculum.
biographies of Asian travellers, such as the Chinese explorer Zheng He	• These biographies relate better to an Asian and Southeast Asian context when placed in a broader historical perspective of commercial and political journeys in precolonial Asia. • These biographies demonstrate that exploratory aspirations were not exclusive to Europeans.	• It is questionable whether students identify more easily with a Chinese seafarer than a European one. • The Filipinos in the stories are still the "discovered," instead of the "discoverers," because some Chinese explorers also depicted as the "discoverers" of the Philippines.
lessons about the trans-Pacific galleon trade between Acapulco and Manila	• This important trade route of the Age of Discovery is specifically related to the Philippines and had a great impact on Philippine history. • This trade route demonstrates that there was a Filipino connection with Latin America and that the Philippines was actively involved in the global economy of the time	• Stories about the trans-Pacific galleon trade are still strongly connected with colonialism and underline mostly the strength and wealth of the colonial power. • It is questionable whether students identify more easily with (mostly European) galleon traders than other (European) seafarers.
lessons about the "other side of the story"; talking about Filipino society during the Age of Discovery: who were the "discovered"?	• Students learn about colonialism and can identify with "their side of the story," for example, through alternative biographies of native historical figures, e.g., LapuLapu.	• The connection between the developmental stage of the seventh graders and the image of the discoverer is unclear because the lesson portrays them as victims rather than active historical actors who explored the world.
lessons related to the nineteenth-century Filipino Renaissance, including biographies of famous Filipino ilustrados, such as José Rizal.	• These lessons demonstrate a historical parallel with the development of the human consciousness in Renaissance Europe and the developmental stage of seventh graders as described by Steiner.	• The ilustrados were Europeanized because of their Western education and therewith partly alienated from local Philippine culture. • There is a risk that "localization of the curriculum" becomes confused with the "promotion of nationalism"

Source: Based on fieldnotes taken during discussions with teachers

1. Many teachers and school managers perceive "localization" as complicated in a Filipino context due to the country's colonial history, which had resulted in a hybrid and diverse Filipino culture, with Asian, European, and American influences. In education, American and European cultural influences are noticeable in "Western"-oriented school curricula. This cultural hybridity and "Western" orientation in education was perceived as a complicating factor by Filipino educators in localizing the curriculum because: "What does localization mean when it is unclear to which local culture one should refer?"

2. Finding local equivalents for the Waldorf curriculum with similar pedagogical quality was also perceived as difficult given that they also needed to correspond with the developmental stage of seventh graders and link with other parts of the curriculum. Alternative suggestions that came out of the discussion were mainly additions to the existing curriculum, rather than forming a new "Filipino" or "Asian" block. Despite multiple ideas for change, all suggestions seemed to have obvious advantages but also serious disadvantages, which are summarized in table 2.

In conclusion the three teachers questioned whether the traditional Waldorf main lesson block on the Age of Discovery was appropriate in a Filipino context since being discovered is fundamentally different from being a discoverer. Despite their intentions to continue thinking about new adjustments to this particular main lesson block, they all agreed that making changes was complicated.

Conclusion: Being a Discoverer or Being Discovered?

The case study presented in this article confirms that the lesson content in the Philippine Waldorf school under study is mainly formulated from a European perspective in order to serve the developmental aims of Waldorf pedagogy. This European perspective raises the question of whether these developmental aims are sufficiently consonant with a Filipino context. It could be that instead of identifying with heroic "discoverers," seventh graders identify with those who are "discovered," i.e., those who are not the heroes in the stories, but rather the "victims" or the "losers."

If we evaluate the case study alongside the theoretical perspectives of Waldorf education as a globalizing phenomenon, as presented in the article, we must note the following:

1. Framed using the typology of Waldorf education based on the level of parity with the original curriculum, the evaluated lesson series is rather purist. The question is whether that purism represents a status quo or just a necessary phase towards more accommodationist or evolutionist phases. In other words, do schools stick with a century-old Eurocentric Waldorf curriculum, or do they adjust it to a Filipino context? The teachers' discussion presented earlier shows that at least a group of teachers is moving towards a more localized version of the Waldorf curriculum.

2. The case study can be perceived as an example of Waldorf principles and practices being

presented as universalistic or cosmopolitan, whereas its foundations are actually culture-specific. Both the actual stories used in the classroom and the ideas behind them derive from a European context. Steiner's theories on personal and social development were formulated within an early-twentieth-century (central) European context. Localization to new local contexts will only be possible when it is recognized that Waldorf education itself derives from a particular time and local culture.

3. In terms of inclusiveness, the case study raises the suspicion that Filipino Waldorf education can be, at least partly, exclusionary. Stehlik (2018, 223) notes the cultural inflexibility of globalizing Waldorf curriculum: "Despite its apparent successful transition to most countries and cultures for almost 100 years, Steiner education comes under some criticism for the very fact that the curriculum has been adapted and applied fairly unchanged in most instances and in most situations, since its introduction in 1919." Despite the "one size fits all approach," he also observes an interesting contradiction, namely that Waldorf schools are mostly founded through "grass-root networks by parents and teachers who are looking for something new for their children" (ibid., 223). Thus, on the one hand, there is an attraction to Waldorf education by parents who are looking for alternative and innovative education for their children, as evidenced by the opening of new Waldorf schools in many places in recent years; on the other hand, there is limited curricular flexibility to accommodate new cultural contexts. This raises the question of whether Waldorf education could be even more meaningful in new contexts if its curriculum were more flexible and inclusive, not only as a movement in educational innovation but also and especially with respect to its own educational aim of stimulating individual development.

If we now consider the identified challenges, we must conclude that they all apply to the case studied here:

1. The specific cultural and ideological background of Waldorf education means that teachers are hesitant to adjust the curriculum. They feel that they lack in-depth knowledge about both the sociocultural context that the lesson content must be adjusted to and the anthroposophical background of the specific developmental stage of the students. In other words, they feel that they have to be simultaneously educated anthropologists and anthroposophists.

2. The multiple intersections within the Waldorf curriculum also make it difficult to adjust lesson content. For example, any changes to the Age of Discovery block necessitate a re-evaluation of all the connections with other main lesson blocks, such as the block on astronomy or the block on mathematics, to name a few. It is almost as if one adjustment would lead to more adjustments in the entire curriculum, for which schools lack knowledge, skills, and time.

3. The Philippine context is a complicating factor. Questions are raised about what exactly Filipino Waldorf education is, if it must take shape in the context of a culturally diverse society such as the Philippines, which demonstrates cultural hybridity and mestizo cultural

expressions, as well as a strong international outlook. Eurocentrism within the Waldorf curriculum is not an isolated issue but connects with a broader debate on localization processes in Filipino education.

This article has shown that, even when there are multiple ideas about adjusting lessons to make them fit better into the Filipino context, it remains challenging to do so due to serious disadvantages, such as those shown for the History lessons in Grade 7 (see table 2). Is it, therefore, impossible to localize Filipino Waldorf curricula? Discussions and enthusiasm among Filipino Waldorf teachers provide hope for change. There is certainly much to gain.

Notes

1 Waldorf education is a familiar educational context to me since I am both a researcher on Waldorf education and a teacher in a Waldorf school in the Netherlands. Combining research and teaching produces challenges and opportunities, and demands that I should be extra reflexive, open, and critical about my own findings. For an extended reflection on this double role, see Schie 2021.

2 This publication is based on a lecture by Rudolf Steiner in Dornach, Switzerland, on 19 January 1923 and is part of Steiner's extended oeuvre, which consists of more than 350 books, most of which are collections of public lectures written in stenography (more than 6,000). Key works fundamental to anthroposophy are *Theosophy* (Steiner 1904), *Knowledge of Higher Worlds*. *How Is It Achieved*? (Steiner 2011, first published between 1904 and 1905 as a series of articles in the journal *Lucifer Gnosis*), and *An Outline of Esoteric Science* (Steiner 1910). Steiner's most renowned book on Waldorf education is *Study of Man: General Education Course* (2004), which was first published in 1919.

3 The anthroposophical images of humans are extensively described in Steiner's oeuvre, as well as in secondary anthroposophical literature. For the sake of clarity, I have used a limited number of sources. I lean especially on the book by Avison and Rawson (2014) since it is also used in the school under study.

4 The information mentioned in table 1 can also be found in numerous school documents and websites. Note that there are many subtle and less subtle variations of this scheme. Also, note that Class is used as a synonym for Grade. In the lower classes, thematic narratives told by the class teacher have a central place in the curriculum. In the higher years, when there is no longer a permanent class teacher, students are just typified in a way that corresponds with their developmental stage.

5 The nine-day teacher training given by Rudolf Steiner in 1919, at the start of the first Waldorf school, was summarized in three books, based on notes taken by participants of the course: *Study of Man: General Education Course* (Steiner 2004), *Practical Advice to Teachers* (Steiner 2000), and *Discussions with Teachers* (Steiner 1997).

6 This piece of information is based on the so-called Waldorf World List (Bund der Freien Waldorfschulen et al. 2021), which is an updated list of all Waldorf schools in the world, including kindergartens, that are recognized by the Pedagogical Section of the School of Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland, and the international headquarters of the General Anthroposophical Society (https://www.goetheanum.org/en).

7 In Schie 2020, 70–85, I explore the in-depth genesis of Filipino Waldorf education, based on three biographies of school founders.

8 These are the seven Waldorf schools in the Philippines: Manila Waldorf School (San Mateo, Rizal, est. 1994), Acacia Waldorf School (Santa Rosa, Laguna, est. 2003), Gamot Cogon Waldorf School (Zarraga, Iloilo, est. 2005), Kolisko Waldorf School (Quezon City, est. 2008), Balay Sofia Waldorf School (Baguio City, est. 2008), Tuburan Waldorf School (Davao City, est. 2012), and Sisidlan Waldorf School (Quezon City, est. 2019).

9 This typology builds on an old debate among anthroposophists after Rudolf Steiner's death in 1925. Some people thought that there was nothing to develop within anthroposophy from that point (they formed a group led by Steiner's wife, Marie Steiner-von Sivers). Others thought that anthroposophy needed further development (this group was led by Steiner's Dutch mistress and famous anthroposophic physician Ita Wegman).

[10] In more general terms: One may wonder, do children worldwide develop and learn in similar ways? Like other cognitive anthropologists, Henrich et al. (2010) suggest that developmental psychologists, pedagogues, and educational scientists base their studies too often on Western data sets that are not representative of children and pupils in other cultural settings. The study by De Gracia et al. (2016) seems to substantiate this claim in a Filipino context.

[11] The Tagalog word *makabayan* refers to patriotism or nationalism.

[12] "The Philippines are the world's largest exporter of government-sponsored temporary contract labor" (Tyner 2009). It is estimated that about 8 million Filipinos work overseas in about 190 different countries.

[13] The Philippine archipelago counts more than 7,000 islands, of which about 2,000 are inhabited. Additionally, there are over a hundred indigenous peoples and an equivalent number of minority languages.

[14] This paragraph is based on interviews with teachers at the Gamot Cogon Waldorf School.

[15] However, such stories of precolonial Malay seafarers migrating into the archipelago are based on conjectures and have been essentially disproven by recent scholarship (cf. Aguilar 2005).

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Classroom Stories About (Not) Forgetting The Local in a Global Curriculum

From my fieldwork notes:[1]

Today's lesson (see photo, left) follows a set pattern. The students take off their outdoor footwear and greet the teacher at the door with a handshake and a short chat. In a circle, they perform eurythmy exercises, followed by the verse: "I look into the World…". After this, individual verses are recited by the students who have their birthdays on that day of the week, each one crafted specifically for them by their teacher. Then comes a brief class discussion and some rhythmic exercises. Only after this does the actual lesson begin, and the students arrange the desks into the 'Main Lesson position'.

Today's lesson, part of the main lesson block on chemistry, is about sugar. Chemical experiments await, but first the teacher tells a story about the history of sugar. The students listen attentively and take notes in their Main Lesson Book. The story is told in English, with occasional explanations in Hiligaynon. On the blackboard is a drawing of sugar beets and sugarcane. A whole history unfolds: how sugar travelled from Asia through the Arab world to Europe; how Venice became a major trading centre for the 'white gold'; how the French came up with the idea of extracting sugar from sugar beets during the Napoleonic wars; how saccharin was invented in Germany; how sugarcane plantations emerged in the Americas; and the appalling labour conditions of the slaves who worked on these plantations.

As this history unfolds, I am struck by the absence of any mention of Iloilo, the city where some of the students in this class come from – a city that was the trading hub for sugar during the colonial period in the Philippines and which is full of beautiful old villas paid for with sugar money. Nor is there any mention of sugar cultivation on this island, where people worked under harsh conditions on sugarcane plantations. Why is this not addressed? When I later discuss it with the teacher, she simply says she hadn't thought of it. She thanks me for the suggestion…

[1] I have shortened, merged, and rewritten parts of the original notes for the sake of readability and text length.

Figure 1 | Gamot Cogon Waldorf School, 28 January 2020. Classroom at Gamot Cogon Waldorf School, with a chemistry lesson on sugar.

Figure 2 | Iloilo, 20 June 2018. Music teacher Aeon. It is safe to say that Aeon and I have become friends. I'm impressed by his lessons. They model how to give 'local music' a deliberate place, but always in combination with music from elsewhere in the world. Songs in the local language – and in other Philippine languages – sometimes accompanied by traditional Philippine instruments, are combined with internationally known songs, well-known Waldorf songs, and songs from distant cultures. A good mix. In his lessons, students feel at home due to the familiarity of the songs yet are also amazed and challenged through their encounter with 'the other' and 'the world' via music.